

Report of the Global Commission on International Migration

In December 2003, "acting on the encouragement of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan," the Global Commission on International Migration was established as an independent body, consisting of 19 Commissioners co-chaired by Jan O. Carlsson, former Minister for Migration and Development, Sweden, and Mamphela Ramphele, formerly the World Bank's Managing Director, from South Africa. The mandate of the Commission was to "provide the framework for the formulation of a coherent, comprehensive and global response to the issue of international migration." The work of the Commission was assisted by a Geneva-based Secretariat and a "Core Group of States," eventually including 32 governments from all world regions, that acted as an informal consultative body to the Commission. (The United States, the most important host country to immigrants, was not among the 32.) In October 2005, in New York, the Commission presented its Report to Kofi Annan, the UN member states, and other interested bodies. The Report is also intended as an input to intergovernmental discussion of international migration issues at the UN General Assembly in the Fall of 2006.

The Report, an 88-page document, is accessible at «<http://www.gcim.org>». That web site also provides access to extensive background materials on selected topics concerning international migration, regional studies of international migration prepared for the Commission, and reports of the regional hearings, consultations with "stakeholders," and expert meetings held by the Commission. Reproduced below are three sections of the Report: its Introduction (titled "Dimensions and dynamics of international migration") and two of its four Annexes: "Principles for Action and Recommendations," and a compendium of data: "Migration at a glance."

Under the impact of globalization, international migration, long an important element of demographic change as experienced by individual states, has acquired increasing salience in international relations and in domestic politics. National sovereignty in deciding about immigration policy (probably the key determinant of contemporary international migration flows) remains an established principle in international law, subject only to treaty obligations to admit bona fide refugees. Increasingly in recent years, however, demands have surfaced to treat such policies as matters to be decided bilaterally between sending and receiving countries, or even to be regulated by an international or supranational body. (For earlier voices discussing this topic see the Archives section of this issue and the Archives section of the December 1983 issue of PDR: "On the international control of migration.") Unexpectedly to some observers, the Report of the Global Commission fell short of recommending establishment of a new, WTO-like, international organization within the UN system

with responsibility for international migration. It recommends, instead, steps to be taken toward an Inter-agency Global Migration Facility. Whether or not such arrangements will materialize and be influential, the Commission clearly sees international migration flows, primarily from less developed to more developed countries, as increasing in the future. While not quantified, this vision contrasts with the assumptions incorporated in the often-cited projections of the UN Population Division, which envisage future net migratory flows as either constant in size or even decreasing. The Report's argument rests primarily on the perceived economic benefits of migration to both receiving and sending countries, fueled by persisting income differentials and by contrasting demographic configurations between migrants' places of origin and destination. It gives short shrift to arguments that question the economic gains of mass migration to receiving countries, or that see such gains at best as minor and likely to be counterbalanced by noneconomic considerations. Nor does the Report gauge the likelihood that heeding its strictures for a more welcoming treatment of migrants would increase the incentives to migrate.

Dimensions and dynamics of international migration

1. Migration has been a constant and influential feature of human history. It has supported the process of global economic growth, contributed to the evolution of states and societies and enriched many cultures and civilizations. Migrants have often been amongst the most dynamic and entrepreneurial members of society, people who are prepared to venture beyond the confines of their own community and country in order to create new opportunities for themselves and their children.

2. In the contemporary world, international migration continues to play an important (if often unacknowledged) role in national, regional and global affairs. In many developing countries, the remittances received from migrants constitute a more important source of income than Official Development Assistance (ODA) or Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Throughout much of the world, migrants are not only employed in jobs that nationals are reluctant to do, but are also engaged in high-value activities that local people lack the skills to do. In certain countries, whole sectors of the economy and many public services have become highly dependent on migrant labour, and would collapse overnight if those workers were no longer available.

