

## 1. The number of international migrants worldwide has continued to grow rapidly over the past fifteen years.

The number of international migrants „ persons living in a country other than where they were born „ reached 244 million in 2015 for the world as a whole, an increase of 71 million, or 41 per cent, compared to 2000. Nearly two thirds of all international migrants live in Europe (76 million) or Asia (75 million). Northern America hosts the third largest number of international migrants (54 million), followed by Africa (21 million), Latin America and the Caribbean (9 million) and Oceania (8 million).

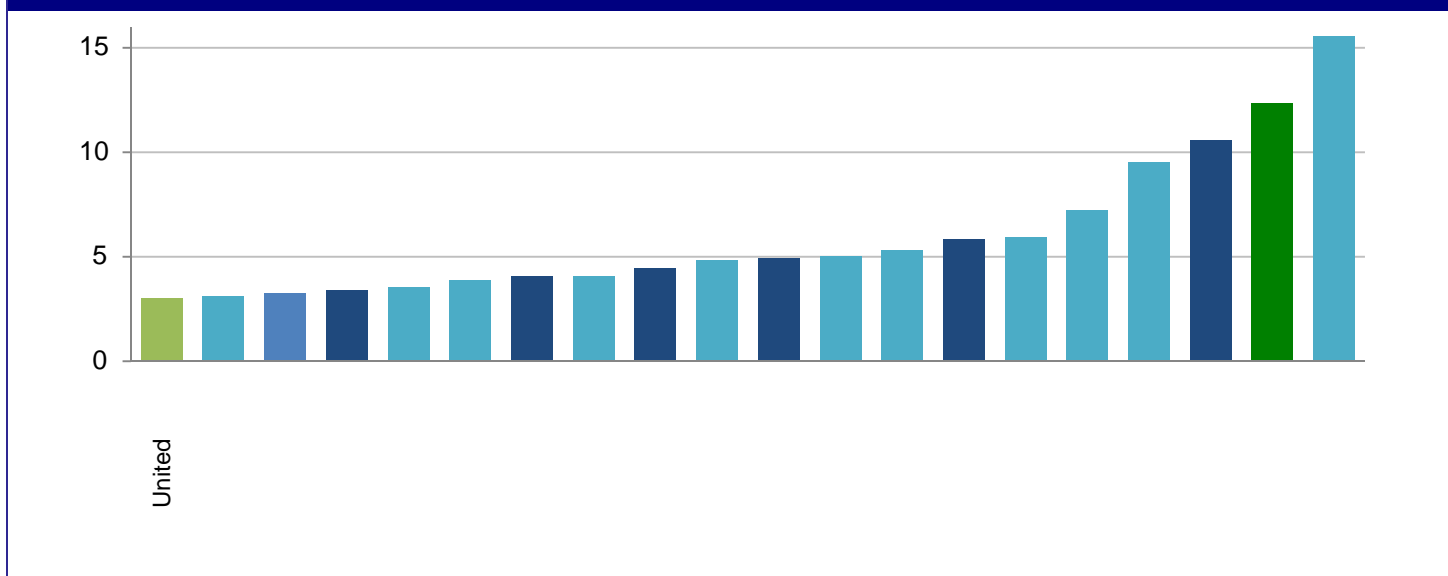
Between 2000 and 2015, Asia added more international migrants than any other major area of the world. Asia gained 26 million international migrants during this period, or 1.7 million additional migrants per annum. Europe added the second largest number of international migrants between 2000 and 2015 (20 million, or 1.3 million per year), followed by Northern America (14 million, or 0.9 million per year) and Africa (6 million, or 0.4 million per year). Both Latin America and the Caribbean and Oceania added comparatively smaller numbers of migrants during this period (3 million, or 0.2 million per year each).

In many parts of the world, migration occurs primarily between countries that are located within the same major area. In 2015, the majority of the international migrants living in Africa (87 per cent), Asia (82 per cent), Latin America and the Caribbean (66 per cent) and Europe (53 per cent) originated from another country located in the same major area. In contrast, the majority of international migrants living in Northern America (98 per cent) and Oceania (87 per cent) were born in a major area other than the one where they currently reside.

In 2015, two thirds (67 per cent) of all international migrants were living in just twenty countries. The largest number of international migrants (47 million) resides in the United States of America, equal to about a fifth (19 per cent) of the world's total. Germany and the Russian Federation host the second and third largest numbers of migrants worldwide (12 million each), followed by Saudi Arabia (10 million), the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (nearly 9 million), and the United Arab Emirates (8 million). Of the top twenty countries of destination for international migrants worldwide, nine are located in Asia, seven in Europe, two in Northern America, and one each in Africa and Oceania.



Figure 4. Countries or areas with the largest number of international migrants living abroad, 2015



Note: •United KingdomŽ stands for United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and •United StatesŽ for United States of America.

Data source: United Nations (2015a).

#### 4. India has the largest diaspora in the world, followed by Mexico and the Russian Federation.

Nearly half of all international migrants worldwide were born in Asia. In 2015, of the 244 million international migrants worldwide, 104 million, or 43 per cent of the total, were born in Asia. Europe was the birthplace of the second largest number of international migrants (62 million, or 25 per cent), followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (37 million, or 15 per cent) and Africa (34 million, or 14 per cent). Relatively few international migrants were born in Northern America (4 million, or 2 per cent) or Oceania (2 million, or 1 per cent).

Between 2000 and 2015, the number of international migrants born in Asia grew more than twice as fast as the number born in Europe. During 2000-2015, the average annual growth rate of the migrant stock originating in Asia exceeded that of all other major areas. Over the same period, the number of migrants from Asia grew by 2.8 per cent per year, compared to 1.2 per cent for those from Europe. Other major areas that experienced a rapid growth in their •diasporasŽ were Africa (2.7 per cent per annum), Latin America and the Caribbean (2.5), Oceania (2.4) and Northern America (2.1).

In 2015, 16 million persons from India were living outside of their country of birth compared to 12 million from Mexico (figure 4). Other countries with large diasporas include the Russian Federation (11 million), China (10 million), Bangladesh (7 million), and Pakistan and the Ukraine (6 million each). Of the twenty countries with the largest number of international migrants living abroad, 11 were located in Asia, 6 in Europe, and one each in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Northern America.

#### 5. While international migration can contribute to population growth, it cannot reverse the trend of population ageing.

The number of international migrants has grown faster than the world’s population. As a result, the share of migrants in the global population reached 3.3 per cent in 2015, up from 2.8 per cent in 2000. There are, however, considerable differences between major areas. In Europe, Northern America and Oceania, international migrants account for at least 10 per cent of the total population. By contrast, in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, less than 2 per cent of the population is an international migrant.

Between 2000 and 2015, positive net migration contributed 42 per cent of total population growth in Northern America and 32 per cent in Oceania. In Europe, the population would have declined during the period 2000-2015 in the absence of positive net migration. In Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean in this period, negative net migration contributed marginally to slowing population growth.

Net migration is projected to have an increasingly significant impact on the future size of populations. In Europe, although current migration levels will not be sufficient to compensate for the surplus of deaths over births (figure 5), population decline would be more pronounced and would have started earlier under a scenario of zero net migration. In Northern America, under a zero net migration scenario, the size of the population would start to decline during the period 2040-2045, whereas with the maintenance of current migration patterns, the population is projected to continue growing.

