

**E c o n o m i c &**

**S o c i a l A f f a i r s**

# **International Migration Report 2015**



United Nations



ST/ESA/SER.A/384  
September 2016

**Department of Economic and Social Affairs**  
Population Division

# **International Migration Report 2015**



United Nations



The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat is a vital interface between global policies in the economic, social and environmental spheres and national action. The Department works in three main interlinked areas: (i) it compiles, generates and analyses a wide range of economic, social and environmental data and information on which States Members of the United Nations draw to review common problems and take stock of policy options; (ii) it facilitates the negotiations of Member States in many intergovernmental bodies on joint courses of action to address ongoing or emerging global challenges; and (iii) it advises interested Governments on the ways and means of translating policy frameworks developed in United Nations conferences and summits into programmes at the country level and, through technical assistance, helps build national capacities.

The Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs provides the international community with timely and accessible population data and analysis of population trends and development outcomes for all countries and areas of the world. To this end, the Division undertakes regular studies of population size and characteristics and of all three components of population change (fertility, mortality and migration). Founded in 1946, the Population Division provides substantive support on population and development issues to the United Nations General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Population and Development. It also leads or participates in various interagency coordination mechanisms of the United Nations system. The work of the Division also contributes to strengthening the capacity of Member States to monitor population trends and to address current and emerging population issues.

This report was prepared by Clare Menozzi, under the supervision of Bela Hovy. The estimates of the migrant stock were provided by Pablo Lattes and Clare Menozzi.

## Note

The designations employed in this report and the material presented in it do not imply the expression of any opinions whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

This report is available in electronic format on the Division's website at [www.unpopulation.org](http://www.unpopulation.org). For further information about this report, please contact the Office of the Director, Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, New York, 10017, USA, by Fax: 1 212 963 2147 or by e mail at [migrationp@un.org](mailto:migrationp@un.org).

Suggested citation:

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2016). International Migration Report 2015 (ST/ESA/SER.A/384).

Official symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with numbers, as illustrated in the above citation.

Published by the United Nations  
Copyright © United Nations, 2016  
All rights reserved

< this page intentionally left blank >

## PREFACE

In the area of international migration, the Population Division estimates the global number of international migrants at regular intervals, monitors levels, trends and policies of international migration, and collects and analyses information on the relationship between international migration and development. As part of these monitoring activities, the Migration Section within the Population Division maintains the United Nations Global Migration Database, which contains the most complete set of statistics on international migrants enumerated in countries or areas and classified by age, sex and country/area of birth or citizenship.

The Population Division also convenes the interagency coordination meeting on international migration and organizes expert group meetings on migration-related topics. The Division participates on behalf of DESA in the interagency Global Migration Group (GMG). It also services the intergovernmental process on international migration and development at the General Assembly and acts as the focal point within the United Nations Secretariat for the State-led Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD).

This report presents information on levels and trends in international migration for major areas, regions and countries of the world, and on the

ratification status of migration-related legal instruments. The data for the international migrant stock described in chapter I are taken from the publication *Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2015 Revision*, while the estimates on the total population in chapter I are based on *World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision, DVD Edition*. The estimates on net migration and the projected population up to 2050 presented in chapter II are based on *World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision, DVD Edition*. Chapter III provides an analysis of the status of ratification (by Member States) of the migration-related legal instruments of the United Nations and the International Labour Organization (ILO), based on information from the United Nations Treaty Section (<http://treaties.un.org>) and the NORMLEX Information System on International Labour Standards (<http://www.ilo.org>). For more information on the data and methodology used for calculating the various indicators used in this report, please see the above-mentioned publications.

The present report has been issued without formal editing. Responsibility for this report rests with the Population Division. More information on the activities of the Population Division in the area of international migration can be found at [www.unmigration.org](http://www.unmigration.org).

< this page intentionally left blank >



## CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
PREFACE.....	iii
EXPLANATORY NOTES.....	vii
CLASSIFICATION OF COUNTRIES OR AREAS BY MAJOR AREAS AND REGION IN THE WORLD.....	ix
I. LEVELS AND TRENDS IN INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION.....	1
II. NET INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION .....	11
III. LEGAL INSTRUMENTS AND POLICIES ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION .....	19

< this page intentionally left blank >

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

The following symbols are used in the tables shown in this report:

Two dots (..) indicate that data are not available or are not separately reported.

Three dots (...) indicate that the treaty was not ratified.

An em dash (—) indicates that the amount is nil or negligible.

A hyphen (-) indicates that the item is not applicable.

A minus sign (-) before a figure indicates a decrease.

A full stop (.) is used to indicate decimals.

Use of a hyphen (-) between years, for example, 1990-2000, signifies the full period from 1 July of the first year to 1 July of the second year.

Due to rounding, the numbers and percentages displayed in tables may not add up to the corresponding totals.

Following common practice, the “developed regions”, referred to also as the “global North” or simply the “North”, are comprised of all countries or areas of Europe and Northern America, plus Australia, New Zealand and Japan. The term “developed countries” refers to countries in the developed regions.

The “developing regions”, or the “global South”, are comprised of all countries or areas of Africa, Asia (excluding Japan) and Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia. The term “developing countries” is used to designate countries in the developing regions.

The terms “developed” and “developing” describe the clear distinction between rich and poor countries or regions that existed as recently as 1960, but which has since disappeared as many countries of the South have undergone rapid development. The terms continue to be used because the categories remain meaningful for some purposes; their use in this report does not imply any judgment as to the current developmental stage of a particular country or region.

Where appropriate, the term “country” may be used in reference to a territory or area.

The group of least developed countries, as defined by the Committee for Development Policy (CDP), a subsidiary body of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, currently comprises 48 countries: Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Yemen, Zambia.

The designation sub-Saharan Africa refers to all countries in Africa except Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Western Sahara.

Countries and areas are grouped geographically into six major areas: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Northern America and Oceania. These are further divided into 21 geographical regions.

Country names and the composition of geographical areas follow those of “Standard country or area codes for statistical use”, available at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/m49/m49.htm>.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES *(continued)*

The following abbreviations have been used:

DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
GDP	gross domestic product
GFMD	Global Forum on Migration and Development
GMG	Global Migration Group
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

## CLASSIFICATION OF COUNTRIES OR AREAS BY MAJOR AREA AND REGION OF THE WORLD

AFRICA				
<i>Eastern Africa</i>	<i>Middle Africa</i>	<i>Northern Africa</i>	<i>Western Africa</i>	<i>Southern Africa</i>
Burundi	Angola	Algeria	Benin	Botswana
Comoros	Cameroon	Egypt	Burkina Faso	Lesotho
Djibouti	Central African Republic	Libya	Cabo Verde	Namibia
Eritrea	Chad	Morocco	Côte d'Ivoire	South Africa
Ethiopia	Congo	Sudan	Gambia	Swaziland
Kenya	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Tunisia	Ghana	
Madagascar	Equatorial Guinea	Western Sahara	Guinea	
Malawi	Gabon		Guinea-Bissau	
Mauritius <sup>1</sup>	Sao Tome and Principe		Liberia	
Mayotte			Mali	
Mozambique			Mauritania	
Réunion			Niger	
Rwanda			Nigeria	
Seychelles			Saint Helena <sup>2</sup>	
Somalia			Senegal	
South Sudan			Sierra Leone	
Uganda			Togo	
United Republic of Tanzania <sup>3</sup>				
Zambia				
Zimbabwe				

ASIA				
<i>Central Asia</i>	<i>Eastern Asia</i>	<i>South-Eastern Asia</i>	<i>Southern Asia</i>	<i>Western Asia</i>
Kazakhstan	China <sup>4</sup>	Brunei Darussalam	Afghanistan	Armenia
Kyrgyzstan	China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region <sup>6</sup>	Cambodia	Bangladesh	Azerbaijan <sup>5</sup>
Tajikistan	China, Macao Special Administrative Region <sup>10</sup>	Indonesia	Bhutan	Bahrain
Turkmenistan	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Lao People's Democratic Republic	India	Cyprus <sup>7</sup>
Uzbekistan	Japan	Malaysia <sup>9</sup>	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Georgia <sup>8</sup>
	Mongolia	Myanmar	Maldives	Iraq
	Republic of Korea	Philippines	Nepal	Israel
		Singapore	Pakistan	Jordan
		Thailand	Sri Lanka	Kuwait
		Timor-Leste		Lebanon
		Viet Nam		Oman
				Qatar
				Saudi Arabia
				State of Palestine <sup>11</sup>
				Syrian Arab Republic
				Turkey
				United Arab Emirates
				Yemen

<sup>1</sup> Including Agalega, Rodrigues and Saint Brandon.

<sup>2</sup> Including Ascension and Tristan da Cunha.

<sup>3</sup> Including Zanzibar.

<sup>4</sup> For statistical purposes, the data for China do not include Hong Kong and Macao, Special Administrative Regions (SAR) of China.

<sup>5</sup> Including Nagorno-Karabakh.

<sup>6</sup> As of 1 July 1997, Hong Kong became a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China.

<sup>7</sup> Including Northern-Cyprus.

<sup>8</sup> Including Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

<sup>9</sup> Including Sabah and Sarawak.

<sup>10</sup> As of 20 December 1999, Macao became a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China.

<sup>11</sup> Including East Jerusalem. Refugees under UNRWA's mandate are not counted as part of the migrant stock for the State of Palestine, as almost all of these individuals were born in the territory.

**CLASSIFICATION OF COUNTRIES OR AREAS BY MAJOR AREA AND REGION OF THE WORLD** (*continued*)

EUROPE			
<i>Eastern Europe</i>	<i>Northern Europe</i>	<i>Southern Europe</i>	<i>Western Europe</i>
Belarus	Channel Islands <sup>12</sup>	Albania	Austria
Bulgaria	Denmark	Andorra	Belgium
Czech Republic	Estonia	Bosnia and Herzegovina	France
Hungary	Faeroe Islands	Croatia	Germany
Poland	Finland <sup>13</sup>	Gibraltar	Liechtenstein
Republic of Moldova <sup>14</sup>	Iceland	Greece	Luxembourg
Romania	Ireland	Holy See <sup>15</sup>	Monaco
Russian Federation	Isle of Man	Italy	Netherlands
Slovakia	Latvia	Malta	Switzerland
Ukraine	Lithuania	Montenegro	
	Norway <sup>16</sup>	Portugal	
	Sweden	San Marino	
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland <sup>18</sup>	Serbia <sup>17</sup>	
		Slovenia	
		Spain <sup>19</sup>	
		The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia <sup>20</sup>	

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN		
<i>Caribbean</i>	<i>Central America</i>	<i>South America</i>
Anguilla	Belize	Argentina
Antigua and Barbuda	Costa Rica	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)
Aruba	El Salvador	Brazil
Bahamas	Guatemala	Chile
Barbados	Honduras	Colombia
Bonaire, Saba and Sint Eustatius	Mexico	Ecuador
British Virgin Islands	Nicaragua	Falkland Islands (Malvinas)
Cayman Islands	Panama	French Guiana
Cuba		Guyana
Dominica		Paraguay
Curaçao		Peru
Dominican Republic		Suriname
Grenada		Uruguay
Guadeloupe <sup>21</sup>		Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Haiti		
Jamaica		
Martinique		
Montserrat		
Puerto Rico		
Saint Kitts and Nevis		
Saint Lucia		
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines		

<sup>12</sup> Refers to Guernsey and Jersey.

<sup>13</sup> Including Åland Islands.

<sup>14</sup> Including Transnistria.

<sup>15</sup> Refers to the Vatican City State.

<sup>16</sup> Including Svalbard and Jan Mayen Islands.

<sup>17</sup> Including Kosovo.

<sup>18</sup> Also referred to as United Kingdom.

<sup>19</sup> Including Canary Islands, Ceuta and Melilla.

<sup>20</sup> Also referred to as TFYR Macedonia.

<sup>21</sup> Including Saint-Barthélemy and Saint-Martin (French part).

**CLASSIFICATION OF COUNTRIES OR AREAS BY MAJOR AREA AND REGION OF THE WORLD** (*continued*)

<b>LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN</b> ( <i>continued</i> )			
<i>Caribbean</i>	<i>Central America</i>	<i>South America</i>	
Sint Maarten (Dutch part)			
Trinidad and Tobago			
Turks and Caicos Islands			
United States Virgin Islands			
<b>NORTHERN AMERICA</b>			
Bermuda			
Canada			
Greenland			
Saint Pierre and Miquelon			
United States of America			
<b>OCEANIA</b>			
<i>Australia and New Zealand</i>	<i>Melanesia</i>	<i>Micronesia</i>	<i>Polynesia</i>
Australia <sup>22</sup>	Fiji	Guam	American Samoa
New Zealand	New Caledonia	Kiribati	Cook Islands
	Papua New Guinea	Marshall Islands	French Polynesia
	Solomon Islands	Micronesia (Federated States of)	Niue
	Vanuatu	Nauru	Samoa
		Northern Mariana Islands	Tokelau
		Palau	Tonga
			Tuvalu
			Wallis and Futuna Islands

<sup>22</sup> Including Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands and Norfolk Island.

< this page intentionally left blank >



## I. LEVELS AND TRENDS IN INTERNATIONAL MIGRANT STOCK

### A. INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS BY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

Globally, there were 244 million international migrants in 2015.<sup>i</sup> Of these, nearly 58 per cent lived in the developed regions, while the developing regions hosted 42 per cent of the world's total. Of the 140 million international migrants living in the global North in 2015,<sup>ii</sup> 85 million, or 61 per cent, originated from a developing country, while 55 million, or 39 per cent, were born in the North. Meanwhile, 90 million, or 87 per cent, of the 103 million international migrants residing in the global South in 2015 originated from other parts of the developing world, while 13 million, or 13 per cent, were born in the North.

Between 1990 and 2015, the number of international migrants worldwide rose by over 91 million, or by 60 per cent. Much of this growth occurred between 2000 and 2010, when some 4.9 million migrants were added annually, compared to an average of 2.0 million from 1990 to 2000 and 4.4 million from 2010 to 2015 (table I.1). Between 1990 and 2015, the developed regions gained 58 million international migrants, or 64 per cent, of the 91 million added worldwide, whereas the developing regions added 33 million, or 36 per cent. While the North gained the larger number of international migrants between 1990 and 2015, from 2010 to 2015 the average annual increase of

the migrant stock in the South exceeded that in the North: 2.9 versus 1.2 per cent, respectively.

The increase in the number of international migrants in the developed regions resulted from the increase in the number of migrants from countries of both the South and the North. Of the 58 million international migrants added in the North between 1990 and 2015, 44 million, or 76 per cent, were born in the South. The remaining 14 million international migrants, or 24 per cent, originated from a country in the North.

#### Box I.1. Who is an international migrant?

For the purpose of estimating the international migrant stock, international migrants are equated either with the foreign-born or with foreign citizens. When data on place of birth are available, they are generally given precedence.

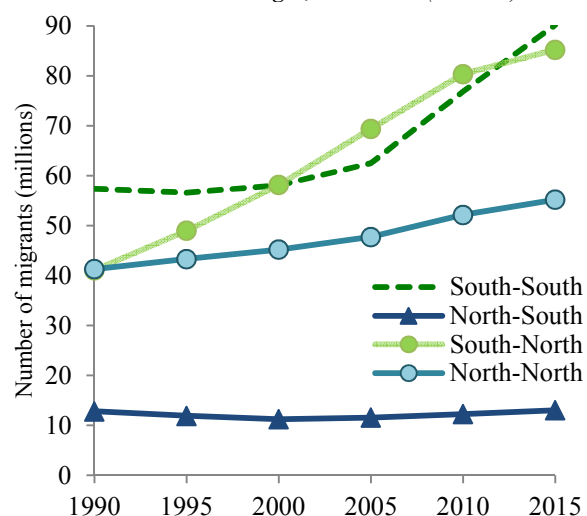
Of the 232 countries or areas in *Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2015 Revision*, data on the foreign-born were available for 188, or 81 per cent. Data on foreign citizens were used for 44 countries or areas, or 19 per cent of the total.

TABLE I.1: NUMBER AND AVERAGE ANNUAL CHANGE OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRANT STOCK BY DEVELOPMENT GROUP AND MAJOR AREA, 1990-2015

	International migrant stock (millions)				Average annual change in migrant stock (millions)			
	1990	2000	2010	2015	1990-2000	2000-2010	2010-2015	1990-2015
World	152.6	172.7	221.7	243.7	2.0	4.9	4.4	3.6
Developed regions	82.4	103.4	132.6	140.5	2.1	2.9	1.6	2.3
Developing regions	70.2	69.3	89.2	103.2	-0.1	2.0	2.8	1.3
Africa	15.7	14.8	16.8	20.6	-0.1	0.2	0.8	0.2
Asia	48.1	49.3	65.9	75.1	0.1	1.7	1.8	1.1
Europe	49.2	56.3	72.4	76.1	0.7	1.6	0.8	1.1
LAC	7.2	6.6	8.2	9.2	-0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1
NA	27.6	40.4	51.2	54.5	1.3	1.1	0.7	1.1
Oceania	4.7	5.4	7.1	8.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015).

Note: LAC refers to Latin America and the Caribbean, while NA refers to Northern America.

**Figure I.1: Numbers of international migrants by development group of the countries or areas of destination and origin, 1990-2015 (millions)**

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015).

By contrast, in the developing countries, the growth of the migrant population resulted mainly from an increase in the number of migrants from the South. Between 1990 and 2015, the migrant population originating from the South and living in the South grew from 57 million to 90 million, a 57 per cent increase (figure I.1). Of the 33 million foreign-born persons added during this period, over 99 per cent were born in the developing regions, while less than 1 per cent originated from a country in the North.

Worldwide, international migrants accounted for a relatively small share of the total population, comprising about 3.3 per cent of the world population in 2015, compared to 2.9 per cent in 1990. In the North, international migrants constituted 11.2 per cent of the total population in 2015 compared to 1.7 per cent in the developing regions. Between 1990 and 2015, international migrants as a share of the total population grew in the North but changed very little in the South.

## B. INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS BY MAJOR AREA

Europe and Asia combined hosted nearly two thirds of all international migrants worldwide in 2015, with 76 million international migrants living in Europe and 75 million in Asia. Northern America hosted the third largest number of international migrants in 2013 (54 million), followed by Africa (21 million), Latin America and the Caribbean (9 million), and Oceania (8 million) (table I.1).

Between 1990 and 2015, Asia, Europe and Northern America recorded the largest gains in the number of international migrants, adding roughly 27 million migrants each, equal to nearly 1.1 million additional migrants per year (figure I.2). Of the 27 million international migrants added in Asia during this period, 24 million, or 90 per cent, were born in other countries of Asia. For Europe and Northern America the pattern was more

TABLE I.2: NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS BY DEVELOPMENT GROUP AND MAJOR AREA OF DESTINATION AND ORIGIN, 2015 (millions)

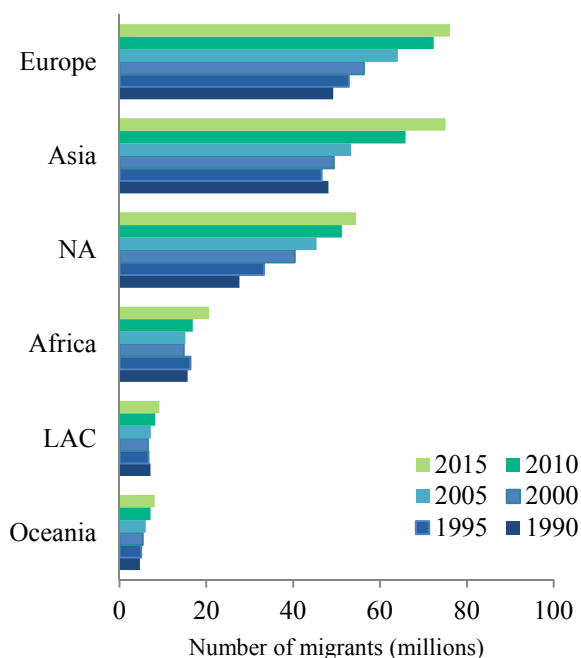
Destination	Origin		Origin							World
	Developed regions	Developing regions	Africa	Asia	Europe	LAC	NA	Oceania	Other	
Developed regions	55.2	85.3	12.0	40.3	50.4	29.7	2.5	1.6	4.1	140.5
Developing regions	13.0	90.2	20.6	59.5	9.2	6.1	1.9	0.2	5.7	103.2
Africa	1.4	19.2	16.4	1.2	1.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	1.9	20.6
Asia	8.8	66.3	4.1	59.4	6.9	0.4	0.5	0.1	3.6	75.1
Europe	42.0	34.2	9.2	20.2	39.9	4.6	1.0	0.4	0.8	76.1
LAC	2.8	6.4	0.1	0.3	1.3	5.9	1.3	0.0	0.3	9.2
NA	9.2	45.2	2.3	15.5	7.5	24.6	1.2	0.3	3.1	54.5
Oceania	4.0	4.1	0.5	3.0	3.0	0.2	0.2	1.1	0.1	8.1
World	68.2	175.5	32.6	99.8	59.6	35.8	4.3	1.8	9.8	243.7

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015).

Note: LAC refers to Latin America and the Caribbean, while NA refers to Northern America.

diversified. Of the 27 million international migrants gained by Europe during this period, 45 per cent were born in Europe, 25 per cent in Asia, nearly 18 per cent in Africa and 13 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean. For Northern America, nearly 15 million, or 54 per cent of the 27 million migrants gained between 1990 and 2015, were born in Latin America and the Caribbean, while 9 million, or 35 per cent, originated from Asia and nearly 2 million, or 6 per cent, from Africa.

**Figure I.2. Number of international migrants by major area of destination, 1990-2015 (millions)**



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015).

Note: LAC refers to Latin America and the Caribbean, while NA refers to Northern America.

While all three major areas — Asia, Europe and Northern America — experienced a large growth in the number of international migrants between 1990 and 2015, after 2000 Asia added more international migrants than any other major area (figure I.3). Asia gained an average of 1.7 million international migrants per annum between 2000 and 2010 and 1.8 million per annum between 2010 and 2015, the largest gain amongst all major areas. Europe added the second largest number of international migrants between 2000 and 2015, with an average of 1.6 million migrants

added per annum from 2000 to 2010 and nearly 0.8 million from 2010 to 2015.

Northern America added the third largest number of international migrants since the year 2000; however, the number of international migrants added per year has continued to decline. Between 2010 and 2015, the average annual addition of international migrants to the population of Northern America was slightly less than half the level observed from 1990 to 2000, falling from 1.3 million to 0.7 million. Moreover, between 2010 and 2015, Northern America added only half as many international migrants as did Asia. Meanwhile, Africa, which experienced a relatively small growth in the number of international migrants between 1990 and 2010, gained roughly the same number as did Europe and Northern America from 2010 to 2015.

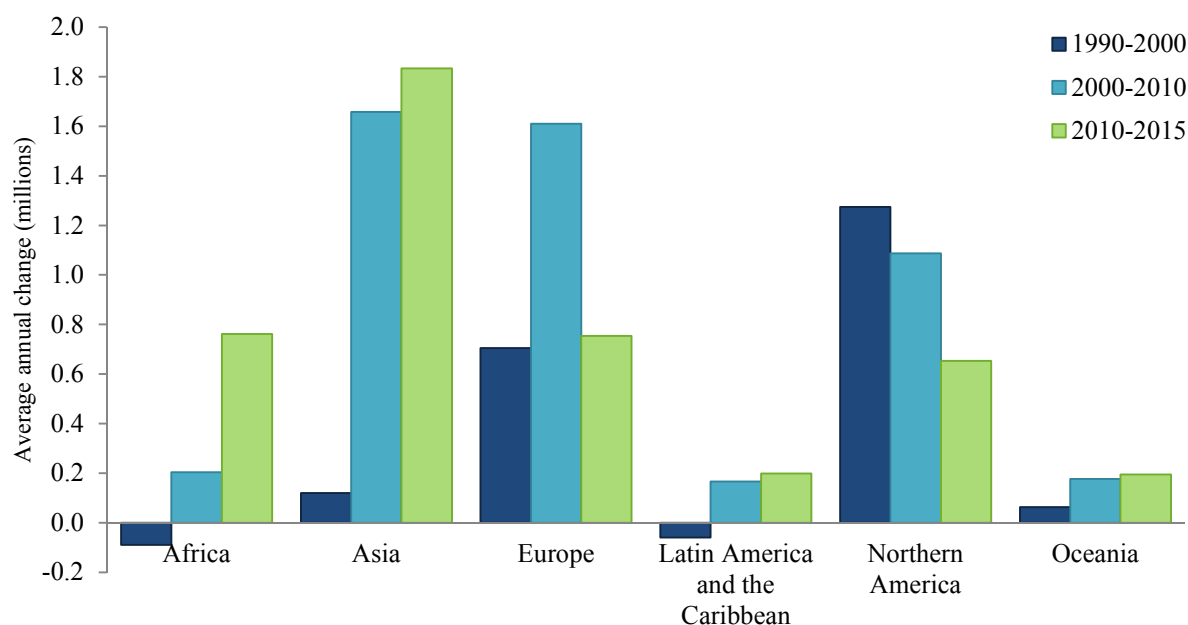
In 2015, Asia-to-Asia was the largest regional migration corridor in the world, with some 59 million international migrants born in that region residing in another country of Asia. From 2000 to 2010, the Asia-to-Asia corridor grew by an average of 1.5 million international migrants per year, a figure that increased to 1.6 million between 2010 and 2015 (figure I.4). Europe-to-Europe was the second largest regional corridor in 2015, with nearly 40 million international migrants born in Europe living in another country of Europe. However, between 2010 and 2015, the intensity of migration along this regional corridor declined, as the average annual increase in the Europe-to-Europe migrant stock fell to 0.4 million compared to 0.7 million between 2000 and 2010.

The corridor from Latin America and the Caribbean to Northern America was the third largest in 2015, with nearly 25 million international migrants. However, the number of international migrants added annually via this corridor declined steadily, falling from an average of 0.8 million between 1990 and 2000 to 0.3 million between 2010 and 2015. The latter period marked the first time that more migrants were added to the population of Northern America coming from Asia than from Latin America and the Caribbean. The Asia-to-Europe corridor was the fourth largest in 2015, with 20 million international migrants from Asia residing in

Europe; it also recorded a decline in the average number of migrants added per year from 2010 to 2015 compared to the period between 2000 and 2010. The Africa-to-Africa corridor, with 16 million international migrants in 2015,

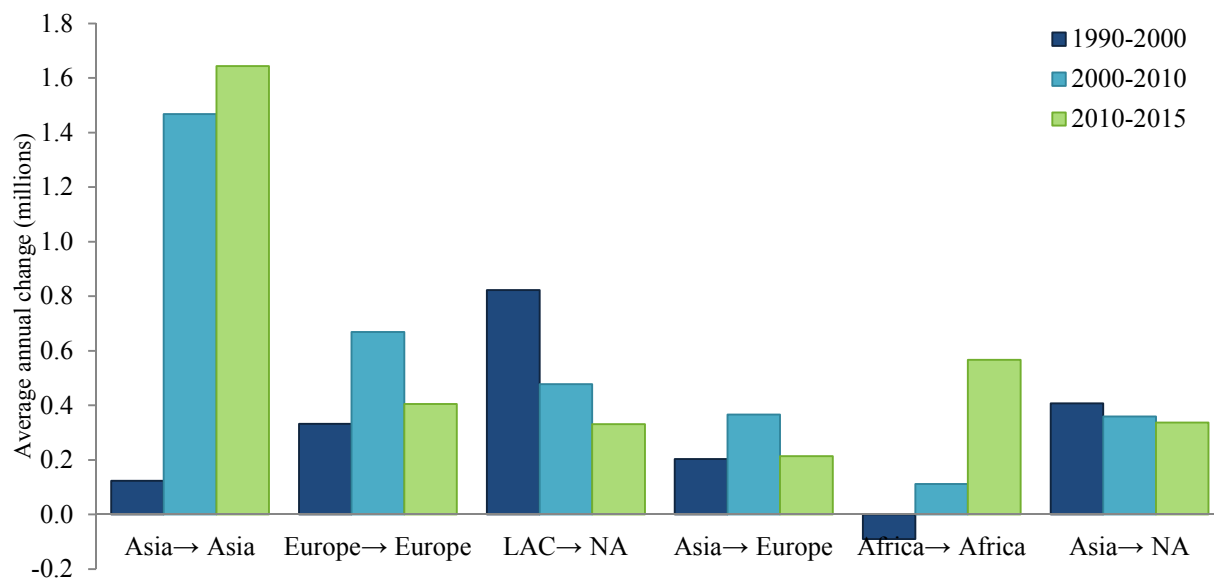
represented the fifth largest in the world; between 2010 and 2015, it gained a larger number of migrants than any other regional corridor with the exception of the Asia-to-Asia corridor.

**Figure I.3. Average annual change in the number of international migrants by major area of destination, 1990-2015 (millions)**



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015).

**Figure I.4. Average annual change in the number of international migrants along the six largest regional migration corridors, 1990-2015 (millions)**



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015).

Note: LAC refers to Latin America and the Caribbean, while NA refers to Northern America.

Between 1990 and 2015, the share of international migrants in the total population grew rapidly in Europe, Northern America and Oceania, while it remained relatively small in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. Oceania, the major area with the highest share of migrants as a component of the total population, saw this figure climb from 17.5 per cent in 1990 to 20.6 per cent in 2015. In Northern America, the proportion of international migrants reached 15.2 per cent of the total population in 2015, up from 9.8 per cent in 1990, while in Europe it rose from 6.8 per cent in 1990 to 10.3 per cent in 2015.

In 2015, Latin America and the Caribbean had the lowest proportion of international migrants in the total population (1.5 per cent), followed by Asia and Africa (1.7 per cent each). Both Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean experienced a decline in the share of international migrants in the total population between 1990 and 2015, implying that the overall population increased more rapidly in those major areas than the total migrant stock.

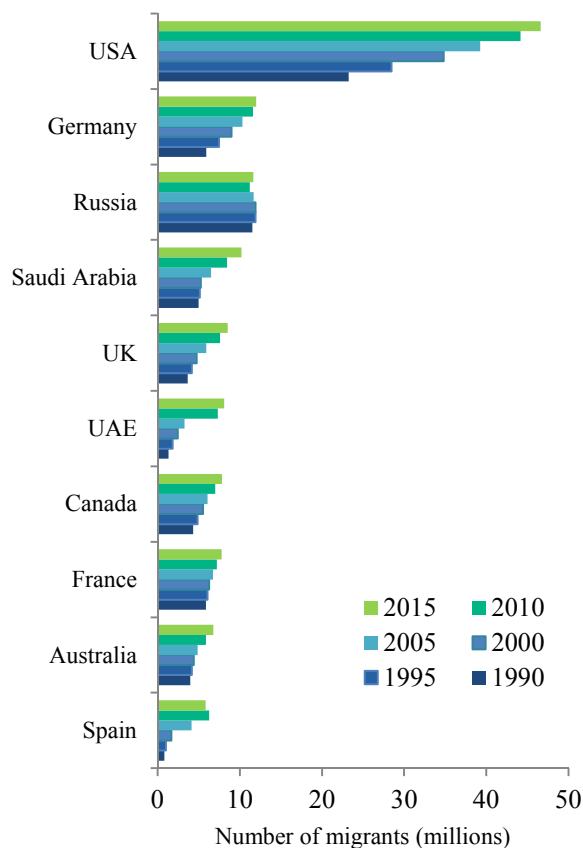
### C. INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS BY COUNTRY OR AREA

In 2015, over 51 per cent of all international migrants in the world were living in ten countries. The largest number resided in the United States of America, which hosted 47 million migrants in 2015, or 19 per cent of the world's total (figure I.5). Germany and the Russian Federation hosted the second and third largest numbers (12 million each), followed by Saudi Arabia (10 million), the United Kingdom (nearly 9 million) and the United Arab Emirates (8 million).

Between 1990 and 2015, the size of the international migrant stock grew in 169 countries or areas, while it declined in 63 others. The United States of America experienced the largest increase of the migrant stock between 1990 and 2015, adding a total of 23 million migrants, equal to 0.9 million additional migrants per annum. The United Arab Emirates recorded the second largest gain during this period (7 million), followed by Germany (6 million), and Saudi Arabia and Spain (5 million each). Most countries with the largest

gains in the migrant stock between 1990 and 2015 witnessed a deceleration in the annual growth rate of the migrant population between 2010 and 2015 compared to the period from 2000 to 2010.

**Figure I.5. Ten countries hosting the largest number of international migrants in 2015, 1990-2015 (millions)**

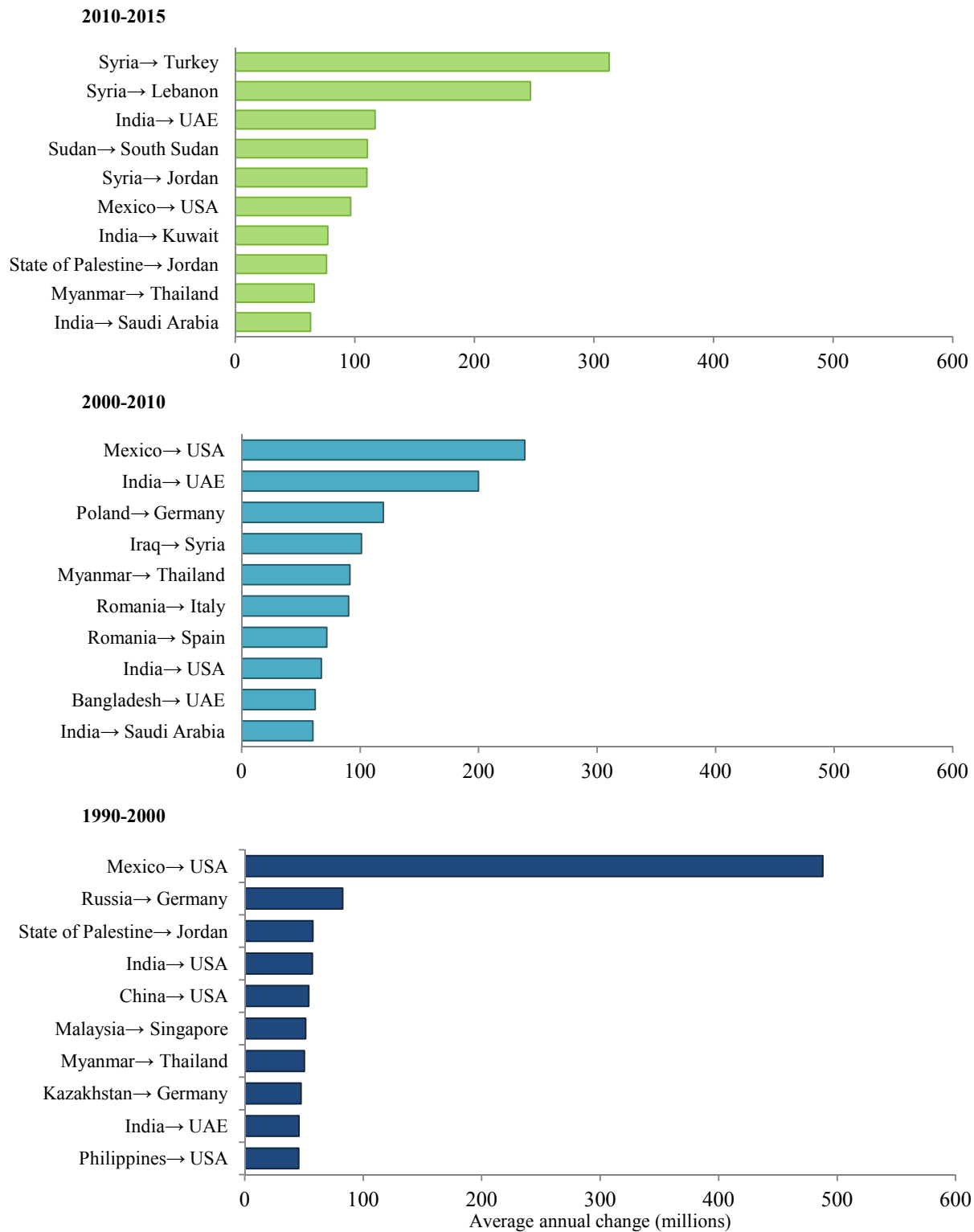


Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015).

Note: Russia refers to the Russian Federation, UAE refers to United Arab Emirates, UK refers to the United Kingdom of Britain and Northern Ireland and USA refers to the United States of America.

Bilateral migration corridors shifted significantly between 1990 and 2015. Between 1990 and 2000, six of the ten bilateral corridors with the largest average annual increase in the number of international migrants had a country in the North as destination. The United States of America was the destination of four of the top ten bilateral migration corridors during this period, with large numbers of international migrants originating from Mexico, India, China and the Philippines. Mexico-to-USA was the largest

**Figure I.6. Ten bilateral migration corridors with the largest average annual change in the number of international migrants, 1990-2015 (thousands)**



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015).

Note: Russia refers to the Russian Federation, Syria refers to the Syrian Arab Republic, UAE refers to United Arab Emirates, UK refers to the United Kingdom of Britain and Northern Ireland and USA refers to the United States of America.

bilateral migration corridor in the world, with an annual average of nearly 500,000 migrants born in Mexico being added to the population of the United States of America from 1990 to 2000 (figure I.6).

Two of the top ten bilateral migration corridors between 1990 and 2000 had Germany as the destination, while four corridors were between countries or areas of Asia, namely between India and the United Arab Emirates, between Malaysia and Singapore, between Myanmar and Thailand, and between the State of Palestine and Jordan. The latter included a large number of refugees falling under the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

During the period from 2000 to 2010, the top ten bilateral migration corridors were equally split between those having a country in the South or a country in the North as the destination. Mexico-USA continued to be the corridor with the largest gain — on average, around 240,000 additional migrants per year — though at much lower levels than during the preceding decade. Between 2000 and 2010, some countries of Southern Europe, namely Italy and Spain, became major destinations of international migrants originating from countries of Eastern Europe, in particular from Romania. In addition, three of the top ten corridors were between a country of Southern Asia and an oil-producing country of Western Asia: Bangladesh-UAE, India-Saudi Arabia, and India-UAE. Refugees displaced by the war in Iraq also accounted for large numbers of the migrants added in Western Asia between 2000 and 2010.

By the period from 2010 to 2015, migration patterns had changed significantly: only one of the largest migration corridors in the world had a country in the North as the destination, namely Mexico-USA. The other nine corridors had a country in the South as the destination. Eight of these were between countries in Asia, while one was between countries in Africa, namely from Sudan to South Sudan. As in the period from 2000 to 2010, several of the destinations that recorded the largest increase in the number of international migrants were oil-producing countries in Western Asia. In addition, the

conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic led to a large increase in the number of refugees living in neighbouring countries, in particular Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey.

In 2015, international migrants accounted for at least a quarter of the population in 43 countries or areas. These included small island states in the Caribbean, Micronesia or Polynesia as well countries in Western Asia. By contrast, in many countries of Africa, Eastern Asia, South America and Southern Asia, migrants accounted for less than 5 per cent of the total population.

#### D. INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS BY SEX

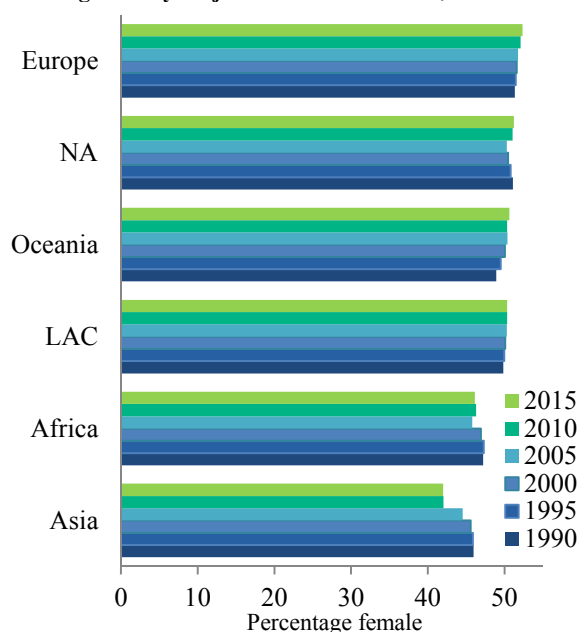
In 2015, women comprised 48.2 per cent of all international migrants worldwide. Yet there were considerable differences in this percentage across regions. In the North, women constituted 51.9 per cent of all migrants in 2015, while in the South they accounted for 43.3 per cent. The percentage of women among all migrants declined from 46.4 in 1990 to 43.3 in 2015 in the developing regions. In the North, however, the share of women amongst international migrants increased slightly, from 51.1 to 51.9 per cent during the same period.

The decline in the percentage of women among migrants in the South was primarily the result of a rapid increase in the number of male migrants in Asia between 2000 and 2015. During this period, the increase in the number of male migrants in Asia (62 per cent) far exceeded the increase the number of female migrants (40 per cent). The increase in the number of male migrants in Asia was fuelled by the strong demand for migrant workers in the oil-producing countries of Western Asia.

Major areas with well-established histories of immigration have hosted the highest percentages of female migrants. In 2015, the percentage female among all migrants was highest in Europe (52.4 per cent), followed by Northern America (51.2 per cent). The higher proportion of women in these major areas was mainly the outcome of the aging process, whereby migrants who had arrived decades earlier were remaining to grow

older in the host country, combined with the fact that women, including female migrants, tend to have longer life expectancies compared to their male counterparts. By contrast, male migrants significantly outnumbered female migrants in Asia (58 per cent) and Africa (53.9 per cent), where migration was typically of shorter duration (figure I.7).

**Figure I.7. Percentage of women among all international migrants by major area of destination, 1990-2015**



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015).

Note: LAC refers to Latin America and the Caribbean, while NA refers to Northern America.

Between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of women among all international migrants declined in Asia and, to a lesser extent, in Africa. In Asia the percentage of female migrants fell from 46 per cent in 1990 to 42 per cent in 2015. By contrast, in Europe and Oceania, the share of women amongst all migrants rose. This increase was primarily due to the ageing of the migrant population residing in those areas.

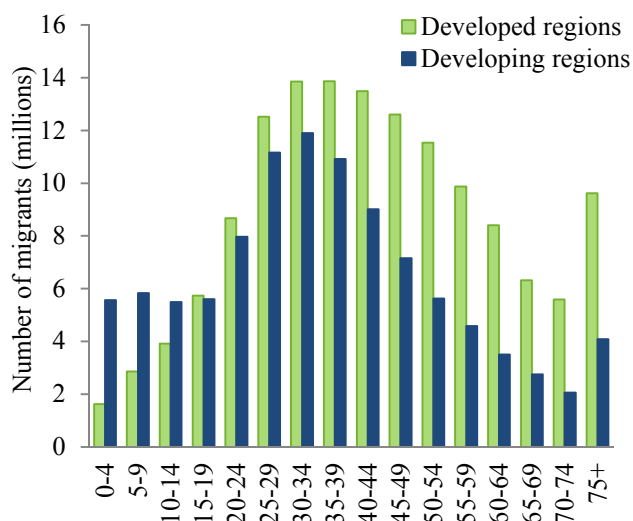
In 2015, women constituted more than half of all international migrants in 101 countries or areas. Estonia, Latvia, Poland and the Republic of Moldova were among the countries with the highest shares. In 11 countries, all of them located in Africa or Asia, women accounted for

less than a third of all international migrants. Bangladesh, Oman and Qatar were among the countries with the lowest proportions of female migrants in 2015.

#### E. INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS BY AGE AND SEX

In 2015, nearly three quarters of all international migrants were between the ages of 20 and 64 (figure I.8). Of the 177 million international migrants of working age, the majority (59 per cent) resided in the developed regions. This distribution had changed little since the year 1990, when 57 per cent of working-age migrants resided in the North. Amongst migrants of working age, women represented a larger share of migrants in the developed regions than in the developing regions — 51 per cent versus 41 per cent, respectively, in 2015.

**Figure I.8. Number of international migrants by age and by development group of the country or area of destination, 2015 (millions)**



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015).

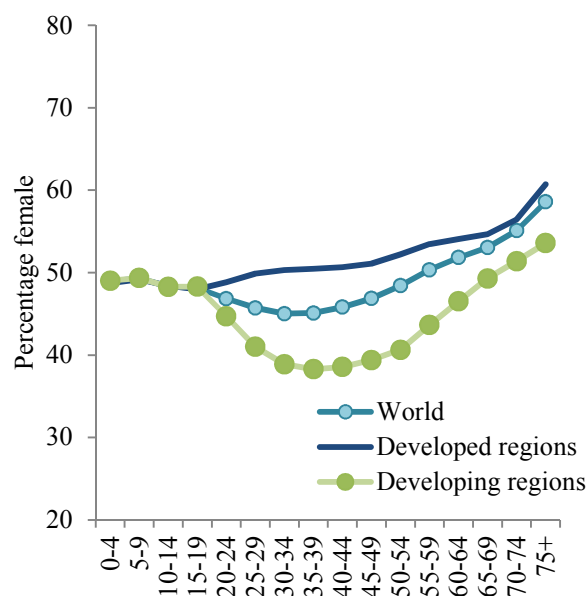
While the North hosted the largest number of working-age migrants in 2015, the number of migrants in the working ages grew faster in the South than in the North between 2000 and 2015. In the South, the number of migrants of working age increased from 46 million in 2000 to 72 million in 2015, a 57 per cent increase, compared



to the North, where it rose from 77 to 105 million, a 36 per cent increase, over the same time period. Women accounted for around half of the increase in the North (53 per cent) compared to roughly a third of the increase in the South (35 per cent).

Globally, 15 per cent of all international migrants were under the age of 20 in 2015. The proportion of young migrants was significantly higher in the developing regions (22 per cent) than in the developed regions (less than 10 per cent). There were about three times as many migrants under 5 years of age living in the South as in the North. Between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of young persons amongst all migrants worldwide declined. The proportion of those under age 20 declined from 20 per cent in 1990 to 17 per cent in 2000, and then further to 15 per cent in 2015.

**Figure I.9. Percentage female among all international migrants by age and development group of the country or area of destination, 2015**



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015).

Globally, there were 30 million international migrants aged 65 or over in 2015. The majority of older migrants lived in the developed regions, with nearly 2.5 times as many migrants aged 65 or above living in the North as in the South (figure I.8). Between 1990 and 2015, the number of international migrants in this age range grew

significantly in the North but changed only slightly in the South. The North experienced an increase of more than 10 million migrants aged 65 or over from 1990 to 2015. During the same period, the number of older migrants in the global South increased by around 1 million. The fact that many developed countries had long been the destination of international migrants, combined with the greater propensity among migrants living in the developing world to return to their countries of origin, helps to explain the rising numbers of older migrants residing in the developed regions compared to the developing regions.

Globally, the proportion of older migrants was higher for women (15 per cent) than for men (11 per cent). In 2015, 56 per cent of international migrants aged 65 or over were women. In the developed regions, 58 per cent of all migrants aged 65 or over were women, compared to 52 per cent in the developing regions.

#### NOTES

<sup>i</sup> The estimates of the migrant stock were prepared by the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. The data presented here refer to the international migrant stock defined as a mid-year estimate of the number of people living in a country or area other than the one in which they were born or, in the absence of such data, the number of people of foreign citizenship. Most statistics used to estimate the international migrant stock were obtained from population censuses, population registers and nationally representative household surveys. The following should be cited when referring to the data in this report: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2015 Revision (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2015). See: [www.unmigration.org](http://www.unmigration.org).

<sup>ii</sup> The global North refers to countries or regions typically classified as “developed”, while the global South refers to those classified as “developing”. The developed regions include Europe and Northern America plus Australia, New Zealand and Japan; the developing regions include the remainder of the world. The use of these terms does not imply any judgment about the current developmental stage of a particular country or area. See Explanatory Notes for additional information.

< this page intentionally left blank >

## II. NET INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

### A. GLOBAL TRENDS

From 1950 to 2015, the developed regions gained population due to positive net migration while the developing regions lost population as a result of negative net migration. Between 1950 and 2010, the magnitude of the net inflow of migrants to the developed regions increased steadily, reaching an average of 3.2 million per year between 2000 and 2010, up from less than 0.3 million per annum from 1950 to 1970. After 2010, however, the size of the net inflow of persons to the developed regions declined for the first time in five decades, falling to 2.3 million per year between 2010 and 2015.

#### Box II.1. Net migration: Definition and related terminology

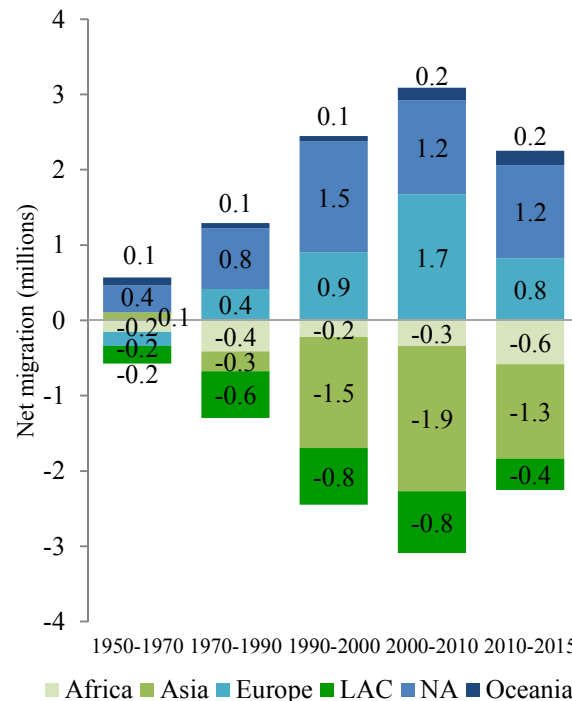
*Net migration*, for a given country and time period, refers to the difference between the number of immigrants and the number of emigrants. If more people immigrate than emigrate, the country gains population due to *positive net migration*, or *net immigration*; when more people emigrate than immigrate, the country loses population through *negative net migration*, or *net emigration*.

The data on net migration presented here do not include information on the country or region of origin or destination. For regions or groups of countries, the level of net migration reflects only movements from or to countries located outside the region or group. For the world as a whole, the level of net migration is zero.

Much of the recent decline in the net inflow of migrants to the developed regions was due to a reduction in net migration to Europe, which declined by over half, falling from 1.7 million per annum between 2000 and 2010 to 0.8 million between 2010 and 2015 (figure II.1). The level of net migration to Northern America and to Oceania was stable between 2000 and 2015.

Both Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean have experienced a recent decline in the net outflow of migrants. For Asia as a whole, annual net emigration fell from 1.9 million between 2000 and 2010 to 1.3 million between 2010 and 2015, while net emigration from Latin America and the Caribbean dropped by half, from 0.8 to 0.4 million per annum. Conversely, the net outflow from Africa increased from 0.3 million per annum between 2000 and 2010 to 0.6 million between 2010 and 2015.

Figure II.1. Average annual net migration by major area, from 1950-1970 to 2010-2015 (millions)



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015). *World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision, DVD Edition*.

Note: LAC refers to Latin America and the Caribbean, while NA refers to Northern America.

These regional trends mask substantial variations at the country level. Between 2000 and 2010, amongst the 232 countries or areas comprising the total population of the world, 95 gained population from net immigration while 134 lost population due to net emigration. By

TABLE II.1: NUMBER OF COUNTRIES OR AREAS WITH POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE NET MIGRATION DURING 2000-2010 AND 2010-2015, AND THOSE WITH A CHANGE IN THE DIRECTION OF NET MIGRATION BETWEEN 2000-2010 AND 2010-2015, BY DEVELOPMENT GROUP AND MAJOR AREA

Development group and major area	Number of countries or areas with:					
	Positive net migration (Net immigration)		Negative net migration (Net emigration)		Change in the direction of net migration between 2000-2010 and 2010-2015	
	2000-2010	2010-2015	2000-2010	2010-2015	From positive to negative	From negative to positive
World.....	95	89	134	137	15	8
Developed regions.....	41	33	15	23	8	—
Developing regions.....	54	56	119	114	7	8
Africa.....	16	11	42	46	7	2
Asia.....	21	23	28	26	—	2
Europe.....	36	28	12	20	8	—
Latin America and the Caribbean.....	16	19	31	28	—	2
Northern America.....	2	2	3	3	—	—
Oceania.....	4	6	18	14	—	2

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015). *World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision, DVD Edition*.

Note: Countries or areas estimated to have zero net migration in 2000-2010 or 2010-2015 were excluded from these tabulations.

the period from 2010 to 2015, the number of countries or areas gaining population due to positive net migration had fallen to 89, while the number of countries or areas losing population due to negative net migration had risen to 137 (table II.1).

In the developed regions, the majority of countries or areas experienced positive net migration. However, that number decreased from 41 between 2000 and 2010 to 33 in the period from 2010 to 2015. In the developing regions, while the majority of countries or areas experienced negative net migration in both time intervals, the number doing so declined from 119 between 2000 and 2010 to 114 in the period from 2010 to 2015, while the number of countries gaining population due to net immigration increased slightly, from 54 to 56.

Comparing the same two time periods, the number of countries recording net inflows of migrants increased in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and Oceania, decreased in Africa and Europe, and remained the same in Northern America. Among countries gaining population from positive net migration both between 2000 and 2010 and between 2010 and 2015 were the traditional countries of immigration — Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States of America — and a few countries that started to

experience increasing levels of immigration between 2000 and 2010, such as Italy and the Russian Federation. Countries in the developing regions that were recruiting migrant labourers on a large scale, such as Qatar, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates, were also amongst the countries experiencing positive net migration in both time periods.

Among the group of countries experiencing net emigration between 2000 and 2015 were traditional countries of emigration, such as Bangladesh, China, India, Mexico and the Philippines. Many of these countries had long-standing ties with traditional countries of immigration, such as Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, while others had newly established ties with countries in South-Eastern or Western Asia that were recruiting foreign workers.

Eight countries or areas, all in the developing regions, transitioned from being a net emigration country between 2000 and 2010 to being a net immigration country between 2010 and 2015. For some of these countries, such as Iraq or Turkey, the shift was due in part to an influx of refugees from neighbouring countries during the latter period.

TABLE II.2: TEN COUNTRIES WITH THE HIGHEST AND LOWEST LEVELS OF NET MIGRATION DURING 2000-2010 AND 2010-2015 (THOUSANDS OF MIGRANTS PER YEAR)

<i>A. Net immigration countries</i>				
<i>Rank</i>	<i>Country or area</i>	<i>2000-2010</i>	<i>Country or area</i>	<i>2010-2015</i>
1.	United States of America .....	1 022	United States of America .....	1 002
2.	Spain .....	508	Turkey .....	400
3.	United Arab Emirates .....	467	Lebanon .....	250
4.	Russian Federation .....	389	Germany .....	250
5.	Italy .....	263	Oman .....	242
6.	United Kingdom .....	249	Canada .....	235
7.	South Africa .....	247	Russian Federation .....	224
8.	Canada .....	226	Australia .....	205
9.	Saudi Arabia .....	176	United Kingdom .....	180
10.	Australia .....	171	South Sudan .....	173
<i>B. Net emigration countries</i>				
<i>Rank</i>	<i>Country or area</i>	<i>2000-2010</i>	<i>Country or area</i>	<i>2010-2015</i>
1.	Bangladesh .....	527	Syrian Arab Republic .....	806
2.	India .....	504	India .....	520
3.	China .....	435	Bangladesh .....	445
4.	Mexico .....	325	China .....	360
5.	Philippines .....	293	Pakistan .....	216
6.	Myanmar .....	284	Sudan .....	160
7.	Pakistan .....	219	Indonesia .....	140
8.	Indonesia .....	197	Philippines .....	140
9.	Nepal .....	195	Spain .....	119
10.	Viet Nam .....	165	Mexico .....	105

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015). *World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision, DVD Edition*.

Another 15 countries or areas worldwide transitioned from being a net immigration country between 2000 and 2010 to being a net emigration country between 2010 and 2015. These include Ireland, Portugal and Spain, countries that had emerged as major destinations for international migrants during the early 2000s but later experienced large net outflows of both natives and immigrants during the period from 2010 to 2015. Europe counted the largest number of countries or areas that transitioned from net immigration to net emigration during this period (8), followed by Africa (7).

Between 2010 and 2015, Australia, Canada, Germany, Lebanon, Turkey and the United States of America were among the countries with the highest levels of net immigration, whereas Bangladesh, India and Mexico ranked among the countries with the highest levels of net emigration (table II.2). Compared to the decade from 2000 to 2010, Italy, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia,

South Africa, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom moved down on the list of countries with the highest levels of net immigration, whereas Australia, Canada, Germany, Lebanon, Oman, South Sudan and Turkey moved up on the same list. On the list of countries with the highest levels of net emigration, Bangladesh, Mexico, Myanmar, the Philippines and Viet Nam moved down in the period from 2010 to 2015 compared to the decade from 2000 to 2010, whereas Pakistan and the Syrian Arab Republic were among the countries that moved up on that list.

#### B. CONTRIBUTION OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION TO TOTAL POPULATION CHANGE

Between 1950 and 1990, the populations of both developed and developing regions grew primarily as a result of natural increase (figure II.2). However, while in the developing regions

the net change in population size rose from 391 million between 1950 and 1960 to 800 million between 1980 and 1990, in the developed regions it fell from 102 to 63 million over the same time period.

**Box II.2. Net migration and population change**

A population grows or declines over time due to *natural increase*, the number of births minus the number of deaths, and *net migration*, the number of immigrants minus the number of emigrants. Migration affects population size by the addition of immigrants and the subtraction of emigrants. Migration can also affect the age distribution of a population and its levels of mortality and fertility.

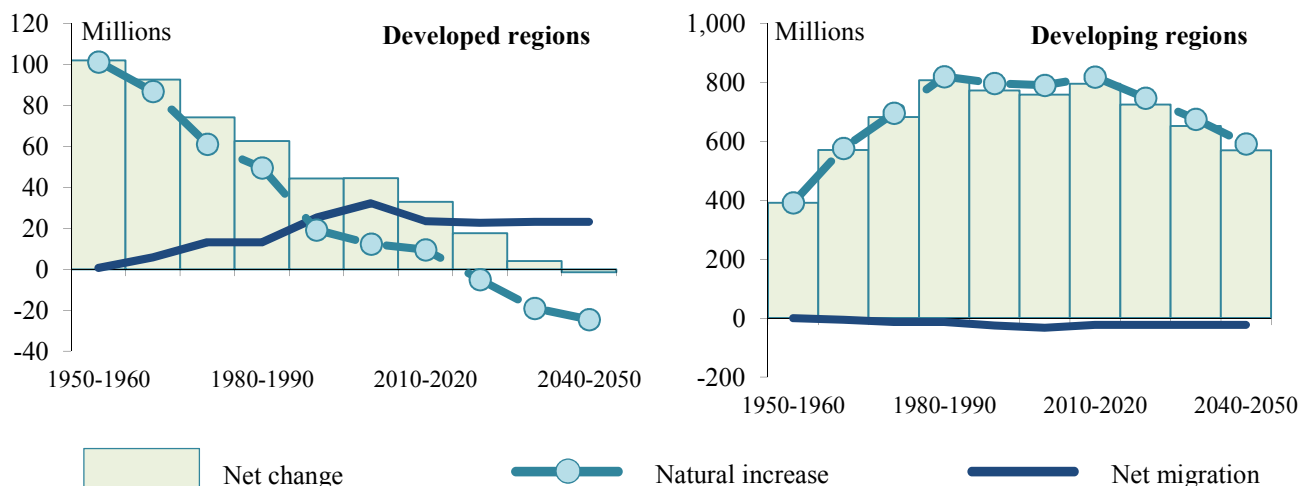
By the decade from 1990 to 2000, net migration had overtaken natural increase as the primary driver of population growth in the developed regions. Meanwhile, the population of the developing regions continued to grow due to a

surplus of births over deaths, albeit at lower rates than during the previous four decades. Moreover, the impact of net emigration on overall population change in the developing regions remained relatively small.

In the developed regions, net immigration has been the main driver of population growth since the decade from 2000 to 2010, and is expected to be the sole driver of growth in the developed regions as a whole starting in the decade from 2020 to 2030. From 2000 to 2030, population growth in the developing regions is expected to slow down due to a decline in natural increase caused by a drop in the birth rate, with net emigration continuing to play a minor role in overall population change.

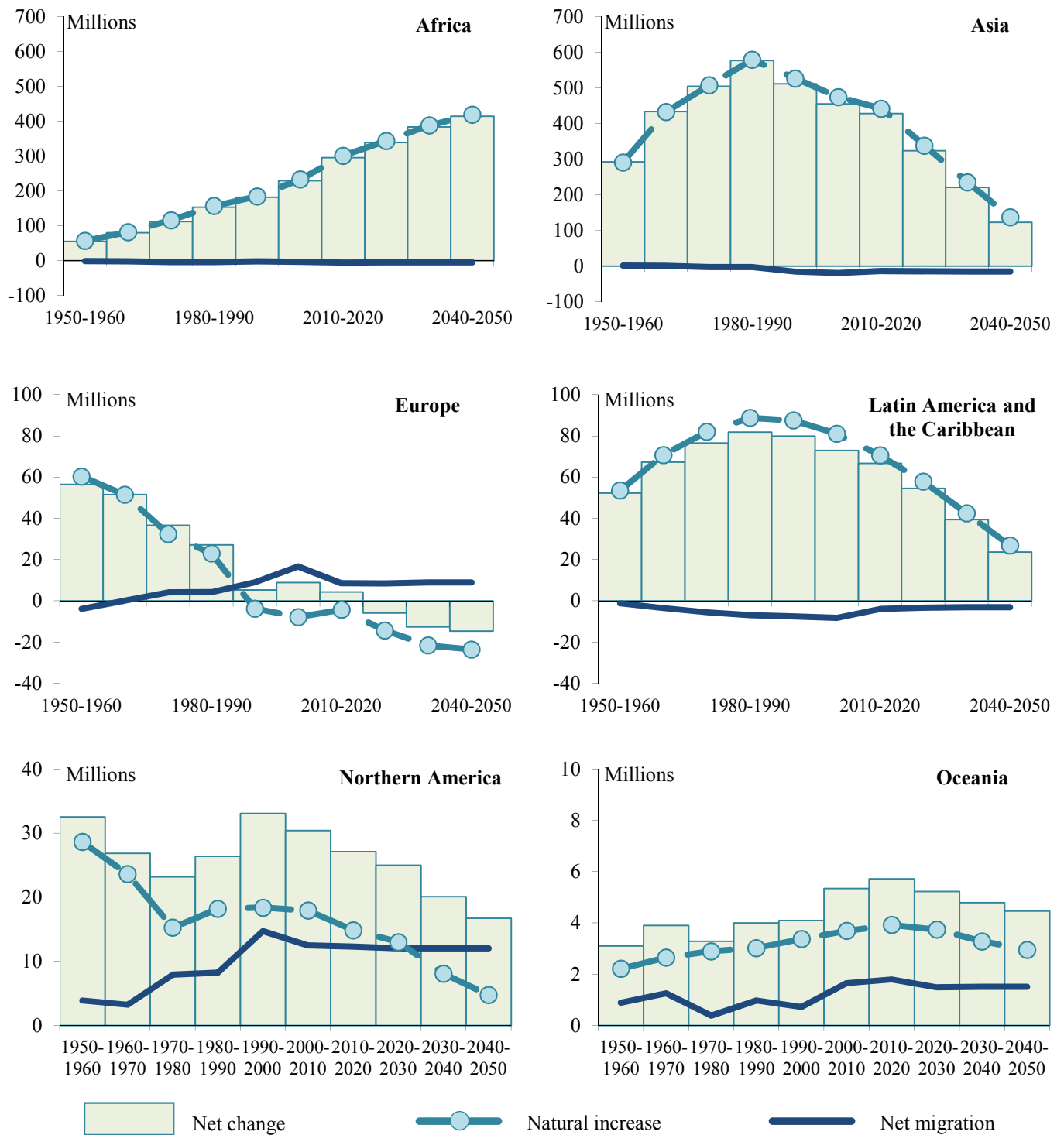
By the decade from 2040 to 2050, population growth in the developed regions is projected to be negative, with positive net migration no longer able to compensate for the excess of deaths over births. For the developing regions in this period, population growth is projected to continue due to natural increase, albeit at declining rates, with negative net migration still having a relatively small effect.

**Figure II.2. Contribution of natural increase and net migration to total population change by development group, from 1950-1960 to 2040-2050 (millions of persons per decade)**



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015). *World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision, DVD Edition*.

**Figure II.3. Contribution of natural increase and net migration to total population change by major area, from 1950-1960 to 2040-2050 (millions of persons per decade)**



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015). *World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision, DVD Edition*.

TABLE II.3: PROJECTED POPULATION IN 2050 ACCORDING TO THE MEDIUM VARIANT AND THE ZERO-NET-MIGRATION SCENARIO, BY DEVELOPMENT GROUP AND MAJOR AREA

Development group and major area	Population in 2050 (millions)		Difference between medium variant and zero-net-migration scenario (percentage)
	Medium variant	Zero-net-migration scenario	
World.....	9 725	9 725	—
Developed regions.....	1 286	1 178	-8
Developing regions.....	8 439	8 548	1
Africa.....	2 478	2 503	1
Asia.....	5 267	5 333	1
Europe.....	707	666	-6
Latin America and the Caribbean.....	784	799	2
Northern America.....	433	376	-13
Oceania.....	57	49	-13

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015). *World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision, DVD Edition*.

### Box II.3. Estimating and projecting net migration

The data used in this chapter are from the latest population estimates and projections produced by the United Nations Population Division. The estimates of net migration for each country were produced to be consistent with past trends of fertility and mortality and with changes in the size of the population and its distribution by age and sex. The projected levels of net migration were generally kept constant until 2045-2050, with the exception of circumstances such as large recent fluctuations in migration numbers, refugee flows, or temporary labour flows. Estimates refer to the period from 1950 to 2015 and projections from 2015 to 2050.

Given the volatility of international migration flows, it is impossible to project with great confidence the future levels and trends of net migration and their impact on the size and characteristics of the population. Nonetheless, a comparison based on different migration scenarios can assist in assessing the likely impact of international migration on future populations.

From 1950 to 2010, the populations of Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean grew due to natural increase, although at differing rates (figure II.3). In these three regions, negative net migration was more than offset by natural increase, which will remain the major driver of future population trends in these major areas over the next several decades.

In Europe and Northern America, and to a lesser extent Oceania, positive net migration has become an increasingly important component of population growth. Starting in the period between 1990 and 2000, the number of deaths has exceeded the number of births in Europe but has been offset by positive net migration, a situation that is projected to continue until around 2020. After 2020, the surplus of deaths over births is projected to be large enough for Europe to experience a reduction in population size, despite continued positive net migration. Starting in the decade from 2030 to 2040, net migration is projected to overtake natural increase as the main driver of population growth in Northern America. For Oceania, although natural increase will remain the dominant component of population growth, the contribution of net migration as a component of total growth is expected to increase over the next several decades.

Comparing the projected size of the population in 2050 based on the medium variant and the zero-net-migration scenario provides some insight into the relative impact of



international migration on population change during the period from 2015 to 2050 (table II.3). Under the zero-net-migration scenario, the developed regions would have a population size in 2050 that is about 8 per cent smaller than they would have had if current migration trends continued. In contrast, with the same assumption, the developing regions are projected to record a population size in 2050 that is about one per cent larger than what is currently projected.

The zero-net-migration scenario would have the greatest impact on population change in Northern America and Oceania. In both regions, without positive net migration, the total population would be 13 per cent smaller by 2050. In Europe, the difference in total population size between the medium variant and the zero-net-migration scenario would be just six per cent in 2050. For Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, the difference in the population size projected for 2050 between the medium variant and the zero-net-migration scenario is two per cent or less.

### C. IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION ON THE AGE STRUCTURE OF THE POPULATION

Because international migrants tend to comprise larger proportions of working-age persons compared to the overall population,

positive net migration can contribute to reducing the old-age dependency ratio. The old-age dependency ratio, commonly used to assess the demographic component of potential changes in the costs of social and economic support for older persons, is calculated by dividing the size of the population aged 65 years or older by that of the working-age population, aged 15 to 64. In general, the higher this ratio, the more dependent persons each potential worker needs to support. Table II.4 presents old-age dependency ratios based on the projected size of the population according to the medium variant and the zero-net-migration scenario.

Based on the medium variant, the old-age dependency ratio in the developed regions is projected to increase from 27 to 46. In other words, for every 100 working-age adults, there were 27 older persons in 2015, and this number is projected to grow to 46 older persons in 2050, an increase of 71 per cent. Assuming zero net migration over this interval, the old-age dependency ratio in the developed regions is projected to increase further to 50 persons aged 65 or over per 100 working-age adults in 2050, an 87 per cent rise compared to 2015.

In Asia, based on the medium variant, there are projected to be 28 older persons for every 100 persons of working age in 2050, compared to 11 older persons in 2015, an increase of 157 per cent.

TABLE II.4: OLD-AGE DEPENDENCY RATIO AS ESTIMATED IN 2015 AND PROJECTED IN 2050 ACCORDING TO THE MEDIUM VARIANT AND THE ZERO-NET-MIGRATION SCENARIO, BY DEVELOPMENT GROUP AND MAJOR AREA

Development group and major area	Old-age dependency ratio in 2015	Old-age dependency ratio in 2050		Change between 2015 and 2050	
		Medium variant	Zero-net-migration scenario	Based on medium variant (percentage)	Based on zero-net-migration scenario (percentage)
World.....	13	26	26	103	103
Developed regions.....	27	46	50	71	87
Developing regions.....	10	23	23	135	134
Africa.....	6	10	9	51	50
Asia.....	11	28	28	157	156
Europe.....	26	48	51	83	94
Latin America and the Caribbean.....	11	31	30	170	166
Northern America.....	22	38	43	68	91
Oceania.....	18	30	34	60	82

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015). *World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision, DVD Edition*.

Likewise, during the period from 2015 to 2050, old-age dependency ratios are projected to increase from 26 to 48 in Europe (83 per cent increase), from 22 to 38 in Northern America (68 per cent), from 11 to 31 in Latin America and the Caribbean (170 per cent), and from 18 to 30 in Oceania (60 per cent). Only Africa is projected to have an old-age dependency ratio below 10 older persons for every 100 persons of working age by 2050, with the ratio nevertheless increasing by about 50 per cent between 2015 and 2050.

In sum, while international migration is expected to have a noticeable impact on

dependency ratios, it is unlikely to reverse the long-term trend toward population ageing. Even assuming a continuation of current migration patterns, as in the medium variant, all major areas are projected to have significantly higher old-age dependency ratios in 2050 than in 2015. In many parts of the world, the old-age dependency ratio would be even higher in the absence of net migration. For example, assuming zero net migration from 2015 onward, it is projected that the old-age dependency ratio in 2050 would be 51 (zero net migration) rather than 48 (medium variant) in Europe, 43 instead of 38 in Northern America and 34 in place of 30 in Oceania.

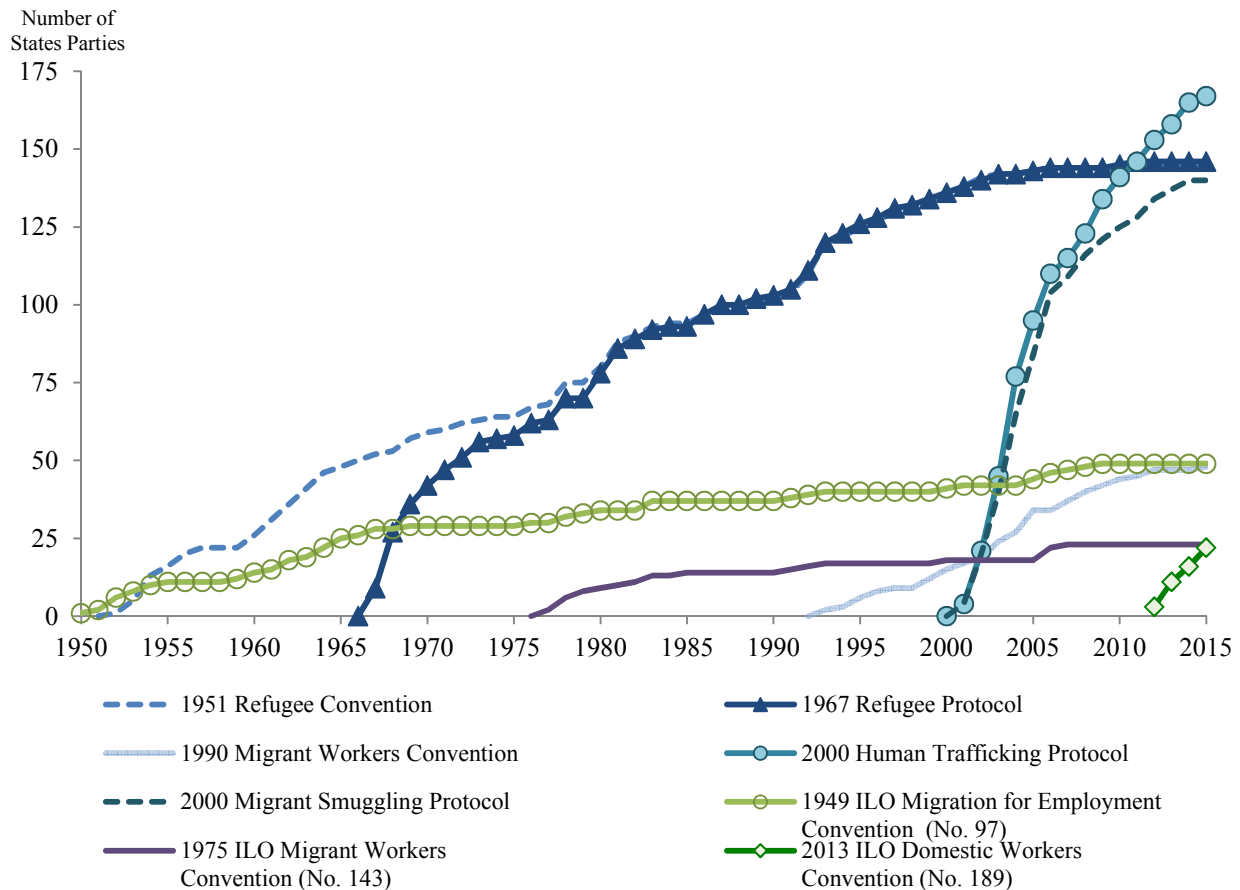
### III. LEGAL INSTRUMENTS ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

