

## VII. SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION AND INTERNAL MIGRATION

Spatial distribution of population and development are highly interrelated, especially in the context of sustainability. Challenges related to the spatial distribution of a population include rapid urbanization and population concentration, rural depopulation, urban management and slum dwelling, and internally displaced persons and refugees, including environmentally-induced displacements. Migration is a fundamental component of the spatial distribution of a population and is likely to remain a key driver in the coming decades, particularly as a component of urbanization in developing countries.

In 2011, more than half (52 per cent) of the world's population lived in urban areas (United Nations, 2012d). The world urban population is projected to increase by 72 per cent by 2050, from 3.6 billion in 2011 to 6.3 billion in 2050, at which point, two thirds of the world's population is expected to reside in urban areas. Almost all of this growth in urban population is expected to occur in developing countries. Governments need to develop policies and adaptation strategies to plan for future urban growth, including developing appropriate infrastructure, and providing access to basic education, health, and other services, so that countries can reap the benefits of economies of scale, greater efficiency, and minimize the environmental and other adverse impacts of urban growth.

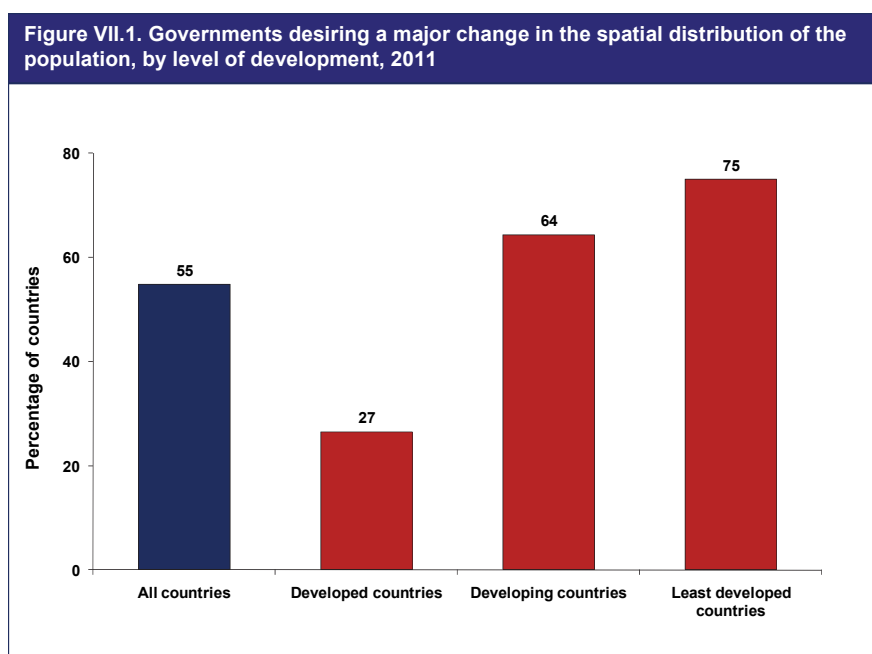
One specific area of concern relates to populations living in environmentally-fragile areas that are at risk of displacement. In 2011, at least 14.9 million people worldwide had to leave their homes due to the acute threat or impact of natural disasters (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2012). Population movement triggered by such environmental forces, including climate change, is likely to increase in the foreseeable future (International Organization for Migration, 2010a). Therefore, identifying such vulnerable populations and investing in reducing their vulnerability and enhancing their adaptive capacity, including planning for potential migration and relocation of people, should be policy priorities.

### VIEWS ON SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION

In 2011, only 12 per cent of Governments were satisfied with the spatial distribution of the population in their countries, and a majority of Governments (55 per cent) desired a major change in the spatial distribution of their population (table VII.1). Since the mid-1990s, a growing proportion of Governments have considered the spatial distribution of their population as unsatisfactory. While the percentage of Governments that viewed the spatial distribution of population in their countries as satisfactory has declined from 29 per cent in 1996 to 12 per cent in 2011, the percentage desiring a major change in the spatial distribution has increased from 42 per cent to 55 per cent.

