

International Technical Meeting on Measuring Remittances

**World Bank (IFC Building, Room F 8P-100)
2121 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20433**

January 24-25, 2005

Background

There is increasing attention on international migrant remittances as a development policy issue. Official statistics on remittances are primarily collected and reported through the Balance of Payments framework, but they are incomplete in many countries, may underreport remittance flows, and are often not comparable. There is a pressing need for improvements in the data on remittances.

Purpose

To review existing data and metadata on migrants' remittances and the extent to which existing frameworks meet user needs; to identify additional data needs; and to develop a strategy to improve data in priority areas.

Monday, 24 January

8.30 – 9.00 Registration and breakfast

9.00 – 10.30 Opening session: The policy needs for data on remittances

The session will aim to answer the questions: What is the policy need for remittances data? What weaknesses do users perceive in existing data? The policy requirements for remittance data will be explored by outlining recent policy initiatives and issues, particularly those relating to remittance flows between developed and developing countries. Data users will outline where they identify gaps and quality problems relating to statistics on transfers by migrants.

Chair: Shaida Badiee, Director, Development Data Group, World Bank

Rapporteur: Neil Patterson, IMF

Speakers:

Amar Bhattacharya, World Bank. Needs for remittance data in development policy, and perceived weaknesses and gaps.

Lois Quinn, US Treasury. Data needs, particularly those arising from the G8 Sea Island Action Plan, including proposals for a working group on improving remittance data.

Valsa Shah, UK Department for International Development. Development policy needs for data on remittances.

William Cave, OECD. Data needs arising from GATS Mode 4 and the WTO.

10.30 – 11.00 Coffee break

11.00 – 12.30 Session 2. Data frameworks

This session aims to examine existing data frameworks for recording remittance data, particularly those within the Balance of Payments (BOP), and the Statistics of International Trade in Services. Gaps, definitional and data quality issues as they relate to user needs will be explored. Participants will discuss the respective roles of concepts and practical compilation issues in explaining data problems. To this end, metadata will be discussed, addressing issues of deviations of compilation practices from conceptual guidance. The discussion will also cover the dynamic nature of BoP methodology, which is constantly being reviewed and assessed by compilers. The session will focus on conceptual issues of the framework rather than data sources and compilation, and will try to determine the extent to which the BOP framework can meet users needs.

Chair: Ivo Havinga, Chief, Economic Statistics Branch, UN Statistics Division

Rapporteur: Misha Belkindas, World Bank

Speakers:

Neil Patterson, IMF Statistics Department. An overview of the balance of payments statistics framework, existing data and metadata in the BOP yearbook, compilation guidance, data problems, and improvements in progress.

Alessandra Alfieri, UN Statistics Division. Ongoing work on concepts and guidance by UN Statistics Division/Technical Sub-Group on Movement of Natural Persons.

Hania Zlotnik, UN Population Division. The impact of the definition of migrant on the measurement of remittances.

Mushtaq Hussain, Eurostat. Measuring migrant remittances from the perspective of the European Union.

12.30 – 14.00 Lunch

14.00 – 15.30 Session 3. Recent studies relating to remittance data quality and availability

This session will aim to present the findings of various recent studies relating to remittance data, and in particular to identify data quality and availability issues that have been found.

Chair: Rob Edwards, Director, IMF Statistics Department

Rapporteur: Alessandra Alfieri, UNSD

Speakers:

Anne Harrison, Adviser, OECD Round Table on Sustainable Development. A review of data available to analyze patterns of remittance flows.

Violetta Damia, European Central Bank. Capturing information on remittances and other flows – a fact-finding in Europe.

Jose De Luna Martinez, World Bank. Preliminary findings of a survey with Central Banks on remittance issues.

15.30 – 14.00 Coffee break

16.00 – 17.30 Session 4. Data sources and compilation problems: country experiences

This session will examine data collection practices as they relate to international data frameworks and national data needs. In particular the session will look at improving coverage of remittances from sources commonly used in the BOP compilation process (such as ITRS, bank reporting, reporting by non-bank companies and remittance transfer companies) and on how new sources such as informal mechanisms (e.g. hawala) could be included. Experiences of different countries will be presented and discussed, and the objective will be to identify areas where further work and resources are needed to improve coverage and data quality.

