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Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

>   The present report was prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 73/241. In section II of the report, the latest global levels and trends in international migration are presented. Section III contains a discussion of recent activities undertaken by entities of the United Nations system to support countries in integrating migration considerations into national development plans. An overview on progress in measuring the Sustainable Development Goals and targets related to migration is presented in section IV. The current status of ratification of the main international instruments related to international migration is addressed in section V. Section VI provides a brief overview of efforts by the international community to convene an international conference on international migration, which culminated in the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, held in Marrakech, Morocco, on 10 and 11 December 2018. Other recent activities of the General Assembly in the realm of international migration and development are also covered. Key findings and recommendations are presented in section VII.

>   Since the outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), United Nations entities have supported Member States in combating the pandemic and in mitigating its economic and social consequences. Where relevant, examples of such interventions have been included in the report.

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I. Introduction

1.   The number of international migrants worldwide has risen steadily over the past three decades. Between 1990 and 2019, the number of persons residing outside their country of birth or citizenship increased by 78 per cent. As a result, the share of the number of international migrants in the global population increased from 2.9 per cent in 1990 to 3.5 per cent in 2019. The global distribution of migrants is highly uneven: in 2019, half of the world's 272 million international migrants resided in only 10 countries. The net flow of migrants moving from less developed regions to more developed regions increased from around 26 thousand per year in the early 1950s to a high of 3.4 million per year during 2005–2010; it has since declined to 2.8 million per year during 2015–2020. Since there tend to be larger proportions of working-age persons among international migrants compared with the overall population, a net inflow of migrants delays the long-term trend towards population ageing.

2.   Since 2018, United Nations entities have supported Governments in numerous ways to develop policies that allow countries as well as migrants and their families to reap the benefits of migration, while addressing the challenges associated with migration. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, adopted in December 2018, provides a strong impetus for countries to integrate migration into national development planning. Entities of the United Nations system have continued to develop indicators and strengthen data collection in order to monitor the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals and targets relevant for migrants and migration.

3.   International instruments designed to protect refugees or to combat migrant smuggling and human trafficking have been ratified by more than three quarters of all Member States, whereas instruments protecting the rights of migrant workers have been ratified by fewer than 30 per cent.

4.   In recognition of the importance of remittances for migrants and their families, the General Assembly proclaimed 16 June as the International Day of Family Remittances.

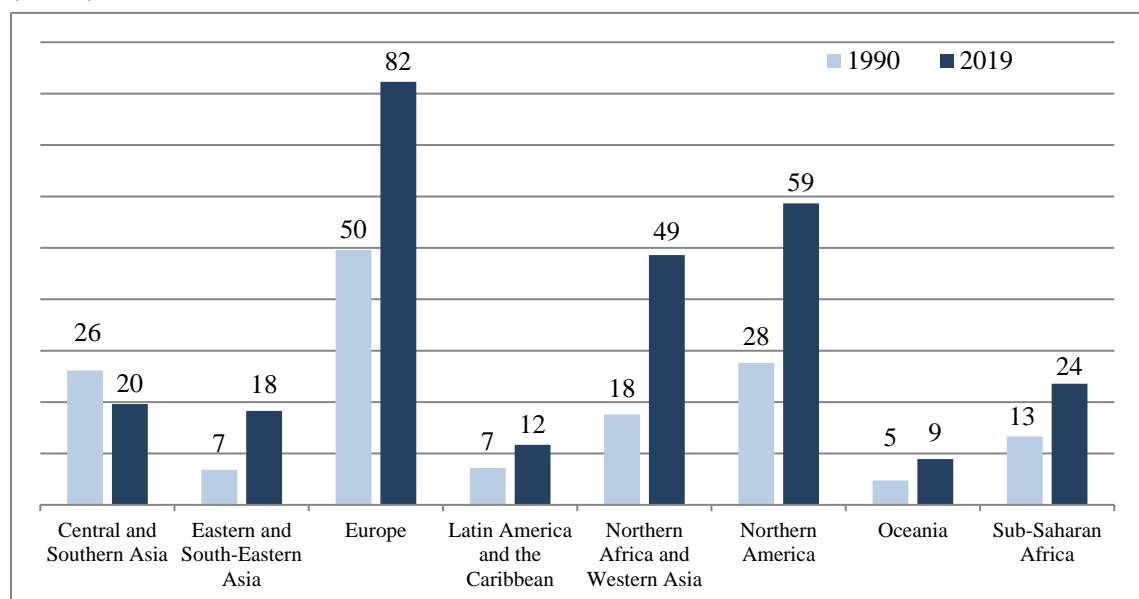## II. Migration levels and trends

A. The international migrant stock

5.   The number of international migrants worldwide reached an estimated 272 million in 2019, having grown by around 119 million since 1990 (see figure I).[1] Between 1990 and 2019, countries in more developed regions gained 69 million international migrants, whereas countries in less developed regions added 49 million. By 2019, nearly 56 per cent of all international migrants, or 152 million, lived in more developed regions.

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[1] For the purpose of estimating the international migrant stock, international migrants are defined as persons who are living outside their country of birth or citizenship. The size of the foreign-born or foreign-citizen population covers all persons residing abroad, irrespective of their date of arrival. The estimates presented here refer to mid-2019, several months before the outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Figure I
Number of international migrants by region of destination, 1990 and 2019
(Millions)

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). *International Migrant Stock 2019*. (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2019).