In 2011, a much greater proportion of Governments in developing countries (64 per cent) desired a major change in the spatial distribution of population than in developed countries (27

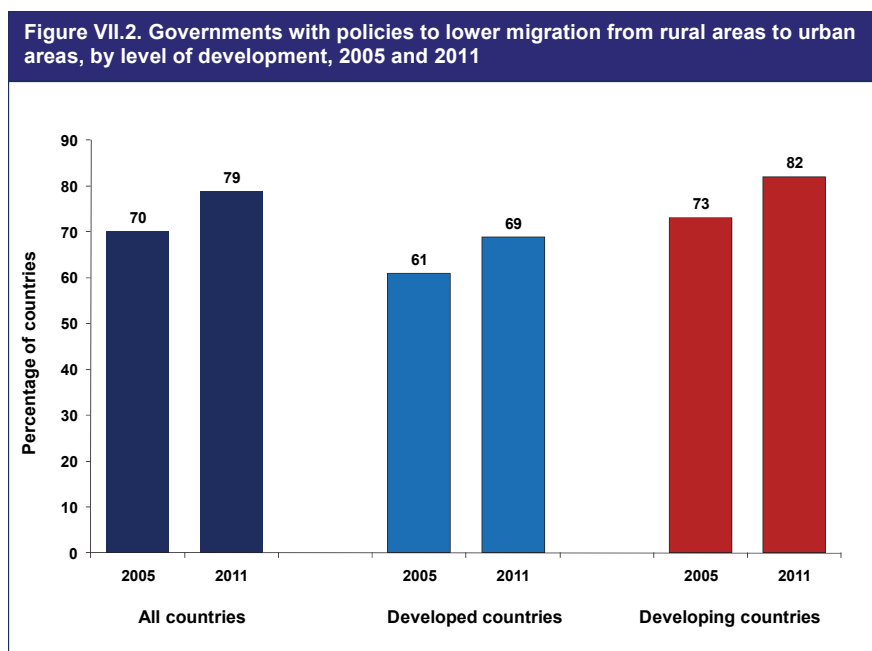
per cent) (figure VII.1). The proportion of Governments desiring a major change in the spatial distribution of their population was particularly high among least developed countries, with 75 per cent of them desiring a major change. Between 1996 and 2011, the proportion of Governments that viewed their spatial distribution as satisfactory declined in both developed and developing countries. By geographic region, the proportion of Governments desiring a major change in the spatial distribution of population ranged from 0 per cent in Northern America and 27 per cent in Europe to 79 per cent in Africa (table VII.1).



## POLICIES ON MIGRATION FROM RURAL TO URBAN AREAS

Urbanization is a key factor shaping the spatial distribution of the population. In particular, migration from rural areas to urban areas has historically represented a crucial force boosting the rapid growth of cities. In recent years, more Governments have seen the need to devise policies to slow rural to urban migration. Among 179 countries with available data in 2011, 79 per cent of Governments had policies to lower rural to urban migration, an increase from 70 per cent in 2005 (table VII.2, figure VII.2).

The proportion of Governments with policies to retain people in rural areas varied by level of development and by geographic region. In 2011, the proportion of Governments that had policies to lower rural to urban migration was higher in developing countries (82 per cent) than in developed countries (69 per cent). This proportion was even higher in least developed countries (86 per cent). Policies to lower rural to urban migration were particularly common in Oceania (85 per cent), Africa (84 per cent) and Asia (81 per cent), followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (77 per cent) and Europe (70 per cent). Between 2005 and 2011, the proportion of Governments had policies to lower rural to urban migration had increased in both developed and developing countries, as well as in all world regions, except Africa.



## POLICIES ON MIGRATION INTO URBAN AGGLOMERATIONS

In many countries, especially in developing countries, the inflow of large numbers of migrants to urban areas has led to a concentration of the population into large cities and urban agglomerations. In 1970, there were only two mega-cities (Tokyo and New York) with 10 million or more inhabitants in the whole world (United Nations, 2012d). By 2011, that number had increased to 23, and by 2025 it is expected to increase further to 37. The number of cities with 1–10 million inhabitants had also grown rapidly during this time. The growing concentration of populations in large cities has strained the capacity of local city Governments to provide basic services, such as clean water, sanitation and public transportation.

In 2011, among 176 countries with data, 69 per cent of Governments had policies to reduce the inflow of migrants to large urban agglomerations, an increase from 45 per cent in 1996 (table VII.3). During this time, there has been a corresponding decline in the proportion of Governments that did not intervene to influence the flow of migration into urban agglomerations, from 49 per cent in 1996 to 26 per cent in 2011.

Similar to the pattern observed for rural to urban migration in 2011, a much greater proportion of Governments in developing countries (79 per cent) had policies to lower migration into urban agglomerations than in developed countries (69 per cent). Notably, about half of Governments in developed countries were not intervening to influence the flow of migration into urban agglomeration, compared with only 17 per cent in developing countries. Since the mid-1990s, both developed and developing countries, including least developed countries, have seen an increase in the proportion of Governments with policies to lower migration into urban agglomerations. In 2011, policies to lower migration into urban agglomerations were particularly common among countries in Oceania (92 per cent), Latin America and the Caribbean (81 per cent), followed by Africa (77 per cent) and Asia (77 per cent), whereas, in Europe only 38 per

cent of Governments had such policies and the Governments of two countries in Northern America did not intervene to influence migration into urban agglomerations (table VII.3).

