4. CONCLUSION

The Compendium presents an overview of the latest situation on international labour migration statistics in the world, sources and methodologies used to compile these statistics. A critical analysis of the metadata gathered from 128 countries has been presented in an earlier ILO report (2019). The Compendium and the ILO report (2019) complement each other and aim to contribute towards the development of a methodology to collect better, harmonized data to generate global and regional estimates of migrant workers and guide policy makers in making informed decisions on migration and labour issues.

The results of the metadata survey based on 128 member countries suggest that countries collect a variety of international migration related characteristics via various sources. The most commonly collected information that can help identify international migrants is country of citizenship. Another key information in the identification of international migrant workers is their work status. Labour related information on respondents is available in Population Census, Household Surveys, Establishment Census and Establishment Surveys but not necessarily in Border/Admission Statistics and Administrative Registers. Basic demographic information, on the other hand, is collected in most data sources. Other information of interest such as remittances sent or received, (former) household members living and working abroad are less frequently collected. Countries also differ in the way they collect, organize, and classify information, which are likely to bring about differences in estimated magnitudes.

An important limitation concerning the ILO metadata country survey effort has been the low response rate. Of the 229 ILO member countries, only 128 responded, producing an overall response rate of 55.9%. Furthermore, among the responding countries, the response rate per questionnaire varied. Of the 128 countries that returned at least one questionnaire, the highest response is observed for the Questionnaire for Population Census, to which 122 countries responded. This is followed by the Questionnaire for Household Surveys with 86 countries returning at least for questionnaire for this source. The response rate for the Questionnaire for Establishment Census and Establishment Surveys has been particularly low, which may suggest that countries do not collect information on international migrant workers through these sources. However, less than full-response for Border/Admission Statistics and Administrative Sources raises concern that non-response to a particular questionnaire may not be safely interpreted as lack of information on population groups of interest in these sources. In the case of administrative sources low response may arise due to potential communication issues between NSOs and government agencies and ministries. Hence, non-response should not be interpreted as lack of information on international migrant workers in a particular source or in a particular country. This limitation must be kept in mind in drawing conclusions based on the ILO metadata.

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