3. Human mobility has become an integral component of the global economy, with

countries and companies looking further afield for the personnel they need to improve their competitiveness. It is no coincidence that some of the largest concentrations of migrants are to be found in 'global cities', dynamic, innovative and highly cosmopolitan urban centres that are enabling people, places and cultures in different parts of the world to become increasingly interconnected.

4. As these examples indicate, international migration has the potential to play a very positive role in the process of human development, bringing benefits to people in poorer and more prosperous countries alike. The Global Commission on International Migration underlines the need for the international community to maximize these benefits and to capitalize on the resourcefulness of people who seek to improve their lives by moving from one country to another. The following sections identify a number of important issues that must be taken into account if those objectives are to be achieved.

Disparities and differentials

5. International migration is a dynamic and expanding phenomenon. As indicated already, the number of international migrants has doubled in the past 25 years, although as a proportion of the world's total population it remains rather modest, at around three per cent. International migration affects countries at every level of economic development and of every ideological and cultural

persuasion. Migrants now depart from and arrive in almost every country in the world, making it increasingly difficult to sustain the distinction that has traditionally been made between countries of origin, transit and destination. Many states now fall into all three categories.

6. Over the past 30 years, the proportion of foreign-born residents living in developed countries has generally increased, while in most developing countries it has either remained stable or diminished to some extent. Around 60 per cent of all recorded migrants are now to be found in the world's more prosperous countries, and the other 40 per cent in developing regions. Despite this trend, large numbers of people continue to engage in 'south-south' migration, moving from one developing country to another. According to the most recent UN statistics, Asia has some 49 million migrants, Africa 16 million and the Latin America and Caribbean region six million.

Development, democracy and human security

7. As suggested earlier, the globalization process has created enormous wealth and has lifted millions of people out of poverty. But it has not yet narrowed the gap between rich and poor, and in some cases economic disparities are widening. Many developing countries are struggling to cope with high levels of demographic growth and are failing to create enough jobs for the millions of young people who are entering the labour market. And although more people than ever before are citizens of states with pluralistic political systems, too many people continue to live in countries characterized by poor governance, low levels of human security, corruption, authoritarianism, human rights violations and armed conflict.

8. Given these conditions, it is not surprising that many people are looking for a future beyond the borders of their own country, both within their own region and, if they have the means to get there, to more distant parts of the world. And for reasons that are self-evident, few people (other than short-term contract workers) seek to migrate from functional states with thriving economies and flourishing democracies to weak or despotic

states where human rights are violated and that are unable to meet the basic needs of their own citizens.

Demographic and economic factors

9. While many of the industrialized states are cautious in acknowledging it, their continued prosperity will depend in part on international migration. Many of the world's most affluent societies have low and declining birth rates, and as a result their populations are becoming progressively smaller and older. As a result, they may find it difficult to maintain existing levels of economic productivity, to sustain their pensions and social security systems, and to find the caregivers required to meet the needs of an ageing population.

10. The growing competitiveness within the global economy has led to a process of economic restructuring that has limited the number of public and private sector jobs available in developing countries. This has simultaneously created demand for a flexible labour force in the industrialized states that is prepared to work for low wages and under difficult conditions. Migrants from developing countries are currently helping to fill that gap at the lower end of the labour market, and seem likely to do so for the foreseeable future. At the upper end of the labour market, migrants are also in growing demand to fill positions in high-value and knowledge-based sectors of the economy that are currently confronted with a global shortage of appropriate skills.

Culture, communications, curiosity

11. The expanding scale of international migration can also be attributed to cultural factors. The human race has always been curious, and eager to visit different places, gain new experiences and encounter unfamiliar cultures. As a result of the globalization process, much larger numbers of people can realize those ambitions. Global communications networks provide people with the information they need to move from one place to another. Global transportation networks have made it much faster and cheaper to cross the globe. And the growth of global social networks and diasporas

(themselves a product of earlier migratory movements) have made it easier for people to move to another country and to adapt to a new society.

