



WORKING DOCUMENT

**COVID-19 IMPACT ON MIGRATION STATISTICS
IN
COMESA REGION**

May 2020

Current situation of COVID-19 in COMESA Region

The world is currently in the COVID-19 pandemic. The spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Africa has been increasing at a fast pace since the first case was reported. Governments are implementing various strategies such as simple restrictions to lockdown of cities and regions and curfew to contain the pandemic. All these strategies put in place are aimed to prevent exponential increase in the number of new cases due to community transmissions. COMESA countries have also not been spared by this pandemic. As at 12th May 2020, COMESA member states had reported a total of 18,193 positive cases and 817 deaths. Table 1 shows the distribution of the cases by countries within the region. Thirty percent (993) of the confirmed cases had recovered while the crude fatality rate was at 4% (5,540).

Table 1: COVID 19 Situation in the COMESA Region as at 12th May 2020¹

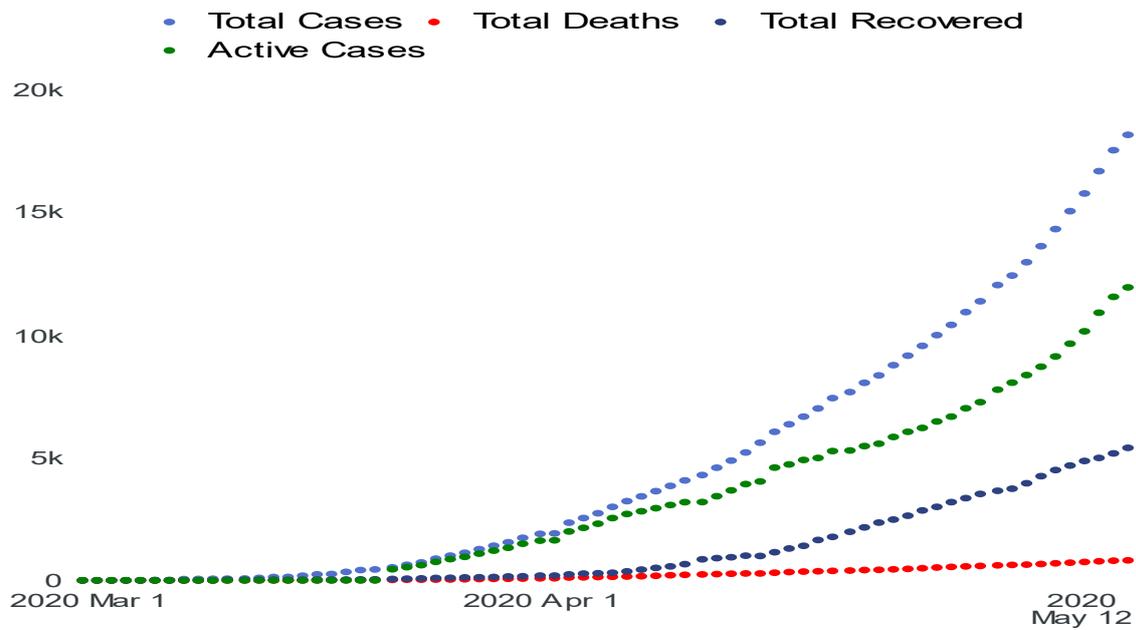
Country	Total Cases	New Cases	Total Tests	Tests/ 1M pop	Total cases/ 1M pop	Deaths	Deaths/ 1M pop	Recoveries	Total Active Cases
Burundi	15	0	284	24	1	1	0.08	7	7
Comoros	11	8	-	-	13	1	1	0	10
Djibouti	1227	107	15790	15982	1242	3	3	872	352
DR Congo	1024	227	-	-	11	41	0.5	141	842
Egypt	9746	2545	90000	879	95	533	5	2172	7041
Eritrea	39	0	-	-	11	0	-	38	1
Eswatini	175	56	714	615	151	2	2	28	145
Ethiopia	250	105	36624	319	2	5	0.04	105	140
Kenya	700	165	32938	613	13	33	0.6	251	416
Libya	64	1	3253	473	9	3	0.4	28	33
Madagascar	186	35	3968	143	7	0	-	101	85
Malawi	57	16	1337	70	3	3	0.2	24	30
Mauritius	332	0	69773	54863	261	10	8	322	0
Rwanda	285	24	42805	3305	22	0	-	150	135
Seychelles	11	0	-	-	112	0	-	10	1
Somalia	1089	254	-	-	69	52	3	121	916
Sudan	1526	748	-	-	35	74	2	162	1290
Tunisia	1032	10	33266	2815	87	45	4	727	260
Uganda	121	23	58606	1281	3	0	-	55	66
Zambia	267	128	10270	559	15	7	0.4	117	143
Zimbabwe	36	2	20537	1382	2	4	0.3	9	23
TOTALS	18193	4,454	419,881			817		5,440	11,936

