

4. International Migration

Acronyms and abbreviations

ASEAN—Association of Southeast Asian Nations

EU—European Union

GDP—Gross Domestic Product

ILO—International Labour Organization

UAE—United Arab Emirates

UN—United Nations

UNHCR—UN High Commissioner for Refugees

UNRWA—UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Glossary

3x1 Project for Migrants: A co-financing project under Mexico's Social Development Department, wherein federal, state and municipal governments match the collective remittances invested in hometown projects by Mexican migrants abroad.

1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees: The central UN legal document defining refugee status and rights, as well as obligations of states.

Partition of British India (1947): The division of the Indian subcontinent, following independence from Great Britain, into Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan. Widespread inter-communal violence and displacement ensued as Muslims and Hindus found themselves on the wrong side of the new border.

Partition of British Palestine (1948): The UN plan to organize post-colonial Palestine into Jewish- and Arab-governed sectors. The General Assembly passed the partition, but shortly thereafter, Jewish leaders established the state of Israel. Arab armies invaded the new state, beginning the First Arab-Israeli War (1948–1949).

The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration: The agency of the Department of Labor and Employment that manages the Philippine labor migration program.

Program for Mexican Communities Living Abroad: A project organized under the auspices of the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and administered by consular offices in the U.S. It creates a support network for Mexican communities abroad, focusing on the key areas of education, sports, small business, culture and health.

1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees: The UN Protocol removing temporal and geographic restrictions on qualification for refugee status, as defined in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR): The UN agency tasked with leading and coordinating action related to refugee protection since its establishment in 1950.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA): The UN Agency responsible for providing assistance and protection to Palestinian refugees. It was created in response to the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict, and has been in operation since 1950.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights: A UN declaration adopted in 1948, which represented the first international expression of universal, inherent human rights. The declaration consists of four pillars: freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from fear and want.

Definitions and Data

Among the three key dimensions of population change, migration is perhaps the most difficult to investigate. In contrast to births and deaths, migration is not a unique experience, since it can occur repeatedly over the life of an individual, may vary greatly in a short period of time, and may be politically sensitive. Consequently, determining international migration levels and trends accurately and comprehensively is a challenging statistical undertaking, especially in countries with limited resources and capacities or where immigration status is divisive.

Measuring and analyzing the levels, trends and types of international migration depend to a large extent on:

1. The definitions and concepts utilized to classify, identify and characterize various types of international migrants, including refugees, asylum seekers and unauthorized migrants.
2. The quality and extent of the available statistical data and information that have been collected and compiled on the stocks of international migrants (the number of immigrants within a given country at a certain point in time), and the flows of international migrants (the movements of immigrants and emigrants across an international border over a specified time period, usually a year).

Although definitions, categories and terminology vary by country, the UN has established recommended definitions and guidelines for measuring and analyzing international migration.* It defines an international migrant as a person who stays outside their usual country of residence for at least one year. According to that definition, the estimated worldwide number of international migrants is now close to 250 million.

Most statistics used to estimate the international migrant stock are obtained from population censuses, population registers and nationally representative household surveys. For the purpose of estimating the international migrant stock, migrants are equated either with the foreign-born or with foreign citizens. It should be noted that the foreign-born population differs from the immigrant population because there are births of citizens working or traveling abroad and non-immigrants who reside in a country temporarily.

*United Nations. 1998. *Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration, Revision 1*. New York.

Key International Human Rights Instruments Relevant to International Migration

- 1948: Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- 1949: ILO Convention concerning Migration for Employment
- 1951: Convention relating to the Status of Refugees plus the 1967 Additional Protocol
- 1954: Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons
- 1961: Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness
- 1966: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- 1966: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Culture Rights
- 1975: ILO Convention concerning Migrations in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Workers
- 1990: Convention on the Protection of Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families
- 2000: Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air
- 2000: Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Woman and Children
- 2011: ILO Convention concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers