World Population Policies 2019

Highlights
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Highlights
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Preface

This publication presents the highlights of the report *World Population Policies 2019*. It provides an overview of policies to govern regular migration and to address irregular migration and reviews an array of policy measures related to migrants’ rights, including access to services, as well as policies to foster the integration of migrants into host societies. It also examines Government measures to maximize the development impacts of migration and to support diaspora populations.

*World Population Policies 2019* presents the official Government responses to the module on international migration (module III) of the United Nations Twelfth Inquiry among Governments on Population and Development (the “Twelfth Inquiry”). The Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has been implementing the Inquiry every five years since 1963 as part of its mandate to monitor population policies at the global level.

Responsibility for these highlights rests with the Population Division. Preparation of these highlights was facilitated by the cooperation of Member States and non-member States of the United Nations, the regional commissions and other partners. Specifically, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) assisted in gathering Government responses to the international migration module of the Twelfth Inquiry, while the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) supported efforts to collect responses from its member countries.
World Population Policies 2019: Highlights

Key messages

1. **Institutions to promote migration governance are widespread.** Among the 111 Governments that replied to the module on international migration of the Twelfth Inquiry, more than nine out of ten (92 per cent) reported having a dedicated Government agency to implement national migration policy. Ninety-one per cent of these Governments reported having an interministerial coordination mechanism on migration to promote coherence across levels of government and policy sectors.

2. **Whole-of-government or evidence-based policies are also common, but less widespread.** In 2019, three fourths of the responding Governments reported having a mechanism to ensure that migration policy is informed by data, appropriately disaggregated, or having an annual national report on migration that includes data collected by the Government or other sources. Formal mechanisms to ensure that migration policy is gender responsive were less prevalent (54 per cent).

3. **Most Governments have measures to promote cooperation and partnerships.** Ninety per cent of Governments with available data indicated that they have bilateral agreements on migration. Formal mechanisms to engage civil society and the private sector in the formulation and implementation of migration policies were reported by 74 per cent of these Governments.

4. **Few Governments are seeking to lower immigration through regular, or legal, channels.** In 2019, 37 per cent of the 111 responding Governments reported having policies to raise levels of immigration through regular channels, while 26 per cent reported policies to maintain current levels. Only 3 per cent had policies to lower their current immigration levels, while 34 per cent had either no policy or no data on such measures.

5. **Irregular migration is considered a matter of concern by Governments of all but five countries.** Globally, 68 per cent of the 111 responding Governments viewed irregular migration to their country as a major concern; another 25 per cent viewed it as a minor concern; nearly 5 per cent had no information; while nearly 3 per cent did not consider irregular migration to be a matter of concern.

6. **Promoting orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration is a priority for most Governments.** Globally, 84 per cent of Governments with available data reported having provisions for the arrival of unaccompanied or separated minors; 80 per cent reported having information and awareness-raising campaigns for prospective migrants; 76 had pre-arrival authorization controls; while 75 per cent indicated having a system to monitor international migrants who overstay their visas.

7. **Nearly all Governments have formal strategies to address human trafficking and migrant smuggling.** In 2019, more than nine out of ten responding Governments reported having policy measures to prevent trafficking in persons or to protect or assist the victims of human trafficking (95 per cent each). Measures to prosecute or criminalize human trafficking were reported by 93 per cent of these Governments.

8. **Most Governments have measures to address the mobility dimensions of crises.** Globally, more than four fifths of Governments with available data reported having a system for receiving, processing and identifying those forcibly displaced across international borders (84 per cent) or for granting permission for temporary stay or temporary protection for those forcibly displaced across international borders who are unable to return (84 per cent). A smaller proportion of these Governments (56 per cent)
reported having a national disaster risk reduction strategy with specific provisions for addressing the displacement impacts of disasters.

9. **Policy measures to protect migrant rights vary widely.** In 2019, more than four fifths of the responding Governments indicated that they provided non-nationals with equal access to essential or emergency health care (86 per cent) or justice (82 per cent) regardless of their legal immigration status. Most of these Governments also reported providing equal access to public education (62 per cent) regardless of immigration status. Government measures to promote equal work for equal pay regardless of immigration status, or to provide social security benefits to migrants on par with those received by nationals, were less prevalent (39 per cent and 22 per cent, respectively).

10. **Further steps are needed to promote the socio-economic well-being of migrants.** Globally, 81 per cent of Governments with available data reported having policy measures to facilitate the recognition of skills and qualifications acquired abroad, 78 per cent reported having measures to promote fair and ethical recruitment of migrant workers, while 67 per cent responded that they have measures to facilitate or promote the flow of remittances. Measures to align labour migration policies with actual and projected labour market needs were reported by 66 per cent of the 111 Governments, while 60 per cent indicated that they have measures to facilitate the portability of social security benefits.
Introduction

In 2019, the number of international migrants worldwide reached 272 million, up from 221 million in 2010 (United Nations, 2019a). People migrate for many reasons, including to search for jobs or education or to make a better future for themselves and their families. At the same time, political conflict, poverty, inequality and a lack of sustainable livelihoods continue to compel many people to leave their homes and undertake dangerous and sometimes fatal journeys.

International migration has a significant impact on countries of origin and destination. In 2018, migrant remittances reached an estimated US$688 billion globally (World Bank, 2019). Remittances improve the livelihoods of families and communities in countries of origin through investments in education, health, sanitation, housing and other infrastructure. Countries of destination also benefit significantly from migration, as migrants often fill critical labour gaps, create jobs as entrepreneurs, and pay taxes and contribute to social security programmes.

Despite the significant benefits of migration, international migrants remain among the most vulnerable members of society. Migrants in irregular situations are especially vulnerable to discrimination and abuse. Migrants, particularly women and children, may fall victim to human trafficking. Racial, ethnic and religious profiling of migrants, as well as instances of systematic intolerance and xenophobia, constitute barriers to their integration and full participation in society.

When supported by appropriate policies, international migration can contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic growth and development. Target 10.7 of the Sustainable Development Goal (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. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, a non-legally binding framework for international cooperation among all relevant actors on migration, also recognized that migration is a source of prosperity, innovation and sustainable development and that these positive impacts can be optimized by improving migration governance.

Data for *World Population Policies 2019* were collected through the United Nations Twelfth Inquiry among Governments on Population and Development (the “Twelfth Inquiry”). The Inquiry has been used to survey population policies, including policies on international migration, since 1963. The Twelfth Inquiry was administered between September 2018 and August 2019 and was sent to all Member States and non-member States of the United Nations.¹ The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) assisted in gathering Government responses to the international migration module of the Twelfth Inquiry.

The analysis presented in this report is based on data for 111 countries that had responded to the international migration module of the Twelfth Inquiry by September 2019 (map 1). The availability of information on migration policies varies by region.

This publication presents the highlights of the report *World Population Policies 2019*. It provides an overview of Government policies and programmes related to international migration, including policies to govern immigration and to address irregular migration. It reviews policy measures related to migrants’ rights, including access to services, as well as policies to foster the integration of migrants into host societies. It also examines Government measures to maximize the development impacts of migration and to support diaspora investment and migrant return.

¹ These comprise 193 Member States, 2 observer States (Holy See, State of Palestine) and 2 non-member States (Cook Islands, Niue).
Map 1.
Governments that responded to the international migration module of the Twelfth Inquiry by September 2019


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 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).
International migration governance

International migration is a multidimensional reality that individual States cannot address alone. Instead, it requires cooperation and dialogue between and among countries in order to maximize the benefits of migration and reduce its costs for both countries of origin and countries of destination, as well as for migrants and their families. In addition, it requires a complex framework of institutions, laws and policy measures to ensure coherence across all policy sectors and levels of government. Cooperation and partnership with relevant stakeholders, including migrants, civil society, diaspora organizations and the private sector, are also essential for ensuring that migration governance takes place in an inclusive and comprehensive manner, addressing migration in all its dimensions for all migrants.