## **Chapter VII**

### **Tables**

Table VII.1. Government views on the spatial distribution of the population, 1976–2011

Year	By level of development							
	Number of countries				Percentage			
	Major change desired	Minor change desired	Satisfactory	Total	Major change desired	Minor change desired	Satisfactory	Total
<i>World</i>								
1976	78	55	17	150	52	37	11	100
1986	75	71	18	164	46	43	11	100
1996	80	57	55	192	42	30	29	100
2005	97	64	33	194	50	33	17	100
2011	107	65	23	195	55	33	12	100
<i>More developed regions</i>								
1976	4	19	11	34	12	56	32	100
1986	3	18	13	34	9	53	38	100
1996	11	15	22	48	23	31	46	100
2005	17	18	13	48	35	38	27	100
2011	13	25	11	49	27	51	22	100
<i>Less developed regions</i>								
1976	74	36	6	116	64	31	5	100
1986	72	53	5	130	55	41	4	100
1996	69	42	33	144	48	29	23	100
2005	80	46	20	146	55	32	14	100
2011	94	40	12	146	64	27	8	100
<i>Least developed countries</i>								
1976	27	15	0	42	64	36	0	100
1986	26	22	0	48	54	46	0	100
1996	30	12	6	48	63	25	13	100
2005	31	17	2	50	62	34	4	100
2011	36	11	1	48	75	23	2	100

Table VII.1. (Continued)

Year	By major area							
	Number of countries				Percentage			
	Major change desired	Minor change desired	Satisfactory	Total	Major change desired	Minor change desired	Satisfactory	Total
<i>Africa</i>								
1976	36	12	0	48	75	25	0	100
1986	34	17	0	51	67	33	0	100
1996	33	13	6	52	63	25	12	100
2005	38	13	2	53	72	25	4	100
2011	42	10	1	53	79	19	2	100
<i>Asia</i>								
1976	14	19	4	37	38	51	11	100
1986	11	24	3	38	29	63	8	100
1996	17	18	11	46	37	39	24	100
2005	23	16	8	47	49	34	17	100
2011	28	10	9	47	60	21	19	100
<i>Europe</i>								
1976	2	17	10	29	7	59	34	100
1986	2	15	12	29	7	52	41	100
1996	10	13	20	43	23	30	47	100
2005	16	15	12	43	37	35	28	100
2011	12	22	10	44	27	50	23	100
<i>Latin America and the Caribbean</i>								
1976	22	4	1	27	81	15	4	100
1986	24	8	1	33	73	24	3	100
1996	16	7	10	33	48	21	30	100
2005	13	13	7	33	39	39	21	100
2011	17	14	2	33	52	42	6	100
<i>Northern America</i>								
1976	0	1	1	2	0	50	50	100
1986	0	1	1	2	0	50	50	100
1996	0	0	2	2	0	0	100	100
2005	0	1	1	2	0	50	50	100
2011	0	1	1	2	0	50	50	100
<i>Oceania</i>								
1976	4	2	1	7	57	29	14	100
1986	4	6	1	11	36	55	9	100
1996	4	6	6	16	25	38	38	100
2005	7	6	3	16	44	38	19	100
2011	8	8	0	16	50	50	0	100





Table VII.2. Government policies on internal migration from rural areas to urban areas,<sup>1</sup> 2005 and 2011

Year	Number of countries					Percentage				
	Raise	Maintain	Lower	No intervention	Total	Raise	Maintain	Lower	No intervention	Total
<b>By level of development</b>										
<i>World</i>										
2005	6	2	115	41	164	4	1	70	25	100
2011	5	3	141	30	179	3	2	79	17	100
<i>More developed regions</i>										
2005	2	1	25	13	41	5	2	61	32	100
2011	1	0	31	13	45	2	0	69	29	100
<i>Less developed regions</i>										
2005	4	1	90	28	123	3	1	73	23	100
2011	4	3	110	17	134	3	2	82	13	100
<i>Least developed countries</i>										
2005	1	0	32	8	41	2	0	78	20	100
2011	0	0	38	6	44	0	0	86	14	100
<b>By major area</b>										
<i>Africa</i>										
2005	0	0	38	7	45	0	0	84	16	100
2011	0	0	42	8	50	0	0	84	16	100
<i>Asia</i>										
2005	3	0	30	7	40	8	0	75	18	100
2011	4	1	35	3	43	9	2	81	7	100
<i>Europe</i>										
2005	2	1	23	10	36	6	3	64	28	100
2011	1	0	28	11	40	3	0	70	28	100
<i>Latin America and the Caribbean</i>										
2005	0	1	16	13	30	0	3	53	43	100
2011	0	2	24	5	31	0	6	77	16	100
<i>Northern America</i>										
2005	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	100	100
2011	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	50	50	100
<i>Oceania</i>										
2005	1	0	8	2	11	9	0	73	18	100
2011	0	0	11	2	13	0	0	85	15	100