12. An Afghan citizen who decides to migrate, for example, can be guaranteed to find a supportive community of compatriots, whether she or he moves to Dubai, Karachi, London, New Delhi, Sydney or Washington DC. A number of countries, of which Afghanistan is just one, are now characterized by a culture of migration in which moving abroad on a temporary or long-term basis has become the norm rather than the exception.

The complexity of human mobility

13. Human mobility is not only becoming larger in scope and scale, but is also becoming more complex in its nature. International migrants constitute a very diverse group of people. As the number of migrants has increased, so too has the number of legal and administrative categories into which they are placed by governments and international organizations.

14. People who move across international borders are variously described as having regular or irregular status and as being skilled or unskilled workers, permanent settlers or temporary migrants, not to mention additional categories such as student migrant, family reunion migrant, transit migrant, asylum seeker or refugee. In principle, a coherent and comprehensive migration policy should address the particular circumstances of each of these different groups.

15. In reality, however, an individual migrant may belong to one or more of these categories at the same time. She or he may move successively from one category to another in the course of a migratory movement, or may seek to be reclassified from one category to another, as when an economic migrant submits a claim to asylum in the hope of gaining the privileges associated with refugee status.

16. The traditional distinction between skilled and unskilled workers is in certain respects an unhelpful one, as it fails to do justice to the complexity of international migration. For example, many countries are

currently eager to recruit migrants who are specialists in information technology and engineering, but they are equally eager to attract migrants who are able to provide high-quality care to elderly people and children. While they may have different levels of educational achievement, all of them could be legitimately described as essential workers.

Regional differences

17. In the course of its consultations, the Commission has become acutely aware of the many regional and sub-regional differences that exist in relation to international migration, as well the constraints that such differences place on the formulation of international migration policies.

18. The predominant form of migration varies considerably from one part of the world to another. In Asia, for example, many migrants move on the basis of temporary labour contracts, while in parts of the Americas and Africa, irregular migration is far more prevalent. Traditional countries of immigration such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA continue to accept migrants for permanent settlement and citizenship, while the countries of the Middle East usually admit international migrants for fixed periods and without any expectation of integration. In Europe, the major preoccupation of recent years has been the arrival of asylum seekers from other parts of the world, the majority of whom do not qualify for refugee status.

19. The states of the former Soviet Union have experienced a particularly complex pattern of human mobility during the past 15 years, involving migrations within, to and from the region; movements of a voluntary and involuntary nature, and situations in which people themselves did not move, but in which their nationality changed. Epitomizing this complexity, an intergovernmental initiative to address the issue of migration in the former Soviet Union has been obliged to develop its own vocabulary, establishing new categories of migrant such as 'formerly deported peoples' (communities that were forcibly relocated during the Stalin regime), 'ecological migrants' (people who have been forced to move by environmental disaster) and 'involuntarily relocating persons' (those

who have been forced to relocate to the country of their citizenship as a result of circumstances endangering their lives).

20. Important variations are also to be found in the capacity of states to formulate and implement migration policies. Such variations generally reflect the relative prosperity and the historical experience of the countries concerned. One would evidently not expect countries with relatively little relative experience in the field of international migration to have the same capacity as states that have longstanding and large-scale immigration programmes.

21. The Commission's mandate is to provide the framework for the formulation of a "coherent, comprehensive and global response to the issue of international migration." In accordance with its mandate, the conclusions and recommendations presented in this report are addressed to states and other stakeholders in all parts of the world, and do not focus on regional or sub-regional issues and situations.

Policy linkages: Development, human rights and security

22. A final dimension of the complexity of international migration is to be found in its inextricable linkage to a range of other global concerns, as well as the international community's growing awareness of such linkages. For example, recent years have witnessed a growing appreciation of the need to maximize the contribution that migrants make to poverty reduction and sustainable development in their countries of origin. In addition, the Commission has recognized an increased awareness that the issues of development, human rights and good governance are inseparable, and that an integrated approach to these issues will be required if the international community is to address the pressures that induce people to leave their countries of origin.