Institutions to promote migration governance are widespread

Nearly all of the 111 Governments that responded to the module on international migration of the Twelfth Inquiry reported having a dedicated Government agency to implement national migration policy (92 per cent) (figure 1). In addition, 91 per cent reported having an interministerial coordination mechanism on migration to promote coherence across levels of government and policy sectors (table A.1). Around three fourths of the responding Governments indicated that they had a dedicated Government unit, department or ministry for diaspora engagement, citizens abroad or overseas employment (73 per cent). A diaspora is broadly defined as the collection of individuals, and their networks, associations and communities, who have left a shared country of origin but maintain links with each other and their homeland.

While institutions to govern migration are widespread, gaps in national migration governance persist, particularly among some of the countries with large diaspora populations. Of the 32 countries hosting 1 million or more international migrants that replied to the migration module of the Twelfth Inquiry, all but two (thus, 94 per cent) reported having a dedicated mechanism to implement a national migration policy. However, among the 40 countries providing data that had a diaspora of 1 million or more, only 31 (or 78 per cent) reported having a dedicated Government entity for diaspora engagement.

Among development groups, less developed countries excluding the least developed countries will be home to more than two-thirds of the world’s older population (1.1 billion) in 2050. The fastest increase of the older population between 2019 and 2050 is projected to happen in the least developed countries (+225 per cent), rising from 37 million in 2019 to 120 million persons aged 65 years or over in 2050.
Many countries do not have formal mechanisms to promote gender-responsive migration policies

Around half of Governments with available data (54 per cent) reported having formal mechanisms to ensure that migration policy is gender responsive (table A.1). While gender-responsive migration policies are widespread in many regions, formal mechanisms are still missing in a large number of countries, including many where women and girls outnumber men and boys in the migrant population. Among countries hosting more female than male migrants, 40 per cent of those with available data did not have any formal mechanism to ensure that migration policy is gender responsive.

Whole-of-government or evidence-based policies are also common, but less widespread

Among the Governments that provided information in 2019, three fourths indicated that they had a mechanism to ensure that migration policy is informed by data, disaggregated by age, sex, migration status, geographic location, income, education level and other relevant characteristics (table A.1). Yet in many countries, the availability and timeliness of data on the number and basic characteristics of international migrants are still inadequate to support evidence-based policy making. Among the 85 countries that reported having a mechanism to ensure that migration policy is informed by data, 26 per cent did not have recent data on the total number of international migrants living in the country; 38 per cent did not have recent data on the age of migrants, and 32 per cent were missing recent information about a migrant’s country of origin (United Nations, 2019a).

Most Governments have measures to promote cooperation and partnerships

Ninety per cent of Governments that responded to module III of the Twelfth Inquiry reported having bilateral agreements on migration (figure 2), while 84 per cent reported having agreements for cooperation with other countries on return and readmission. In addition, 77 per cent of the countries reported being party to regional agreements to promote mobility. Formal mechanisms to engage civil society and the private sector in the formulation and implementation of migration policies were reported by 74 per cent of the Governments (table A.2).

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2 Recent data refers to having at least one official empirical data source providing information on the number of international migrants, defined either by place of birth or citizenship, dating from the year 2010 or later.

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Figure 2.
Percentage of Governments that reported having measures to foster cooperation among countries and encouraging stakeholder inclusion and participation in migration policy, 2019

Note: Based on 111 countries with available data (as of 1 September 2019). See table A.2.
Immigration and Emigration

The volume of movements across international borders has increased manifold over the past decades (United Nations, 2019c). As the number of people moving across international borders continues to rise, the need for coherent, evidence-based policies to manage the volume, direction and composition of migration flows is greater than ever.

Few Governments are seeking to lower immigration through regular channels

In 2019, most Governments reported either having policies to raise levels of immigration through regular channels (37 per cent) or policies to maintain current levels (26 per cent) (figure 3 and table 3.A). Only 3 per cent of Governments had policies to lower their current immigration levels.