Chair: Rob Edwards, Director, Statistics Department, IMF

Rapporteur: Eduardo Rodriguez-Tenes, Bank of Spain

Speakers:

Pawel Michalik, National Bank of Poland. Measuring migrants' and temporary worker remittances in Balance of Payments statistics.

Michael Mann, Bureau of Economic Analysis, US. BEA's measures of workers' remittances and transfers through charitable organizations.

Tom Orford, Office for National Statistics, UK. Remittance data in the UK Balance of Payments. Methodology, data sources and weaknesses.

17.30-19.00 Reception (in Room F L-101)

Tuesday, 25 January

8.30 – 9.00 Breakfast

9.00 – 10.30 Session 4 (continued). Data sources and compilation problems: country experiences

Chair: Rob Edwards, Director, Statistics Department, IMF

Rapporteur: Almut Steger, Bundesbank

Speakers:

K T Chau, Department of Census and Statistics, Hong Kong.

Toshinori Doi, Ministry of Finance, Japan, and Satoru Hagino, Bank of Japan.

Rosabel Guerrero, Central Bank of Philippines. Statistical measurement of overseas Filipino workers' remittances: present practices and future direction.

Michael Atingi-Ego, Bank of Uganda. Measuring workers' remittances.

John Wilson, IMF. Measuring the immeasurable: hawala international remittances via informal channels.

10.30 – 11.00 Coffee break

11.00 – 12.30 Session 5. Collection of data from household surveys

This session will look at the role of household surveys in meeting users data needs. Experiences from recent surveys and methods to improve guidance for countries will be discussed.

Chair: Rob Edwards, Director, Statistics Department, IMF

Rapporteur: Dilip Ratha, World Bank

Speakers:

Richard Adams, Research Group, World Bank. Using household surveys to study remittance flows.

Johan Mistiaen, Development Data Group, World Bank. Household surveys of migrant remittances in remittance-sending countries.

Hania Zlotnik, UN Population Division. Use of surveys to measure remittances.

Pedro de Vasconcelos, Inter-American Development Bank. Sending money home – Remittances as a development tool in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Julie Rogers, Asian Development Bank. Enhancing the efficiency of overseas workers remittances.

12.30 – 14.00 Lunch (in Room F L-101)

14.00 – 15.30 Concluding session

Chair: Shaida Badiee, Director, Development Data Group, World Bank

This session will aim to develop a strategy and method improving remittance concepts and data, particularly within the framework of existing BOP and Mode 4 data collection efforts but also through household surveys. The session will inform the concerns expressed by the G7 and examine whether existing data frameworks are sufficient; whether users concerns can be addressed; and whether sufficient work is planned or being done to meet user needs. Specific recommendations are likely to cover:

- helping countries improve the coverage and quality of remittance data reported within existing data collections, particularly through the exchange of information and technical assistance in implementing BPM5/6 recommendations, through guidelines for incorporating all transfer mechanisms in international transaction reporting systems
- improving BOP metadata as a basis for international comparison of methodology and identifying best practice, and supporting the exchange of data and information on best practice among compiling agencies
- ways of improving estimation of data on sources and destinations of remittance flows
- helping countries study remittance flows in detail through better guidelines for surveys of households sending and receiving migrant remittances.

Rapporteurs from sessions:

Neil Patterson, IMF. Opening session: Policy needs

Misha Belkindas, World Bank. Session 2: Data frameworks.

Alessandra Alfieri, UN Statistics Division. Session 3: Recent studies.

Eduardo Rodriguez-Tenes, Bank of Spain, and Almut Steger, German Bundesbank. Session 4: Country experiences with data collection and reporting.

Dilip Ratha, World Bank. Session 5: The use of household surveys to collect remittance statistics.