

UN Photo / Eskinder Debebe

Economic & Social Affairs

2015

World Population Policies



United Nations

[highlights]

This page is left intentionally blank

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

World Population Policies 2015

Highlights



United Nations
New York, 2018

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 the Population Policy Section of the Population Division.

Notes

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. 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 population@un.org.

Suggested citation:

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2018). *World Population Policies 2015: Highlights* (ST/ESA/SER.A/373).

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

Cover photo: UN photo/Eskinder Debebe

Published by the United Nations

Sales no.: E.16.XIII.2

ISBN: 978-92-1-151534-3

eISBN: 978-92-1-057610-9

Copyright © United Nations, 2018

All rights reserved

Key findings

- Changes in the growth, age structure and the distribution of the population determine and influence the implementation and achievement of the goals and targets of the *2030 Sustainable Development Agenda*.
- Between 1996 and 2015, the proportion of Governments in more developed regions with policies to raise their rate of population growth increased from 23 per cent to 45 per cent.
- During the same period, the proportion of Governments in less developed regions with policies to lower their rate of population growth remained unchanged (around 50 per cent).
- Over the last five years, many countries have taken steps to address population ageing (68 per cent). Policies to raise the minimum retirement age or to raise the social security contributions of workers are most common (32 per cent, respectively).
- Globally, a large majority of Governments (81 per cent) have carried out specific strategies or policies to influence the spatial distribution of their population.
- Paid or unpaid maternity leave with job security is nearly universal (99 per cent of countries). Less than a third of countries have policies to provide tax credits for dependent children or allow flexible or part time work hours for parents.
- Globally, a large majority of Governments (84 per cent) provided direct support for family planning. Governments in 18 countries provided indirect support, while 12 Governments did not support family planning.
- In 2015, 91 per cent of Governments had at least one policy measure to improve the sexual and reproductive health (SRH) of adolescents.
- The most prevalent measure to improve SRH was to provide school-based sexuality education to adolescents (76 per cent), followed by measures to expand the enrolment and retention of girls in secondary school (57 per cent).
- In 2015, around half of all Governments (52 per cent) had a policy to raise or enforce the minimum age of marriage.
- Globally, a large majority of Governments (76 per cent) have adopted one or more policy measures to reduce the number of newborn and maternal deaths.
- In 2015, the most widely adopted measures to address newborn and maternal mortality were expanding the coverage of: essential post-partum and newborn care (72 per cent), comprehensive prenatal care (71 per cent), obstetric care (71 per cent), and effective contraception (71 per cent).
- In 2015, the proportion of Governments permitting abortion to save a woman's life was 97 per cent, while one third of Governments allowed abortion upon request.
- Between 1996 and 2015, the proportion of Governments with policies to lower immigration declined from 40 per cent to 13 per cent. During the same period, the proportion of Governments with policies to raise immigration increased from 4 per cent to 12 per cent.
- In 2015, more than half of countries had a policy to promote the integration of migrants. Protection against discrimination was the most prevalent type of intervention globally, employed by 52 per cent of Governments.
- Almost all countries have adopted policy measures to address irregular migration. Nearly all countries (99 per cent) used fines, detention or deportation of migrants in an irregular situation, while 77 per cent had penalties for employers of migrants in an irregular situation.
- Between 1996 and 2015, the proportion of Governments with policies to lower emigration increased from 23 per cent to 32 per cent, while the proportion of Governments with policies to raise emigration increased from 3 per cent to 9 per cent.
- In 2015, less than half of Governments had policies to encourage investment by their diaspora (42 per cent). Twenty-six per cent had policies to reduce the costs of transferring remittances; and 21 per cent provided tax exemptions or breaks for investments by diaspora, and 21 per cent of Governments gave their diaspora preferential treatment in access to credit or allotment of licenses.

This page is left intentionally blank

Introduction

Population dynamics play a critical role in the achievement of social, economic and environmental development. Changes in the growth, age structures and the distribution of the population determine and influence the implementation and achievement of the goals and targets agreed by the international community in the *2030 Sustainable Development Agenda*.

Population dynamics can pose both challenges and opportunities to development efforts. While one country may be struggling to ensure universal access to services in a context of rapid population growth, another may see the realization of demographic dividend derived from the decline of fertility and mortality. Whether demographic changes can be harnessed for the success and sustainability of development strategies at the international, regional and national levels, is determined by the implementation of effective population policies that are rights-based, evidence informed and gender responsive.

In this context, the need to monitor population policies and programmes remains crucial. The systematic monitoring of population policies at the international level began after the *World Population Plan of Action*—the first global intergovernmental instrument on population policy—was adopted in the World Population Conference held in 1974. Subsequent population conferences, including the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in 1994, have emphasized the need to monitor population policies and programmes. Various internationally agreed development plans, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, have also included a number of targets and indicators to monitor population-related policies and programmes.

The Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs plays an important role in the monitoring of national population policies and programmes. Since 1963 it has implemented the United Nations Inquiry among Governments on Population and Development every five years, the results of which provide a platform for Governments to discuss views and policies on population issues, considering the national developmental priorities and progress made in the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals. Starting in 1974, the Population Division has carried out biennial updates of Government policies and programmes related to key population issues, included in the *World Population Policies Database*.

This report presents the highlights of the 2015 revision of the World Population Policies Database. It provides an overview of population policies and related population indicators for all 193 Member States, two Observer States (the Holy See and the State of Palestine) and two non-member States (Niue and Cook Islands) of the United Nations.

Major sources of information

To compile information on Government views, policies and programme measures related to population issues, the Population Division has established a comprehensive *World Population Policies Database*, formerly called the Population Policy Data Bank.

The World Population Policies Database provides comprehensive and up-to-date information on the population policy situation and trends for 197 countries, including all Member States, Observer States and non-member States of the United Nations. The database shows the evolution of Government views, policies and programme measures with respect to population size and growth, population age structure, spatial distribution and internal migration, fertility, reproductive health and family planning, health and mortality, and international migration. The Database is updated biennially by conducting a detailed country-by-country review of information on selected population policy issues from a variety of sources.

The major sources of information contained in the Database are of four broad types:

1. Official Government responses to the United Nations Inquiry among Governments on Population and Development.
2. Publications, documents, statements and other materials issued by Governments, including development plans, sectoral programmes, laws, regulations and proclamations.
3. Materials provided by international organizations, such as regional commissions, funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system, as well as other regional intergovernmental organizations.
4. Non-governmental materials, including articles in academic journals, proceedings of conferences and seminars, reports and studies prepared by research centres and non-governmental organizations, clippings from the world press, as well as correspondence and personal communications with experts.

The *World Population Policies Database* can be accessed through an interactive website (http://esa.un.org/PopPolicy/about_database.aspx) that allows users to run custom data queries on selected population policies and related indicators for all countries and selected time points since 1976, create graphs and maps, and download country profiles.

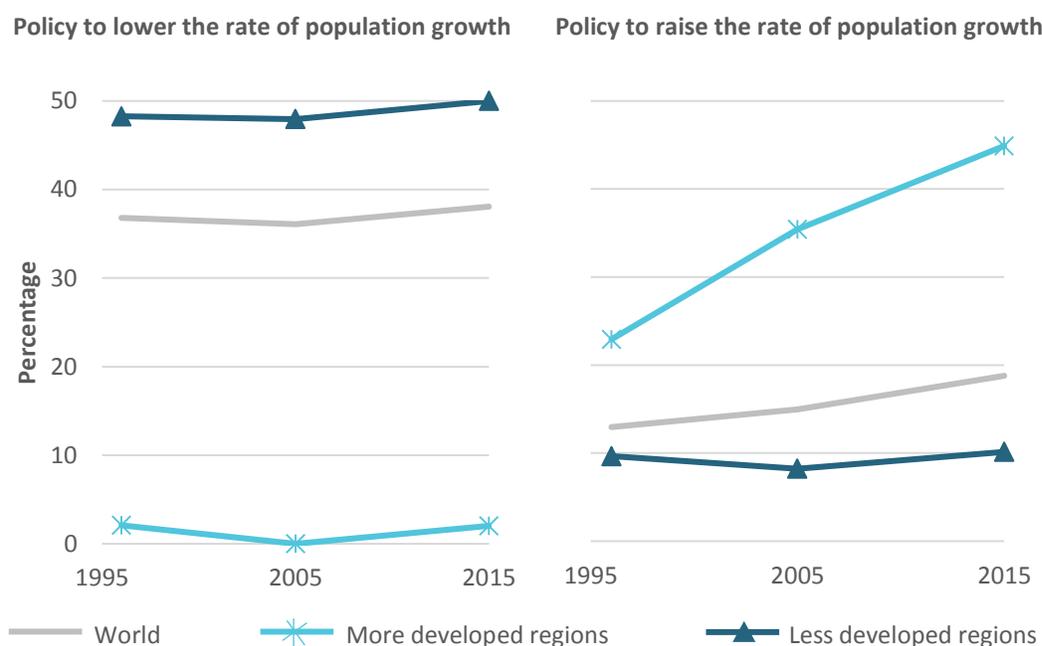
Policies on growth, age structure and spatial distribution

Population growth

Rapid population growth remains a concern for many countries in less developed regions of the world, especially the least developed countries; while in more developed regions, countries confront a different set of issues as a result of slower population growth, such as population ageing and decline. As a consequence, there was a marked distinction in the policies to influence the rate of population growth by level of development. In 2015, 45 per cent of Governments in more developed regions had policies to raise their rate of population growth and only 2 per cent had policies to lower it. In contrast, 50 per cent of Governments in less developed regions had policies to lower the rate of population growth and 10 per cent had policies to raise it.

Figure 1.

Proportion of Governments with policies to influence the rate of population growth, by level of development, 1996-2015



The proportion of Governments with policies to lower population growth rate at the global level has remained largely unchanged since 1996, while the proportion with policies to raise it has increased from 13 per cent in 1996 to 19 per cent 2015. In more developed regions with low and declining population growth rates, the proportion of Governments with policies to raise the rate of population growth has increased steadily, from 23 per cent in 1996 to 45 per cent in 2015. In less developed regions, where some countries have seen considerable declines in population growth rates while others continue to have high rates,

the proportion of Governments attempting to lower the rate of population growth has remained mostly unchanged since 1996. Among the least developed countries, where population growth rates remain high, more than 9 out of 10 Governments had policies to lower the rate of population growth.