Source: World Health Organisation, Worldometer, Johns Hopkins University (compiled by COMWARN)

¹ <https://www.comesa.int/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/COVID-19-Situational-Update-13.pdf>

As per figure 1, there is an upward trend in all of the three parameters; positive cases, recoveries and deaths. At regional level (consolidation of the member states cases), as the cumulative number of confirmed and recovered cases increase over time, the trend for active cases over the same time slows down disproportionately. Deaths have also been on increase, with the crude fatality rate of 4 % of the total cases.

Figure 1: Evolving COVID 19 trend in the COMESA region²



² <http://comstat.comesa.int/covid-19> (COMESA dashboard as at 12-05-2020)

COVID-19 impact on migration statistics

Background and Objectives of COVID-19 impact on migration statistics

The emergence of coronavirus illness (COVID-19) poses a significant challenge for the countries globally both in terms of the socio economic and health conditions. Trends of the COVID-19 cases show that there is a continuous growth in the number of confirmed cases. Therefore, countries across the world are putting on multiple kinds of strategies to curb the spread of the disease. These strategies are expected to have serious effect on the statistical operations, which includes; the production of migration statistics in Africa. To understand this phenomenon, the African Union Commission instituted an online survey with all its member states to assess the possible impact of the pandemic on the production of migration statistics and also to collect proposals for solutions in order to contain the negative impact of this pandemic on the production of migration statistics in Africa. To further gain insight on the impact of the pandemic on the production of migration statistics in the COMESA region, it is paramount to cascade the analysis of data collected to the regional level. This will COMESA and its member states come up with regionally contextualized.

Methodology

The questionnaire was sent to the migration statistics focal persons of national statistics offices of the 55 countries in Africa. Amongst there twenty-one of the countries are from COMESA region. The questionnaires were self-administered and emailed back to the AUC. Data collection was done in the month of April 2020.

Findings

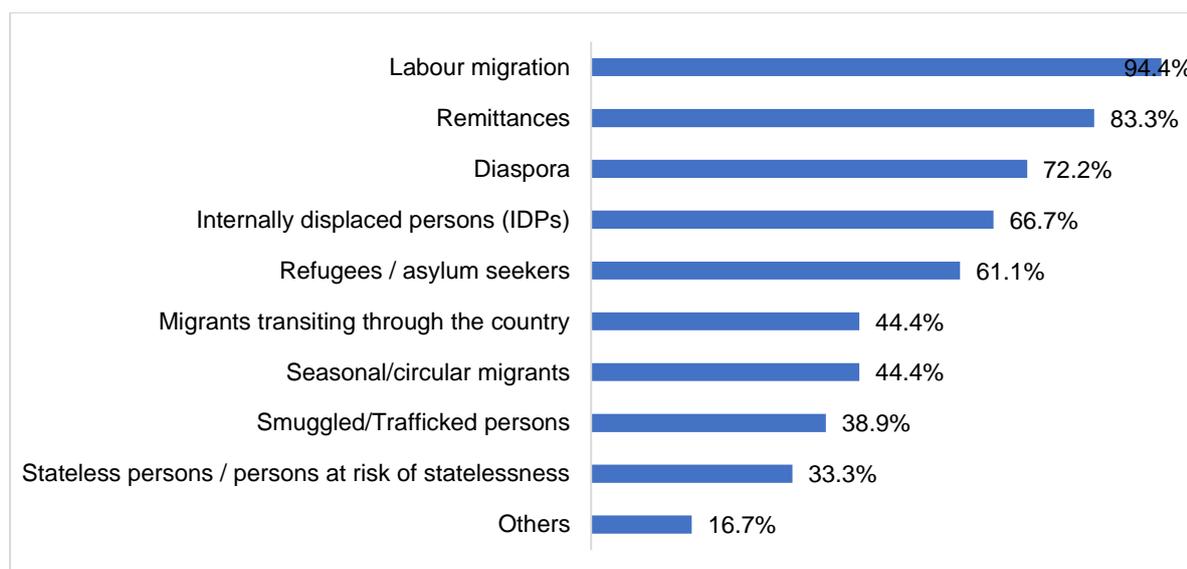
Out of twenty-one countries within COMESA region, eighteen responded to the questionnaire. The response rate was 85.71%. The following are the countries which participated in the survey; Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, DRC, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The following are summary of key findings from the survey;