6. International migrants accounted for 3.5 per cent of the world's population in 2019, having increased from 2.9 per cent in 1990 – indicating that the number of international migrants worldwide has grown faster than the global population. In 2019, in more developed regions, international migrants constituted, on average, 12.0 per cent of the total population, whereas migrants comprised only 1.9 per cent of the population in less developed regions.
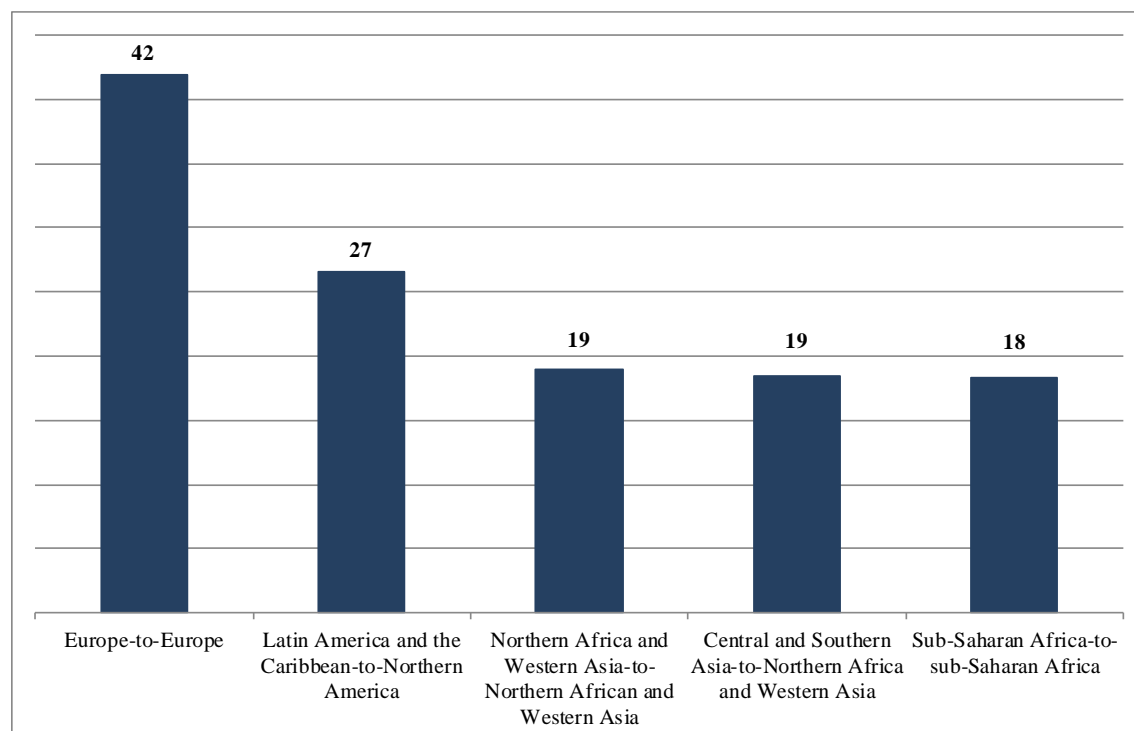
7. In 2019, Europe hosted the largest share of the world's migrants (30 per cent), followed by Northern America (22 per cent) and Northern Africa and Western Asia (18 per cent). The remaining 30 per cent of the world's migrants lived in sub-Saharan Africa, Central and Southern Asia, Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean or Oceania.

8. Between 1990 and 2019, the number of international migrants grew by a factor of around 2.7 in Northern Africa and Western Asia and in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia. During that period, the international migrant stock approximately doubled in Northern America and in Oceania, while in sub-Saharan Africa, Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean, it increased by 77, 65 and 63 per cent, respectively. Only in Central and Southern Asia did the number of international migrants decrease between 1990 and 2019, by about 25 per cent.

9. The five largest regional migration corridors accounted for almost half of the global international migrant stock, or 124 million international migrants in 2019 (figure II). Europe-to-Europe constituted the largest regional corridor in the world, with about 42 million international migrants residing in a European country different from where they were born. The corridor from Latin America and the Caribbean to Northern America was the second largest migration corridor, with a stock of about 27 million international migrants. The third, fourth and fifth largest regional migration corridors were almost equal in size, with around 18 to 19 million international migrants each.

Figure II
Number of international migrants in the five largest regional migration corridors, 2019
(Millions)

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). *International Migrant Stock 2019*. (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2017).

10.   In 2019, just 20 countries hosted two thirds of all international migrants worldwide and about half were living in just 10 countries. Almost one fifth of the world's migrants, or 50.7 million, resided in a single destination country, the United States of America.

11.   Women and girls comprised 47.9 per cent of the world's international migrants in 2019. In less developed regions, the percentage of females among all international migrants fell from 47.0 per cent in 1990 to 43.4 per cent in 2019, resulting, in part, from the rapid increase in demand for male migrant workers in the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Female migrants accounted for more than half of all international migrants in Northern America, Europe and Oceania, where the percentage of female migrants was 51.8, 51.4 and 50.4 per cent, respectively. By contrast, male migrants significantly outnumbered female migrants in Northern Africa and Western Asia, where women constituted only 35.5 per cent of all international migrants.

12.   In 2019, the median age of international migrants residing in more developed regions was 42.9 years, compared with 34.5 years in less developed regions, reflecting the overall demographic composition of those regions. Around three quarters of all international migrants worldwide (202 million) were aged 20 to 64 years, which is the range commonly defined as the working-age population. Around 32 million international migrants, or roughly one eighth of the global total, were aged 65 years or over.

13.   Children under the age of 18 accounted for 32.7 million (12 per cent) of the world's international migrants with 21.6 million children (66 per cent) residing in less developed

countries.[2] The share of children among all migrants in less developed regions (18.1 per cent) is more than twice the share in more developed regions (7.3 per cent).

14.   The number of refugees and asylum seekers more than doubled between 2005 and 2017, reaching an estimated 29 million in 2017.[3] In 2017, around 83 per cent of all refugees and asylum seekers lived in less developed regions. Slightly less than half of all refugees and asylum seekers, or 13.1 million, resided in Northern Africa and Western Asia. Sub-Saharan Africa hosted 5.9 million refugees and asylum seekers, followed by Central and Southern Asia and Europe, which each hosted 3.6 million.

15.   Globally, refugees and asylum seekers accounted for 10.6 per cent of the international migrant stock in 2019. The share of refugees and asylum seekers in the international migrant stock was significantly lower in more developed regions (3.2 per cent) than in less developed regions (20.0 per cent).

16.   In 2017, migrant workers represented about 4.7 per cent of the global labour pool, comprising 164 million workers, with nearly half being women. The majority of labour migrants are employed in high-income (67.9 per cent) or upper-middle-income countries (18.6 per cent).[4] Migrant workers, especially women migrant workers, are often employed in the informal economy, which limits their access to social protection.