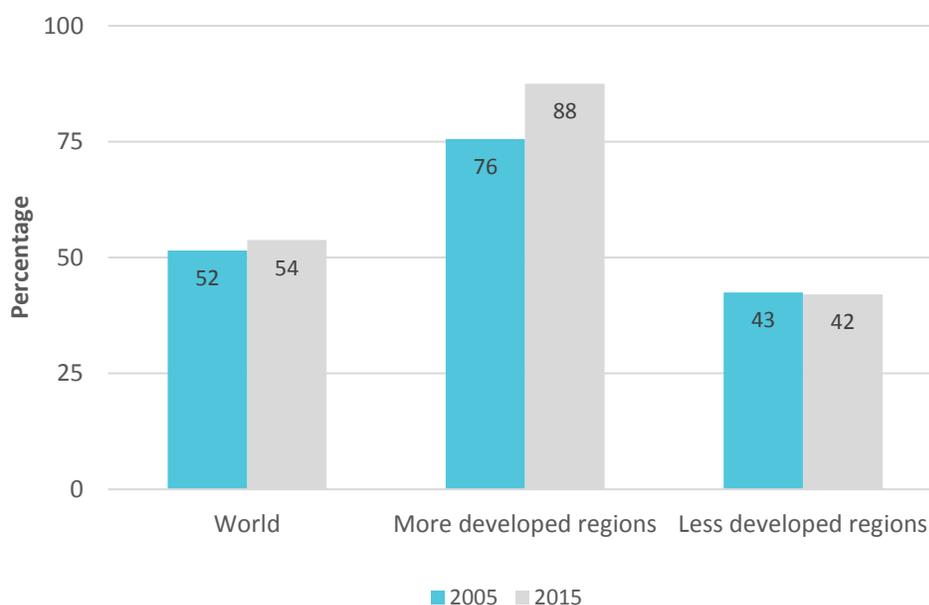
Population ageing

Concern over population ageing increased over the past decade

In the next decades, virtually all countries in the world are expected to experience population ageing, although at varying levels of intensity and in different time frames. Once limited to countries in more developed regions, concerns over the consequences of ageing have been growing in less developed regions as well. In 2015, more than one half of Governments worldwide (54 per cent) considered population ageing in their countries a major concern. Governments in more developed regions were more than twice as likely (88 per cent) as those in less developed regions (42 per cent) to consider it a major concern, something to be expected considering older population structures in high income countries (United Nations, 2015).

In addition, in recent years, the proportion of Governments that considered population ageing as a major concern has increased in more developed regions, from 76 per cent in 2005 to 88 per cent in 2015, while it remained almost constant in less developed regions (from 43 per cent in 2005 to 42 per cent in 2015).

Figure 2.
Proportion of Governments that consider population ageing a major concern, by level of development, 2005 and 2015

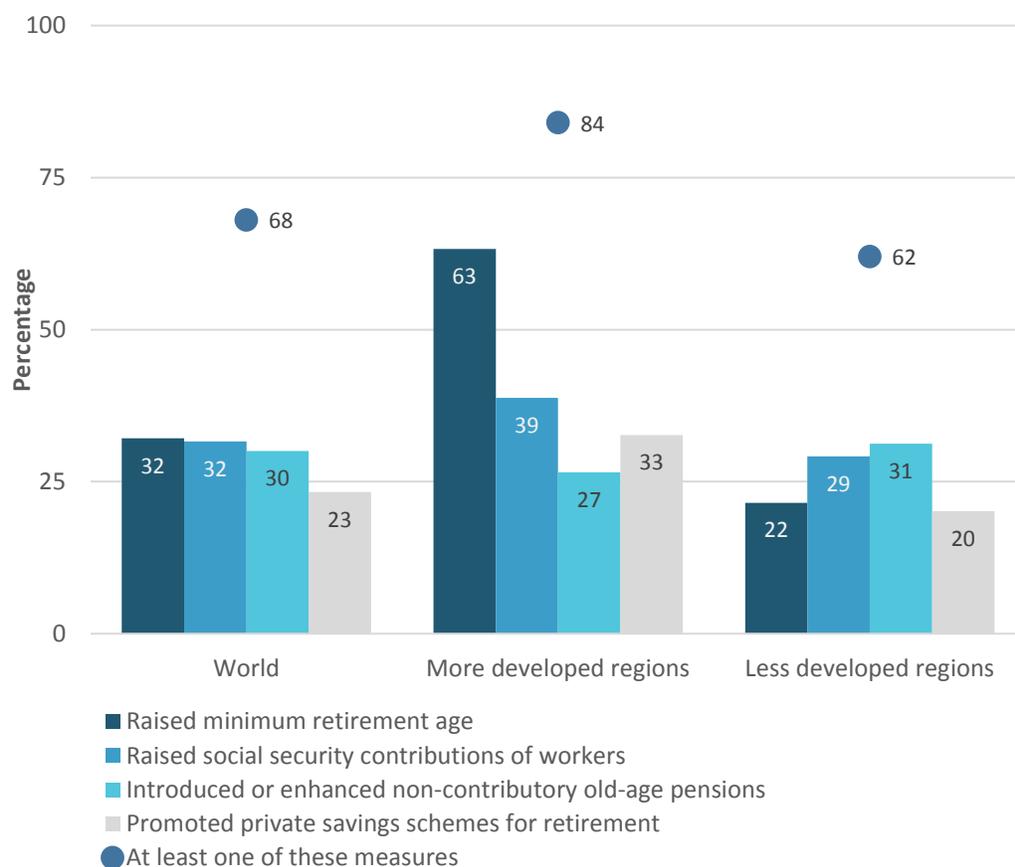


Countries have at their disposal an array of policy measures to address the consequences of population ageing. In 2015, data on four such measures adopted in the past five years were gathered for 193 countries. At the global level, Governments of 62 countries (32 per cent) raised their minimum retirement age, 61 countries (32 per

cent) raised the social security contributions of workers, 58 countries (30 per cent) introduced or enhanced non-contributory old-age pensions and 45 countries (23 per cent) promoted private savings schemes for retirement. Around a third of Governments in the world (32 per cent) did not adopt any of these four measures to address population ageing in the past five years.

Figure 3.

Proportion of Governments that have adopted measures to address population ageing in the past five years, by level of development, 2015



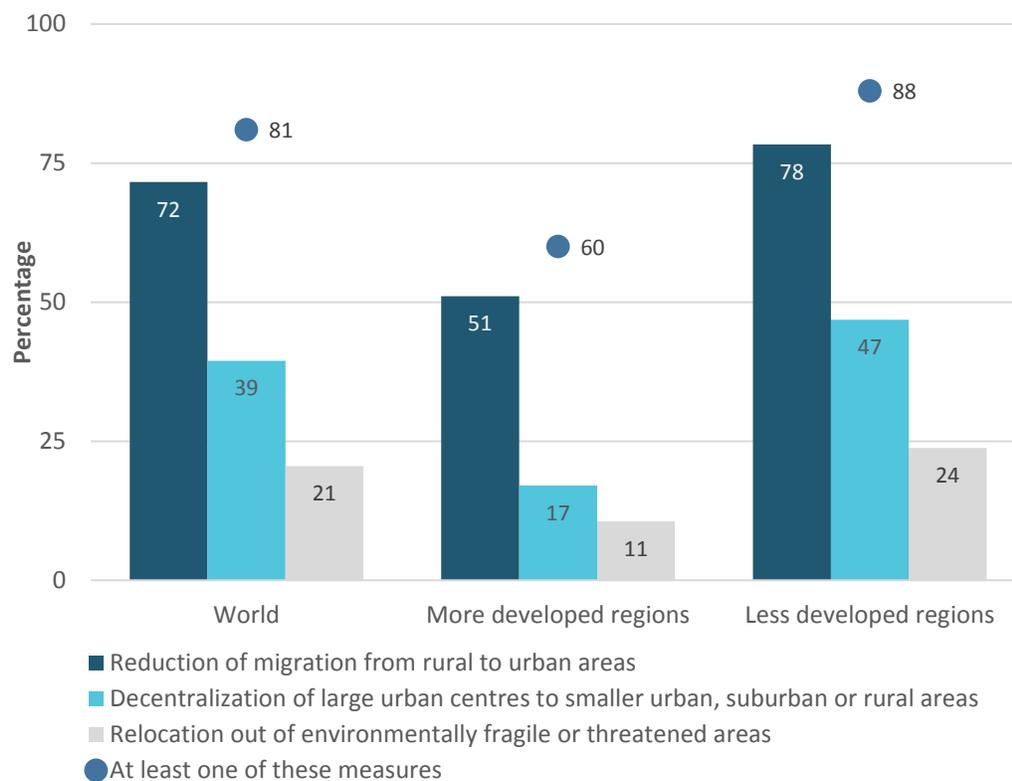
Significant differences were observed in the adoption of these policy measures to address population ageing depending on the level of development. Eighty-four per cent of Governments in more developed regions had adopted at least one of the four policy measures in the past five years, compared with 62 per cent of Governments in less developed regions. While population ageing is more advanced in more developed regions, in the next decades the number of older persons is expected to grow faster in less developed regions, where population ageing is occurring at a more rapid pace than it did in more developed countries. This points to the importance of developing policies that address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of older persons in all countries, including those where the ageing process is currently less advanced.

Most Governments have taken steps to influence the spatial distribution of their population

Spatial distribution

In the context of sustainable development, key challenges related to the spatial distribution of a population include rapid urbanization, urban sprawl and slum dwelling, concentration of population in large urban centres, rural exodus and rural depopulation and internally displaced persons, including environmentally induced displacements. In 2015, a large majority (81 per cent) of Governments in the world with available data had carried out specific policies or strategies in the past five years to plan for and manage the spatial distribution of their population. Seventy-two per cent of Governments had policies to reduce migration from rural areas to urban areas. Governments of less developed regions were much more likely (78 per cent) than those in more developed regions (51 per cent) to have adopted such policies, reflecting the more acute challenges faced by the least developed countries in their process of urbanization.

Figure 4.
Proportion of Governments with policies or strategies to encourage population redistribution in the past five years, by region, 2015



Thirty-nine per cent of Governments had adopted policies in the past five years to decentralize population from large urban centres to smaller urban, suburban or rural areas, and 21 per cent had adopted policies to relocate their populations out of environmentally fragile or threatened areas. Countries in less developed regions were much more likely to have adopted policies to manage the spatial distribution of their population. For example, 70 per cent of Governments in Asia had adopted policies to

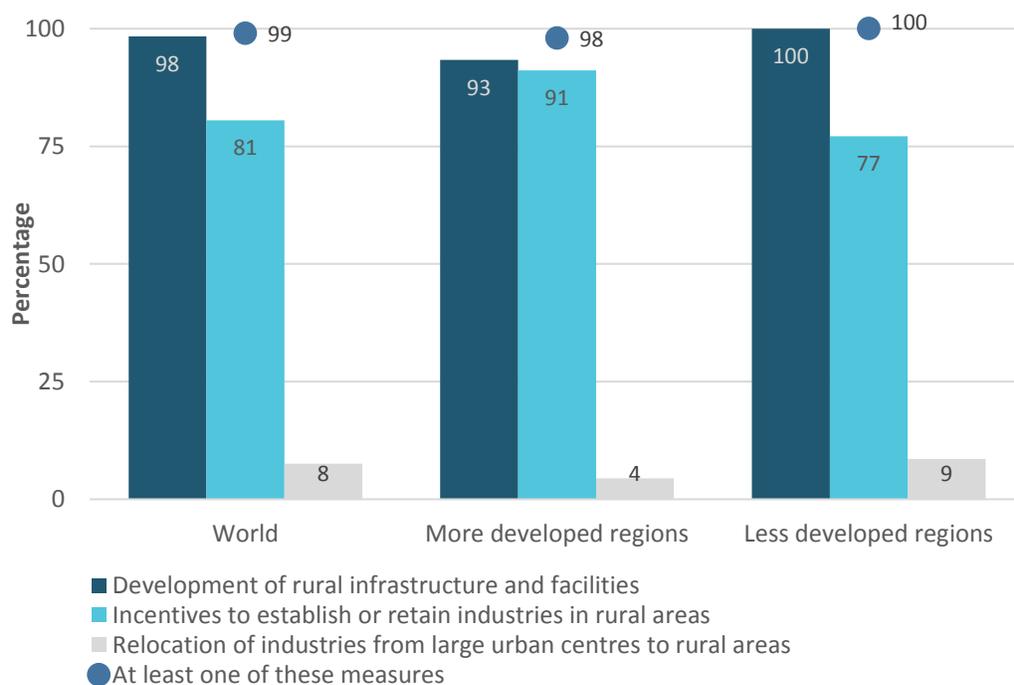
decentralize large urban centres in the past five years, compared with only 14 per cent in Europe. Similarly, 24 per cent of Governments in less developed regions had adopted policies to relocate populations out of environmentally fragile or threatened areas, compared with 11 per cent in more developed regions.

Rural development

Rural populations, especially in less developed regions of the world, continue to be disadvantaged in their access to basic services and opportunities for education and gainful employment. Together with poverty, lack of education and employment opportunities are among major push factors for migration from rural to urban areas. In the least developed countries, about two thirds of the population lives in rural areas where poverty rates are estimated to be twice as high as in urban areas. Effective rural development policies are essential for improving the wellbeing of rural populations and reducing disparities. Such policies may include developing rural infrastructure; facilitating access to markets; providing quality education, healthcare and other essential services; and creating opportunities for gainful employment, on- and off-farm.

Figure 5.

Proportion of Governments that have adopted measures to promote rural development in the past five years, 2015



In 2015, information was gathered for 185 countries on three specific policies or strategies adopted in the past five years to promote rural development: (i) incentives to establish or retain industries in rural areas; (ii) relocation of industries from large urban centres to rural areas; and (iii) development of rural infrastructure and facilities. Almost all countries in the world (98 per cent) had policies or strategies to develop rural infrastructure and facilities in the past five years; 81 per cent had incentives to establish or retain industries in rural areas; whereas only 8 per cent had policies or strategies to relocate

industries from large urban centres to rural areas. Incentives to establish or retain industries in rural areas were more common in countries in more developed regions (91 per cent) than in less developed regions (77 per cent).

Urbanization

In 2014, around four billion people (54 per cent of the world population) lived in urban areas, though significant differences were observed across regions and countries. By 2030, the share of the world population living in urban areas is projected to rise to 60 per cent, with almost all this urban growth occurring in the cities and towns of developing countries (United Nations, 2014).

Urbanization, if well planned, has the potential to improve people's access to education, health care, housing, and other services and to expand their opportunities for economic productivity. Rapid urbanization, however, can represent a challenge to sustainable urban planning, including the management of slums and the provision of basic urban services. To reap the benefits of economies of scale, greater efficiency, and to minimize the environmental and other adverse impacts of urban growth, governments need to adapt strategies to plan for future urban growth. Effective policies and programmes are needed to develop appropriate urban infrastructure and provide access to essential services, including secured access to water and sanitation, health care, schooling, land tenure and adequate housing, especially for the urban poor. Policies are also needed to improve solid waste management systems, and to increase energy efficiency in transport and housing, to list a few.

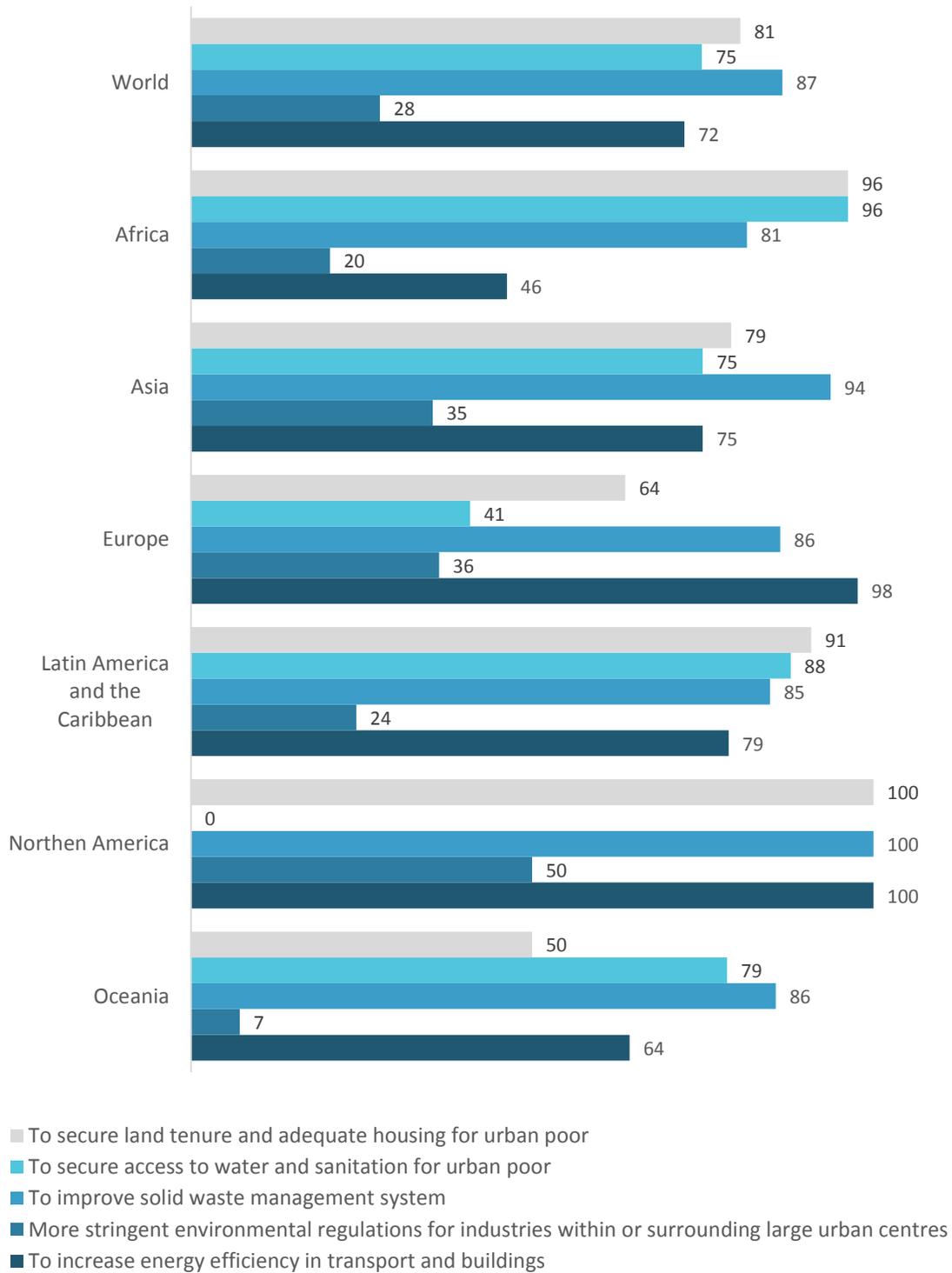
Living conditions and sustainability of large urban centres

In 2015, information was gathered on five policy measures designed to improve living conditions and sustainability of large urban centres. While 72 per cent of Governments in the world had adopted policy measures to increase energy efficiency in transport and buildings, only 28 per cent of Governments had adopted more stringent environmental regulations for industries within or surrounding large urban centres. Governments in more developed regions were more likely than Governments in less developed regions to have adopted measures to increase energy efficiency in transport and buildings and more stringent environmental regulations for industries within and surrounding large urban centres. Improving solid waste management systems was the measure adopted by most Governments worldwide, with 88 per cent of Governments in more developed regions and 86 per cent in less developed regions having adopted it in the past five years.

Three-quarters of Governments had adopted measures to secure access to water and sanitation and 81 per cent had adopted measures to secure land tenure and adequate housing for the urban poor. Governments in less developed regions were more likely to have adopted policy measures to improve access to water and sanitation and to secure land tenure and adequate housing for the urban poor than in more developed regions, where access to such services was already widespread.

Policies to promote sustainable urbanization are prevalent

Figure 6.
Proportion of Governments with policies or strategies to improve the living conditions and sustainability of large urban centres in the past five years, by region, 2015





LBDI PAYNESVILLE COMMUNITY BRANCH

LBDI
PAYNESVILLE
BRANCH

LBDI PLAZA

Vango

DO NOT BE USED BY
AFRICA ONLY

C.B.I.