23. The linkage between migration and security has become an issue of even greater international concern. Recent incidents involving violence committed by migrants and members of minority groups have led to a perception that there is a close connection between international migration and inter-

national terrorism. Irregular migration, which appears to be growing in scale in many parts of the world, is regarded by politicians and the public alike as a threat to the sovereignty and security of the state. In a number of destination countries, host societies have become increasingly fearful about the presence of migrant communities, especially those with unfamiliar cultures and that come from parts of the world associated with extremism and violence.

24. These are real and legitimate concerns. However, the linkage between migration and security should also be viewed in more positive ways. In many parts of the world, labour migration has contributed towards security and political stability by reducing poverty levels, curbing unemployment and expanding the experiences and opportunities available to the population. Migration can be an empowering experience that enables people to enjoy a greater degree of human security. Returning migrants and exiles have assumed important leadership roles in many nascent democracies that are emerging from years of authoritarian rule.

25. The intricacy of the linkages that exist between international migration and other global issues presents further challenges to policy makers and has also raised some important issues in the preparation of this report. As an entity specifically established to consider the issue of international migration, the Commission has focused its conclusions and recommendations on policies that have a relatively direct bearing on the cross-border movement of people. Even so, the Commission is firmly convinced that migration policies have little chance of producing positive outcomes unless they are complemented by appropriate policies in the many other areas that have an impact on, and which are impacted by, international migration. In short, the issue of human mobility cannot be dealt with in isolation.

Conflicting interests and attitudes

26. Another important challenge confronted by policy makers in the domain of international migration is to be found in the controversial and contradictory nature of the issue. From the beginning of its work in January

2004, the Commission has been struck by the enormous amount of interest and controversy that exists in relation to international migration. States throughout the world are devoting an increasing amount of attention and resources to the movement of people across their borders. Questions related to international migration are being discussed in numerous national, regional and international fora. Migration issues are constantly in the headlines of many major media outlets. And while governments remain the principal actors in this discourse, many other influential stakeholders are striving to have their voice heard, not least the corporate sector.

Markets and states: The global and the local

27. In recent years, an apparent tension has arisen regarding the interests of the state and the interests of markets and the corporate sector in relation to international migration. As indicated earlier, a principal manifestation of the globalization process is the increasing ease with which goods, capital, services, information and ideas flow across international borders. But the same cannot be said for people, who are still confronted with a wide range of official controls when moving from one country to another. While such controls impinge most directly upon unskilled migrant workers, even skilled professionals and the employees of multinational corporations often find that their relocation is obstructed or delayed by restrictive policies and cumbersome procedures.

28. The corporate sector is increasingly anxious to resolve such problems. Private enterprises that wish to boost their competitiveness and expand their markets feel that they must be able to recruit their employees much more freely and on a global basis. And if they are unable to do so, they may move part or all of their enterprises to countries where they are able to find the people they need.

29. In contrast to the increasingly globalized approach of the corporate sector, the concerns of states are still predominantly embedded in local politics. Governments are often concerned that by facilitating the entry of foreigners to the national labour market they will reduce employment opportunities for citizens, offend public opinion and lose

electoral support. While they may acknowledge the economic case for a more liberal approach to international migration, many governments are also worried that admitting additional numbers of foreign nationals, even on a temporary basis, will have negative consequences for the stability of society and ultimately the security of the state.

The public discourse

30. The Commission considers that this tension between markets and the state, between the corporate sector and government, between the global and the local, between national interests and the globalization process, will be an increasingly important element of the discussion on international migration in years to come. While that tension may not be resolved, it must be approached on the basis of a calm, open and objective debate. In the current international context, this represents a serious challenge.

31. In every part of the world that the Commission has visited, international migration has been very high on the public, political and media agenda. While the precise issues at stake may have varied from place to place, the prominence of the discourse has been unmistakable.