B.   Contribution of migration to population change

17.   From 1950 to 2020, there was a net flow of persons from countries in less developed regions to countries in more developed regions, and this pattern is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. Net migration[5] from less developed regions to more developed regions increased from around 26 thousand per year in the early 1950s to a high of 3.4 million per year during 2005–2010; it has since declined to 2.8 million per year during 2015–2020.[6]

18.   Northern America and Oceania have had a net inflow of migrants for all five-year periods between 1950 and 2020, while Europe has experienced positive net migration for all periods since 1970 (figure III). Latin America and the Caribbean and sub-Saharan Africa have experienced a net outflow of migrants for all periods between 1950 and 2020, while Central and Southern Asia has experienced negative net migration for all periods since 1970. In Northern Africa and Western Asia, net migration was mostly negative until 2000 and became positive thereafter, whereas the region of Eastern and South-Eastern Asia has generally experienced a net outflow of migrants, with sporadic periods of positive net migration.

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[2] United Nations Children's Fund calculations based on United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, International Migrant Stock 2019. (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2019). For more information, see https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-migration-and-displacement/migration/.
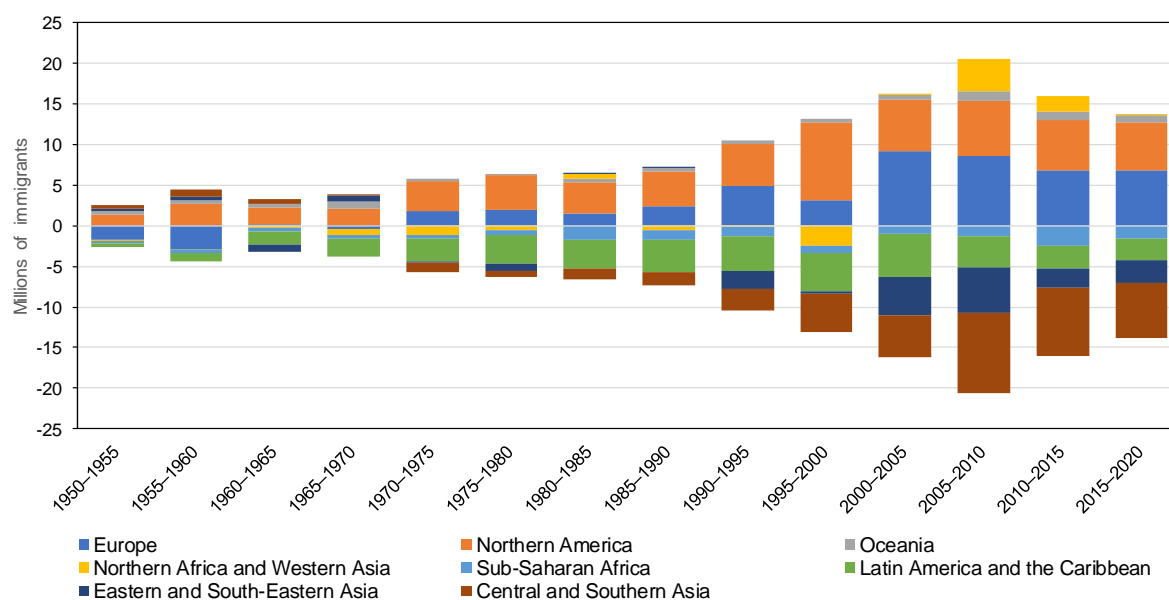
[3] The latest data on refugees and asylum seekers available when preparing the 2019 estimates of the international migrant stock refer to 2017. The global number of refugees and asylum seekers reached an estimated 30.2 million in 2019 (see Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2019* (Geneva, 2020)).

[4] International Labour Organization (ILO), *Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers – Results and Methodology*. 2nd ed. (International Labour Office - Geneva, ILO, 2018).

[5] Net international migration refers to the difference between the number of immigrants and the number of emigrants. If more people immigrate than emigrate, the country gains population through positive net migration, or net immigration. When more people emigrate than immigrate, the country loses population through negative net migration, or net emigration.

[6] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects 2019*.

Figure III
Average annual net number of immigrants by region of destination, from 1950–1955 to 2015–2020

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, World Population Prospects 2019.

19.   Between 2010 and 2020, 81 countries or areas experienced positive net migration, whereas 118 countries or areas had negative net migration.

20.   International migration has a growing impact on the size and age structure of populations in a growing number of countries. Under a hypothetical scenario in which all international migration came to a halt immediately and remained at zero in the coming decades, the populations of Northern America and Oceania would be 12 and 10 per cent smaller, respectively, by 2050 than if current levels and patterns of migration continued, while in Europe this difference would be about 4 per cent. By comparison, the populations of Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean would be about 1 per cent larger by 2050 under a scenario of zero net migration.

21.   Without future migration, the median age of the population of Northern America would be 2.2 years higher than expected by 2050, while the equivalent difference in Oceania and Europe would be 1.4 and 0.9 years, respectively. Similarly, old-age dependency ratios would rise more rapidly in those regions in the absence of future migration. The hypothetical elimination of future migration would have a negligible impact on the median age or old-age dependency ratio of populations in less developed regions.

22.   Because international migrants tend to comprise larger proportions of working-age persons compared to the overall population, positive net migration can contribute to slowing population ageing. Without future migration, the working-age population would be smaller than expected in 2050 by 14 per cent in Northern America, by 11 per cent in Oceania and by 6 per cent in Europe. In Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, where net migration is negative, the working-age population in 2050 would be larger by about 1 per cent in the absence of future migration.

III. Integrating migration into development planning at national and international levels

23. Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, migration has increasingly been considered in national development planning. The Global Compact has added to a common understanding of the contribution of migration to development and assisted Member States in identifying migration-related policies and measures that can help to implement the 2030 Agenda.

24. At the individual level, migrants are powerful agents of development, who have the potential to reduce poverty and increase access to health and education for their families and communities of origin.

25. In order to reap fully the benefits of migration and to integrate migration into national efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda, migration policies require a whole-of-government approach to ensure policy coherence across all sectors of government, including at the local level.

26. An analysis covering 49 countries between 2015 and 2019 found that few Governments had established a whole-of-government approach towards migration governance.[7] While many Governments provided a range of services to migrants, from employment programmes to basic services and social protection, a comprehensive migration strategy consistent with national development priorities was lacking in many cases.

27. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) assists Governments in bringing to the fore the impact of migration in different sectors of the economy, ranging from health and education to labour markets and urban planning. IOM produces migration profiles and guidelines to assist countries in mainstreaming migration in national planning and in harnessing the contribution of migrants and migration to development.

28. Since 2012, IOM and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have been implementing a programme to jointly support the mainstreaming of migration into policy planning in eight countries.[8] Now in its third phase, the programme has developed legal frameworks, policies, strategies and action plans to assist those countries in managing migration for development.

29. Since 2018, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has supported 48 member States and five regional institutions in adopting or implementing labour migration policies, regulations, institutional mechanisms or services, strengthening labour protections, promoting decent work for migrant workers and refugees, and fostering inclusive labour markets. The Organization supported constituents in 24 member States with developing, updating or implementing labour migration policies and regulations on issues such as reintegration, labour contracts and the application of the principle of zero worker-paid recruitment fees. ILO assisted in the development of six bilateral labour agreements and supported 14 workers' organizations in extending new services to migrant workers, including legal counselling, training and language classes. At the regional level also, ILO promotes a tripartite dialogue between representatives of Governments, employers and workers. It has developed new training courses on fair recruitment, social protection, negotiation of bilateral and multilateral agreements, skills dimensions of labour migration and access to decent work for refugees.

30. The engagement of the World Bank on migration focuses on: (a) supporting safe and regular labour mobility; (b) monitoring migration-related indicators of the

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[7] Susanne Melde and others, *Migration Governance Indicators: A Global Perspective* (International Organization for Migration (IOM), Geneva, 2019).

[8] Available at www.iom.int/mainstreaming-migration-national-development-strategies.

Sustainable Development Goals; (c) generating knowledge for policymaking; and (d) supporting global partnerships.[9] The World Bank publishes policy reports on migration, compiles statistics on remittance flows, bilateral migration and highly skilled migration, and conducts migration surveys. The Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development is a knowledge partnership hosted by the World Bank, which aims to generate policy options based on peer-reviewed evidence and to provide technical assistance to developing countries.

31. The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) works along major migratory routes in both humanitarian and development settings to address the specific needs of children and youth on the move. UNICEF supports Governments in strengthening social services, making them inclusive of all children, regardless of migration status. UNICEF advocates keeping families together, ending child immigration detention, and addressing discrimination, xenophobia and social exclusion.

32. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), together with IOM and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), developed a guide on migrant and refugee entrepreneurship, which formed the basis for an e-learning course prepared by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).[10] By mid-2020 the training had been attended by over 400 policymakers and practitioners from 90 countries.

33. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), through its financing facility for remittances, promotes economic development and financial inclusion in rural areas by linking low-cost, easy-to-use remittance services to financial products. IFAD encourages remittance-receiving families to improve their capacity to save and invest and to mobilize remittances for local investments, thereby stimulating rural development. In 2019, IFAD launched a platform for remittances, investment and migrant entrepreneurship in Africa. Through innovation, partnerships and the development of scalable products and services, the platform seeks to promote cheaper, faster and safer transfers of remittances, helping migrant families to leverage development opportunities.

34. The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) seeks to expand economic activities and employment opportunities in rural areas for prospective migrants, in particular youth, and to provide livelihoods for returning migrants. FAO addresses the causes and impacts of forced migration and displacement by building the resilience of rural communities when faced with threats and crises, by improving food security and nutrition for migrants and their families, and by mitigating the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation. The Organization encourages the productive investment of remittances and the engagement of diasporas in countries of origin.

35. In 2018, the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) endorsed a set of recommendations prepared by a task force on displacement comprising representatives of United Nations agencies, civil society and States parties, which focused on facilitating orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people in the context of climate change.

36. The World Health Organization (WHO) worked with IOM, UNHCR and other stakeholders to design and implement a global action plan to promote universal health coverage and access to quality health services for refugees and migrants. The plan was adopted at the seventy-second World Health Assembly in May 2019. WHO helps

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[9] World Bank, *Leveraging Economic Migration for Development: A Briefing for the World Bank Board* (World Bank Group, Washington, D.C., September 2019).

[10] United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and IOM, *Policy Guide on Entrepreneurship for Migrants and Refugees* (2018).

to ensure that refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants are included in national, regional and global responses to coronavirus disease (COVID-19), including as part of the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19.

37. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) supports countries in generating new migration data and in utilizing existing population information more effectively. UNFPA carries out population situation analyses to integrate migration, including its linkages with gender equality, sexual and reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS, into development planning. UNFPA has assisted countries with including questions about international migration in the 2020 round of national censuses, as recommended by the United Nations. [11] Countries that benefitted from such assistance include Azerbaijan, Belarus, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Colombia, Guatemala, Madagascar, Malawi, Kenya, Solomon Islands and Viet Nam.

38. The sixth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in March 2019, discussed Sustainable Development Goal 10 with a special focus on migration during one of its round tables. The summary of the meeting, which was transmitted to the high-level political forum on sustainable development (E/HLPF/2019/3/Add.2), recommended addressing inequality as a driver of migration and considering the needs of migrants in vulnerable situations. Participants recommended that migration should be a choice, that it should take place in a safe, orderly and regular fashion, and that the human rights of migrants should be protected. Participants agreed that mechanisms should be developed to produce and share accurate and disaggregated migration data in order to guide policies.

39. In December 2018, the Governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico requested the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) to prepare a comprehensive plan to address the drivers of human mobility in northern Central America. The response plan, developed in collaboration with 19 entities of the United Nations system, is based on four pillars: economic development; social well-being; environmental sustainability, climate change and disaster risk reduction; and well-managed migration policies across the full migration cycle.

40. In 2019, a total of 47 States presented voluntary national reviews at the high-level political forum, and at least 43 of them, mostly from Africa and Asia and the Pacific, addressed the topic of migration. Whereas human trafficking was the greatest concern among Governments, other topics frequently addressed were remittances, refugees, labour mobility, women migrant workers and national migration policies. Nevertheless, in its outcome documents, the forum continues to grapple with references to the Global Compact (see resolution 73/195, annex), migrants' access to basic services, the human rights of migrants, and migrants in vulnerable situations.