Policies on fertility, family planning and reproductive health

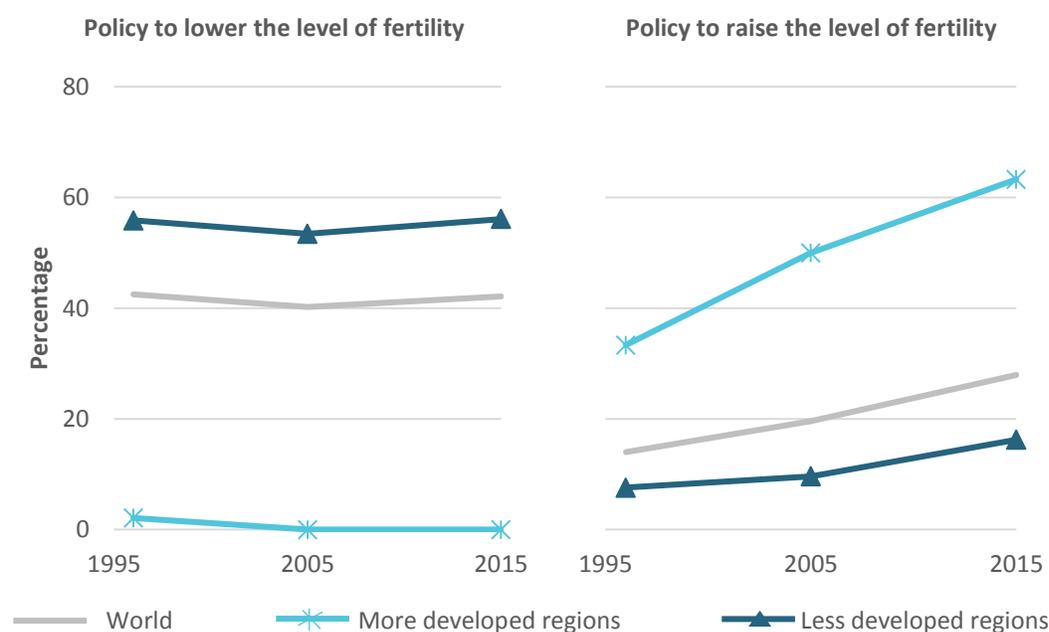
Fertility

Fertility declines around the world have resulted in unprecedented low levels of fertility at the global level. Childbearing patterns differ greatly among countries and regions. Among the 201 countries or areas with at least 90,000 inhabitants in 2017, 83 were estimated to have “low” or “below replacement” levels of fertility, meaning that, on average, women in those countries bear fewer than 2.1 children over their lifetime (United Nations, 2017). In addition, 96 countries had intermediate levels of fertility, where women have between 2.1 and 5 children, while 22 countries or areas were characterized by high levels of fertility, with women bear 5 or more children. Of the countries or areas with high levels of fertility, 20 were in Africa and 2 in Asia.

Countries with high or intermediate levels of fertility tend to have policies to lower fertility. Globally, in 2015, 42 per cent of Governments had a policy to lower their current levels of fertility. All countries with high fertility and 64 per cent of countries with intermediate fertility had policies to reduce their fertility levels. Key measures to reduce fertility include: raising the minimum legal age at marriage; providing access to reproductive health services, including low cost, safe and effective contraception; integrating family planning and safe motherhood programmes into primary health care systems; and improving female education and employment opportunities.

Figure 7.

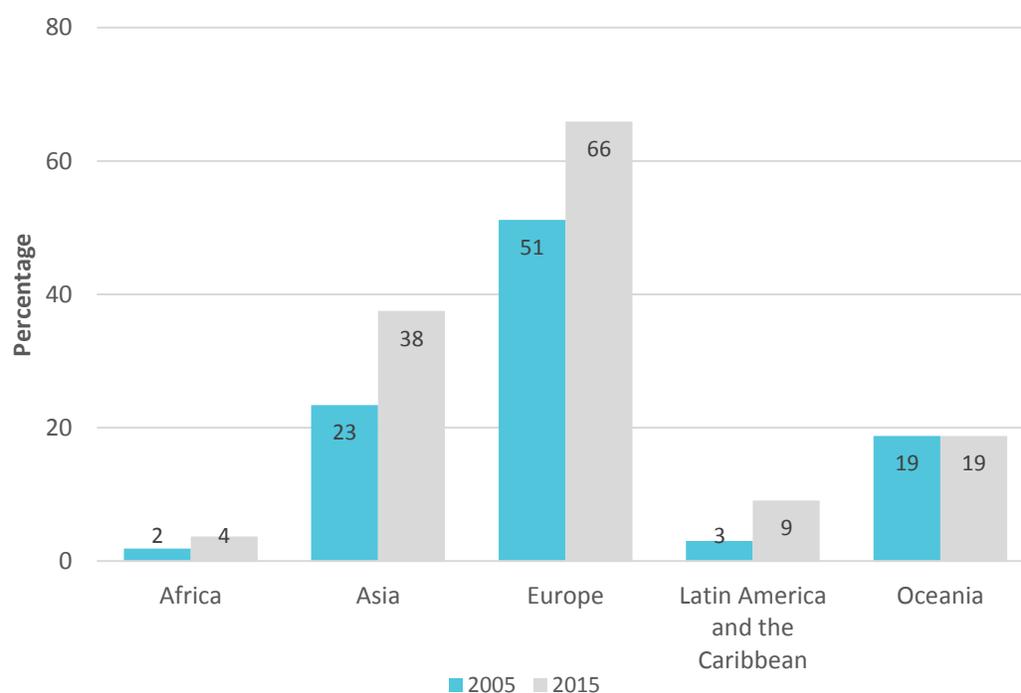
Proportion of Governments with policies to influence the level of fertility, by level of development, 1996-2015



Countries with below-replacement levels of fertility tend to have policies to raise their fertility levels. At the global level, 28 per cent of Governments had policies to raise the level of fertility in 2015. Among the countries with fertility below the replacement level, 62 per cent had a policy to raise fertility. While in more developed regions 63 per cent of Governments aimed at raising their fertility levels in 2015, in less developed regions only 16 per cent of Governments had that objective. Measures to raise fertility include, among others, baby bonuses; family allowances; maternal, paternal and parental leave; tax incentives; and flexible work schedules.

In the past decade, as fertility levels have declined, the proportion of Governments with policies to raise fertility has increased from 20 per cent in 2005 to 28 per cent in 2015. The increase in the proportion of Governments with policies to raise fertility is most remarkable in Europe and Asia. In Africa, where fertility levels remain high, this proportion has remained at or below 4 per cent. Reflecting the diversity of fertility levels, Asia now has an equal proportion of Governments with policies to raise fertility and those to lower fertility (38 per cent each).

Figure 8.
Proportion of Governments with policies to raise fertility, by region, 2005 and 2015



Note: The two countries of the Northern America region are not included as they reported not to have interventions to change fertility levels.

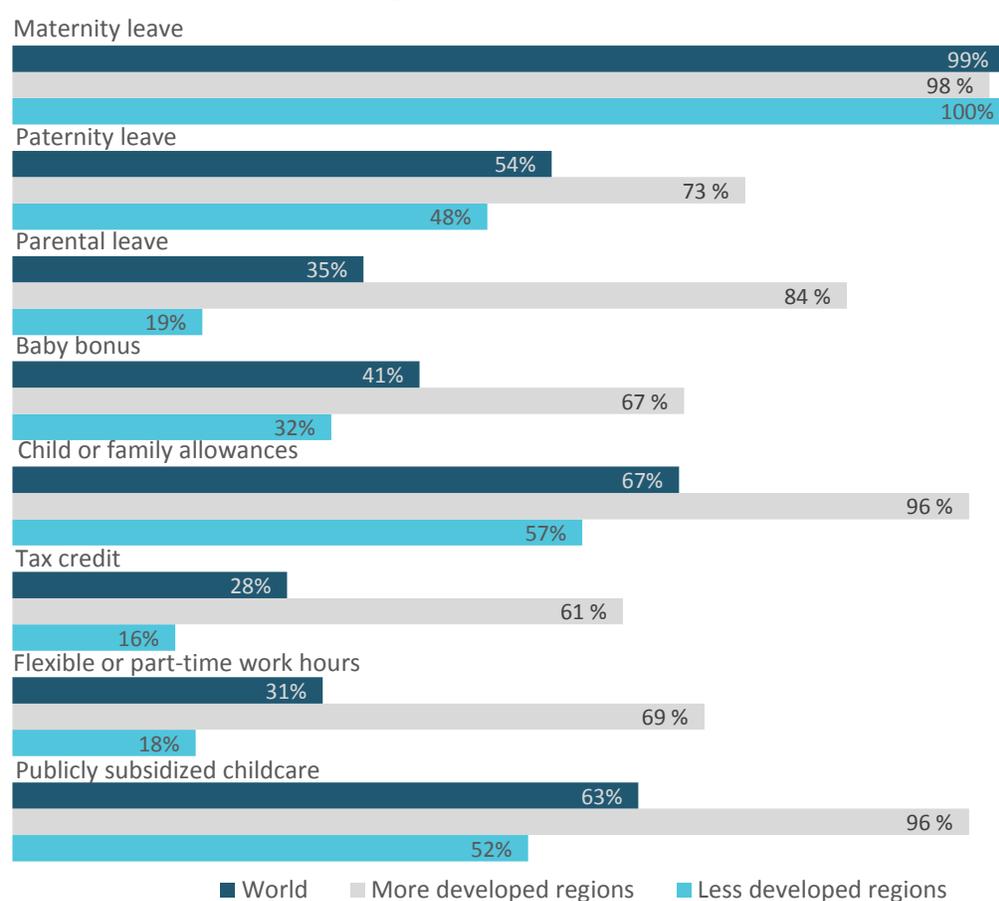
Family and work balance

Faced with ever-declining fertility levels and the consequent ageing of their populations, many Governments have instituted policy measures geared at improving family/work balance for childbearing and childrearing. Globally, in 2015, 99 per cent of Governments provided paid or unpaid maternity leave with job security, while 54 per cent of Governments provided paternity leave with job security. Sixty-seven per cent of Governments gave child or family allowances, 63 per cent subsidised childcare, and 54 per cent provided a baby bonus to parents. In addition, 31 per cent of Governments allowed flexible or part time work hours for working parents and 28 per cent provided tax credit for dependent children. With the exception of maternity leave, these measures were more prevalent in more developed regions than in less developed regions.

Virtually all countries in the world provide some form of maternity leave

Figure 9.

Proportion of Governments with measures to improve family/work balance for childbearing and childrearing, by level of development, 2015



Sexual and reproductive health

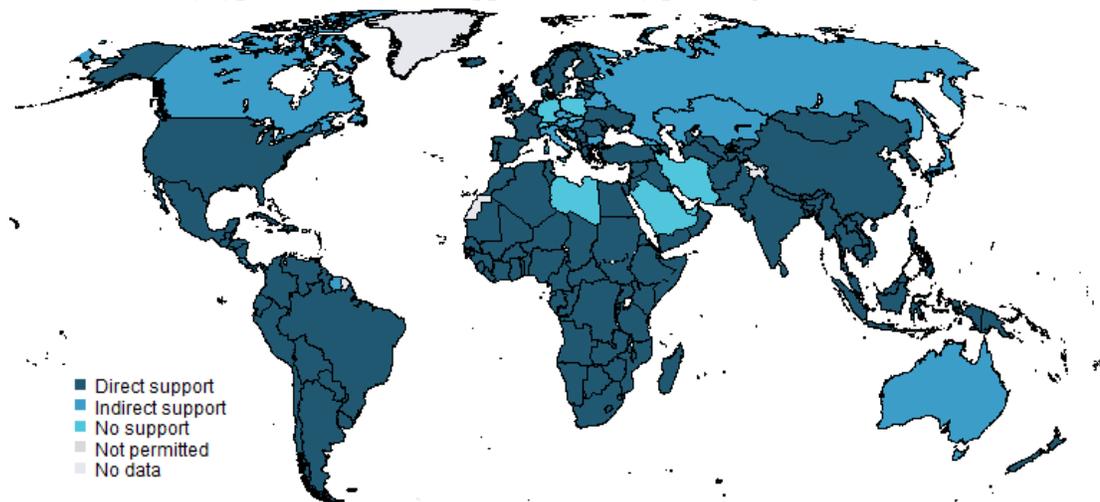
Sexual and reproductive health are critical determinants of the health and well-being of a population. They include rights to access essential information and services related to reproductive health care, family planning and sexual health, among others. In 2017, 63 per

cent of women of reproductive age (15-49) who are married or in-union were using some form contraception. Contraceptive use varied greatly by region, ranging from a low of 36 per cent in Africa to a high of 74 per cent in Northern America. Fifty-eight per cent of married or in-union women of reproductive age used a modern method of family planning, constituting 92 per cent of contraceptive users.

The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* contains a number of targets related to reproductive health. Specifically, target 3.7 calls for ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes by 2030. Likewise, target 5.6 calls for ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.

Globally, in 2015, 166 out of 197 Governments (84 per cent) provided direct support for family planning, implying that family planning services were provided through government-run facilities or outlets.

Figure 10.
Countries by type of Government support for family planning, 2015



Note: Direct support implies that family planning services are provided through government-run facilities or outlets. Indirect support implies that the Government does not provide family planning services through government outlets, but instead supports the private sector, including non-governmental organizations, in providing those services. No support means that the Government allows the private sector to provide family planning services without giving it any material support. Not permitted means that the Government does not allow family planning programmes or services within its jurisdiction.

The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion 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. 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 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).

The proportion of Governments providing direct support has risen steadily since 1976 when less than two thirds of Governments (63 per cent) did so. In 2015, Governments in 18 countries provided only indirect support for family planning

through the private sector, including non-governmental organizations. The remaining 12 Governments did not support family planning, including the Holy See, which did not allow family planning programmes or services within its jurisdiction.

In 2015, information was gathered for 186 countries on whether their policies included restrictions to access to contraceptive services based on the following criteria or categories: (i) minimum age; (ii) marital status; (iii) parental consent (for minors); (iv) emergency contraceptive pills, (v) sterilization of women; and (vi) sterilization of men. Globally, 19 per cent of Governments had one or more of these restrictions to access to contraceptive services. Latin America and the Caribbean (31 per cent) was the region with the highest proportion of Governments restricting access to contraceptive services on the basis of at least one of these grounds, followed by Asia (25 per cent) and Europe (19 per cent).

In terms of the specific measures, in 2015, requiring parental consent for minors was the most common restriction (9 per cent), while restrictions related to the sterilization of women (3 per cent) or men (4 per cent) were the least prevalent. Latin America and the Caribbean (19 per cent) and Europe (14 per cent) had the highest proportion of Governments requiring parental consent for minors to access contraceptive services, while Asia had the highest proportion of Governments restricting the sterilization of women (7 per cent) or men (14 per cent).

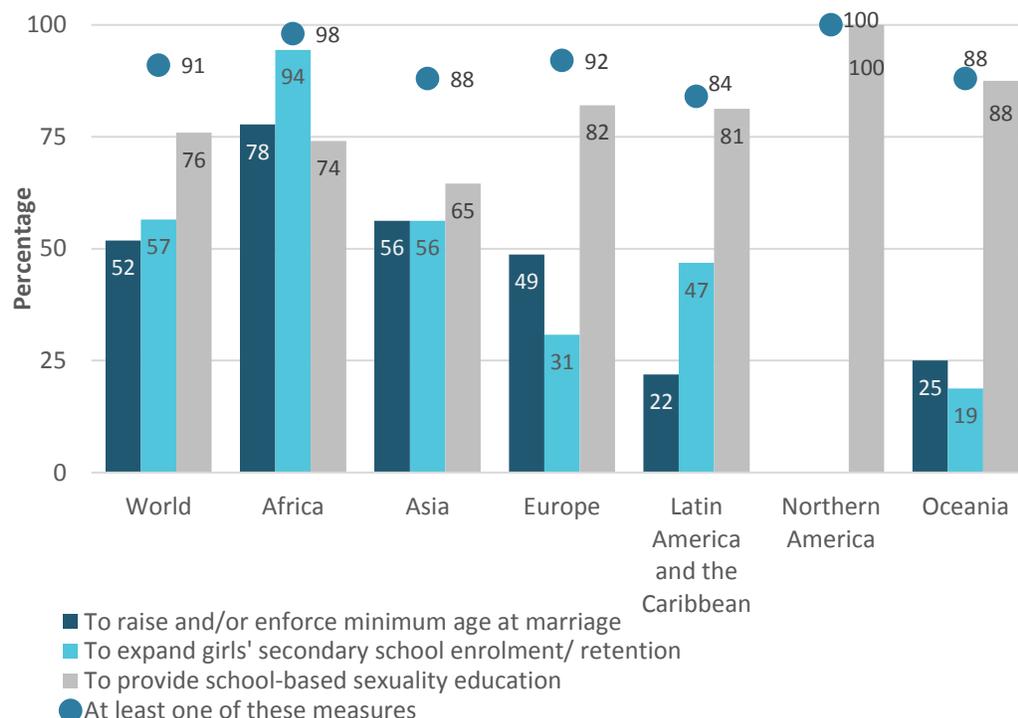
While childbearing in adolescence has steadily declined in almost all regions of the world, the adolescent birth rate, measured as the number of births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19, remains high in many countries in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. Women who are very young when they have their first child are more likely to suffer complications during pregnancy and childbirth. They are also at much greater risk of maternal death. Furthermore, the children of young mothers have higher levels of morbidity and mortality. Reducing adolescent childbearing through universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services can have important social consequences both for adolescent girls and for the children they bear.

Globally, in 2015, 91 per cent of Governments had a policy or programme aimed at improving the reproductive and sexual health of adolescents. Among the policy measures considered are raising or enforcing the minimum age at marriage, expanding girls' secondary school enrolment or retention, and providing school-based sexuality education. At the regional level, the share of Governments with at least one of these three measures to improve the reproductive and sexual health of adolescents ranged from a high of 100 per cent in Northern America to a low of 84 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In terms of the specific measures considered, providing school-based sexuality education was the most prevalent type of intervention, employed by 76 per cent of Governments globally. Expanding girls' school enrolment or retention and raising or enforcing minimum age at marriage were adopted by 57 per cent and 52 per cent of Governments, respectively.

Policies to improve the reproductive and sexual health of adolescents are widespread

Figure 11.
Proportion of Governments with a policy to improve the reproductive and sexual health of adolescents by type of policy measure and region, 2015



Newborn and maternal health

Maternal mortality has been declining around the world in recent decades, however it remains a concern for many countries in less developed regions. According to the World Health Organization (2016), an estimated 830 women die every day from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. In the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, Governments have committed to accelerating the progress made in reducing newborn, child and maternal mortality by ending all such preventable deaths before 2030. Target 3.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) calls upon Governments to reduce global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births by 2030. Likewise, target 3.2 of the SDGs calls for ending preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age. In 2016, the global neonatal mortality rate was 19 deaths per 1,000 live births. Improved care around the time of birth reduces the incidence of neonatal deaths.

In 2015, information for 190 countries was gathered on six measures adopted in the previous five years to reduce maternal and newborn deaths: (i) expanded coverage of comprehensive prenatal care; (ii) expanded coverage of obstetric care; (iii) expanded coverage of essential post-partum and newborn care; (iv) expanded access to effective contraception, (v) expanded access to safe abortion care, including post-abortion care; and (vi) expanded recruitment or training of skilled birth attendants. Three out of four Governments (76 per cent) had adopted one or more of these policy measures in the five years preceding 2015. Africa was the region with the highest share of Governments with at least one of these measure adopted in the past five years to reduce

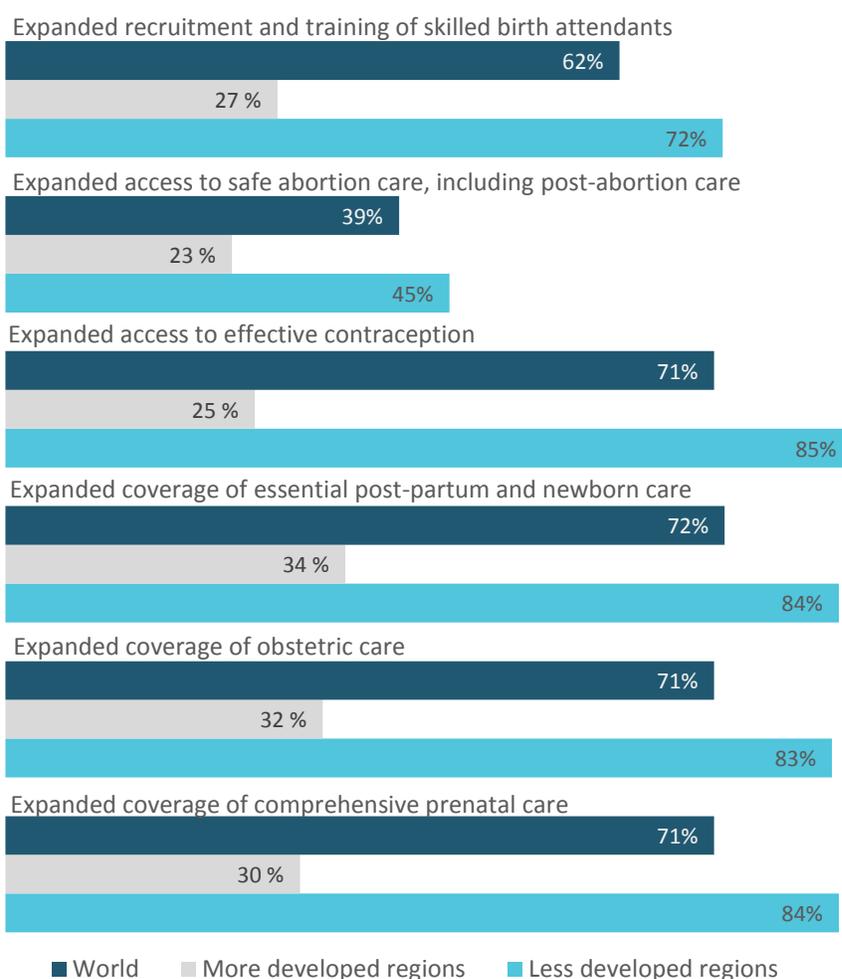
maternal and newborn deaths (100 per cent), followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (90 per cent) and Asia (75 per cent).