Main migration topics that are covered by country migration statistics

Figure 2 indicates that, 94.4% of countries within COMESA region collects data on labor migration. Might be due to the adoption of the AU/ILO/IOM /EC A Joint Programme on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration (JLMP) by the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the African Union in 2015. 83.3% of the countries collect data on remittances. The study further indicates that 72.2% of Member States produce statistics on the diaspora on refugees, while considerable proportion produces statistics on internally displaced persons (IDPSs) (66.7%) and asylum seekers (61.1%). Less than 50% of the countries produce statistics on migrants in transit, circular migration, human trafficking and smuggling of migrants and stateless persons.

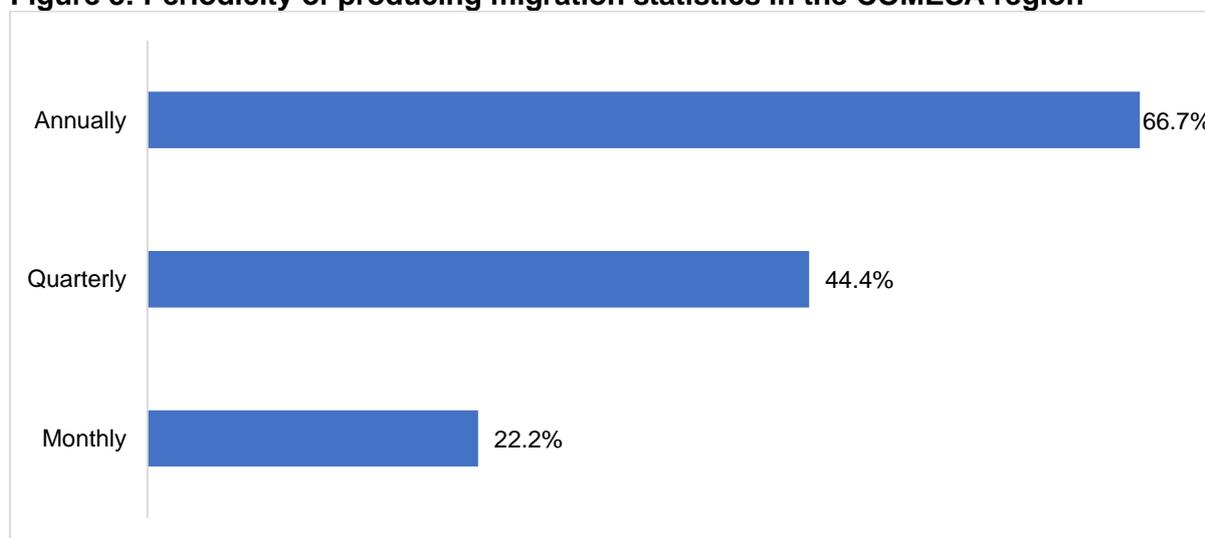
Figure 2: Migration Topics covered by Countries in COMESA region



Periodicity of migration statistics production by NSOs in the seven countries.

As illustrated in Figure 3, most of the countries (66.7%) produce migration statistics on annual basis. Around 44% and 22% of the countries produce the statistics on quarterly and monthly basis respectively. Currently, majority of the countries have put in place various measures such as full or partial lockdowns and social distancing to contain the pandemic. This therefore affects, timely collection of migration data. This will in turn have an effect on the periodicity of producing migration statistics within the region.