41. The follow-up and review of the Global Compact offers an opportunity for Member States to strengthen the discussion of migration and related issues in their voluntary national reviews. The United Nations Network on Migration is preparing guidance materials to mainstream migration in sustainable development cooperation frameworks.

42. Beginning in late 2020, I will report to the General Assembly on a biennial basis, based on inputs received from the Network, on the implementation of the Global Compact, the activities of the United Nations system in that regard and the functioning of the institutional arrangements.

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[11] *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 3* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.15.XVII.10).

IV. Migration-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals: an assessment

43.   Section IV provides an overview of activities undertaken by the United Nations system to support the achievement of the targets most closely related to migration (see A/73/286, section IV). Recent information on the development of relevant indicators is also included.

A.   Target 3.c: health workforce

44.   Member States reporting on the implementation of the WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel confirm a heavy reliance on foreign-born and foreign-trained health workers. Data from over 80 Member States indicate that, on average, over one quarter of doctors and one third of dentists and pharmacists are foreign-trained or foreign-born. About one in every eight nurses worldwide is practicing outside his or her country of birth. The code is of growing relevance in the context of addressing health emergencies, providing universal health coverage and implementing the Goals.

45.   IOM works with Governments and stakeholders to manage health worker migration, to build health systems in developing countries, and to promote the transfer of the skills and knowledge of health workers living abroad.

B.   Target 4.b: scholarships and training

46.   IOM provides pre-departure training to migrants, including youth, helping to pave the way for their successful integration in countries of destination. These training courses, which provide migrants with essential information and needed skills, have been implemented in over 70 countries in Africa and Asia. IOM, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, conducts training on financial literacy, thereby helping migrant families to leverage the financial gains obtained from migration and to access additional financial products.

47.   UNCTAD conducted a training workshop to promote migrant and refugee entrepreneurship in Ecuador in 2019.

C.   Targets 5.2, 8.7 and 16.2: human trafficking and migrant smuggling

48.   The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is advancing efforts to counter the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, including in the context of international migration. In that context, in 2019, UNODC provided technical assistance to 72 countries and trained more than 3,000 criminal justice practitioners, government officials and civil society representatives, leading to more than 1,200 criminal investigations. To support the achievement of targets 5.2 and 16.2, UNODC is working to address the factors that place women and girls at greater risk of becoming a victim of human trafficking. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNODC analysed how smuggling of migrants and cross-border trafficking in persons are likely to be affected by pandemic-related restrictions on travel and immigration along mixed migration routes.[12]

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[12] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime COVID-19 policy documents are available at www.unodc.org/unodc/en/covid-19-policy-documents.html.

D. Target 8.8: labour rights

49. In many countries, the incidence rate of fatal occupational injuries is higher for migrant workers than for non-migrant workers, suggesting that labour migrants are more exposed to risks and hazards in the workplace than native-born workers. Employment sectors with a greater concentration of fatal work accidents involving migrant workers include manufacturing, construction, transport and storage. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of occupational safety and health, with migrant workers often overrepresented in so-called essential jobs that may bring higher risks of exposure. The pandemic has also had an impact on migrant workers owing to rising levels of discrimination and xenophobia, food insecurity, unemployment, crowded living conditions, restrictions on movements and the threat of forced return.[13]

E. Target 10.7: well-managed migration policies

50. A critical dimension of well-managed migration policies is the reduction of the financial costs of recruitment incurred by migrant workers seeking jobs abroad. ILO and the World Bank, in collaboration with national statistical offices, have developed guidelines for calculating the cost of recruitment borne by employees as a proportion of monthly income earned in the country of destination (indicator 10.7.1). Preliminary data from selected countries confirm the high costs incurred by migrant workers for recruitment, which has a negative impact on their earnings. Research conducted by ESCAP found that recruitment costs paid by migrants ranged between 55 and 425 per cent of their net monthly salary. The management of migration policies is also addressed in the context of indicator 10.7.2 (see box).

51. In March 2020, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators approved two new indicators to measure well-managed migration policies. Indicator 10.7.3 (number of people who died or disappeared in the process of migration towards an international destination) is informed by the IOM Missing Migrants Project database, whereas indicator 10.7.4 (proportion of the population who are refugees, by country of origin) relies on data collected by UNHCR.

Measuring the number of countries with migration policies to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people
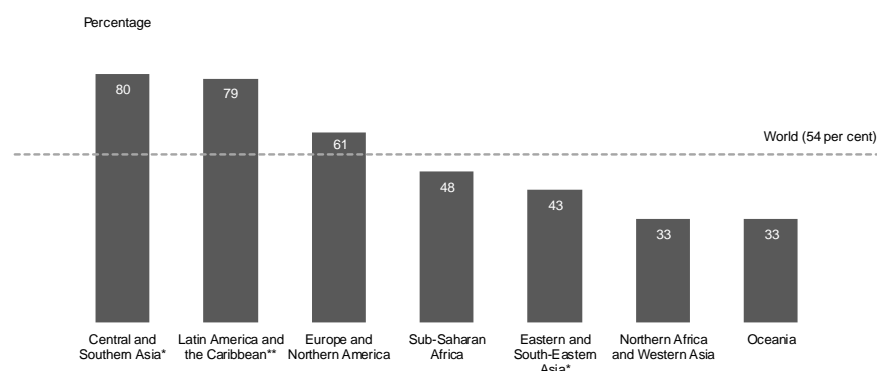
Sustainable Development Goal indicator 10.7.2 serves to describe the state of national migration policies and how such policies change over time. IOM and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs have developed a conceptual framework for the indicator, based on the IOM migration governance framework.[a] Each of the six policy domains of indicator 10.7.2 is informed by answers to a single question about relevant policies across five subcategories. Those 30 pieces of information, which capture key aspects of migration policies at the national level, are combined to form a composite indicator of the completeness of the existing policy framework.[b]

Data required for the computation of indicator 10.7.2 was collected through the United Nations Twelfth Inquiry among Governments on Population and Development.[c] Of the 111 responses received, 54 per cent of the countries meet or fully meet the criteria for indicator 10.7.2, which is 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 subcategories under the six domains of the indicator. Central and Southern Asia (80 per cent) and Latin America and the Caribbean (79 per cent) had the highest share of Governments that meet or fully meet the criteria for the indicator (see figure).[d]

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[13] ILO, "Policy brief: protecting migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic - recommendations for policy-makers and constituents" (April 2020).