Worldwide, in the five years preceding 2015, 72 per cent of Governments had expanded the coverage of essential post-partum and newborn care, comprehensive prenatal care (71 per cent), obstetric care (71 per cent), and access to effective contraception (71 per cent). In addition, 62 per cent of Governments around the world had adopted a policy to expand recruitment and training of skilled birth attendants, while 39 per cent had expanded access to safe abortion care, including post-abortion care.

Globally, the majority of Governments have policies to address maternal and newborn mortality

Figure 12.

Proportion of Governments with measures to reduce the number of newborn and maternal deaths in the past five years, by level of development, 2015



Reflecting higher maternal mortality rates in less developed regions, more Governments in these countries had adopted one or more of these policy measures to address newborn and maternal mortality (88 per cent) than in countries from more developed regions (39 per cent). The contrast was even sharper if we look at least developed countries which had all adopted at least one of these measures. With the

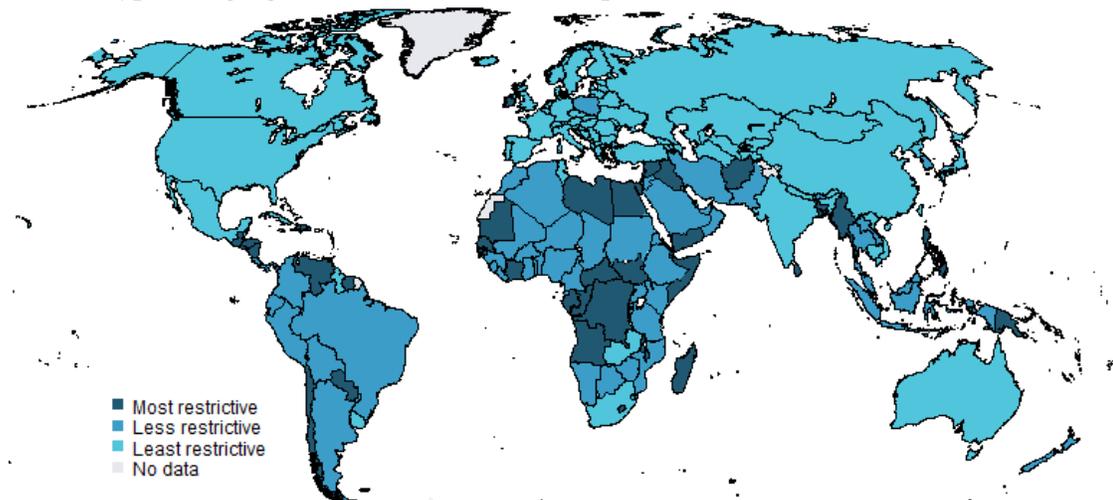
exception of expanding access to safe abortion care, including post-abortion care, which was adopted by 52 per cent of least developed countries, all other measures were adopted by over 90 per cent of Governments.

Abortion

Saving a woman's life is the most common ground for permitting abortion

In 2015, 97 per cent of Governments permitted abortion to save a woman's life. Only the Governments of Chile, El Salvador, the Holy See, Malta and Nicaragua did not permit abortion under any circumstances. Between 1996 and 2015, the proportion of Governments permitting abortion to save a woman's life remained at 97 per cent. Meanwhile, the proportion of Governments allowing abortion to preserve the physical health of a woman increased slightly from 63 per cent to 67 per cent. During this period, the proportion of Governments allowing abortion increased from 52 per cent to 65 per cent to preserve the mental health of a woman, from 43 per cent to 54 per cent in cases of rape or incest, and from 41 per cent to 54 per cent because of foetal impairment. The proportion of Governments permitting abortion for economic and social reasons or upon request also rose gradually between 1996 and 2015. In 2015, 36 per cent of Governments permitted abortion for economic and social reasons and 30 per cent provided abortion on request, up from 31 per cent and 24 per cent in 1996, respectively.

Figure 13.
Types of legal grounds on which abortion is permitted, 2015



Note: Most restrictive: abortion not permitted or permitted only to save a woman's life; less restrictive: to preserve a woman's physical or mental health, in case of rape or incest, or because of foetal impairment; least restrictive: for economic or social reasons or on request.

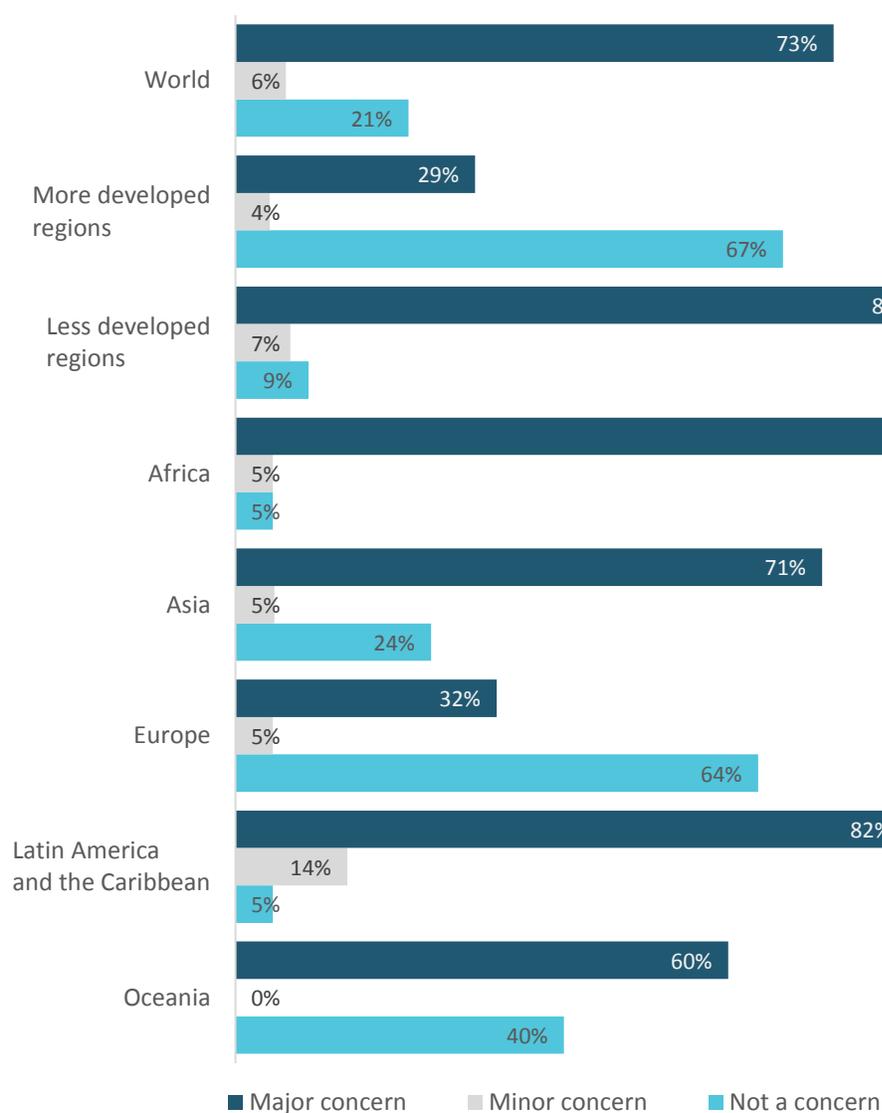
The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. 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).

Unsafe abortion is one of the leading causes of maternal mortality. Of the 114 countries with available information in 2015, 73 per cent of Governments considered unsafe abortion to be a major concern, 6 per cent considered it to be a minor concern and 21 per cent expressed no concern about unsafe abortion. In Africa, 91 per cent of Governments with available data in 2015 considered unsafe abortion to be a major concern, compared with 82 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean, 60 per cent in Oceania and 32 per cent in Europe. Of the 90 Governments that considered unsafe abortion to be a major or minor concern in 2015, 71 per cent had adopted specific policy measures in the previous five years to expand access to safe abortion care, including post-abortion care.

Unsafe abortions remain a major concern in many regions

Figure 14.

Proportion of Government by level of concern about unsafe abortion, level of development and region, 2015



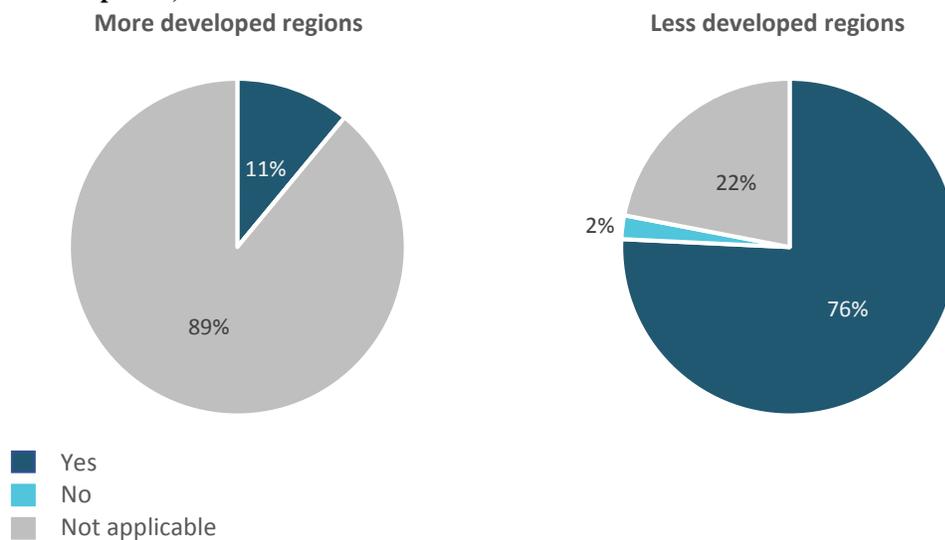
Note: The two countries of the Northern America region are not included in this graph.

Birth registration

Nearly all countries with incomplete birth registration have adopted measures to improve it

Nearly all countries in the world with incomplete coverage of birth registration in 2015 had adopted policy measures to improve such coverage in the previous five years. Out of 178 countries with available information in 2015, the coverage of birth registration was nearly universal (96 per cent or higher) in 70 countries (39 per cent). The coverage of birth registration was nearly universal in 90 per cent or more countries in Europe and Northern America, compared with only 8 per cent in Africa. Of the 108 countries with incomplete coverage, 105 (97 per cent) had undertaken policy measures in the past five years to improve the coverage of birth registration.

Figure 15.
Proportion of Governments with measures to improve coverage of birth registration, by level of development, 2015



Note: "Not applicable" indicates that coverage of birth registration in the country is near universal (96 per cent or higher).



Policies on international migration

International migration has grown in complexity, scope and impact, affecting Governments all over the world. The number of international migrants – persons living in a country other than where they were born – has continued to grow rapidly over the past two decades reaching 258 million in 2017, up from 222 million in 2010 and 173 million in 2000. With appropriate policies, migration can contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic growth and development. Indeed, the available evidence suggests that the overall impact of international migration is overwhelmingly positive for countries of origin, countries of destination and migrants and their families.

While the international community has long recognized the important relationship between international migration and development, the integration of migrants and migration into the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* represents an important step forward. Specifically, target 10.7 of the SDGs calls on countries to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.

Immigration

At the global level, in 2015, the majority of Governments (61 per cent) had a policy to maintain their current level of documented immigration. Another 14 per cent of Governments had either no official policy or did not seek to influence the level of immigration. Among the remaining Governments, 13 per cent had a policy to lower the level of immigration while 12 per cent had a policy to raise it.

Globally, most Governments seek to maintain current levels of immigration

Governments in more developed regions were more likely to have policies to raise immigration (29 per cent) than lower it (8 per cent). In less developed regions, only 7 per cent of Governments had policies to raise immigration, in contrast to 14 per cent that had policies to lower it. Worldwide, the proportion of Governments with policies to lower the level of immigration has declined since the mid-1990s (from 40 per cent in 1996 to 13 per cent in 2015), while the share of Governments with policies to raise the level of immigration has increased, from just 4 per cent in 1996 to 12 per cent in 2015.

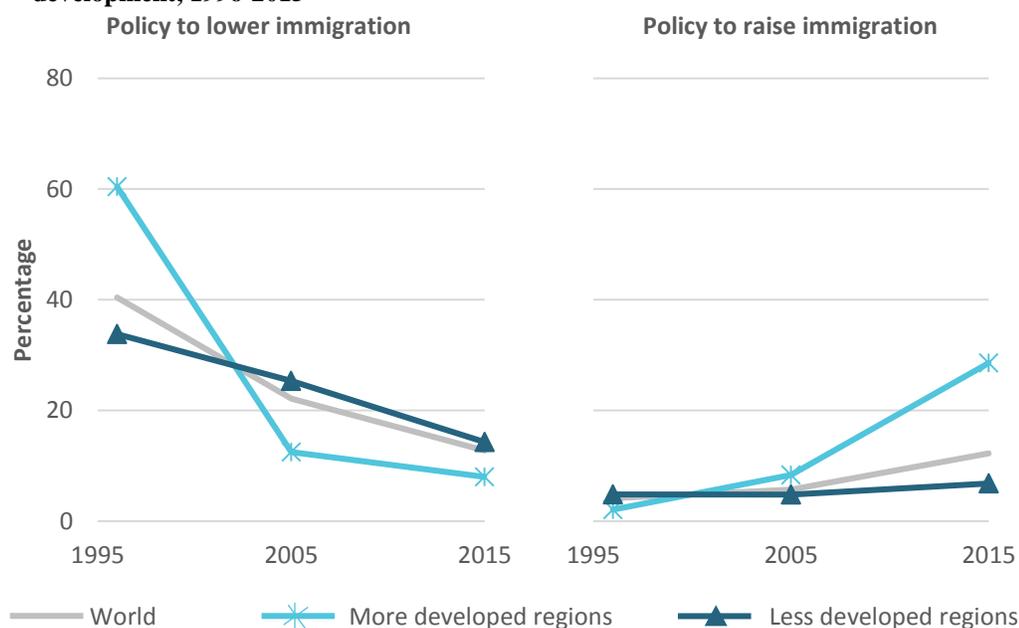
Governments have become increasingly selective about attracting highly skilled immigrants, who may help complement country's own domestic workforce qualifications. In 2015, out of 176 countries with available data, Governments of 77 countries (44 per cent) had adopted policies to raise immigration of highly skilled workers, 7 countries (4 per cent) had policies to lower it, and the remaining 92 countries (52 per cent) either had policies aimed at maintaining the current levels or had no policies in place in this regard. The proportion of Governments that had policies to raise immigration of highly skilled workers in 2015 had doubled from 22 per cent in 2005. In 2015, policies to raise immigration of highly skilled workers were more prevalent amongst Governments in more developed regions (62 per cent) than in less developed regions (37 per cent).

Among 148 countries with available information on the rationale for immigration policy, 68 per cent of Governments identified meeting labour market demands as the

Meeting labour demands is the main rationale for countries' immigration policies

underlying reason for their current immigration policy. A large share of Governments (46 per cent) also viewed immigration policy as a tool to safeguard employment opportunities for their nationals. Demographic drivers were the third most 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.

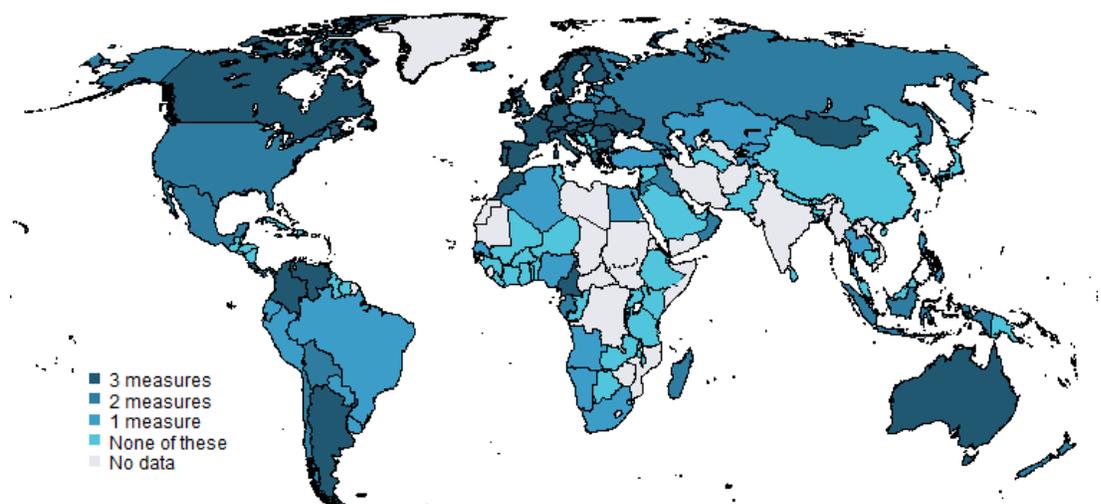
Figure 16.
Proportion of Governments with policies to lower or raise immigration, by level of development, 1996-2015



Integration of immigrants

Appropriate integration and inclusion policies, with reference to access to education, health care, language training, justice, etc. are essential to protect migrant rights, to achieve inclusive and sustainable economic growth and development of the country of destination, and to contribute to the wellbeing of migrants themselves. In 2015, out of a total of 153 countries with available data, Governments of 80 countries (52 per cent) provided protection against discrimination, 57 countries (37 per cent) had language skills training available to immigrants and 55 countries (36 per cent) facilitated the transfer of professional credentials. Governments in more developed regions were more likely to have promoted the integration of migrants through at least one of these measures (85 per cent) than in less developed regions (48 per cent). The proportion of Governments that had at least one of these measures in 2015 ranged from 40 per cent in Africa and 51 per cent in Asia to 86 in Europe and 100 per cent in Northern America.

Figure 17.
Government measures to encourage the integration of migrants, 2015



Note: The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion 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. 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 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).

Irregular immigration

Irregular migration poses multiple challenges to countries of origin, transit and destination, as well as to migrants themselves. Migrants in irregular situation are particularly vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation and abuse, and are at risk of being exploited by criminal organizations involved in human trafficking and migrant smuggling. A growing number of governments have responded to address irregular migration by reforming their immigration laws, promoting the return of irregular migrants and implementing regularization programmes. In 2015, among 177 countries with information on three specific policy measures to address irregular immigration, 175 countries (99 per cent) used fines, detention or deportation of migrants in an irregular situation, 137 countries (77 per cent) had penalties for employers of migrants in an irregular situation, while 60 countries (34 per cent) facilitated the regularization of their legal status through defined schemes or conditions.

Most countries have adopted policy measures to address irregular immigration

Emigration

Emigration generates both opportunities and challenges for sending countries, especially in developing regions. Policies addressing emigration of citizens can respond to a wide range of needs, both from the perspective of individuals who have left their countries of origin and from the perspective of governments in sending countries.

Globally, in 2015, the majority of Governments either had no explicit policy on emigration (36 per cent) or sought to maintain current levels (23 per cent). Only 9 per cent

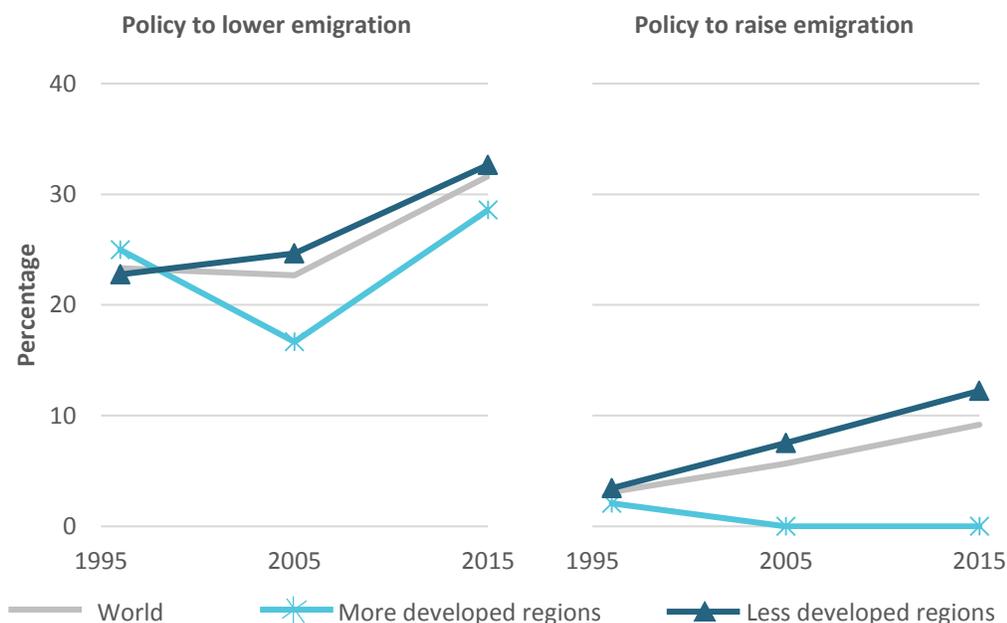
Few Governments explicitly seek to raise levels of emigration

of Governments sought to raise the current level of emigration of their citizens, while 32 per cent had policies to lower it.

Since the mid-1990s, the proportion of Governments with policies to lower emigration has increased from 23 per cent in 1996 to 32 per cent in 2015, while the proportion of Governments with policies to raise emigration has increased from 3 per cent in 1996 to 9 per cent in 2015. On the other hand, the proportion of countries that aim at maintaining or not intervening in their current emigration levels has declined from 74 per cent in 1996 to 59 per cent in 2015.

A higher proportion of Governments from the more developed regions (71 per cent) had policies to maintain their level of emigration or did not have a policy to influence it than in less developed regions (55 per cent). No country from a more developed region had a policy to raise their emigration level in 2015, whereas a growing number of countries in less developed regions intended to raise it, up from 3 per cent in 1996 to 12 per cent in 2015.

Figure 18.
Proportion of Governments with policies to lower or raise emigration, by development level, 1996-2015



Diaspora investment

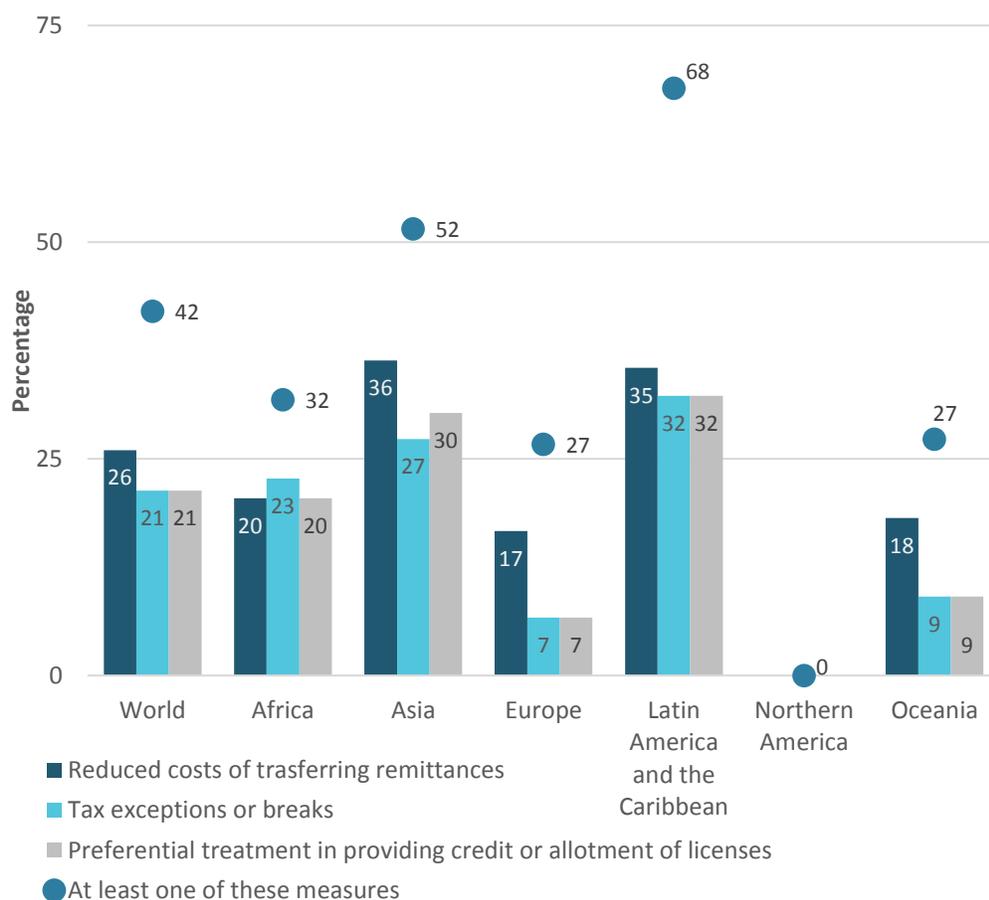
Encouraging diaspora members to become more involved in the development of their country of origin has gained more attention in recent years, among governments in countries of origin and their diaspora community. Many governments have implemented policy measures to encourage investment by their diaspora, by providing financial incentives and facilitating the transfer of remittances.

Globally, among 150 countries with available data in 2015, less than half (42 per cent) of Governments had instituted one or more policy measures to encourage investment by their diaspora. Twenty-six per cent of Governments had policies to reduce the costs of transferring remittances; 21 per cent had tax exemptions or breaks specifically available to their diaspora; and 21 per cent gave their diaspora preferential treatment in providing credit or allotment of licenses. Latin American and the Caribbean region had the highest proportion of Governments having adopted at least one of these measures (68 per cent), followed by Asia (52 per cent), Africa (32 per cent), Europe and Oceania (27 per cent) and Northern America (0 per cent).

Less than half of Governments have policies to encourage investment by their diaspora

Figure 19.

Proportion of Governments with a policy to encourage investment by their diaspora, by type of policy measure and region, 2015



Return migration

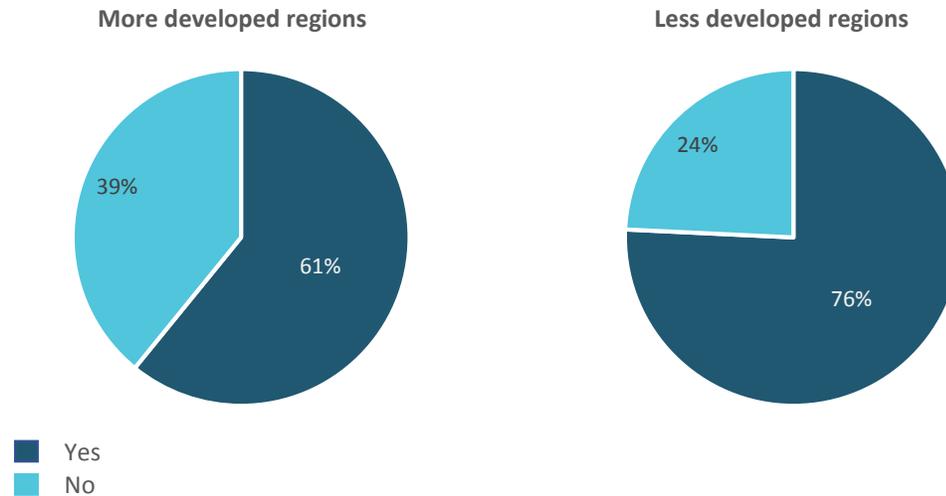
The return of citizens living abroad can contribute to the development of the countries of origin by promoting capital inflows, investments and the transfer of technologies and knowledge acquired abroad. Many Governments facing growing emigration of skilled workers, have instituted policies or programmes to encourage the return of their citizens living abroad. In 2015, out of the 178 countries with available data, 72 per cent of

Most Governments encourage the return of their citizens from abroad

Governments had policies to encourage the return of their citizens. The proportion of Governments seeking to encourage the return of their citizens has increased consistently since the mid-1990s, from 43 per cent in 1996, to 51 per cent in 2005 and 72 per cent in 2015. A higher proportion of Governments in less developed regions (76 per cent) had policies to encourage the return of their citizens than in more developed regions (61 per cent).

Figure 20.

Proportion of Governments with measures to encourage the return of their citizens, by level of development, 2015



The proportion of Governments with policies to encourage the return of citizens increased most rapidly in Europe, from 32 per cent in 2005 to 66 per cent in 2015, closely followed by Latin America and the Caribbean, from 57 per cent in 2005 to 88 per cent in 2015. On the other hand, Oceania observed a decline in this proportion from 63 per cent in 2005 to 50 per cent in 2015.



References

UNFPA, UNDESA, UN-HABITAT, IOM (2014) *Population dynamics in the post 2015 development agenda: Report of the Global Thematic Consultation on Population Dynamics*.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2014) *World Urbanization Prospects 2014 Revision (ST/ESA/SER.A/352)*

----- (2015) *World Population Ageing 2015 (ST/ESA/SER.A/390)*

----- (2016) *International Migration Report 2015: Highlights (ST/ESA/SER.A/375)*

----- (2017) *World Population Prospects. Key findings and advanced tables 2017 Revision (ESA/P/WP/248)*

United Nations General Assembly (2015) Resolution 70/1. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

World Health Organization (2016) *Maternal Mortality Fact Sheet*. Available at: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs348/en/>.

Photo credits

Cover photo: Primary school classroom, Ethiopia. UN photo by Eskinder Debebe, cropped from original, <https://www.unmultimedia.org/photo/detail.jsp?id=208/20834&key=15&query=Eskinder&lang=&sf=>

Page 10: Aerial view of Monrovia, UN photo by Christopher Herwig, cropped from original, https://www.flickr.com/photos/un_photo/5434063718/

Page 20: Newborn child delivered in Mongolia hospital, UN photo by Eskinder Debebe, cropped from original, <http://www.unmultimedia.org/photo/detail.jsp?id=420/420745&key=1001&query=maternal%20health&lan>

Page 26: Migrant workers harvest corn, USDA photo by Bob Nichols, cropped from original, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/usdagov/9622527004/in/album-72157635273186104/>

This page is left intentionally blank

This page is left intentionally blank

