The IOM’s 11th World Migration Report estimated that there were 281 international migrants in 2020, meaning that 3.6 percent of the world’s 7.8 billion residents were outside their country of birth for a year or more. The stock of international migrants increased by five million a year since 1990, when there were 128 million migrants. The world’s population increases by about 80 million a year.

The covid pandemic reduced human mobility, which may stay low due to remote work arrangements that allow work rather than workers to cross borders via the internet, as with teaching, telemedicine, and IT-related services. On the other hand, climate change may displace more people due to floods, fires, and droughts, pushing some of those displaced over national borders and making them international migrants.

Europe is the continent of international migration, hosting 87 million migrants or 31 percent of the world’s migrants despite having less than 10 percent of the world’s population. Asia follows with 86 million migrants, who are a small share of residents on a continent with 60 percent of the world’s people. North America has 59 million migrants or 21 percent of the world’s migrant stock and five percent of the world’s people.

The migrant share of the population is lowest in Asia and Africa at less than two percent, and highest in Oceania, where 22 percent of residents are migrants.

The share of migrants in the population varies by country, from almost none in some African countries to 88 percent in Qatar and the UAE. The populations of Australia and New Zealand include 30 percent migrants, Canada, Germany, and Sweden about 20 percent, and the US 15 percent.

The US has the most migrants, 45 million in 2020, followed by Germany, Saudi Arabia, and Russia, each with about 12 million migrants. India is the world’s largest source of migrants, with 18 million people abroad, followed by Mexico and Russia, each with about 12 million people abroad.

The Henley Passport Index measures the ease of entering other countries for holders of a particular country’s passport. Japanese passport holders can easily enter 193 other countries, followed by holders of passports from Singapore, Germany and Korea who can easily enter 190 countries. At the other extreme, Afghans, Syrians, and Pakistanis can enter fewer than 30 other countries easily.
Remittances

A major reason to migrate over national borders is to earn more money, some of which is remitted or sent to families at home. Remittances have been increasing faster than the stock of migrants abroad, which may reflect more money flowing via banks and money transfer firms rather than being carried by people crossing borders.

Total remittances, including remittances to high-income countries, were $702 billion in 2020, down slightly from $719 billion in 2019. Most migrants are from low- and middle-income countries, and remittances to these countries fell to $540 billion in 2020 from $548 billion in 2019. The top 10 countries received $358 billion in remittances in 2020, over half of the total, and included two high-income countries, France and Germany.

Remittances are a small share of GDP in countries with large economies such as India and China, but can be a major share of GDP in small island nations that have many residents abroad and in countries undergoing conflict or recovering from disasters.

Remittances did not fall as much as expected in 2020 due to factors that range from more money flowing through formal channels and thus being measured to more migrants settled in richer countries sending money to help relatives who lost sources of income during covid lockdowns.

Covid

A major theme of the 2022 WMR was the decline in international mobility due to government actions aimed at reducing the spread of covid. Almost all governments restricted international travel when the WHO declared covid a pandemic March 10, 2020, and some restricted internal movement as well. Many international travel restrictions remain in place two years into the pandemic. Most internal movement restrictions and stay-at-home lockdowns ended as more people got vaccinated.

Air travel dropped 60 percent. There were 4.5 billion air passengers in 2019, and 1.8 billion in 2020.

Labor

New flows of international migrant workers were largely stopped by the pandemic. About 62 percent of all migrants are in the labor force of their host countries, and this share is 69 percent of the 246 million migrants who are 15 and older. Two thirds of international migrant workers are in high-income countries, some 115 million, making them 18 percent of the 630 million strong labor force in high-income countries.
The ILO estimated that the global labor force in 2022 is 3.6 billion, including 285 million workers in low-income countries, 1.2 billion in lower-middle income countries, and 1.5 billion in upper-middle income countries.

**Trafficking**

Human trafficking involves three elements: an “act” such as recruiting a migrant to cross borders, a “means” by which the act is done such as coercion, and a “purpose” of the action and means, such as sexual exploitation or forced labor.

Reliable data on the number of victims of human trafficking is sparse. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime reported that the number of detected trafficking victims rose from 20,000 a year in the early 2000s to 50,000 a year recently, including half who are trafficked domestically or within one country. Two thirds of trafficking victims are women and girls, but men are 60 percent of the victims of forced labor trafficking. There are more victims of sexual exploitation in all regions except Africa and the Middle East, where there are more forced labor victims.

Workers trafficked for forced labor are most often employed in domestic work, where 30 percent of victims were detected, construction, 16 percent, agriculture, 10 percent, manufacturing nine percent, and hospitality, eight percent. Most victims came from nearby countries except in domestic work and hospitality, where half or more of the victims were from further away. Anti-trafficking policies center on the three P’s of prevention, prosecution of traffickers, and protection of victims.
The Henley Passport Index: Q3 2021 Global Ranking
The Top 10 Countries Received Over Half of the $700 Billion in Remittances in 2020

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<td>Bangladesh</td>
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</tbody>
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Remittances were 30% or More of GDP in Tonga, Somalia, and Lebanon in 2020

Most Governments have Maintained the International Travel Restrictions First Imposed in March 2020
2/3 of International Migrant Workers are in High-Income Countries, Where they are 18% of Workers

Human Trafficking Involves an Act, a Means, and a Purpose

1. **ACT (what is done)**
   - Recruitment;
   - Transportation;
   - Transfer;
   - Harbouring or receipt of persons.

2. **MEANS (how it is done)**
   - Only if victim is an adult:
     - Threat or use of force;
     - Coercion;
     - Abduction;
     - Fraud;
   - Deception;
   - Abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability;
   - Giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person.

3. **PURPOSE (why it is done)**
   - Exploitation including, at a minimum:
     - Exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation;
     - Forced labour or services;
     - Slavery or practices similar to slavery;
     - Servitude or the removal of organs.
Most Detected Trafficking Involved Sexual Exploitation Except in Africa

Domestic Work and Hospitality had the Highest Shares of Forced Labor Victims from Outside the region Where They were Detected

References


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