

## International Migration 2013: Migrants by origin and destination<sup>1</sup>

### 1. South-South migration is as common as South-North migration

In 2013, about 82.3 million international migrants who were born in the South were residing in the South.<sup>2</sup> This number was slightly higher than the number of international migrants born in the South and living in the North (81.9 million). The number of international migrants from the North who also resided in the North stood at 53.7 million, whereas 13.7 million international migrants from the North were living in the South (figure 1).

Slightly more than a third (36 per cent) of international migrants were born in the South and were living in the South in 2013. Another third (35 per cent) were born in the South and were living in the North. Further, slightly less than a quarter (23 per cent) of international migrants worldwide were born and living in the North, whereas only six per cent were from the North and living in the South (figure 1).

A majority of international migrants in the world originated in the South. Of the 232 million total foreign-born in 2013, 71 per cent, or 164 million, were born in the South.

### 2. Since 1990, South-North migration has been the main driver of global migration trends, but South-South migration remains the largest category

From 1990 to 2013, the number of international migrants born in the South and residing in the North doubled, increasing from 40 to 82 million and growing more than twice as fast as the global total. Over the same period, the migrant population originating in the South and living in the South grew from 59 million to 82 million (a 41 per cent rise) (figure 2). Fifty-four per cent of the growth in the number of international migrants was attributable to growth in South-North migration, while 31 per cent was due to an increase in South-South migration.

Figure 1. Distribution of international migrants by origin and destination, 2013 (millions and percentage)

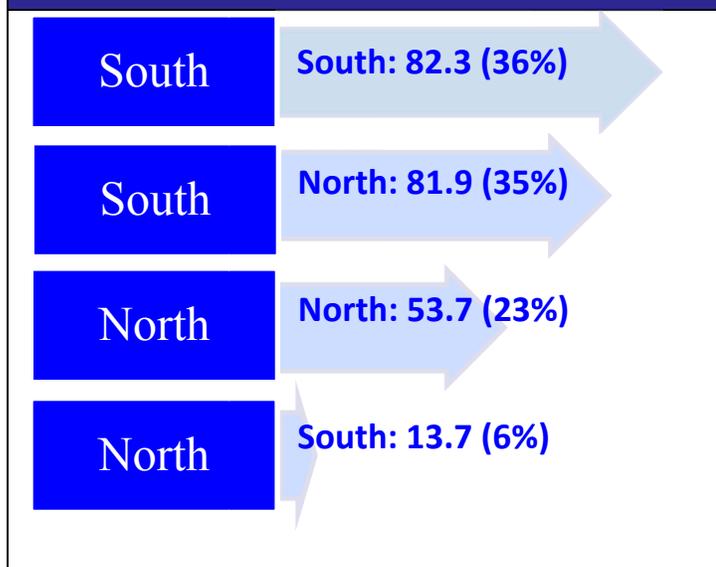
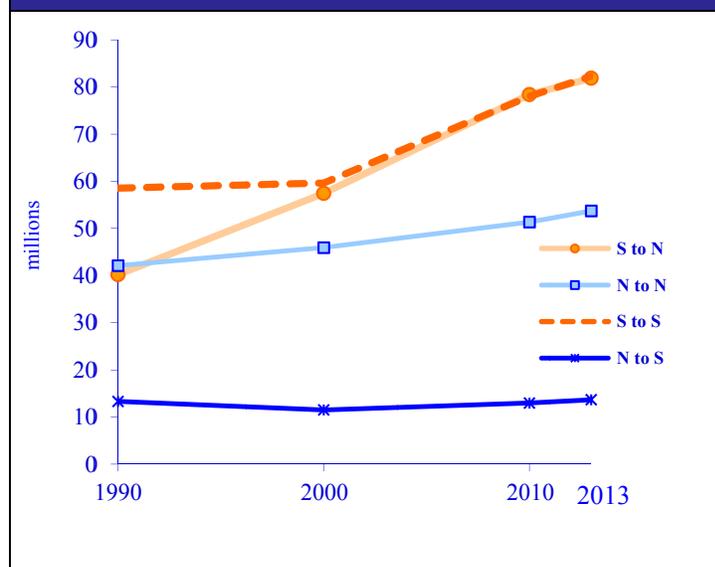


Figure 2. Numbers of international migrants by origin and destination, 1990-2013



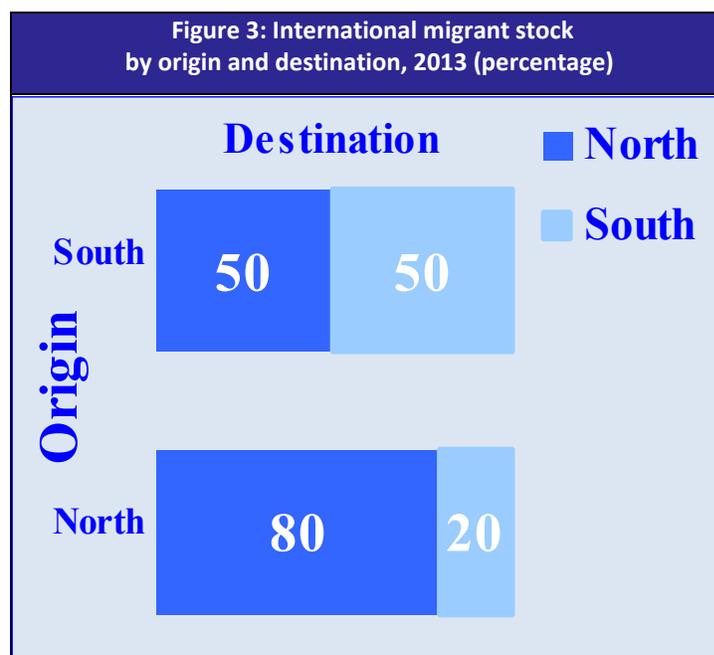
South-South and South-North migration reached similar levels, with both increasing from about 60 million in 2000 to about 82 million in 2013. As a result, they each now account for roughly 40 per cent of the overall growth in foreign-born populations.

Since 1990, the growth of migrant populations living in the North was fuelled largely by an increase in the number of migrants from the South. Between 1990 and 2013, the migrant population in the North increased by 53 million persons, of whom 42 million (78 per cent) were born in the South. The remaining 12 million migrants in this region (22 per cent) were born in other countries of the North.

The growth of the migrant population in the South was fuelled almost entirely by an increase in the number of migrants from the South. Between 1990 and 2013, the foreign-born population in the developing regions increased by 24 million. Almost all of these migrants were born elsewhere in the South.

### 3. International migrants differ with regard to their tendency to remain within their region of birth

In 2013, about 80 per cent of migrants born in the North were residing in the North, while only half of all international migrants born in the South had remained in the South. Over time, there has been very little change, with international migrants born in the North being more likely to remain in the North and about half of all Southern-born international migrants residing outside the South (figure 3).



The majority of international migrants born in Europe, Asia and Oceania were living in a country within their region of birth. Out of the 58 million international migrants born in Europe, 38 million were residing in Europe (65 per cent), compared to 54 million of the 92 million international migrants from Asia who were living in Asia (58 per cent), and 1.1 million of the 1.9 million foreign-born from Oceania living in Oceania (58 per cent) (table 1).

The majority of international migrants born in Latin America and the Caribbean (85 per cent), Northern America (72 per cent) and Africa (51 per cent) were residing in a country outside their major area of birth.

In 2013, 31.3 million international migrants of the 36.7 million foreign-born from Latin America and the

Table 1. International migrant populations by major area of origin and destination, 2013 (millions)

Destination	Origin								Retention by destination (%)
	Africa	Asia	Europe	LAC	NAM	Oceania	Various	TOTAL	
Africa	15.3	1.1	0.8	0.0	0.1	0.0	1.4	18.6	82
Asia	4.6	53.8	7.6	0.7	0.6	0.1	3.4	70.8	76
Europe	8.9	18.6	37.8	4.5	0.9	0.3	1.3	72.4	52
LAC	0.0	0.3	1.2	5.4	1.3	0.0	0.2	8.5	64
NAM	2.0	15.7	7.9	25.9	1.2	0.3	0.0	53.1	2
Oceania	0.5	2.9	3.1	0.1	0.2	1.1	0.1	7.9	14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31.3</b>	<b>92.5</b>	<b>58.4</b>	<b>36.7</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>231.5</b>	
<b>Retention by origin (%)</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>58</b>			

Note: "LAC" stands for "Latin America and the Caribbean" and "NAM" for "Northern America". Retention by destination is calculated as the number of persons residing in a destination (major area) who were also born in the same major area. Retention by origin is calculated as the number of persons from an origin (major area) who were also residing in the same major area

Caribbean were living in a different major area. Latin America and the Caribbean had the lowest intra-regional migration levels. Of those living outside Latin America and the Caribbean, 83 per cent were living in Northern America. For foreign-born from Northern America, Latin America and the Caribbean was the preferred major area of residence.

#### 4. Foreign-born living in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe generally were born in a country within the same major area

**In 2013, 82 per cent of international migrants living in Africa, 76 per cent in Asia, 64 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean and 52 per cent in Europe were living in the major area in which they were born.**

In Northern America, only 2 per cent of current foreign-born residents were born in a country of the region. About 14 per cent of foreign-born residents in Oceania were born in Oceania (figure 4).

**In 2013, Asians represented the largest diaspora group residing outside their major area of birth.** They accounted for about 19 million foreign-born living in Europe, 16 million in Northern America and 3 million in Oceania. Migrants born in Latin America and the Caribbean represented the second largest diaspora group with the majority living in Northern America (26 million). Europeans, the third largest group, were primarily residing in Northern America (7.9 million) and Asia (7.6 million).

**Foreign-born from Asia only recently overtook foreign-born from Latin America and the Caribbean as the largest diaspora group.** In 1990, international migrants

born in Asia and Europe accounted for the largest number of foreign-born living outside their major areas, both numbering about 21 million. By 2010, Asians had increased to 37 million, foreign-born from Latin America and the Caribbean to 30 million and foreign-born Europeans numbered 20 million.

**Within Asia, foreign-born from Southern Asia were the most likely to reside outside their region of birth (23 million).** Oil-producing countries in Western Asia were the preferred destination for these migrants (13.5 million).

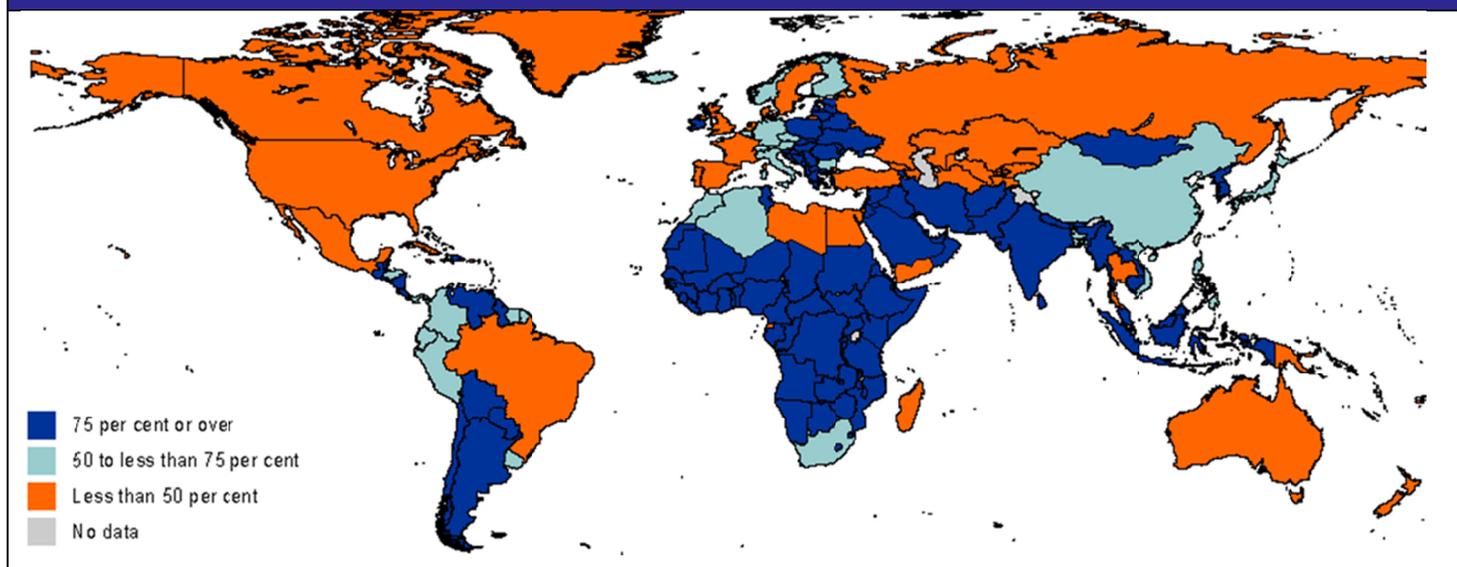
**Within Latin America and the Caribbean, international migrants from Central America were the most likely to reside outside their region of birth (17 million).** The majority of these migrants were living in the United States of America (16.5 million).