Most Governments allow immigration for the purpose of family reunification at least under certain conditions. In 2019, about three fourths of Governments reported either having policies aimed at maintaining their current level of immigration for family reunification (31 per cent) or not having a policy to influence it (42 per cent). Only 6 per cent of Governments had policies to lower immigration for family reunification, while 21 per cent had policies to raise it.

Labour migration policies in destination countries have become increasingly selective, favouring the admission of international migrants with skills considered to be in short supply. Many countries also grant highly skilled workers preferential treatment, subjecting them to fewer restrictions than low-skilled migrants regarding admission, length of stay, change of employment and admission of family members. In 2019, the majority of Governments reported having some type of policy measure to attract highly skilled migrants. Forty per cent of Governments reported having policies to raise immigration of highly skilled workers, 5 per cent had policies to lower such inflows, and the remaining countries either had policies aimed at maintaining the current levels (19 per cent) or had no policies in place (37 per cent).

In 2019, the majority of Governments had no explicit

Figure 3.
Percentage of Governments that reported having policy measures concerning the annual level of immigration or emigration, 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immigration through regular channels</th>
<th>37% Raise</th>
<th>26% Maintain at current levels</th>
<th>3% Lower</th>
<th>34% No official policy or no data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immigration for family reunification</td>
<td>21% Raise</td>
<td>31% Maintain at current levels</td>
<td>6% Lower</td>
<td>42% No official policy or no data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration of highly skilled workers</td>
<td>40% Raise</td>
<td>19% Maintain at current levels</td>
<td>5% Lower</td>
<td>37% No official policy or no data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emigration of its citizens</td>
<td>8% Raise</td>
<td>13% Maintain at current levels</td>
<td>20% Lower</td>
<td>59% No official policy or no data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emigration of highly skilled workers</td>
<td>9% Raise</td>
<td>10% Maintain at current levels</td>
<td>25% Lower</td>
<td>56% No official policy or no data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Based on 111 countries with available data (as of 1 September 2019). See table A.3.
policy on the emigration of their citizens (59 per cent) or on the emigration of highly skilled workers (56 per cent). Less than one in ten Governments reported seeking to raise the level of emigration of either their citizens or highly skilled workers. By contrast, 20 per cent of Governments sought to lower the emigration of citizens and 25 per cent sought to lower the emigration of highly skilled workers.

Immigration policies generally respond to labour market needs

Countries cite a variety of underlying reasons for their current immigration and emigration policies. Among the 111 countries with data in 2019, 68 per cent identified meeting labour market demands as an underlying reason for their current immigration policy (figure 4 and table A.4). A large share of Governments also viewed immigration policy as a tool to safeguard employment opportunities for their nationals (55 per cent) or retain specific categories of workers (44 per cent). Demographic drivers were cited as a rationale by around one third of responding Governments, with 34 per cent pursuing their current immigration policy to address population ageing and 27 per cent to counter long-term population decline. In terms of the rationale for current emigration policies, countering long-term population decline was the most widely cited reason (27 per cent), followed by retaining specific categories of workers (23 per cent) and addressing population ageing (20 per cent).

Figure 4.
Percentage of Governments by major underlying reasons for adopting current migration policies, 2019

A large share of Governments also viewed immigration policy as a tool to safeguard employment opportunities for their nationals (55 per cent) or retain specific categories of workers (44 per cent). Demographic drivers were cited as a rationale by around one third of responding Governments, with 34 per cent pursuing their current immigration policy to address population ageing and 27 per cent to counter long-term population decline. In terms of the rationale for current emigration policies, countering long-term population decline was the most widely cited reason (27 per cent), followed by retaining specific categories of workers (23 per cent) and addressing population ageing (20 per cent).