32. In many societies, citizens are expressing concerns, both legitimate and unfounded, about the arrival of people from other countries and cultures. Media outlets across the world report a constant stream of stories related to migrants and migration, many of them focusing on the more sensational and negative aspects of the issue. Migration has proved to be a politically explosive issue in a significant number of countries, to the extent that it seems to have played an important role in determining the outcome of several elections. The discourse on migration has thus become a highly polarized one at national, regional and global levels, with limited common ground between the different constituencies that have an interest in the issue.

33. One should not be surprised or dismayed by this situation. International migration is an emotive issue because it raises complex questions about the identity and values of individuals, households and communities, as well as societies as a whole. International

migration is a controversial matter because it highlights important questions about national identity, global equity, social justice and the universality of human rights. International migration policy is difficult to formulate and implement because it involves the movement of human beings, purposeful actors who are prepared to make sacrifices and to take risks in order to fulfil their aspirations. Its challenges are radically different from those that arise in managing the movement of inanimate objects such as capital, goods and information. Those challenges are examined in the chapters that follow.

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Principles for Action and Recommendations

I. A world of work: Migrants in a globalizing labour market

Principle – Migrating out of choice: Migration and the global economy

Women, men and children should be able to realize their potential, meet their needs, exercise their human rights and fulfil their aspirations in their country of origin, and hence migrate out of choice, rather than necessity. Those women and men who migrate and enter the global labour market should be able to do so in a safe and authorized manner, and because they and their skills are valued and needed by the states and societies that receive them.

Recommendations

1. The number of people seeking to migrate from one country and continent to another will increase in the years to come, due to developmental and demographic disparities, as well as differences in the quality of governance. States and other stakeholders must take due account of this trend in the formulation of migration policies.

2. States and other stakeholders should pursue more realistic and flexible approaches to international migration, based on a recognition of the potential for migrant workers to fill specific gaps in the global labour market.

3. States and the private sector should consider the option of introducing carefully designed temporary migration programmes as a means of addressing the economic needs of both countries of origin and destination.

4. The GATS Mode 4 negotiations on the movement of service providers should be brought to a successful conclusion. Given the linkage between international trade and international migration, greater efforts should be made to foster a dialogue between officials and experts dealing with the two issues.

5. Governments and employers should jointly review current barriers to the mobility of highly educated professionals, with a view to removing those which are unnecessarily hindering economic competitiveness.

6. Greater efforts should be made to create jobs and sustainable livelihoods in developing countries, so that the citizens of such states do not feel compelled to migrate. Developing countries and the industrialized states should pursue economic policies and implement existing commitments that enable this objective to be achieved.

II. Migration and development: Realizing the potential of human mobility

Principle – Reinforcing economic and developmental impact

The role that migrants play in promoting development and poverty reduction in countries of origin, as well as the contribution they make towards the prosperity of destination countries, should be recognized and reinforced. International migration should become an integral part of national, regional and global strategies for economic growth, in both the developing and developed world.

Recommendations

7. Cooperative relationships between labour-rich and labour-poor countries are required to promote human capital formation and the development of a global pool of professionals. Providing appropriate pay, working conditions and career prospects in order to retain key personnel must be an integral component of such strategies.

8. Remittances are private money and should not be appropriated by states. Governments and financial institutions should make it easier and cheaper to transfer remittances and thus encourage migrants to remit through formal transfer systems.

9. Measures to encourage the transfer and investment of remittances must be combined with macro-economic policies in countries of origin that are conducive to economic growth and competitiveness.

10. Diasporas should be encouraged to promote development by saving and investing in their countries of origin and participating in transnational knowledge networks.

11. States and international organizations should formulate policies and programmes that maximize the developmental impact of return and circular migration.

III. The challenge of irregular migration: State sovereignty and human security

Principle – Addressing irregular migration

States, exercising their sovereign right to determine who enters and remains on their territory, should fulfil their responsibility and obligation to protect the rights of migrants and to re-admit those citizens who wish or who are obliged to return to their country of origin. In stemming irregular migration, states should actively cooperate with one another, ensuring that their efforts do not jeopardize human rights, including the right of refugees to seek asylum. Governments should consult with employers, trade unions and civil society on this issue.

Recommendations

12. States and other stakeholders should engage in an objective debate about the negative consequences of irregular migration and its prevention.

13. Border control policies should form part of a long-term approach to the issue of irregular migration that addresses the socio-economic, governance and human rights deficits that prompt people to leave their own country. This approach must be based on interstate dialogue and cooperation.

14. States should address the conditions that promote irregular migration by providing additional opportunities for regular migration and by taking action against employers who engage migrants with irregular status.

15. States should resolve the situation of migrants with irregular status by means of return or regularization.

16. States must strengthen their efforts to combat the distinct criminal phenomena of migrant smuggling and human trafficking. In both cases, perpetrators must be prosecuted, the demand for exploitative services eradicated and appropriate protection and assistance provided to victims.

17. In their efforts to stem irregular migration, states must respect their existing obligations under international law towards the human rights of migrants, the institution of asylum and the principles of refugee protection.

IV. Diversity and cohesion: Migrants in society

Principle – Strengthening social cohesion through integration

Migrants and citizens of destination countries should respect their legal obligations and benefit from a mutual process of adaptation and integration that accommodates cultural diversity and fosters social cohesion. The integration process should be actively supported by local and national authorities, employers and members of civil society, and should be based on a commitment to non-discrimination and gender equity. It should also be informed by an objective public, political and media discourse on international migration.

Recommendations

18. While recognizing the right of states to determine their own policies in relation to the situation of migrants in society, all migrants must be able to exercise their fundamental human rights and benefit from minimum labour standards.

19. Authorized and long-term migrants should be fully integrated in society. The integration process should value social diversity, foster social cohesion and avert the marginalization of migrant communities.

20. Local and national authorities, employers and members of civil society should work in active partnership with migrants and their associations to promote the integration process. Migrants should be properly informed of their rights and obligations and encouraged to become active citizens in the country to which they have moved.

21. Particular attention should be given to the empowerment and protection of migrant women, as well as ensuring that they are actively involved in the formulation and implementation of integration policies and programmes. The rights, welfare and educational needs of migrant children should also be fully respected.

22. While temporary migrants and migrants with irregular status are not usually granted the right to integrate in the society where they are living, their rights should be fully respected and they should be protected against exploitation and abuse.

23. Those individuals and organizations that have an influence on public opinion must address the issue of international migration in an objective and responsible manner.

V. A principled approach: Laws, norms and human rights

Principle – Protecting the rights of migrants

The legal and normative framework affecting international migrants should be strengthened, implemented more effectively and applied in a non-discriminatory manner, so as to protect the human rights and labour standards that should be enjoyed by all migrant women and men. Respecting the provisions of this legal and normative framework, states and other stakeholders must address migration issues in a more consistent and coherent manner.

Recommendations

24. States must protect the rights of migrants by strengthening the normative human rights framework affecting international migrants and by ensuring that its provisions are applied in a non-discriminatory manner.

25. All states must ensure that the principle of state responsibility to protect those on their territory is put into practice, so as to

reduce the pressures that induce people to migrate, protect migrants who are in transit and safeguard the human rights of those in destination countries.

26. Governments and employers must ensure that all migrants are able to benefit from decent work as defined by the ILO and are protected from exploitation and abuse. Special efforts must be made to safeguard the situation of migrant women domestic workers and migrant children.

27. The human rights component of the UN system should be used more effectively as a means of strengthening the legal and normative framework of international migration and ensuring the protection of migrant rights.

VI. Creating coherence: The governance of international migration

Principle – Enhancing governance: Coherence, capacity and cooperation

The governance of international migration should be enhanced by improved coherence and strengthened capacity at the national level; greater consultation and cooperation between states at the regional level, and more effective dialogue and cooperation among governments and between international organizations at the global level. Such efforts must be based on a better appreciation of the close linkages that exist between international migration and development and other key policy issues, including trade, aid, state security, human security and human rights.

Recommendations

28. All states should establish coherent national migration policies that are based on agreed objectives, take account of related policy issues and are consistent with international treaty law, including human rights law. Governance at the national level should be effectively coordinated among all concerned ministries and should also involve consultation with non-state actors.

29. The international community should support the efforts of states to formulate and implement national migration policies through the contribution of resources, appropriate expertise and training.

30. Bilateral agreements are a valuable means of addressing migration issues that affect two states. They must always respect the normative framework affecting international migrants and thereby safeguard migrant rights.

31. Additional efforts are required to ensure that regional consultative processes on migration have worldwide coverage, engage civil society and the private sector, and are not focused solely on migration control. Greater interaction between the different processes is essential given the global nature of migration.

32. The new willingness of a range of states, institutions and non-governmental stakeholders to take global initiatives on international migration is welcome. The UN General Assembly High-Level Dialogue provides an opportunity for greater interaction and coherence between these initiatives, and to ensure that their momentum is maintained. The ongoing UN reform process provides a window of opportunity to realize this momentum through a revision of current institutional arrangements.

33. The Commission proposes to the UN Secretary-General the immediate establishment of a high-level inter-institutional group to define the functions and modalities of, and pave the way for, an Inter-agency Global Migration Facility. This Facility should ensure a more coherent and effective institutional response to the opportunities and challenges presented by international migration.

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Migration at a glance

This annex highlights some of the key facts and figures relating to numbers, patterns, causes and consequences of international migration today. It relies on the latest available data from: UNDESA, World Bank, IOM, ILO and UNHCR.

How many international migrants are there?

— There are nearly 200 million international migrants in 2005, counting only those who have lived outside their country for more

than one year and including 9.2 million refugees

— This is equivalent to the population of the 5th largest country—Brazil

— 1 in 35 people is an international migrant; or 3% of the world's population

— Numbers are increasing rapidly: from 82 million international migrants in 1970 through 175 million in 2000 to nearly 200 million today

Migrant women

— Almost half the world's international migrants are women (48.6%)

— Some 51% of migrant women live in the developed world, compared with 49% in the developing world

— There are more female than male international migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, Oceania, Europe and the former USSR

Where are the migrants? (Year 2000)

— 56.1 million in Europe (including the European part of the former USSR), accounting for 7.7% of Europe's population

— 49.9 million in Asia, accounting for 1.4% of Asia's population

— 40.8 million in North America, accounting for 12.9% of North America's population

— 16.3 million in Africa, accounting for 2% of Africa's population

— 5.9 million in Latin America, accounting for 1.1% of Latin America's population

— 5.8 million in Australia, accounting for 18.7% of Australia's population

Which are the most important host countries? (Year 2000)

— USA has some 35 million: 20% of the world's migrants

— The Russian Federation has some 13.3 million: 7.6% of the world's migrants

— Germany has some 7.3 million: 4.2% of the world's migrants

— Ukraine has some 6.9 million: 4.0% of the world's migrants

— India has some 6.3 million: 3.6% of the world's migrants

— Migrants comprise more than 60% of the total population in Andorra, Macao Special Administrative Region of China, Guam, the Holy See, Monaco, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates

Which are the most important origin countries?

— The Chinese diaspora has an estimated 35 million people

— The Indian diaspora has some 20 million

— The Filipino diaspora has some 7 million

How has the distribution of migrants changed?