Figure 3: Periodicity of producing migration statistics in the COMESA region

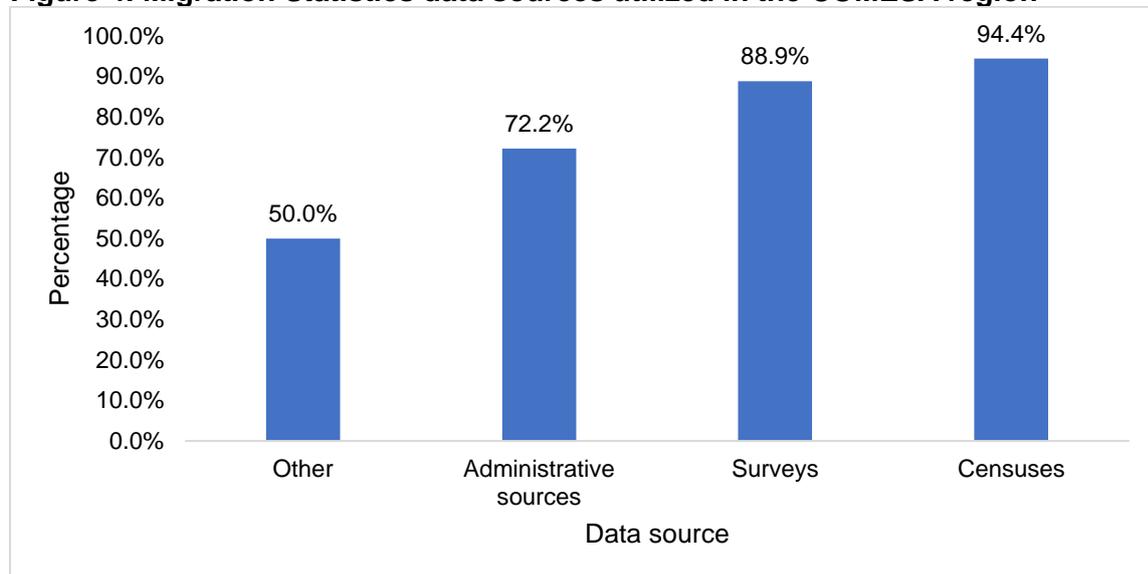


Main sources of data for producing migration statistics in the member states

About ninety-four percent (94%) of Member States use population and housing censuses to produce migration data. While, 88.9% of the countries use surveys as data sources for migration. Administrative sources are also utilised to a greater extent, only 72.2.% of Member

States use them to produce migration statistics while 50% percent (36%) of the countries use data sources other than population and housing censuses, surveys and administrative sources for the production of migration statistics.

Figure 4: Migration Statistics data sources utilized in the COMESA region

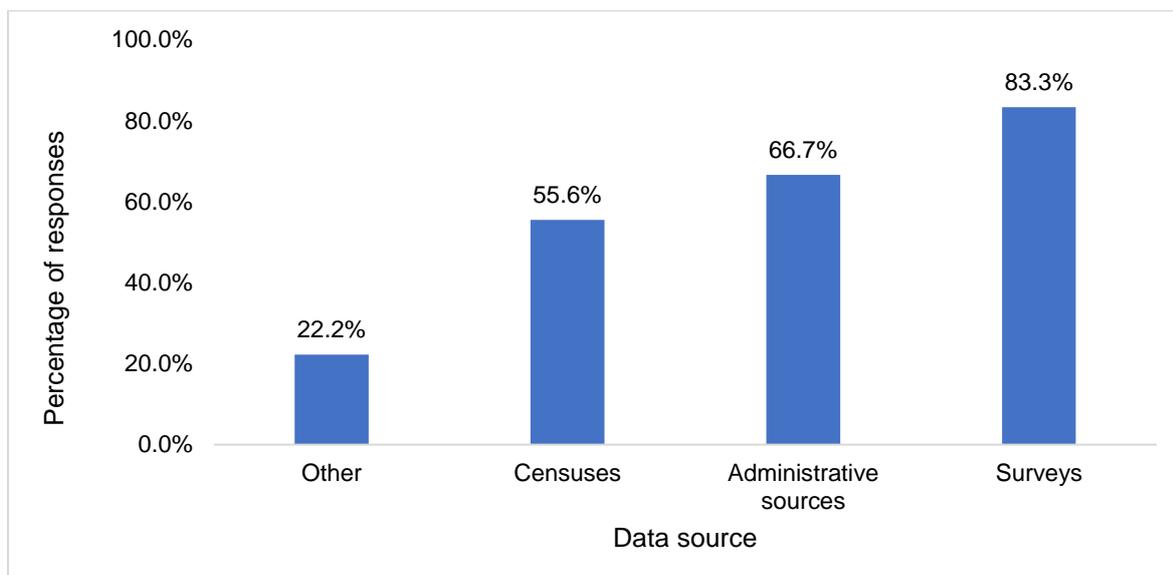


With the current situation, most of the countries will be forced to either suspend or postpone the planned surveys and censuses. Updating of the administrative data sources will also be affected since majority of those involved will be working remotely.