<sup>1</sup> Migration from rural to urban areas is not applicable in 4 countries (Holy See, Monaco, Nauru and Singapore) with 100 per cent urban population.

**Table VII.3. Government policies on internal migration into urban agglomerations,<sup>1</sup> 1976–2011**

Year	By level of development									
	Number of countries					Percentage				
	Raise	Maintain	Lower	No intervention	Total	Raise	Maintain	Lower	No intervention	Total
<i>World</i>										
1976	4	0	39	40	83	5	0	47	48	100
1986	2	1	50	41	94	2	1	53	44	100
1996	3	5	55	60	123	2	4	45	49	100
2005	4	5	107	55	171	2	3	63	32	100
2011	3	7	121	45	176	2	4	69	26	100
<i>More developed regions</i>										
1976	2	0	11	7	20	10	0	55	35	100
1986	1	1	8	9	19	5	5	42	47	100
1996	3	3	8	17	31	10	10	26	55	100
2005	2	2	14	26	44	5	5	32	59	100
2011	1	4	17	23	45	2	9	38	51	100
<i>Less developed regions</i>										
1976	2	0	28	33	63	3	0	44	52	100
1986	1	0	42	32	75	1	0	56	43	100
1996	0	2	47	43	92	0	2	51	47	100
2005	2	3	93	29	127	2	2	73	23	100
2011	2	3	104	22	131	2	2	79	17	100
<i>Least developed countries</i>										
1976	0	0	11	15	26	0	0	42	58	100
1986	0	0	7	19	26	0	0	27	73	100
1996	0	0	17	17	34	0	0	50	50	100
2005	0	0	30	12	42	0	0	71	29	100
2011	0	0	32	9	41	0	0	78	22	100

Table VII.3. (Continued)

Year	By major area									
	Number of countries					Percentage				
	Raise	Maintain	Lower	No intervention	Total	Raise	Maintain	Lower	No intervention	Total
<i>Africa</i>										
1976	0	0	18	19	37	0	0	49	51	100
1986	0	0	16	17	33	0	0	48	52	100
1996	0	1	22	18	41	0	2	54	44	100
2005	0	0	35	10	45	0	0	78	22	100
2011	0	0	36	11	47	0	0	77	23	100
<i>Asia</i>										
1976	1	0	4	0	5	20	0	80	0	100
1986	1	0	12	6	19	5	0	63	32	100
1996	0	0	18	9	27	0	0	67	33	100
2005	2	3	29	8	42	5	7	69	19	100
2011	2	2	34	6	44	5	5	77	14	100
<i>Europe</i>										
1976	2	0	11	6	19	11	0	58	32	100
1986	1	1	8	6	16	6	6	50	38	100
1996	3	3	7	13	26	12	12	27	50	100
2005	2	2	13	22	39	5	5	33	56	100
2011	1	4	15	20	40	3	10	38	50	100
<i>Latin America and the Caribbean</i>										
1976	1	0	6	13	20	5	0	30	65	100
1986	0	0	13	6	19	0	0	68	32	100
1996	0	0	8	15	23	0	0	35	65	100
2005	0	0	20	11	31	0	0	65	35	100
2011	0	1	25	5	31	0	3	81	16	100
<i>Northern America</i>										
1976	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	100	100
1986	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	100	100
1996	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	100	100
2005	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	100	100
2011	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	100	100
<i>Oceania</i>										
1976	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	100	100
1986	0	0	1	4	5	0	0	20	80	100
1996	0	1	0	3	4	0	25	0	75	100
2005	0	0	10	2	12	0	0	83	17	100
2011	0	0	11	1	12	0	0	92	8	100

<sup>1</sup> Migration into urban agglomerations is not applicable in 4 countries (Holy See, Monaco, Nauru and Singapore) with no urban agglomerations or where the entire country is one urban agglomeration.