#### 5. At smaller geographic levels, retention of international migrants varies considerably

**More than 90 per cent of international migrants born in the Caribbean, Central America, Central Asia, Melanesia and Northern Africa resided outside their region of birth.** In contrast, less than 60 per cent of foreign-born from **Australia and New Zealand, Eastern Africa, Southern Africa, Western Africa and Western Asia were living outside their region of birth.** Western Africa was the only region in the South where the majority of its international migrants were residing within their region of birth (68 per cent).

**In Europe, international migrants from Northern Europe were the most likely to reside outside their region of birth (77 per cent).** In contrast, Eastern Europeans were the least likely to live outside their region of birth (64 per cent).

Figure 4. Migration within major areas, 2013 (percentage)



Note: The boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. The data refer to the proportion of foreign-born living in a particular country that were born in the major area of birth in which they are currently residing.

**6. In the South, Southern and Western Asia are host to some of the largest “bilateral stocks” of international migrants**

In 2013, the main “bilateral stocks” of international migrants in the global South consisted of a combination of long-term residents, migrant workers and refugees. Migrants from Afghanistan living in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran (around 2.3 million persons in each country), most of whom were refugees, constituted two of the main “bilateral stocks” of international migrants within the region.

**Oil-producing countries in Western Asia hosted many foreign-born migrant workers from Southern Asia.** Some 2.9 million international migrants from India were residing in the United Arab Emirates and an additional 1.8 million in Saudi Arabia (table 2).

**Table 2. Selected corridors, 2013 (millions)**

Destination: South		
Place of birth*	Place of residence	
India	United Arab Emirates	2.9
Russian Federation	Kazakhstan	2.4
Afghanistan	Pakistan	2.3
Afghanistan	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	2.3
China	China, Hong Kong, SAR	2.3
State of Palestine	Jordan	2.1
Myanmar	Thailand	1.9
India	Saudi Arabia	1.8
Burkina Faso	Côte d'Ivoire	1.5
Pakistan	Saudi Arabia	1.3
Destination: North		
Mexico	United States	13.0
Russian Federation	Ukraine	3.5
Ukraine	Russian Federation	2.9
Kazakhstan	Russian Federation	2.5
China	United States	2.2
India	United States	2.1
Philippines	United States	2.0
Puerto Rico	United States	1.7
Turkey	Germany	1.5
Algeria	France	1.5

Note: “United States” stands for United States of America and “China, Hong Kong, SAR” stands for China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. “Place of birth” refers to present-day territories.

**7. In the North, the United States, Germany and France host some of the largest “bilateral stocks” of international migrants**

**The world’s largest corridor of international migration is between the United States and Mexico.**

In 2013, the United States hosted some 13 million persons born in Mexico. There were also about 2.2 million foreign-born from China, 2.1 million from India and 2.0 million from the Philippines living in the United States. Since 2000, however, the number of international migrants born in China or India and living in the United States has doubled, whereas the number of Mexican foreign-born has only increased by about 31 per cent.

**Germany and France hosted the largest bilateral migrant stocks in Europe.** In 2013, about 1.5 million international migrants born in Turkey were residing in Germany. Many of these migrants came to Germany under guest worker programmes in the 1960s and 1970s and opted to stay. Some 1.5 million international migrants born in Algeria, a former French colony, were residing in France.

**Some successor states of the former Soviet Union retain close migratory ties.** Bilateral migrant stocks are especially large for Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The estimates of the migrant stock were prepared by the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. The data presented here refer to the international migrant stock defined as a mid-year estimate of the number of people living in a country or area other than the one in which they were born or, in the absence of such data, the number of people of foreign citizenship. Most statistics used to estimate the international migrant stock were obtained from population censuses, population registers and nationally representative household surveys. The refugee data used to estimate the migrant stock were based on figures reported by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. The following source should be cited when referring to the data in this fact sheet: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2013 Revision (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2013). See [www.unmigration.org](http://www.unmigration.org).

<sup>2</sup> The term “North” refers to countries or regions traditionally classified for statistical purposes as “developed,” while the term “South” refers to those classified as “developing.” The developed regions include Europe and Northern America plus Australia, New Zealand and Japan. These terms are used for statistical convenience and do not express a judgment about the stage reached by a particular country or area in the development process.