Data sources that can be affected by the coronavirus pandemic

As illustrated by Figure 5, all the data sources for generating migration statistics will be affected by the pandemic. Surveys (83.3%) are adversely affected. This is majorly contributed by the nature of the methodologies and the approaches utilized in collecting migration data are which are mainly dependent on physical interaction with the respondents. Therefore, there is need to put in place new methodologies, strategies and approaches that will mitigate the challenges posed by COVID 19 on production of migration statistics.

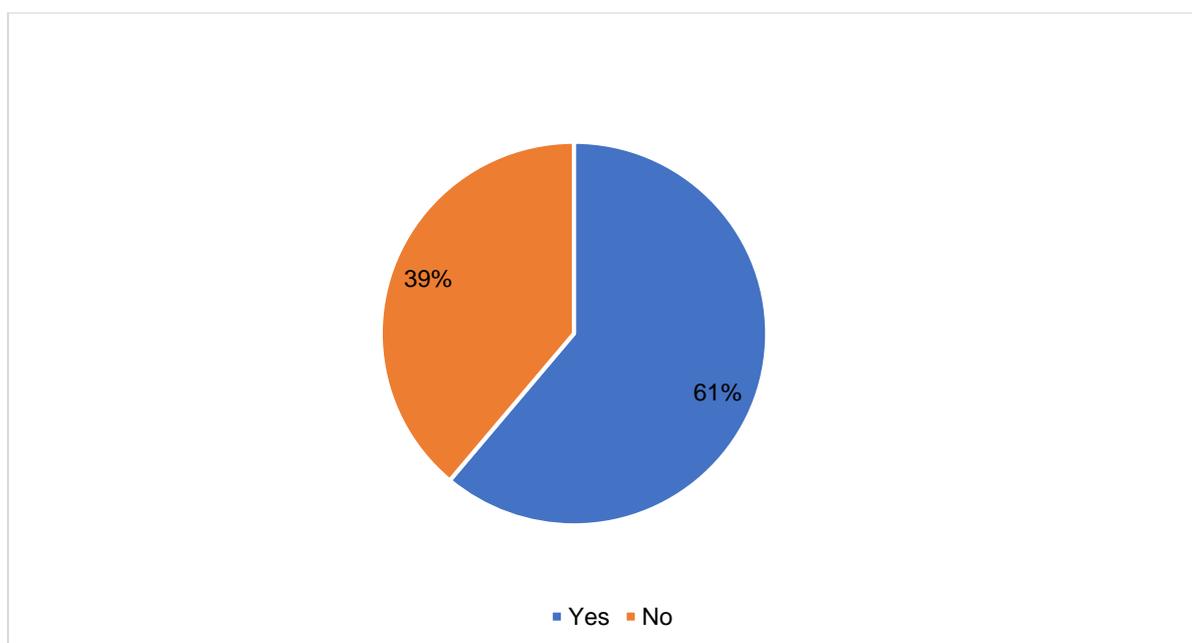
Figure 5: Data sources affected by Pandemic



Countries having any major ongoing migration surveys / censuses that will be affected by the coronavirus crisis

As illustrated in Figure 6, COVID 19 pandemic will have an impact on the major operations of current data collection activities in progress. Sixty one percent (61%) of COMESA Member States indicated that the pandemic will have a negative impact on the major operations under way if it prolongs.

Figure 6: Countries with major ongoing surveys/censuses affected by corona pandemic



Some of the key activities affected within the region are summarised in Table 2 below;