— From 1980 to 2000, the number of migrants living in the developed world increased from 48 million to 110 million; compared with an increase from 52 million to 65 million in the developing world

— Today, some 60% of the world's migrants live in the developed world

— In 1970, migrants comprised 10% of the population in 48 countries; this had increased to 70 countries by 2000

— From 1970 to 2000, the proportion of the world's migrants living in North America rose from 15.9% to 22.3%, and in the former USSR from 3.8% to 16.8%

— From 1970 to 2000, the proportion of the world's migrants living in other parts of the world decreased from: 34.5% to 25% in Asia; 12% to 9% in Africa; 7.1% to 3.4% in Latin America and the Caribbean; 22.9% to 18.7% in Europe, and 3.7% to 3.1% in Oceania

Why do migrants move?

— *Wage disparities*: 45.7% of people earn less than \$1 per day in Sub-Saharan Africa; 14.4% in South Asia, and 10.4% in Latin America and the Caribbean

— *Unemployment rates*: 12.2% in the Middle East and North Africa; 10.9% in Sub-Saharan Africa, and 6.6% in industrialized economies

— *Differentials in life expectancy*: 58 years in low income countries; 78 years in high income countries

— *Education gaps*: 58% women and 68% men literate in low income countries, almost full literacy in high income countries; 76% primary school enrolment in low income countries, almost full enrolment in high income countries

— *Demographic gradients*: on average 5.4 children born to each woman in Sub-Saharan Africa, compared with: 3.8 in the Arab World; 2.5 in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 1.4 in Europe

What are migrants' economic contributions to host countries?

— In 2000, some 86 million of the world's migrants were economically active—over 50% of all migrants

— Foreign workers comprise over 5% of the labour force in 8 European countries

— From 1975 to 2001, the number of foreign workers in Japan increased from 750,000 to 1.8 million

— Skilled immigrants and family members constitute over 50% of migrants entering Australia, Canada and New Zealand

What is the demographic impact of migration in host countries?

— From 1990 to 2000, international migration accounted for 56% of the population growth in the developed world, compared with 3% in the developing world

— From 1990 to 2000, immigration accounted for 89% of population growth in Europe

— From 1995 to 2000, Europe's population would have declined by 4.4 million without immigration

— From 1995 to 2000 immigration accounted for 75% of population growth in USA

How much money do migrants send home?

— Formal transfers of remittances were worth about \$150 billion in 2004

— Perhaps \$300 billion are additionally transferred informally

— Formal remittance transfers are almost triple the value of Official Development Assistance

— Formal remittance transfers are the second largest source of external funding for Developing Countries after Foreign Direct Investment

— The top 3 remittance-receiving countries in 2004 were: Mexico (\$16 billion per year), India (\$9.9 billion), the Philippines (\$8.5 billion)

— The top 3 remittance-sending countries in 2001 were: USA (\$28 billion per year), Saudi Arabia (\$15 billion), Belgium, Germany and Switzerland (\$8 billion)

How important is irregular migration?

— An estimated 2.5 to 4 million migrants cross international borders without authorization each year

— At least 5 million of Europe's 56.1 million migrants in 2000 had irregular status (10%)

— Some 500,000 undocumented migrants are estimated to arrive in Europe each year

— An estimated 10 million migrants live in the USA with irregular status

— An estimated 50% of the Mexican-born population in USA in 2000 had irregular status (4.8 million)

— Some 20 million migrants with irregular status live in India

— An estimated 600–800,000 people are trafficked each year

— Migrant smugglers and human traffickers make an estimated \$10 billion profit each year

What is the number of refugees and asylum seekers?

— 6.5 million of the world's 9.2 million refugees live in developing countries

— From 2000 to 2004, the global refugee population decreased by 24%

— Refugees represent 23% of international migrants in Asia; 22% in Africa, and 5% in Europe

— Pakistan hosts the largest number of refugees; just over 1 million (11% of the global total)

— From 1994 to 2003 some 5 million people applied for asylum in the industrialized countries; refugee or equivalent status was granted to 1.4 million of them (28%)

— In 2004, 676,000 applications for asylum were submitted in 143 countries; representing a 19% decrease from 830,300 in 2003

— In 2004, 83,000 refugees were resettled, mainly in the USA (53,000), Australia (16,000) and Canada (10,000)