

## Policies on international migration

### 1. When supported by appropriate policies, migration can contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic growth and development

Available evidence suggests that the overall impact of migration can be positive for both countries of origin and countries of destination when supported by appropriate policies. Facilitating orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies is an explicit target of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

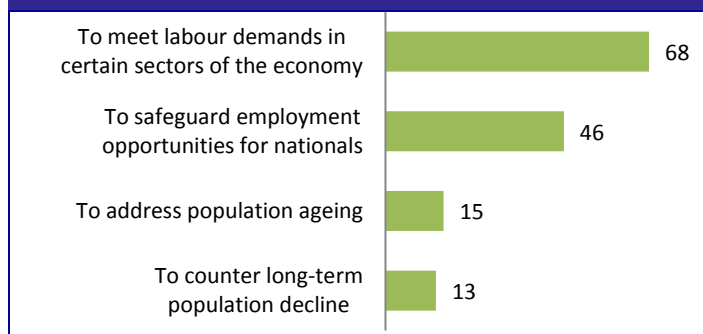
### 2. Most Governments seek to maintain current levels of immigration

At the global level, the majority of national Governments (61 per cent) have a policy to maintain current levels of documented immigration into their country. Among the remaining Governments, 13 per cent have policies to lower the level of immigration, 12 per cent have policies to raise it, and 14 per cent have either no official policy or do not seek to influence levels of immigration.

### 3. Meeting labour demands is the primary reason for immigration policy

Globally, 68 per cent of national Governments identify meeting labour market demands as an underlying motivation for their current immigration policy (figure 1).

**Figure 1. Rationale for current immigration policy, 2015 (percentage of Governments)**



Data source: United Nations (2016).  
Note: Based on information from 148 countries with available data.

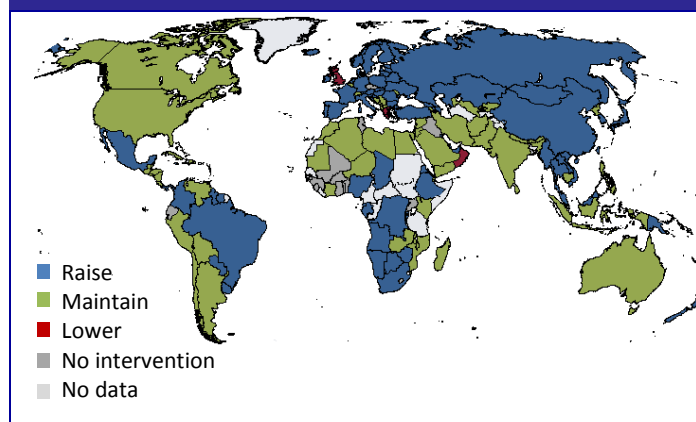
A large proportion of Governments (46 per cent) also view their immigration policy as a tool to safeguard employment opportunities for their nationals.

Demographic drivers are another widely cited rationale, with 15 per cent of Governments pursuing their current immigration policy to address population ageing and 13 per cent to counter long-term population decline.

### 4. Most Governments have policies to attract highly skilled workers

The interest in meeting labour market demands is also reflected in policies to promote the immigration of highly skilled workers. Globally, most Governments either seek to raise (44 per cent) or maintain (41 per cent) current levels of immigration of highly skilled workers (figure 2).

**Figure 2. Policy to influence the immigration of highly skilled workers into the country, 2015**



Data source: United Nations (2016).  
Notes: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas). Based on information from 176 countries with available data.

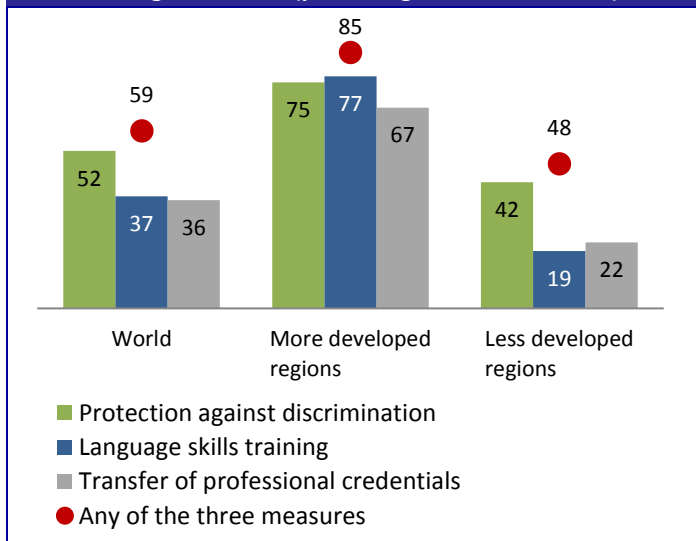
Only 4 per cent of Governments have policies to reduce the immigration of highly skilled workers into their country, while the remaining 11 per cent of Governments have no relevant policies in place.