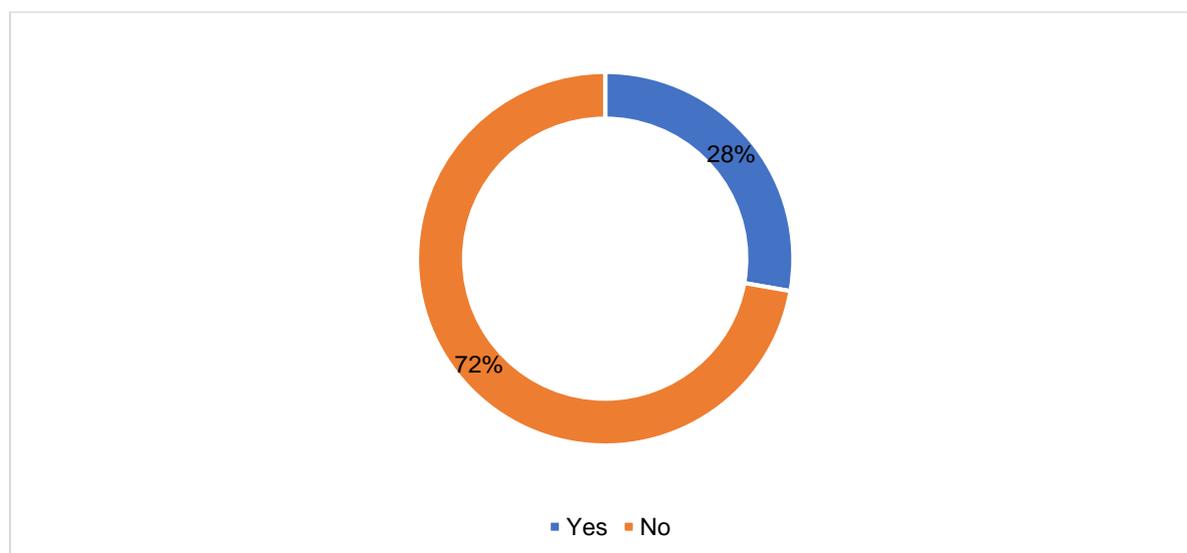
Table 2: Exercises affected by the pandemic

Country	Key exercise
Burundi	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enquête Intégrée sur les Conditions de vie des ménages Burundi (EICVMB, 2019/2020)• Recensement Général de la Population, de l'Habitat, de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage (RGPHAE, 2022)
DR Congo	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cluster Survey of Sustainable Development Goals• Survey of stateless persons
Eswatini	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Labour Force Survey 2019/20-Phase one finalised• Tourism Research
Ethiopia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Population and housing census• Labour Force Survey planned for May 2020
Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kenya Continuous Household Survey Programme (KCHSP – 2019)
Libya	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employment Surveys, Demographics Surveys
Rwanda	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seasonal Cross Border Survey
Tunisia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National survey on international migration Tunisia-HIMS
Uganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Uganda National Household survey (UNHS2019/20)
Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quarterly Labour Force Survey• 2020 Census of Population and Housing

Possibility of using administrative data as an alternative for the affected surveys/censuses by the pandemic

Only 28% of the countries believes that administrative data sources can be utilised as an alternative source for censuses or surveys. Therefore, it is important to evaluate other alternatives that can bridge the gap or rather there is need to come up with robust methodologies to guide the collection of data in such situation.

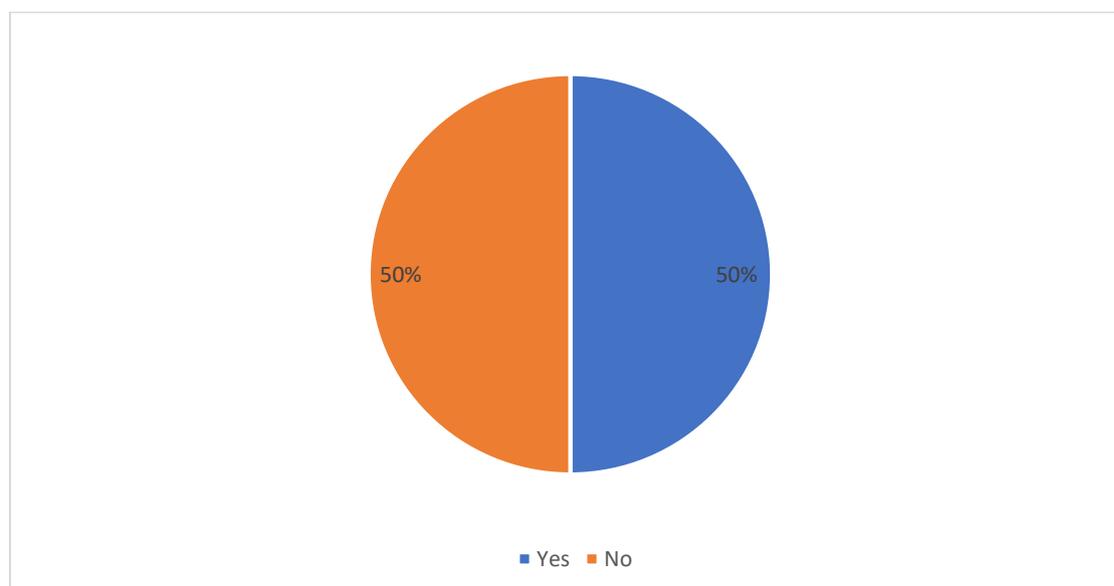
Figure 7: Use of administrative data as an alternative source