Oceania and Northern Africa and Western Asia are the regions with the lowest proportions of countries (33 per cent each) that meet or fully meet the criteria, followed by Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (43 per cent) and sub-Saharan Africa (48 per cent).

Percentage of Governments reporting policies that meet or fully meet the criteria for Sustainable Development Goal indicator 10.7.2 by region, 2019

Percentage

Region	Value
Central and Southern Asia*	80
Latin America and the Caribbean**	79
Europe and Northern America	61
Sub-Saharan Africa	48
Eastern and South-Eastern Asia*	43
Northern Africa and Western Asia	33
Oceania	33

World (54 per cent)

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division and International Organization for Migration (2019). Sustainable Development Goal indicator 10.7.2. Number of countries with migration policies to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, Global and regional aggregates, available at: www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/theme/sdg/index_10_7_2.asp.

Notes: Based on 111 countries with available data (as at 1 September 2019). Countries that meet or fully meet the criteria for indicator 10.7.2 are those that reported having migration policy measures for 80 per cent or more of the 30 subcategories.

  * Data are available for less than 50 per cent of countries as well as for less than 50 per cent of the population.

** Data are available for less than 50 per cent of countries.

 [a] See http://128.199.179.223/iom/sites/default/files/2019-01/C-106-40-Migration-Governance-Framework.pdf.

 [b] For a more detailed discussion see: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division and International Organization for Migration, "Development, validation and testing of a methodology for SDG indicator 10.7.2 on migration policies", Technical Paper No.2019/03 (2019).

 [c] See also: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, "World population policies 2019: international migration policies and programmes", 2019.

 [d] In both regions, fewer than 50 per cent of countries responded to the module on international migration, while in Central and Southern Asia, data are available for less than 50 per cent of the population.

52. The IOM International Recruitment Integrity System offers practical tools to implement professional, transparent, efficient and ethical labour recruitment policies and programmes. In 2020, IOM published recommendations offering policymakers and regulators practical guidance to improve the regulation and oversight of international recruitment and to strengthen the protection of migrant workers. [14]

53. In May 2019, UNCTAD, in collaboration with the secretariat of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States, convened a workshop on how mutual recognition of qualifications could enhance trade in services through the movement of natural persons, thereby facilitating regular migration, the transfer of remittances and other benefits for countries of origin and destination. In 2018, UNCTAD issued a report with evidence on how intra-African migration could improve livelihoods for

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[14] See Katherine Jones and others, *The Montreal Recommendations on Recruitment: A Road Map towards Better Regulation* (IOM, Geneva, 2020).

prospective migrants, especially women.[15] The report highlighted the role of diaspora networks in leveraging linkages between trade and migration and examining the role of the African Continental Free Trade Area in facilitating labour mobility. UNCTAD also issued an analysis of barriers to trade in services, advocating for the waiving of qualification requirements in specific situations.[16]

54.   Since 2018, UNICEF has partnered with the International Detention Coalition to put in place alternatives to the detention of child migrants. The initiative provides a space for Governments and stakeholders to discuss challenges, share progress, exchange good practices and build capacities. In 2019, UNICEF organized a technical workshop on child-sensitive returns and reintegration focusing on good practices and dilemmas faced by practitioners and convened an expert meeting on the return and reintegration of children in northern Central America, Mexico and the United States. In partnership with IOM, OHCHR and civil society, UNICEF prepared guidance on how to respect children's rights in the context of returns from the European Union.[17]

55.   The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), in partnership with IOM and the League of Arab States, organized a regional conference on the Global Compact in December 2019, with a view to identifying policy options for well-managed migration and fostering the exchange of experiences and lessons learned.

F.   Target 10.c: transaction costs of remittances

56.   During the first quarter of 2020, the global average cost for sending remittances was 6.79 per cent, a modest decrease compared to the previous quarter (6.82 per cent) and still more than double the Sustainable Development Goal target of 3 per cent by 2030.[18]

57.   The high fee for transfers in some corridors is linked to the cost of compliance with regulations on anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism and, in some countries, the loss of correspondent banking relationships. The structure of the remittance market can also keep the cost of remittances stubbornly high – for instance, when exclusivity agreements curb competition and act as a barrier to market entry.[19]

58.   To help reduce the costs of transferring remittances, IFAD, IOM and the World Bank are working with Governments to address issues such as transparency and consumer protection, payment systems infrastructure, legal frameworks, competition and governance. MigAPP, an application developed by IOM, provides real-time information on the cheapest available option for sending money within a specific corridor.

G.   Target 17.3: additional financial resources

59.   The World Bank monitors the global volume of remittance flows and provides technical assistance to countries to improve data collection on remittance flows (indicator 17.3.2).

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[15] *Economic Development in Africa Report 2018: Migration for Structural Transformation* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.18.II.D.2).

[16] *Effective Market Access for Least Developed Countries' Services Exports: An Analysis of the World Trade Organization Services Waiver for Least Developed Countries* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.20.II.D.4).

[17] See https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Guidance%20in%20children%27s%20rights%20%282019%29.pdf.

[18] The World Bank, "Remittance prices worldwide: making markets more transparent", available at https://remittanceprices.worldbank.org/en.

[19] Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development, *Financing for Sustainable Development, Report 2020* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.20. I.4).

60. The Asia-Pacific region is home to some of the countries whose economies are most dependent on remittances. In 2019, remittances constituted more than 10 per cent of the gross domestic product in Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nepal, Samoa, Tajikistan and Tonga. Those countries are likely to be highly affected by the economic downturn caused by COVID-19.

H. Target 17.8: disaggregation of data

61. The United Nations expert group on migration statistics, convened under the auspices of the Statistical Commission, promotes the collection, analysis and dissemination of high-quality data and indicators on international migration and coordinates efforts to disaggregate data by migratory status.[20] The Group is updating concepts, definitions and methods related to international migration statistics and is revising the United Nations recommendations on international migration statistics.

62. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) published a note providing guidance and elements of a common understanding on a human rights-based approach to data, with a focus on the collection of disaggregated data in the context of the 2030 Agenda.[21]

63. In March 2020, IOM, OECD, UNHCR and UNICEF launched an international data alliance for children on the move, with a view to improving data and statistics on migrant children, including those forcibly displaced, and supporting evidence-based policymaking.[22]

64. The 2019 edition of the situation report on international migration in the Arab region, produced by ESCWA in partnership with IOM and other entities of the United Nations system, analysed migration trends, using data disaggregated by age and sex where available.[23] ECLAC has also been supporting Member States in their efforts to strengthen the collection of disaggregated migration data.

V. Ratification of migration-related instruments

65. The normative framework for international migration includes legal instruments pertaining to the human rights of all migrants, the rights of migrant workers and members of their families, and the protection of refugees, as well as instruments designed to combat migrant smuggling and human trafficking. Over the past few decades, the legal instruments related to international migration have been ratified in varying degrees by the Member States of the United Nations (see table).

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[20] See https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/migration-expert-group/.
[21] See www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/HRIndicators/GuidanceNoteonApproachtoData.pdf.
[22] See www.unicef.org/press-releases/lack-quality-data-compounds-risks-facing-millions-refugee-and-migrant-children.
[23] "Situation Report on International Migration 2019: The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in the Context of the Arab Region" (United Nations, 2020).

Status of ratification of legal instruments related to international migration, 2020

Instrument	Year of entry into force	Parties to legal instruments	
		Number	Percentage[a]
Refugees			
1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees	1954	146	75
1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees	1967	147	75
Migrant workers			
Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97)	1952	50	27
Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143)	1978	25	13
1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families	2003	55	28
Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)	2013	29	16
Smuggling and trafficking			
2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children[b]	2003	177	91
2000 Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime[b]	2004	148	76

Source: United Nations Treaty Series (http://treaties.un.org, accessed 30 June 2020); NORMLEX Information System on International Labour Standards, http://www.ilo.org/normlex, accessed 30 June 2020.

[a] Of 193 States Members of the United Nations, as well as 2 non-member observer States, or of 187 States members of the International Labour Organization.

[b] Does not include ratifications by the European Union.

66. The 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the status of refugees are key legal instruments at the international level to ensure protection of the rights of refugees. The 1951 Convention enumerates the rights of refugees and establishes the legal obligation of Member States to protect refugees. The 1967 Protocol extended the application of the 1951 Convention to persons who became refugees after 1 January 1951, without any geographic limitation.

67. As of June 2020, the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol had been ratified by 146 and 147 States Members of the United Nations, respectively, with 144 States parties having ratified both instruments.

68. The 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, which entered into force in 2003, is the most comprehensive international treaty on the rights of all migrant workers. As of June 2020, 55 Member States had ratified the 1990 Convention, collectively hosting about 10 per cent of the global migrant population.

69. Within the framework of the International Labour Organization, three instruments are of direct relevance for the protection of migrant workers. The ILO Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97) covers recruitment and promotes standards on conditions of employment, freedom of association and social security for migrant workers. The ILO Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143) addresses irregular migration and calls for respect of key human rights and equality of opportunity and treatment. The ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) establishes global labour standards for domestic workers, guaranteeing them the same basic rights as other workers.

70. As of June 2020, the ILO Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97) had been ratified by 50 parties. The ILO Migrant Workers

(Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No.143) had been ratified by only 25 Member States, hosting about 7 per cent of the global migrant population, whereas the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) had been ratified by 29 Member States, hosting about 20 per cent of the global migrant population.

71. The 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, aims to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, to protect and assist victims of such trafficking, in particular women and children, to prosecute perpetrators of such crimes, and to promote cooperation among States parties. The 2000 Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime seeks to prevent and combat that crime, while protecting the rights of migrants and promoting cooperation among States parties.

72. As of June 2020, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children had been ratified by 177 Member States; and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air had been ratified by 148 Member States. The high rate of ratification of those protocols indicates the concern among Member States about linkages between transnational organized crime and irregular migration.

VI. International migration and development at the United Nations

A. From Cairo to Marrakech, Morocco: towards an international migration conference

73. For over a quarter century, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, adopted in Cairo in 1994, has guided global action on international migration. In chapter X of the Programme of Action, the opportunities and challenges of international migration for development are examined, the rights of documented migrants are highlighted, and concrete actions to address the challenges of undocumented migration are provided. Governments are called upon to address the root causes of forced displacement, to strengthen protection and assistance to refugees and asylum seekers, and to redouble efforts to seek durable solutions to their plight. Participants in subsequent United Nations conferences and summits in the social and economic field have echoed the commitments made in Cairo, reaffirming the need to uphold the human rights of international migrants, to respect labour standards for migrant workers, to enhance the contributions of international migration to development, to address the challenges associated with irregular migration, and to strengthen international cooperation on migration.[24]

74. Participants at previous population conferences, including those held in Bucharest (1974) and Mexico City (1984), had examined various aspects of international migration within the context of population dynamics, and Governments had been called upon to respect the human rights of migrants and to prevent discrimination. The conferences had also urged Governments to mitigate the effects of the "brain drain", to protect migrant workers, to regulate migration flows through bilateral and multilateral agreements, and to find lasting solutions for refugees. Nevertheless, the Millennium Development Goals and the United Nations

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[24] See United Nations, *Compendium of Recommendations on International Migration and Development: The United Nations Development Agenda and the Global Commission on International Migration Compared*, issued by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2006).

Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) did not highlight the impact of international migration on development.

75.   Since 1995, the General Assembly has requested the Secretariat on several occasions to survey Member States on the question of whether to convene an international conference on international migration (see resolutions 50/123, 54/212 and 56/203). With countries remaining divided over that question, the Assembly convened a High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in 2006 (see resolution 58/208), which led to the creation of the State-led Global Forum on Migration and Development (resolution 62/270). The declaration adopted at the second High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (resolution 68/4), held in 2013, helped pave the way for the inclusion of international migration in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1).

76.   In 2016, the General Assembly convened a high-level meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, in response to large flows of migrants and refugees. Through the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1), a process of intergovernmental negotiations was launched in order to adopt a global compact on migration at an intergovernmental conference. [25]

77.   In December 2018, 24 years after the Cairo Conference, Member States adopted the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in Marrakech, Morocco. In the Global Compact, Heads of State and Government and High Representatives affirm that migration is of major relevance for the sustainable development of countries of origin, transit and destination and recognizes that migration contributes to realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (see resolution 73/195, annex).

78.   The International Migration Review Forum serves as the primary intergovernmental global platform for Member States to discuss and share progress on the implementation of the Global Compact at the local, national, regional and global levels, including as it relates to the 2030 Agenda. The first Review Forum will be held in New York during the first half of 2022.

79.   The United Nations Network on Migration seeks to ensure effective and coherent, system-wide support for the implementation, follow-up and review of the Global Compact.

B.   High-level debate on international migration and development

80.   In February 2019, the General Assembly convened a high-level debate on international migration and development with a view to informing the high-level political forum on sustainable development. [26]

81.   Opening the debate, the President of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly observed that migrants should have equitable access to education, health, housing, water and sanitation and other basic services, and that achieving the Sustainable Development Goals would be the most effective means of reducing the adverse drivers that force people from their homes. Highlighting the role of migrants in contributing to development in communities of origin and destination, the President observed that the benefits of migration outweighed its challenges. For example, migrant remittances helped to reduce poverty, eradicate hunger and promote access to health and education in communities of origin. Most migrants moved to urban areas, where their human

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[25] In the Declaration, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was invited to include a proposed global compact on refugees in his annual report to the General Assembly in 2018.

[26] See the summary of the high-level debate on international migration and development, available at https://www.un.org/pga/73/wp-content/uploads/sites/53/2019/03/20-March-Summary-HLD-on-Intl-Migration-and-Development.pdf.

capital is most rewarded. The President called for eliminating xenophobia, prejudice, negative stereotypes and discriminatory practices aimed at migrants.

82.   Member States observed that migration is both a development strategy and a development outcome of major relevance to countries of origin, transit and destination. Efforts should be taken to integrate migration in global policy agendas as well as in development planning at the national level. Countries were encouraged to duly reflect migration in the voluntary national reviews prepared for the upcoming high-level political forum. Member States highlighted the urgent need to build national capacities to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation. Baseline assessments were needed to monitor future progress in implementing the Global Compact. In many countries, the narrative around migration had become intensely political and often quite negative, which eroded public trust. Efforts were needed to ensure that national migration policies were based on facts and well-founded analysis, that migration challenges were being addressed effectively and that the benefits of migration were fully realized. In that regard, speakers highlighted the role of local authorities.

83.   The President concluded the debate by emphasizing the role of the Global Compact in promoting international cooperation and partnerships, guiding national capacity development and fostering nuanced migration narratives. She also highlighted the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective in formulating migration policies and of including youth in migration policy discussions. The Sustainable Development Goals, she argued, could not be achieved without taking into consideration the role of migration.

C.   International Day of Family Remittances

84.   On 12 June 2018, the General Assembly proclaimed 16 June as the International Day of Family Remittances in recognition of the transformative impact that remittances have in the lives of migrants and their families and in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (resolution 72/281). Remittances contribute to poverty reduction and facilitate access to basic services at the household level. When invested productively, remittances can foster local entrepreneurship and financial inclusion. In 2020, IFAD marked the new international day by launching an information campaign on "building resilience in times of crisis", calling on Governments, private sector entities and civil society to build the resilience of remittance-receiving migrant families, who had been hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.[27]

85.   In March 2020, IFAD created a task force to counter the potentially devastating socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on migrants and their families. To date, the task force includes 38 international organizations, private sector entities, diaspora organizations and experts on remittances who give a voice to remittance-receiving families and help build resilience in times of crisis.[28] In April, the World Bank projected that remittances would fall by 20 per cent during 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.[29] In May, the Governments of Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, with the support of the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development, IOM, the United Nations Capital Development Fund and UNDP, and in partnership with the private sector and civil society, launched the call to action "Remittances in crisis: How to keep them flowing".

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[27] See https://familyremittances.org/.
[28] See https://familyremittances.org/idfr-2020/the-remittance-community-task-force/.
[29] World Bank, "World bank predicts sharpest decline of remittances in recent history", 22 April 2020.

VII. Conclusions and recommendations

86. **Against the backdrop of the present report, the following recommendations are made to Member States:**

(a) **Take further steps towards adopting a whole-of-government and a whole-of-society approach in the area of migration, with a view to mainstreaming migration across all relevant policy domains as well as integrating migration into national development planning at all levels;**

(b) **Consider, for those States that have not yet done so, ratifying or acceding to the international instruments related to international migration;**

(c) **Take steps to include non-citizen migrants in national systems for civil registration and vital statistics to ensure their access to social protection and the establishment of a legal identity;**

(d) **Leverage the 2030 Agenda, in particular its pledge that no one will be left behind, as a means of ensuring the inclusion of migrants and refugees in all aspects of national development planning;**

(e) **Draw on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration as a road map that offers guidance on how to integrate migration into national development policies and planning;**

(f) **Align the follow-up and review processes of the Global Compact and the 2030 Agenda at the national, regional and global levels, including by ensuring that the regional reviews of the implementation of the Global Compact serve to inform the high-level political forum for sustainable development, in particular its preparations at regional level;**

(g) **Include migrants and refugees, regardless of their legal status, in health programmes and in national responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, recognizing that the health of migrants and refugees cannot be separated from the health of the general population;**

(h) **Take steps to ensure that migrants and refugees, including those in precarious situations, are fully included in national and global socioeconomic response and recovery efforts to the pandemic;**

(i) **Recognize the contributions of migrants and refugees to the COVID-19 crisis response and to sustainable development efforts more broadly, including by ensuring that human mobility remains safe, inclusive and respectful of international human rights and refugee law; by exploring various models of regularization pathways for migrants in irregular situations; and by keeping remittances flowing and bringing transaction costs as close to zero as possible;**

(j) **Redouble support to developing countries in planning and conducting their censuses as well as in disseminating the results in order to address the severe adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on census-taking around the world.**

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