Note: Based on 111 countries with available data (as of 1 September 2019). See table A.4.
Irregular migration poses multiple challenges to countries of origin, transit and destination, as well as to migrants themselves. Migrants in irregular situations are often vulnerable to discrimination and abuse and are at risk of being exploited by transnational criminal networks involved in human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

*Irregular migration is considered a matter of concern by Governments of all but five countries*

Globally, 68 per cent of Governments that provided information to the Twelfth Inquiry viewed irregular migration in their countries as a major concern, another 25 per cent viewed it as a minor concern, nearly 5 per cent had no information, while nearly 3 per cent did not consider irregular migration to be a matter of concern (table A.5). Irregular migration was a major concern for 69 per cent of countries hosting one million or more international migrants in 2019.

*Promoting orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration is a priority for most Governments*

Among the policy measures to address irregular immigration and promote regular migration, 84 per cent of Governments reported having provisions for unaccompanied or separated minors, while 80 per cent of Governments reported having information and awareness-raising campaigns (see table A.6). These included government websites, awareness-raising events or training on topics related to pre- and post-arrival in destination countries or after return. Eighty per cent of Governments also reported having penalties for employers of migrants in an irregular situation; while 76 per cent had pre-arrival authorization controls. Seventy-five per cent of Governments indicated that they had a system to monitor visa overstays or used fines or detention of migrants in an irregular situation. Sixty-five per cent of Governments reported facilitating the regularization of their legal status.

*Nearly all Governments have formal strategies to address human trafficking and migrant smuggling*

More than nine out of ten of the responding Governments reported having policy measures to prevent trafficking in persons or to protect or assist the victims of human trafficking (95 per cent each) (figure 5 and table A.7). Measures to prosecute or criminalize human trafficking were reported by 93 per cent of Governments. Prosecution and criminalization were the most frequently reported measures adopted by Governments to combat migrant smuggling (76 per cent), followed by prevention (74 per cent). Measures to protect or assist victims were the least prevalent, reported by 60 per cent of Governments in 2019.

*Figure 5.*

**Percentage of Governments that reported having measures to combat trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling, 2019**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Protection or assistance to victims</th>
<th>Prevention</th>
<th>Prosecution or criminalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trafficking in persons</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant smuggling</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*Note:* Based on 111 countries with available data (as of 1 September 2019). See table A.7.
Malagasy migrant (nurse) works in Mauritius, 2017, IOM / Natalie Oren
Most Governments have measures to address the mobility dimensions of crises

Globally, more than four fifths of Governments that responded to the Twelfth Inquiry module on international migration in 2019 reported having a system for receiving, processing and identifying those forced to flee across international borders (84 per cent) or granting permission for temporary stay or protection for those forcibly displaced across international borders and those unable to return (84 per cent) (figure 6 and table A.8). Seventy-five per cent of Governments reported having contingency plans for displaced populations in terms of basic needs such as food, sanitation, education and medical care, while 68 per cent reported specific measures to assist citizens residing abroad in countries in crisis or post-crisis situations. A much lower proportion of Governments (56 per cent) reported having a national disaster risk reduction strategy with specific provisions for addressing the displacement impacts of disasters, whether natural or man-made.

In addition to these policy measures, most countries have ratified the key international legal instruments for the protection of refugees. As of December 2019, the 1951 Convention on Refugees and its 1967 Protocol had been ratified by 146 and 147 Member States of the United Nations, respectively.

Figure 6.
Percentage of Governments that reported having measures to respond to refugees and other persons forcibly displaced across international borders, 2019

Note: Based on 111 countries with available data (as of 1 September 2019). See table A.8.
Construction site employing internal migrant workers from the countryside. Beijing. China. ILO/Crozet M.
Migration rights and integration

The respect, protection and fulfilment of migrant rights, regardless of migration status, are essential for ensuring that migrants become active, empowered and well-integrated members of societies. Many host countries have undertaken measures to minimize disparities between migrants and nationals and to facilitate migrant integration.