Use of estimation as a temporary solution to produce migration data

As per figure 8, fifty percent (50%) of the respondents feels that estimation models can be used as a temporary solution in filling in the gaps in migration statistics as a result of the pandemic.

Figure 8: Estimation for producing migration data in the COMESA region



Recommendations

From the survey findings, the following are recommendations that made to minimize and contained the negative impacts of this pandemic on the production of migration statistics in the COMESA region;

- Embracing Information Communication and Technology e.g. Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) and/or Computer Assisted Self Interviewing (CASI) to limit face to face interviews
- Rescheduling survey and census activities
- Using big data as a potential source of migration statistics
- Using mobile phones to send questionnaire through cell phones - assuming target population own and access the gadgets
- Continuous improvement and automation of administrative data sources:
- Strengthening the capacity of migration and local authorities in compilation of migrant's information
- Strengthening the statistical offices in coordination, compilation, analysis, and dissemination of migration statistics
- Internal resource mobilisation to avert any situation where externally financed programmes may be halted.
- Sustained support by AUC and COMESA to the Member States in production of estimates on migration data

Annex 1: Questionnaire

COVID-19 IMPACT ON THE COLLECTION OF MIGRATIONS STATISTICS IN AFRICA

QUESTIONNAIRE

The world is currently in the COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic will have serious impact on the production of migration statistics in Africa. To this end, the African Union Commission and COMESA aim to assess the possible impact of the pandemic on the production of migration statistics and also to collect proposals for solutions in order to contain the negative impact of this pandemic on the production of migration statistics in Africa.

I. IDENTIFICATION OF THE RESPONDENT

Country Name:

Name of respondent

Department/Division of the respondent

Position (i.e. job title) of the respondent:

Phone number of the respondent

E-mail address of the respondent

Date of completion of the questionnaire ___ / ___ / 2020

II. IMPACT ON THE COLLECTION OF MIGRATIONS STATISTICS IN AFRICA

II-1: What are the main migration topics that are covered by your migration statistics?

Topics	(1=YES) and (2=NO)
Labour migration	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seasonal/circular migrants	<input type="checkbox"/>
Refugees / asylum seekers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internally displaced persons (IDPs)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stateless persons / persons at risk of statelessness	<input type="checkbox"/>
Migrants transiting through the country	<input type="checkbox"/>
Smuggled/Trafficked persons	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diaspora	<input type="checkbox"/>
Remittances	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others	<input type="checkbox"/>

II-2: How often are migration statistics produced for your institution?

Periodicity	(1=YES) and (2=NO)
Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quarterly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Annually	<input type="checkbox"/>

II-3: What are the main sources of data for producing migration statistics in the country?

Sources of data	(1=YES) and (2=NO)
Censuses	<input type="checkbox"/>
Surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>
Administrative sources	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

II-4: What data sources can be affected by the coronavirus pandemic?

Sources of data	(1=YES) and (2=NO)
Censuses	<input type="checkbox"/>
Surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>
Administrative sources	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

If other please specify:

1)
2)
3)

II-5: Do you have any major ongoing migration surveys / censuses that will be affected by the coronavirus crisis? (1=Yes 2=No)

If yes:

a.) Please list these major data collection operations?

1)
2)
3)

b.) Is it possible to use administrative data as an alternative for the affected surveys/censuses by the pandemic? (1=Yes 2=No)

c.) Can estimation of data be used as a temporary solution to produce migration data?
(1=Yes 2=No)

II-6: What is the estimated financial impact of Coronavirus on the production of your migration statistics? (USD) _____

II-7: What are the possible remedies/solutions for containing the negative impacts of this pandemic on the production of migration statistics in the country?

END OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE