

E c o n o m i c & S o c i a l A f f a i r s

**TRENDS IN INTERNATIONAL MIGRANT
STOCK: MIGRANTS BY AGE AND SEX**

CD-ROM DOCUMENTATION



United Nations

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Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Population Division

TRENDS IN INTERNATIONAL MIGRANT STOCK: MIGRANTS BY AGE AND SEX

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DESA

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PREFACE

The Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) of the United Nations Secretariat is responsible for providing the international community with up-to-date and objective information on population and development. The Population Division provides guidance to the United Nations General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Population and Development on population and development issues and undertakes studies on population levels, trends and dynamics, monitors population policies and conducts research on the interrelationships between population and development.

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. The Population Division maintains the United Nations Global Migration Database, which includes the most comprehensive dataset on international migrants enumerated in the countries or areas of the world and classified by country of origin, sex and age. Depending on the nature of the national data available, country of origin is recorded either as country of birth or country of citizenship.

This report presents, for the first time, estimates of the number of international migrants by age and sex. It describes the contents of the dataset *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by Age and Sex*. This dataset contains time-series of estimates and projections of the number of international migrants in the 196 countries or areas with 100,000 inhabitants or more as of mid-2010 for the years 1990, 2000 and 2010. Responsibility for the dataset *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by Age and Sex* rests with the Population Division. The Population Division gratefully acknowledges the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for supporting the completion of this work. The dataset is presented in Excel files which, together with this report, are available on CD-ROM.

For further information about the dataset *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by Age and Sex*, please contact Ms. Hania Zlotnik, Director, Population Division, United Nations, New York, NY 10017, USA by telephone (+1 212) 963-3179, fax (+1 212) 963-2147 or email (migrationp@un.org). More information on the activities of the Population Division in the area of international migration can be found at www.unmigration.org.

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EXPLANATORY NOTES

The dataset makes use of the following symbols:

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

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.

A zero (0) indicates that the value is zero, rounded to zero or that data are not available.

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

Numbers and percentages in tables do not necessarily add to totals because of rounding.

References to countries and areas:

The designations “more developed regions” and “less developed regions” are intended for statistical convenience and do not necessarily express a judgement about the stage reached by a particular country or area in the development process. The term “country” as used in this publication also refers, as appropriate, to areas.

More developed regions comprise all regions of Europe plus Northern America, Australia and New Zealand, and Japan.

Less developed regions comprise all regions of Africa, Asia (excluding Japan), Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia.

The group of least developed countries, as defined by the United Nations General Assembly, 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, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Sudan, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Yemen and Zambia.

The designation sub-Saharan Africa is commonly used to indicate all of Africa except northern Africa, with the Sudan included in sub-Saharan Africa.

Countries and areas are grouped geographically into six major areas: Africa; Asia; Europe; Latin America and the Caribbean; Northern America; and Oceania. These major areas are further divided into 22 geographical regions.

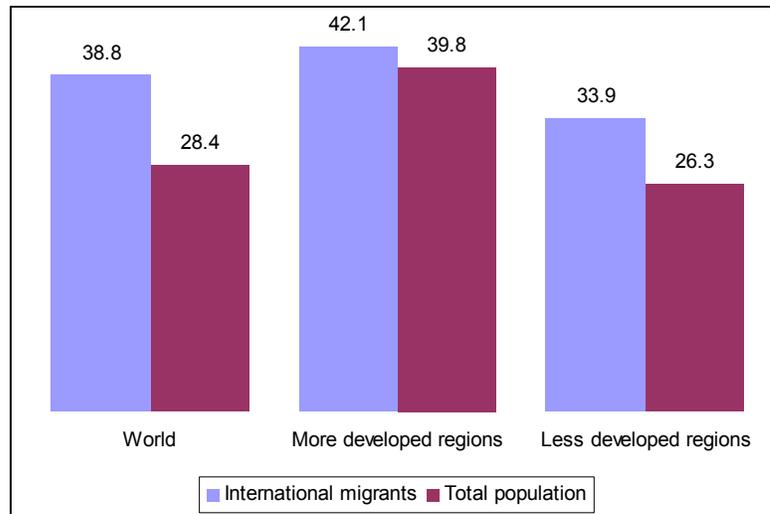
Names and composition of geographical areas follow those of “Standard country or area codes for statistical use” (ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/49/Rev.3), available at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/m49/m49.htm>.

I. MAIN FINDINGS

This publication presents, for the first time, estimates of the migrant stock by age and sex for every country in the world.¹ The results indicate that international migrants in developed countries tend to be older than those in developing countries. In both developing and developed countries, the large majority of international migrants are of working age. In the less developed regions, male migrants significantly outnumber female migrants in the working ages. In the more developed regions, the sex ratio is more balanced, however.

At the world level, the median age of international migrants was almost 39 years in 2010.² On average, international migrants in the more developed regions were aged 42, some eight years older than international migrants in the less developed regions (see figure I). International migrants in the least developed countries were even younger, with a median age of 29 years. The difference in the median age of the migrant stock by development region reflects that of the general population. In the more developed regions, the median age of the total population was 39.8 years in 2010, compared to 26.3 years in the less developed regions.

Figure I. Median age of international migrants and total population, 2010 (years)



International migrants are older than the general population. The difference in the median age between migrants and non-migrants ranges from 2.3 years in the more developed regions to 7.6 years in the less developed regions. Globally, international migrants are about 10 years older than non-migrants (see figure I). The relatively high median age of international migrants is partly due to the way children born to international migrants are classified. In most destination countries, children born to international migrants are included in the native-born population and thus not counted as international migrants. Migrant children are also underrepresented in the migrant stock due to restrictive government policies on family reunification. In many countries, migrant workers are discouraged from bringing their immediate family members, including children.

¹ Countries with fewer than 100,000 inhabitants are not shown separately, but are included in the regional totals.

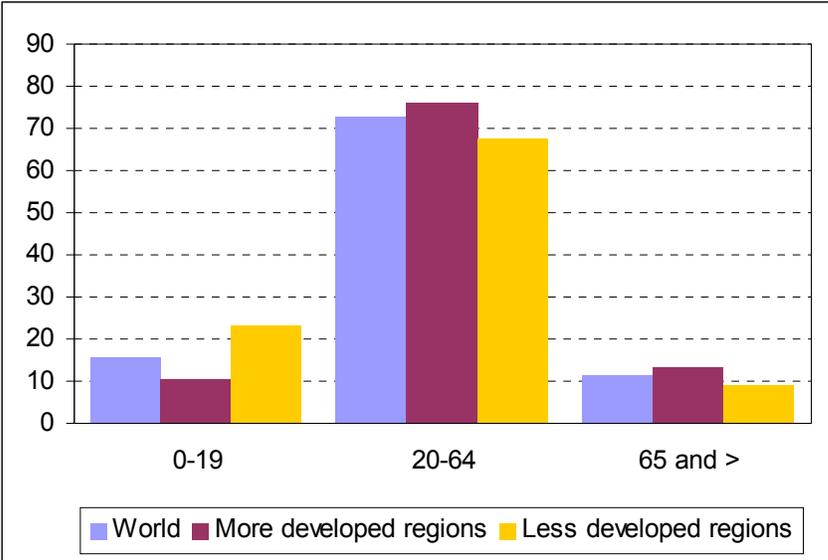
² The median age divides the population in two equal parts.

While migrants are, on average, older than non-migrants, the migrant stock is ageing less rapidly than the general population. Between 1990 and 2010, the median age of the global migrant stock rose by 3.3 years or nine per cent. During the same period, the median age of the general population increased by 4.4 years or 18 per cent. The relatively slow ageing of the migrant stock reflects the dynamics of international migration, characterized by a continuous inflow of international migrants of working age coupled with return migration at older ages.

This “replacement” of older generations of international migrants by younger ones is particularly prevalent in the less developed regions. As a result, the median age of the migrant stock increases less rapidly in the less developed regions than in the more developed regions. Between 1990 and 2010, the median age of the migrant stock in the less developed regions increased by 1.8 years, or six per cent, while the median age of the migrant stock in the more developed regions increased by 3.5 years, or nine per cent.

The higher median age of migrants residing in the more developed regions as compared to those residing in the less developed regions is reflected in the distribution by broad age group (see figure II). Migrants under the age of 20 comprise almost one quarter of the migrant stock in developing countries, compared to only 10 per cent in developed countries. Conversely, the age cohort 65 and over among international migrants is larger in the more developed regions, 13 per cent, than in the less developed regions, 9 per cent (see figure II).

Figure II. Age distribution of international migrants by development group, 2010 (percentages)

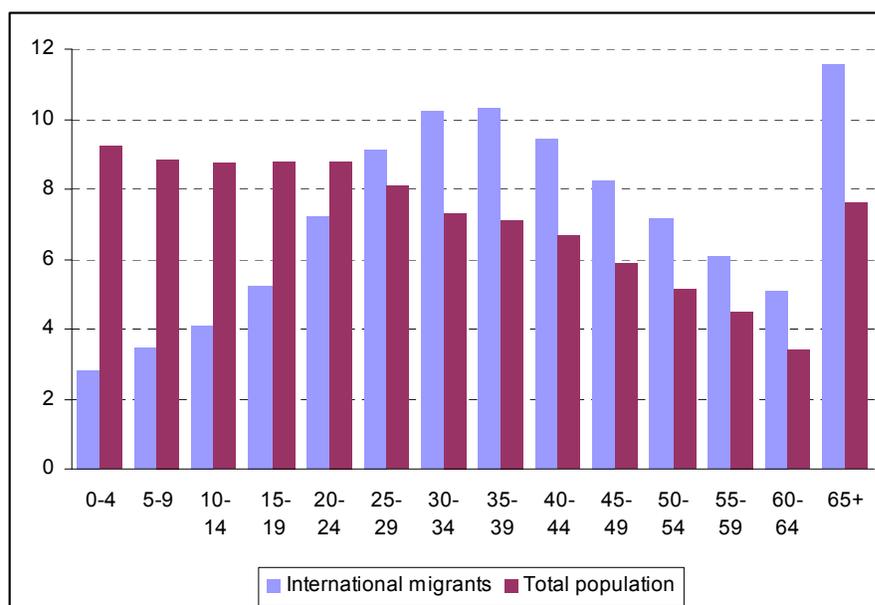


In the more developed regions, the percentage of international migrants of working age exceeds that in the less developed regions. Consequently, the support ratio³ for the migrant stock in the more developed regions was significantly higher (3.2) than in the less developed regions (2.1).

³ The ratio of persons of working age (persons aged 20 to 64) to dependants (persons under the age of 20 plus those aged 65 and over).

In 2010, 16 per cent of the global migrant stock was under the age of 20 compared to 36 per cent of the total population. As noted earlier, the relatively small share of children in the migrant stock is due in large part to the lack of family reunification opportunities for migrant workers in some destination countries as well as the classification of migrant children born in destination countries as native-born. Because the younger age cohorts among international migrants are relatively small, other age groups are relatively large. Thus, 73 per cent of the global migrant stock was aged 20 to 64 compared to 57 per cent of the global population. International migrants are also overrepresented among older persons: some 12 per cent of the global migrant stock is aged 65 or over, compared to eight per cent of the general population (see figure III).

Figure III. Age distribution of international migrants and the total population, 2010 (percentages)

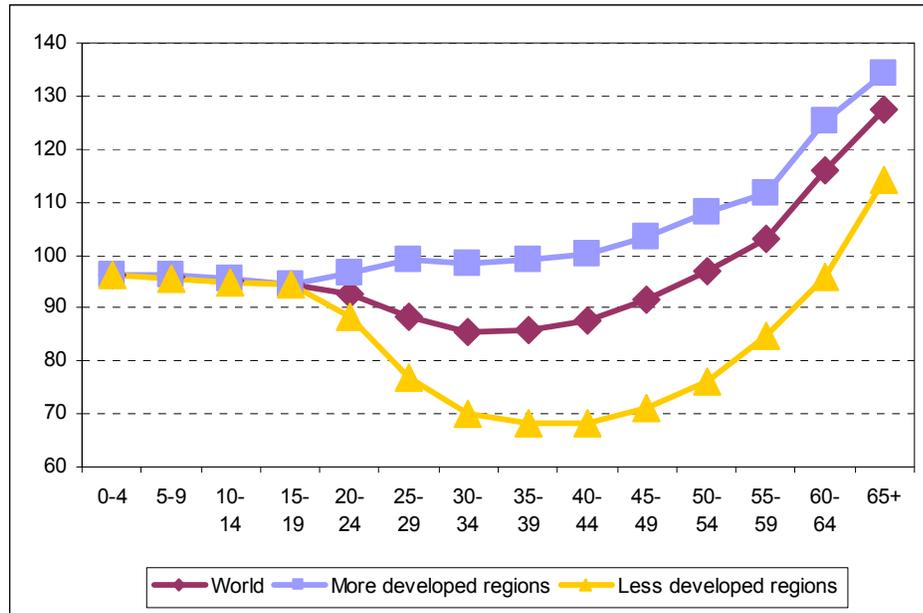


Some 51 per cent of the global migrant stock is male. Male migrants outnumber their female counterparts until the age group 50-54. Starting with the age group 55-59, however, female migrants are more numerous than male migrants. Women migrants are particularly overrepresented in the age group 65 and over, a reflection of their higher life expectancy (see figure III).

The distribution of international migrants by age and sex differs greatly between the more and the less developed regions. In developed countries, the number of female migrants is similar to that of male migrants from the age group 0 to 4 until the age group 45 to 49, a reflection of the importance of the role of family migration in this region.

As in the developed countries, the size of the male and female migrant population in developing countries is broadly similar in the youngest age groups. However, from the age group 20 to 24 onwards, the percentage of female migrants in developing countries drops rapidly. Between the ages 30 and 49, women constitute only some 70 per cent of the migrant stock in developing countries, indicating that international migration in this region is dominated by temporary labour migration of males. The percentage of female migrants in the less developed regions rises rapidly in the older age groups (see figure IV).

Figure IV. Female international migrants per 100 male international migrants, 2010



II. CD-ROM DOCUMENTATION

The CD-ROM entitled *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by Age and Sex* provides estimates of the international migrant stock by age and sex for 1 July 1990, 1 July 2000 and 1 July 2010. This is the first time that the Population Division has prepared such estimates. The total number of international migrants for each country is consistent with those provided in *Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2008 Revision* (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2008).

In response to a growing demand for data on international migrants, the Population Division has developed the Global Migration Database. This database contains the most complete set of official statistics on the foreign-born and the foreign population enumerated in the countries or areas of the world and classified by country of origin, sex and age. Depending on the available data, country of origin is represented either as the country of birth or the country of citizenship. The Global Migration Database can be accessed free of charge from the migration website of the Population Division (www.unmigration.org).

The statistics contained in the Global Migration Database provided the basis for the estimation of the number of international migrants in each country or area of the world by age and sex for 1990, 2000 and 2010. The estimates were produced for each of the 196 countries and areas with a total population of 100,000 or more in 2010. Countries with fewer than 100,000 inhabitants are not shown separately, but were included in the regional totals.

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE DATASET

This section describes the worksheets contained in the Excel workbook UN_MigrantStock_2010.xls. Each worksheet has a name located on its tab. The description of each worksheet is presented below following its name.

Contents: The workbook opens on this worksheet, which provides an index to the rest of the worksheets in the workbook and has links that take the user to the selected worksheet by clicking either on its name (left column) or on the title of each table. The contents of the workbook are described below.

1. *Worksheets providing estimates*

The estimates for the period 1990-2010 are presented in 15 tables, numbered 1 to 15, each presented on a separate worksheet. In all of these tables, the classification of countries or areas by region, major area and development group is the same and corresponds to the classification currently used in reporting population information. It contains estimates for each of the 196 countries or areas with a population of 100,000 or more in 2010.

Each table presents estimates for the regions, major areas, development groups and the world as a whole according to the definition of regions used currently and presented in the annex of the workbook. The tables have a consistent layout that includes a first column showing the sort order of the items listed, a second column showing the name of each country, area and geographical grouping, a third column showing the existence of notes that provide special information on particular entries (see the description of the worksheet Notes below), and a fourth column showing the “country code” for each country, area or geographical grouping. For countries or areas, this code consists of three digits and was established by the International Standards Organization (ISO). For geographical groupings, the codes presented are those

used by the Population Division. These four columns are repeated in all the tables. The fifth column, which contains codes indicating the type of data used in deriving the estimates presented, is included only in the tables showing estimates of the international migrant stock or indicators derived from those estimates. The codes used are: B, which indicates that estimates were derived from data on the foreign-born population; C, which indicates that estimates were derived from data on foreign citizens, also called foreigners; R, which indicates that the number of refugees or persons in refugee-like situations as reported by the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) were added to the estimates, and I, which indicates that there were no data on international migrants for the country or area concerned and that the estimates presented were imputed. A short description of each of the tables follows.

Table 1: *International migrant stock at mid-year by age and sex and by major area, region, country or area, 1990.* This Table presents the complete set of estimates of the international migrant stock by age and sex and by major area, region, country or area for 1 July 1990.

Table 2: *International migrant stock at mid-year by age and sex and by major area, region, country or area, 2000.* This Table presents the complete set of estimates of the international migrant stock by age and sex and by major area, region, country or area for 1 July 2000.

Table 3: *International migrant stock at mid-year by age and sex and by major area, region, country or area, 2010.* This Table presents the complete set of estimates of the international migrant stock by age and sex and by major area, region, country or area for 1 July 2010.

Table 4: *Total population at mid-year by age and sex and by major area, region, country or area, 1990 (thousands).* This Table presents estimates of the total population obtained from *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision*. The estimates refer to 1 July 1990.

Table 5: *Total population at mid-year by age and sex and by major area, region, country or area, 2000 (thousands).* This Table presents estimates of the total population obtained from *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision*. The estimates refer to 1 July 2000.

Table 6: *Total population at mid-year by age and sex and by major area, region, country or area, 2010 (thousands).* This Table presents estimates of the total population obtained from *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision*. The estimates refer to 1 July 2010.

Table 7: *International migrant stock as percentage of the total population by age and sex and by major area, region, country or area, 1990.* The percentages shown are calculated by dividing the entries in Table 1 by those in Table 4 and expressing the results in percentages. The estimates refer to 1 July 1990.

Table 8: *International migrant stock as percentage of the total population by age and sex and by major area, region, country or area, 2000.* The percentages shown are calculated by dividing the entries in Table 2 by those in Table 5 and expressing the results in percentages. The estimates refer to 1 July 2000.

Table 9: *International migrant stock as percentage of the total population by age and sex and by major area, region, country or area, 2010.* The percentages shown are calculated by dividing the entries in Table 3 by those in Table 6 and expressing the results in percentages. The estimates refer to 1 July 2010.

Table 10: *Percentage distribution of the international migrant stock by age and sex and by major area, region, country or area, 1990.* The percentages shown are calculated by dividing the entries in Table 1 for

the individual age groups by the total of these age groups for males and females separately and expressing the results in percentages. The estimates refer to 1 July 1990.

Table 11: *Percentage distribution of the international migrant stock by age and sex and by major area, region, country or area, 2000.* The percentages shown are calculated by dividing the entries in Table 2 for the individual age groups by the total of these age groups for males and females separately and expressing the results in percentages. The estimates refer to 1 July 2000.

Table 12: *Percentage distribution of the international migrant stock by age and sex and by major area, region, country or area, 2010.* The percentages shown are calculated by dividing the entries in Table 3 for the individual age groups by the total of these age groups for males and females separately and expressing the results in percentages. The estimates refer to 1 July 2010.

Table 13: *Female migrants as a percentage of the international migrant stock by age and by major area, region, country or area, 1990.* The figures are obtained by dividing the number of female international migrants by the total migrant stock in Table 1 and expressing the result as a percentage. The estimates refer to 1 July 1990.

Table 14: *Female migrants as a percentage of the international migrant stock by age and by major area, region, country or area, 2000.* The figures are obtained by dividing the number of female international migrants by the total migrant stock in Table 2 and expressing the result as a percentage. The estimates refer to 1 July 2000.