Policy measures to protect migrant rights vary widely

Among countries that provided data in 2019, policy measures to protect migrants’ rights and ensure their access to basic and essential services varied widely (figure 7 and table A.9). Globally, 95 per cent of the Governments reported having policies to provide foreign citizens with equal access to essential or emergency health care. Eighty-six per cent of Governments provided such services to all non-nationals, regardless of immigration status, while 8 per cent provided them only to those with a legal status.

Figure 7. Percentage of Governments that reported providing non-nationals equal access to services, welfare benefits and rights, by legal immigration status, 2019

- Access to justice: 82%, 93%
- Social security: 22%, 84%
- Equal pay for equal work: 39%, 85%
- Public education: 62%, 91%
- Essential and/or emergency health care: 86%, 95%

Regardless of legal immigration status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access to justice</th>
<th>Social security</th>
<th>Equal pay for equal work</th>
<th>Public education</th>
<th>Essential and/or emergency health care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>82%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Based on 111 countries with available data (as of 1 September 2019). See table A.9.

Ninety-three per cent of Governments with available data indicated that they ensured equal access to justice for non-nationals. Eighty-two per cent of the Governments reported having policies to provide equal access to justice for non-nationals regardless of immigration status, while 11 per cent of Governments had such policies only for those migrants with legal immigration status.

Ninety-one per cent of Governments reported having measures to provide equal access to public education; this included 62 per cent that provided the same level of access to public education for all migrants and 29 per cent that provided equal access to non-nationals only if they had a legal immigration status.

Government measures to promote equal pay for equal work or to provide social security on a par with citizens were somewhat less prevalent. Eighty-five per cent of Governments indicated that they had measures to ensure equal payment of salary and benefits for people in the same workplace who are doing similar work. Forty-six per cent of governments reported having measures to ensure equal payment of salary and benefits only to those with legal immigration status, while 39 per cent of governments had such policies for all migrants regardless of immigration status.

Similarly, 84 per cent of Governments had measures to provide non-nationals with equal access to social security programmes. Twenty-two per cent of Governments indicated that they provided access to social security for foreign citizens regardless of their immigration status and 62 per cent only for those with legal immigration status.

Measures to combat discrimination against migrants are widespread

In 2019, nearly three quarters of Governments reported that they provided protection and legal assistance to victims of hate crimes against migrants or criminalized public incitement of violence or hatred directed against migrants (73 per cent each) (see table A.10). In addition, 68 per cent of Governments...
indicated that they counted xenophobia and racism among the aggravating circumstances of a crime, while 67 per cent indicated that they provided formal training to law enforcement and other public officials to identify, prevent and respond to hate crimes against migrants. In 2019, 77 per cent of Governments reported having a national policy or strategy to promote the inclusion or integration of immigrants.
International migration and development

Measures to promote the socioeconomic well-being of migrants are essential for maximizing the positive development impact of migration. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes several targets related directly to international migration or migrants.

The most explicit among them is target 10.7, which 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.

Box 1. SDG indicator 10.7.2: Number of countries with migration policies to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people

Globally, 54 per cent of Governments that replied to the migration module of the Twelfth Inquiry met or fully met the criteria of the indicator; defined as having policy measures to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people for 80 per cent or more of the 30 sub-categories under the six domains of the indicator.

More than three quarters of the Governments met the criteria for domain 3 “Cooperation and partnerships” (79 per cent) or domain 6 “Safe, orderly and regular migration” (77 per cent) (figure 8). Furthermore, 68 per cent of Governments met or fully met the criteria for domain 2 “Whole-of-government or evidence-based policies”, followed by 62 per cent for domain 5 “Mobility dimensions of crises”. Domain 1 “Migrant rights” and domain 4 “Socioeconomic well-being” had the lowest proportions of Governments with available data reporting a wide range of policy measures: 55 per cent and 59 per cent, respectively.

Figure 8.
Percentage of Governments that reported having policy measures to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people by domain, 2019

Notes: Based on 111 countries with available data (as of 1 September 2019). Data refer to countries that meet or fully meet the criteria for indicator 10.7.2 (reported having migration policy measures for 80 per cent or more of the five sub-categories in each domain). Of the countries that provided data, 20 per cent or more have item non-response for domain 4 of SDG indicator 10.7.2 of 10 per cent or more.
Further steps are needed to promote the socio-economic well-being of migrants

Globally, 81 per cent of the Governments that responded to the migration module of the Twelfth Inquiry reported having policies to facilitate the recognition of skills and qualifications acquired abroad, meaning that they had formalized criteria (accreditation) for recognizing foreign qualifications such as degrees, skills and competencies acquired abroad (figure 9 and table A.11).

Seventy-eight per cent of Governments indicated that they had measures to promote fair and ethical recruitment of migrant workers. Sixty-seven per cent of Governments indicated that they had measures to facilitate or promote the flow of remittances through specific policy measures, meaning that they had one or more government programmes to reduce the transaction costs of remittances, increase the availability of remittance services, improve the conditions under which remittances are sent, or support financial literacy and inclusion so that remittances are better used.

Measures to align labour migration policies with actual and projected labour market needs were reported by 66 per cent of Governments providing data. Sixty per cent of Governments had measures to facilitate the portability of social security benefits, signifying that they had an agreement with at least one other country on the portability of at least one type of social security benefit.

Half of Governments had instituted one or more policy measures to encourage investment in their countries by their diaspora population

In 2019, 45 per cent of Governments reported having streamlined bureaucratic procedures to facilitate diaspora investment, while 41 per cent permitted the transfer of financial assets (table A.12). Thirty-seven per cent of Governments indicated that they had tax exemptions or provided other financial incentives specifically to their diaspora; 26 per cent gave their diaspora preferential treatment in allotment of permits or licences; while 22 per cent offered preferential treatment in providing credit.

Many Governments report having policies or programmes to encourage the return of their citizens living abroad

In 2019, 33 per cent of Governments reported having policies to raise levels of return of their citizens living abroad, compared to 1 per cent with policies to lower such flows (see table 3.A). Policies to influence levels of return of international migrants to their countries of origin were somewhat less prevalent. Twenty-three per cent of the Governments reported having policies to raise the level of migrant returns, while 25 per cent sought to maintain current levels.
References


## Annex tables

### Table A.1. Percentage of Governments that reported having institutions, policies or strategies to govern immigration or emigration, by region, 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>A dedicated Government agency to implement national migration policy</th>
<th>A dedicated Government unit, department or ministry for diaspora engagement, citizens abroad or overseas employment</th>
<th>Formal mechanisms to ensure that the migration policy is gender responsive</th>
<th>A mechanism to ensure that migration policy is informed by data, appropriately disaggregated</th>
<th>An annual national report on migration that includes migration data collected by the Government and/or other sources</th>
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### Table A.2. Percentage of Governments that reported having policy measures to foster cooperation among countries and encourage stakeholder inclusion and participation in migration policy, by region, 2019

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<th>Regional agreements promoting mobility</th>
<th>Agreements for cooperation with other countries on return and readmission</th>
<th>Formal mechanisms to engage civil society and the private sector in the formulation and implementation of migration policy</th>
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United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division
Table A.4. Percentage of Governments by major underlying reasons for setting current migration policies, by region, 2019

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<th>Region</th>
<th>Counter long-term population decline</th>
<th>Address population ageing</th>
<th>Meet labour demands in certain sectors of the economy</th>
<th>Safeguard employment opportunities for nationals</th>
<th>Retain specific categories of workers</th>
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Table A.5. Percentage of Governments that view the number of migrants in an irregular situation in their country as a matter of concern, by region, 2019

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Table A.6. Percentage of Governments that reported having policy measures to address irregular immigration and promote regular migration, by region, 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>System to monitor visa overstays</th>
<th>Pre-arrival authorization controls</th>
<th>Provisions for unaccompanied minors or separated children</th>
<th>Migration information and awareness-raising campaigns</th>
<th>Formal mechanisms for regularization of legal status of migrants in an irregular situation</th>
<th>Penalties for employers of migrants in an irregular situation</th>
<th>Fines or imprisonment/confinement of migrants in an irregular situation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>75</td>
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</table>
### Table A.7. Percentage of Governments that reported having policy measures to combat trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling, by region, 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Prevention</th>
<th>Prosecution or criminalization</th>
<th>Protection or assistance to victims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</table>

### Table A.8. Percentage of Governments that reported having policy measures to respond to refugees and other persons forcibly displaced across international borders, by region, 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>System for receiving, processing and identifying those forced to flee across international borders</th>
<th>Contingency planning for displaced populations in terms of basic needs such as food, sanitation, education and medical care</th>
<th>Specific measures to provide assistance to citizens residing abroad in countries in crisis or post-crisis situations</th>
<th>A national disaster risk reduction strategy with specific provisions for addressing the displacement impacts of disasters</th>
<th>Grant permission for temporary stay or temporary protection for those forcibly displaced across international borders and those unable to return</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
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Table A.9. Percentage of Governments that reported providing non-nationals equal access to services, welfare benefits and rights, by legal immigration status and region, 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Essential and/or emergency health care</th>
<th>Public education</th>
<th>Equal pay for equal work</th>
<th>Social security</th>
<th>Access to justice</th>
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</table>
### Table 10.A. Percentage of Governments that reported having policy measures to combat discrimination against migrants, by region, 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Criminalize public incitement of violence or hatred directed against migrants</th>
<th>Count xenophobia and racism among the aggravating circumstances of a crime</th>
<th>Provide protection and legal assistance to victims of hate crimes against migrants</th>
<th>Provide formal training to law enforcement and other public officials to identify, prevent and respond to hate crimes against migrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>73</td>
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<td>73</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Table 11.A. Percentage of Governments that reported having policy measures to maximize the positive development impact of migration and the socioeconomic well-being of migrants, by region, 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Align, through periodic assessments, labour migration policies with actual and projected labour market needs</th>
<th>Facilitate the portability of social security benefits</th>
<th>Facilitate the recognition of skills and qualifications acquired abroad</th>
<th>Facilitate or promote the flow of remittances</th>
<th>Promote fair and ethical recruitment of migrant workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>77</td>
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</table>
Table 12.A. Percentage of Governments that reported having policy measures to encourage or facilitate diaspora investment, by region, 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Tax exemptions or other financial incentives</th>
<th>Preferential treatment in providing credit</th>
<th>Preferential treatment in allotment of permits and licences</th>
<th>Transferability of financial assets</th>
<th>Streamlined bureaucratic procedures</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>3</td>
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</table>

Notes

The designations employed in this publication and the material presented in it 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.

In the tables, data for countries have been grouped into geographic regions based on the classification being used to track progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations (see: https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/regional-groups/).

The designation of “more developed” and “less developed” regions is intended for statistical purposes and does not express a judgment about the stage reached by a particular country or area in the development process. 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), and Latin America and the Caribbean as well as Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand).

Regions with less than 50 per cent country coverage are denoted with an asterisk ‘*’ symbol.

Regions for which data are available for less than 50 per cent of countries and for less than 50 per cent of the total population are denoted with a double asterisk ‘**’ symbol.
When supported by appropriate policies, international migration can contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic growth and development. Target 10.7 of the Sustainable Development Goal (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. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, a non-legally binding framework for international cooperation among all relevant actors on migration, also recognized that migration is a source of prosperity, innovation and sustainable development and that these positive impacts can be optimized by improving migration governance.

This publication presents the highlights of the report *World Population Policies 2019*. It provides an overview of Government policies and programmes related to international migration, including policies to govern immigration and to address irregular migration. It reviews policy measures related to migrants’ rights, including access to services, as well as policies to foster the integration of migrants into host societies. It also examines Government measures to maximize the development impacts of migration and to support diaspora investment and migrant return.