The international normative framework on international migration includes instruments pertaining to the human rights of all migrants, the rights of migrant workers and the protection of refugees, as well as instruments designed to combat migrant smuggling and human trafficking. These instruments have been ratified in varying degrees by Member States. As of 6 October 2015, instruments designed to protect refugees or to combat migrant smuggling and human trafficking had been ratified by more than three quarters of Member States, whereas instruments protecting the rights of migrant workers had been ratified by at most one quarter of all Member States (figure III.1).

#### A. REFUGEES

The 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol, both relating to the Status of Refugees, are the central elements in the international regime of refugee protection. The 1951 Convention defined the term “refugee”,<sup>i</sup> enumerated the rights of refugees and established the legal obligation of States to protect refugees. The Convention prohibited the expulsion or forcible return of persons accorded refugee status: no refugee should be returned in any manner to a country or territory in which his or her life or freedom would be threatened—principle of “non-refoulement”.

**Figure III.1. Status of ratification of legal instruments related to international migration, 1950-2015**



Sources: United Nations Treaty Collection; see <http://treaties.un.org> (as of 6 October 2015) and NORMLEX Information System on International Labour Standards; see <http://www.ilo.org/> (as of 6 October 2015).

Note: Does not include ratifications by the European Union.

TABLE III.1: STATUS OF RATIFICATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEGAL INSTRUMENTS RELATED TO INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

<i>Instrument</i>	<i>Year of entry into force</i>	<i>Parties to international instruments</i>	
		<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage<sup>1</sup></i>
<b><i>Refugees</i></b>			
1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees <sup>2</sup> .....	1954	145	74
1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees <sup>2</sup> .....	1967	146	75
<b><i>Migrant workers</i></b>			
1949 ILO Convention concerning Migration for Employment (Revised 1949) (No. 97) .....	1952	49	26
1975 ILO Convention concerning Migrations in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) (No. 143).....	1978	23	12
1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.....	2003	48	25
2011 ILO Convention concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers (No. 189).....	2013	22	12
<b><i>Smuggling and trafficking</i></b>			
2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children <sup>2</sup> .....	2003	167	86
2000 Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air <sup>2</sup> .....	2004	140	72

*Sources:* United Nations Treaty Collection; see <http://treaties.un.org> (as of 6 October 2015) and NORMLEX Information System on International Labour Standards; see <http://www.ilo.org/> (as of 6 October 2015).

*Notes:*

<sup>1</sup> Of 186 Member States of the International Labour Organization, or of 193 Member States of the United Nations plus 2 non-member observer States.

<sup>2</sup> Does not include ratifications by the European Union.

The 1967 Protocol extended the application of the 1951 Convention to persons who became refugees after 1 January 1951, without any geographic limitation. By October 2015, the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol had been ratified by 145 and 146 United Nations Member States, respectively, with 143 States Parties having acceded to both instruments. The 148 States that had ratified either the 1951 Convention or the 1967 Protocol hosted, collectively, 9.6 million refugees in 2015, or slightly less than half of the global refugee population.

## B. MIGRANT WORKERS

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has adopted three legally-binding instruments that are directly relevant for the protection of migrant workers: the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949

(No. 97), the Convention concerning Migrations in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions), 1975 (No. 143), and the Convention concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers, 2011 (No. 189).<sup>ii</sup> All three instruments have complementary non-binding recommendations.

The 1949 Convention (No. 97) covers recruitment and promotes standards regarding the working conditions of migrant workers. It established the principle of equal treatment of migrant workers and nationals with regard to laws, regulations and administrative practices concerning living and working conditions, remuneration, social security, employment taxes and access to justice.

The 1975 Convention (No. 143) was the first multilateral attempt to address irregular migration and to call for sanctions against

traffickers of human beings. It emphasized that Member States are obliged to respect the basic human rights of all migrant workers, including irregular migrants. It also provided that lawfully present migrant workers and their families should not only be entitled to equal treatment but also to equality of opportunity, e.g., equal access to employment and occupation, the right to join trade unions, cultural rights, and individual and collective freedoms.

The 2011 Convention (No. 189), which entered into force in 2013, was the first multilateral instrument to establish global labour standards for domestic workers, guaranteeing them the same basic rights as other workers. The convention established that domestic workers, regardless of their migration status, have the same basic labour rights as other workers, including reasonable hours of work, a limit on payment in-kind and clear information on the terms and conditions of employment. Employers of domestic workers must respect the fundamental principles and rights at work, including freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.

As of 6 October 2015, 49 ILO Member States had ratified ILO Convention No. 97; 23 Member States had ratified Convention No. 143; and 22 Member States had ratified Convention No. 189. In total, only three of ILO's 186 Member States—Italy, the Philippines and Portugal—had ratified all three instruments. These three countries represent fewer than two per cent of ILO Member States and hosted fewer than three per cent of all international migrants worldwide (6.8 million) in 2015.

The 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrants Workers and Members of Their Families is the third, and most comprehensive, international treaty on migrant rights. It established international definitions for categories of migrant workers and formalized the responsibility of States in upholding the rights of migrant workers and members of their families. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights monitors the implementation of

this convention and works to further its ratification.

As of October 2015, 48 Member States had ratified the 1990 Convention. Collectively, they hosted 18 million international migrants in 2015, about seven per cent of the global total. None of the States Parties to the Convention were major migrant-receiving countries, and only five of them hosted more than one million international migrants.

Overall, 93 countries had ratified at least one of the four instruments regarding migrant workers. Together they hosted 35 per cent of the global population of international migrants in 2015, or around 85 million migrants.

### C. SMUGGLING AND TRAFFICKING

The two protocols seeking to stem irregular migration concern human trafficking and migrant smuggling, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children took effect in 2003 and, as of 6 October 2015, had been ratified by 167 United Nations Member States. The Protocol defined human trafficking as the acquisition of people by improper means, such as force, fraud or deception, with the aim of exploiting them. The Protocol aimed to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, to protect and assist victims of such trafficking, in particular women and children, to prosecute perpetrators of such crimes and to promote cooperation among States Parties.

The 2000 Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air took effect in 2004 and had been ratified by 140 United Nations Member States as of 6 October 2015. As set out in the Protocol, smuggling of migrants involves the procurement, for sake of financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State of which the person is not a national or permanent resident. The Protocol has proven to be an effective tool for

TABLE III.2: RATES OF RATIFICATION BY STATES PARTIES FOR LEGAL INSTRUMENTS RELATED TO INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION, BY DEVELOPMENT GROUP AND MAJOR AREA (percentage)

	<i>States Parties to United Nations instruments<sup>1</sup></i>					<i>States Parties to ILO instrument<sup>2</sup></i>		
	<i>1951 Refugee Convention</i>	<i>1967 Refugee Protocol</i>	<i>1990 Migrant Workers Convention</i>	<i>2000 Human Trafficking Protocol<sup>3</sup></i>	<i>2000 Migrant Smuggling Protocol<sup>3</sup></i>	<i>1949 Migration for Employment No. 097</i>	<i>1975 Migrant Workers No. 143</i>	<i>2011 Domestic Workers No. 189</i>
World.....	74	75	25	86	72	26	12	12
Developed regions.....	94	96	4	94	90	38	24	16
Developing regions.....	68	68	32	83	66	23	9	11
Africa.....	89	89	35	91	74	19	13	4
Asia.....	40	40	21	75	50	16	9	2
Europe.....	95	95	5	95	91	40	28	18
LAC.....	82	82	52	100	91	45	3	36
Northern America.....	50	100	0	100	100	0	0	0
Oceania.....	57	57	0	36	29	8	0	0

*Sources:* United Nations Treaty Collection; see <http://treaties.un.org> (as of 6 October 2015) and NORMLEX Information System on International Labour Standards; see <http://www.ilo.org/> (as of 6 October 2015).

*Notes:* LAC refers to Latin America and the Caribbean.

<sup>1</sup> Of the 193 Member States of the United Nations plus 2 non-member observer States.

<sup>2</sup> Of 186 Member States of the International Labour Organization.

<sup>3</sup> Does not include ratifications by the European Union.

combating and preventing the smuggling of “human cargo”. It reaffirmed that migration in and of itself is not a crime, and that migrants may be victims in need of protection. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) assists Member States in implementing the two protocols. The rapid increase in the ratification of the human trafficking and the migrant smuggling protocols may reflect a growing concern among Member States about the involvement of organized crime in irregular migration.

As of October 2015, the extent of ratification for the above-mentioned conventions and protocols differed greatly by development group and major area (table III.2). For the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol, both relating to the status of refugees, the rate of ratification is low in Asia (40 per cent) and in Oceania (57 per cent), while the remaining areas show ratification rates above 80 per cent for at least one of the two instruments. Ratification rates of the protocols relating to human trafficking and migrant smuggling are highest for Member States in Northern America (100 per cent for both), Latin America and the Caribbean (100

and 91 per cent, respectively) and Europe (95 and 91 per cent, respectively). The rate of ratification of the two protocols was higher amongst countries of the developed regions than amongst countries of the developing regions.

Overall, the four instruments relating to migrant rights show lower ratification rates compared to the other migration-related instruments in all regions. Latin America and the Caribbean had the highest percentage of countries having ratified at least one migrant rights instrument, whereas countries in Northern America have not ratified any of these instruments.

#### NOTES

<sup>i</sup> The 1951 Refugee Convention defined a refugee as someone who “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country”.

<sup>ii</sup> It should be noted that many domestic workers are migrants, particularly migrant women.