Table 15: *Female migrants as a percentage of the international migrant stock by age and by major area, region, country or area, 2010.* The figures are obtained by dividing the number of female international migrants by the total migrant stock in Table 3 and expressing the result as a percentage. The estimates refer to 1 July 2010.

2 Worksheets providing additional information

Annex: *Classification of countries and areas by major area and region.* This Table presents the list of countries or areas ordered alphabetically and the major area and region to which each belongs. It also identifies the countries or areas included in the more developed regions, the group of least developed countries and in sub-Saharan Africa. In this series, 230 countries or areas are covered and their classification by development group, major area and region is the one currently used by the Population Division.

Notes: This worksheet lists the notes that provide certain specificities about the countries or areas covered or the nature of the estimates presented.

B. METHODOLOGY FOR ESTIMATING THE MIGRANT STOCK BY AGE AND SEX

This section provides information on the type of data and sources that have been used to collect the information and on the methodologies that have been applied to estimate the distribution of the migrant stock by age and sex.

1. Types of data, definitions and sources

Estimates of the total number of international migrants by country or area and by sex for the years 1990, 2000 and 2010 included in this dataset were derived from *Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2008 Revision* (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2008). Most of the statistics obtained to estimate the international migrant stock by country or area and by sex were obtained from population censuses. Additionally, population registers and nationally representative surveys provided information on the number and composition of international migrants.

In estimating the international migrant stock, international migrants have been equated with the foreign-born whenever possible. In most countries lacking data on place of birth, information on the country of citizenship of those enumerated was available and was used as the basis for the identification of international migrants, thus effectively equating international migrants with foreign citizens. Of the 196 countries and areas listed in *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by Age and Sex*, data on the foreign-born were available for 149, or 75 per cent, of them. Data on foreign citizens were used for 40 countries, that is, 20 per cent of them. Only seven countries, representing four per cent of the total, lacked data on either the foreign-born or foreigners altogether. In two countries, or one per cent of the countries, a combination of data on the foreign-born and foreign citizens was used.

The availability of information on international migrants has not kept pace with the growing interest in the subject. For 1990, the first data point of this dataset, information on the international migrant stock was available for 175 countries. During the 2000 census round, the number of countries reporting statistics on the number of the foreign-born population or the number of foreign citizens residing in their territory had dropped to 150. A key challenge for the 2010 round of population censuses will be to reverse this trend.

The approach of equating international migrants with foreign citizens when estimating the migrant stock has important shortcomings. In countries where citizenship is conferred on the basis of *jus sanguinis*, people who were born in the country of residence may be included in the number of international migrants even though they may have never lived abroad. Conversely, persons who were born abroad and who naturalized in their country of residence are excluded from the stock of international migrants when using citizenship as the criterion to define international migrants.

Using country of citizenship as the basis for the identification of international migrants has also an important impact on the age distribution of international migrants. In countries where citizenship is conferred mainly on the basis of *jus sanguinis*, children born to international migrants tend to be considered as foreign citizens and are thus included in the count of international migrants. Conversely, in countries where citizenship is conferred mainly on the basis of *jus soli*, children born to international migrants are granted citizenship upon birth and are thus excluded from the migrant stock. Despite these drawbacks, information by country of citizenship was used because ignoring it would have resulted in a lack of data for 20 per cent of the countries.

The coverage of refugees in population censuses is uneven. In countries where refugees have been granted refugee status and allowed to integrate, they are normally covered by the population census as any other international migrant. In such cases, there is no reason to make a special provision for the consideration of refugees in estimating the international migrant stock. However, in many countries, refugees lack freedom of movement and are required to reside in camps or other designated areas. In these cases, population censuses may ignore refugees. Furthermore, when refugee flows occur rapidly in situations of conflict, it is uncommon for a population census to take place soon after and to reflect the newly arrived refugee population. Consequently, for many countries hosting large refugee populations, the refugee statistics reported by

international agencies are the only source of information on persons who are recognized as refugees or find themselves in refugee-like situations. In order to ensure that the estimates of the international migrant stock reflect properly the numbers of refugees, the refugee figures reported by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNWRA) were added to the estimates of the international migrant stock for most developing countries. In doing so, care was taken to estimate refugee stocks at mid-year (1 July) from the UNHCR data, which usually refer to the end of the year. For developed countries, where refugees admitted for resettlement as well as recognized asylum-seekers are routinely included in population counts, be it by censuses or population registers, no such adjustment was made.

Further information on the methodology for estimating the global migrant stock can be obtained from the CD-ROM documentation accompanying *The 2008 Revision*.

2. *Data coverage*

Among the 196 countries or territories included in this publication, 166, representing 85 per cent of the total, had at least one data source on the age of international migrants. For 129 of them, or 78 per cent, the data used for estimation were collected using the criterion of country of birth. For the remaining 37 countries, the age distribution was estimated based on information collected using the criterion of country of citizenship. The 30 countries without any information on the age of international migrants hosted an estimated 16.9 million international migrants by mid-2010, constituting eight per cent of the global migrant stock.

The availability of data sources on the age of international migrants differs significantly between countries and regions. In Africa and Asia, 24 per cent of the countries did not produce any data sources on the age of international migrants. In Europe, one of out every 10 country was unable to report the age of the migrant stock, whereas in Latin America and the Caribbean only one country was unable to provide such information. During the 2010 round of population and housing censuses, countries in Africa and Asia should thus be particularly encouraged to produce data on the international migrant stock by age.

TABLE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTRIES BY AVAILABILITY OF DATA FOR THE ESTIMATION OF THE AGE OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS

Major area	<i>Number of available data sets</i>				<i>Total</i>
	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	
Africa	13	28	13	1	55
Asia	12	23	9	6	50
Europe	4	14	14	8	40
Latin America and the Caribbean	1	10	25	1	37
Northern America	0	0	0	2	2
Oceania	0	4	5	3	12
World	30	79	66	21	196

3. *Standardization of age groups*

Many data sets provided information by age groups other than the standard five-year age groups commonly used in demographic analysis, that is, 0 to 4, 5 to 9, etc. In total, some 40 per cent of the available

data sets required some form of redistribution to ensure that the reported data could be used for estimates by five-year age group. The most common reason for redistribution was that the data sets contained at least one age group spanning ten years or more. In addition, a significant number of datasets included age groups that did not end in a 4 or a 9. Lastly, in several data sets the oldest age group was larger than 65 and over. Various demographic methods, including interpolation and Sprague coefficients, were used to standardize the age groups.

4. Estimates for countries with two or more data sources

For the 87 countries or areas with information by age for at least two points in time, interpolation and extrapolation was used to estimate the age and sex distribution of the migrant stock on 1 July of the reference year, namely 1990, 2000 and 2010. For countries where the change in the total migrant stock was significant or where the period for extrapolation was longer than five years, the estimation method took also into consideration the change in the size of the migrant stock, the ageing of the migrant stock and the age distribution of newly arriving and departing migrants (see below under 7.).

5. Estimates for countries with only one data source

For countries or areas with only one data set, the estimation method for countries with insufficient data was applied (see below under 7).

6. Estimates for countries with no data sets

For countries or areas without any data sets, another country or group of countries was used as a model. These “model” countries were selected on the basis of various characteristics, including the use of the same criterion for enumerating international migrants, geographical proximity and migration experience.

7. Estimation method for countries with insufficient data

For countries with insufficient data to apply a straightforward interpolation or extrapolation, or where the period of extrapolation was longer than five years, a method was applied taking into consideration the ageing of the migrant stock, the age distribution of newly arriving or departing migrants, and changes in the total migrant stock. This method assumes that migration is a continuous process, whereby migrants who return to their home country or those who die are “replaced” by other migrants, while the migrants who remain in the country of destination are subject to the same ageing process as the total population. The age distribution of the newly arriving migrants is based on a combination of the migrant stock in the destination country and Castro’s migration models. Certain variations in these assumptions have been applied for specific groups, such as refugees who tend to be younger than other international migrants.



**United Nations
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
POPULATION DIVISION**

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