Migration at a Glance

This document highlights some of the key facts and figures relating to numbers, patterns, causes and consequences of international migration today. It relies on the latest available data from: UNDESA, World Bank, IOM, ILO and UNHCR.

How many international migrants are there?

- There are nearly 200 million international migrants in 2005, counting only those who have lived outside their country for more than one year and including 9.2 million refugees
- This is equivalent to the population of the 5th largest country - Brazil
- 1 in 35 people is an international migrant; or 3% of the world’s population
- Numbers are increasing rapidly: from 82 million international migrants in 1970 through 175 million in 2000 to nearly 200 million today

Migrant women

- Almost half the world’s international migrants are women (48.6%)
- Some 51% of migrant women live in the developed world, compared with 49% in the developing world
- There are more female than male international migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, Oceania, Europe and the former USSR

Where are the migrants? (Year 2000)

- 56.1 million in Europe (including the European part of the former USSR), accounting for 7.7% of Europe’s population
- 49.9 million in Asia, accounting for 1.4% of Asia’s population
- 40.8 million in North America, accounting for 12.9% of North America’s population
- 16.3 million in Africa, accounting for 2% of Africa’s population
- 5.9 million in Latin America, accounting for 1.1% of Latin America’s population
- 5.8 million in Australia, accounting for 18.7% of Australia’s population
Which are the most important host countries?

- USA has some 35 million: 20% of the world’s migrants
- The Russian Federation has some 13.3 million: 7.6% of the world’s migrants
- Germany has some 7.3 million: 4.2% of the world’s migrants
- Ukraine has some 6.9 million: 4.0% of the world’s migrants
- India has some 6.3 million: 3.6% of the world’s migrants
- Migrants comprise more than 60% of the total population in Andorra, Macao Special Administrative Region of China, Guam, the Holy See, Monaco, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates

Which are the most important origin countries?

- The Chinese diaspora has some 35 million people
- The Indian diaspora has some 20 million
- The Filipino diaspora has some 7 million

How has the distribution of migrants changed?

- From 1980 to 2000, the number of migrants living in the developed world increased from 48 million to 110 million; compared with an increase from 52 million to 65 million in the developing world
- Today, some 60% of the world’s migrants live in the developed world
- In 1970, migrants comprised 10% of the population in 48 countries; this had increased to 70 countries by 2000
- From 1970 to 2000, the proportion of the world’s migrants living in North America rose from 15.9% to 22.3%, and in the former USSR from 3.8% to 16.8%
- From 1970 to 2000, the proportion of the world’s migrants living in other parts of the world decreased from: 34.5% to 25% in Asia; 12% to 9% in Africa; 7.1% to 3.4% in Latin America and the Caribbean; 22.9% to 18.7% in Europe, and 3.7% to 3.1% in Oceania

Why do migrants move?
• **Wage disparities**: 45.7% of people earn less than $1 per day in Sub-Saharan Africa; 14.4% in South Asia, and 10.4% in Latin America and the Caribbean

• **Unemployment rates**: 12.2% in the Middle East and North Africa; 10.9% in Sub-Saharan Africa; and 6.6% in industrialized economies

• **Differentials in life expectancy**: 58 years in low income countries, 78 years in high income countries

• **Education gaps**: 58% women and 68% men literate in low income countries, almost full literacy in high income countries; 76% primary school enrolment in low income countries, almost full enrolment in high income countries

• **Demographic gradients**: on average 5.4 children born to each woman in Sub-Saharan Africa, compared with: 3.8 in the Arab World; 2.5 in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 1.4 in Europe

**What are migrants’ economic contributions to host countries?**

• In 2000, some 86 million of the world’s migrants were economically active - over 50% of all migrants

• Foreign workers comprise over 5% of the labour force in 8 European countries

• From 1975 to 2001, the number of foreign workers in Japan increased from 750,000 to 1.8 million

• Skilled immigrants and family members constitute over 50% of migrants entering Australia, Canada and New Zealand

**What is the demographic impact of migration in host countries?**

• From 1990 to 2000, international migration accounted for 56% of the population growth in the developed world, compared with 3% in the developing world

• From 1990 to 2000, immigration accounted for 89% of population growth in Europe

• From 1995 to 2000, Europe’s population would have declined by 4.4 million without immigration

• From 1995 to 2000 immigration accounted for 75% of population growth in USA

**How much money do migrants send home?**

• Formal transfers of remittances were worth about $150 billion in 2004

• Perhaps $300 billion are additionally transferred informally
Formal remittance transfers are almost triple the value of Official Development Assistance

Formal remittance transfers are the second largest source of external funding for Developing Countries after Foreign Direct Investment

The top 3 remittance-receiving countries in 2004 were: Mexico ($16 billion per year), India ($9.9 billion), the Philippines ($8.5 billion)

The top 3 remittance-sending countries in 2001 were: USA ($28 billion per year), Saudi Arabia ($15 billion), Belgium, Germany and Switzerland ($8 billion)

How important is irregular migration?

- An estimated 2.5 to 4 million migrants cross international borders without authorization each year
- At least 5 million of Europe’s 56.1 million migrants in 2000 had irregular status (10%)
- Some 500,000 undocumented migrants are estimated to arrive in Europe each year
- An estimated 10 million migrants live in the USA with irregular status
- An estimated 50% of the Mexican-born population in USA in 2000 had irregular status (4.8 million)
- Some 20 million migrants with irregular status live in India
- An estimated 600-800,000 people are trafficked each year
- Migrant smugglers and human traffickers make an estimated $10 billion profit each year

What is the number of refugees and asylum seekers?

- 6.5 million of the world’s 9.2 million refugees live in developing countries
- From 2000 to 2004, the global refugee population decreased by 24%
- Refugees represent 23% of international migrants in Asia; 22% in Africa, and 5% in Europe
- Pakistan hosts the largest number of refugees; just over 1 million (11% of the global total)
• From 1994 to 2003 some 5 million people applied for asylum in the industrialized countries; refugee or equivalent status was granted to 1.4 million of them (28%)

• In 2004, 676,000 applications for asylum were submitted in 143 countries; representing a 19% decrease from 830,300 in 2003

• In 2004, 83,000 refugees were resettled, mainly in the USA (53,000), Australia (16,000) and Canada (10,000)