## 5. More than half of all Governments have policies to promote the integration of immigrants

Integration policies are essential to achieve inclusive and sustainable economic growth in countries of destination and to guarantee the wellbeing of migrants.

Globally, 59 per cent of national Governments have instituted one or more policy or programme measures aimed at integrating non-nationals into their society (figure 3).

**Figure 3. Policy measures to promote the integration of immigrants, 2015 (percentage of Governments)**



Data source: United Nations (2016).  
Note: Based on information from 153 countries with available data.

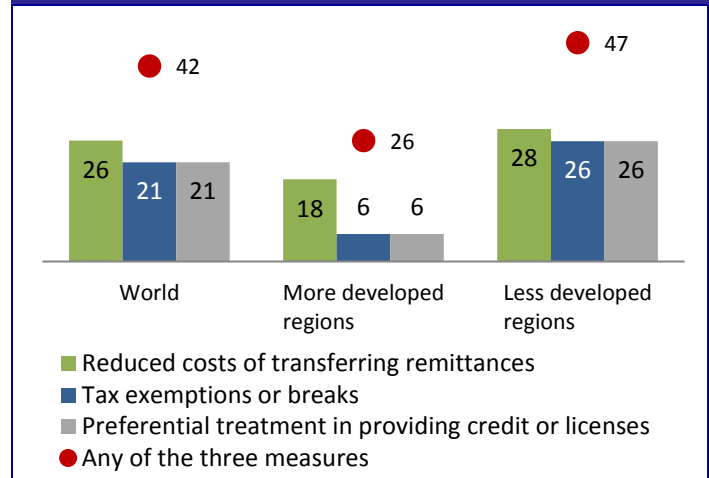
Protection against discrimination is the most prevalent type of integration measure globally, employed by 52 per cent of Governments, followed by language skills training for immigrants and the recognition of professional credentials acquired abroad, adopted by 37 and 36 per cent of Governments, respectively.

## 6. Relatively few Governments have policy measures to encourage investment by diasporas

Diaspora populations can contribute to the sustainable development of their country of origin by fostering entrepreneurship and job creation, and by promoting innovation and the formation of human and social capital. Globally, less than half (42 per cent) of national Governments have instituted one or more policy measures to attract diaspora investments (figure 4).

In terms of specific measures, about a quarter (26 per cent) of national Governments have instituted policies to reduce the costs of transferring remittances. In addition, about one fifth (21 per cent) employ tax exemptions or breaks specifically available to their diasporas and/or give their diaspora populations preferential treatment in providing credit or licenses.

**Figure 4. Policy measures to attract investment by diaspora populations, 2015 (percentage of Governments)**



Data source: United Nations (2016).  
Note: Based on information from 150 countries with available data.

## 7. Many Governments have policies to encourage return migration of their citizens living abroad

The return of citizens can have positive impacts for the development of countries of origin by promoting capital inflow and investment and by fostering the transfer of technology and skills. Globally, 72 per cent of national Governments have policies to encourage the return of their citizens. Of the 20 countries with the largest numbers of citizens living abroad, fifteen have a policy to encourage their return.

## 8. Almost all Governments have adopted policy measures to address irregular immigration

Irregular migration poses multiple challenges to countries of origin, transit and destination, as well as to migrants themselves. Migrants in an irregular situation are particularly vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation and abuse, and are in danger of being exploited by criminal organizations involved in human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

Nearly all national Governments have adopted one or more policy measures to address the issue of irregular immigration. Globally, 99 per cent of Governments have policies to fine, detain or deport migrants in an irregular situation, while 77 per cent impose penalties on employers of such migrants. One third of Governments (34 per cent) have taken measures to regularize their legal status.

SOURCE

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2016). *World Population Policies Database: 2015 Revision*. See: [esa.un.org/poppolicy/about\\_database.aspx](http://esa.un.org/poppolicy/about_database.aspx).