

MIGRATION AND REMITTANCES FACTBOOK 2008



THE WORLD BANK

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Foreword

The *Migration and Remittances Factbook 2008* attempts to present numbers and facts behind the stories of international migration and remittances, drawing on authoritative, publicly available data. It provides a snapshot of statistics on immigration, emigration, skilled emigration, and remittance flows for 194 countries and 13 regional and income groups. Some interesting facts emerge:

- Nearly 200 million people, or 3 percent of the world population, live outside their countries of birth. Current migration flows, relative to population, are weaker than those of the last decades of the nineteenth century.
- The top migrant destination countries are the United States, the Russian Federation, Germany, Ukraine, and France. The top immigration countries, relative to population, are Qatar (78 percent), the United Arab Emirates (71 percent), Kuwait (62 percent), Singapore (43 percent), Israel (40 percent), and Jordan (39 percent).
- The volume of South–South migration is almost as large as that of South–North migration, which accounts for 47 percent of the total emigration from developing countries. South–South migration is larger than South–North migration in Sub-Saharan Africa (72 percent), Europe and Central Asia (64 percent), and South Asia (54 percent).
- The Mexico–United States corridor is the largest migration corridor in the world, accounting for 10.4 million migrants by 2005. Migration corridors in the Former Soviet Union—Russia–Ukraine, and Ukraine–Russia—are the next largest, followed by Bangladesh–India. In these corridors, natives became migrants without moving when new international boundaries were drawn.

- Smaller countries tend to have higher rates of skilled emigration. Almost all the physicians trained in Grenada and Dominica have emigrated abroad. St. Lucia, Cape Verde, Fiji, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Liberia are also among the countries with the highest emigration rates of physicians.
- Refugees and asylum seekers made up 13.5 million or just over 7 percent of international migrants in 2005. The share of refugees in the population was 14.3 percent in the low-income countries—more than five times larger than the share of 2.6 percent in the high-income OECD countries. The Middle East and North Africa had the largest share of refugees and asylum seekers among immigrants (60 percent), followed by Sub-Saharan Africa (17 percent), East Asia and Pacific (11 percent), and South Asia (11 percent).
- Worldwide remittance flows are estimated to have exceeded \$318 billion in 2007, of which developing countries received \$240 billion. The true size, including unrecorded flows through formal and informal channels, is believed to be significantly larger. Recorded remittances are more than twice as large as official aid and nearly two-thirds of FDI flows to developing countries.
- In 2007, the top recipient countries of recorded remittances were India, China, Mexico, the Philippines, and France. As a share of GDP, however, smaller countries such as Tajikistan (36 percent), Moldova (36 percent), Tonga (32 percent), the Kyrgyz Republic (27 percent), and Honduras (26 percent) were the largest recipients in 2006.
- Rich countries are the main source of remittances. The United States is by far the largest, with \$42 billion in recorded outward flows in 2006. Saudi Arabia ranks as the second largest, followed by Switzerland and Germany.

The authors have attempted to present the best possible data in the *Factbook*, drawing on authoritative sources. However, the user is advised to take note of the pitfalls of using currently available migration and remittances data. Remittance flows and the stock of migrants may be underestimated due to the use of informal remittance channels, irregular migration, and ambiguity in the definition of migrants (foreign born versus foreigner, seasonal versus permanent). Considerably more effort is needed to improve the quality of data.

We hope the *Factbook* serves as a stepping stone toward a more concrete understanding of migration and remittance trends in the world.

Uri Dadush

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and International Trade Department
Chair, Migration Working Group
The World Bank

Data Notes

The reader is advised to note the pitfalls of using the data on international migration and remittances, which are often missing, lagging, or lacking in cross-country comparability. Capturing data on irregular movements of migrants and remittances remains a big challenge.

Data on Migration

According to the Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration by the United Nations, *long-term migrants* are persons who move to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least a year—so the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence. And *short-term migrants* are persons who move to a country other than that of their usual residence for a period of at least three months but less than a year, except in cases where the movement to that country is for purposes of recreation, holiday, visits to friends and relatives, business, medical treatment, or religious pilgrimage (UN Statistics Division 1998).

The United Nations Population Division (UNPD) database is the most comprehensive source of information on international migrant stock for the period 1960–2005 (UNPD 2005). For 165 countries, the data are based on foreign-born statistics, and for 50 countries on foreign nationality. For Côte d'Ivoire and the Democratic Republic of Congo, a combination of the two types of data is used. For thirteen countries, migrant stock data are estimated indirectly using various assumptions. Time series data on migrant stocks are generated assuming certain growth rates.

The duration threshold that identifies migrants varies across countries (Lemaitre and others 2006). For example, under the UN definition, international students who study in the receiving country for more than a year would be considered as migrants. The *International Migration Outlook* (OECD 2006) made a first attempt to characterize migrants by “reasons for movement” and to harmonize statistics among OECD countries.

Migrants' transfers are the net worth of migrants that are transferred from one country to another at the time of migration (for a period of at least one year). As the number of temporary workers increases, the importance of migrants' transfers may increase. Therefore, in order to get a complete picture of the resource flow, one has to consider these three items together.

Many countries do not report data on remittances in the IMF balance of payment statistics, even though it is known that emigration from those countries took place. Several developing countries (for example, Lebanon) do not report to the IMF. Some high-income countries (notably Canada, Singapore, and the United Arab Emirates) also do not report remittance data. A survey of central banks reveals widespread problems with remittance data collection methodology (de Luna Martinez 2005). Most of the central banks use remittance data reported by commercial banks, but leave out flows through money transfer operators and informal channels. Even when data are available and properly classified, in many cases, these data are often weak or out of date. Also, the methodology for preparing estimates is not the same in all countries, and it is not always described in the country notes in the publicly available balance of payments data. It is hoped that the increased awareness about the importance of remittances and the shortcomings in both the remittance and migrant workers' data will result in efforts to improve the data transmission.

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of remittance data is estimating informal flows. One way to estimate the true size of remittances is to undertake surveys of remittance senders and recipients. Unless new, adequately randomized and representative surveys of recipients and senders are carried out, evidence from existing household surveys would only be indicative rather than comprehensive.

Sources of Data

Data on immigration and emigration are from UNPD (2005) and Ratha and Shaw (2007). Data on the emigration rate of the tertiary educated are from Docquier and Marfouk (2004). Data on the emigration of physicians and nurses are from Docquier and Bhargava (2006), while supplementary data from Clemens and Pettersson (2006) are used for Sub-Saharan African countries. Remittances data are from the IMF (2007).

Data on the following variables are from the World Bank (2007): population, population growth, population density, labor force, urban population, age dependency ratio, surface area, gross national income (GNI), GNI per capita, GDP growth, and poverty headcount ratio at national poverty line.

In the tables, we use . . to indicate that data are not available.

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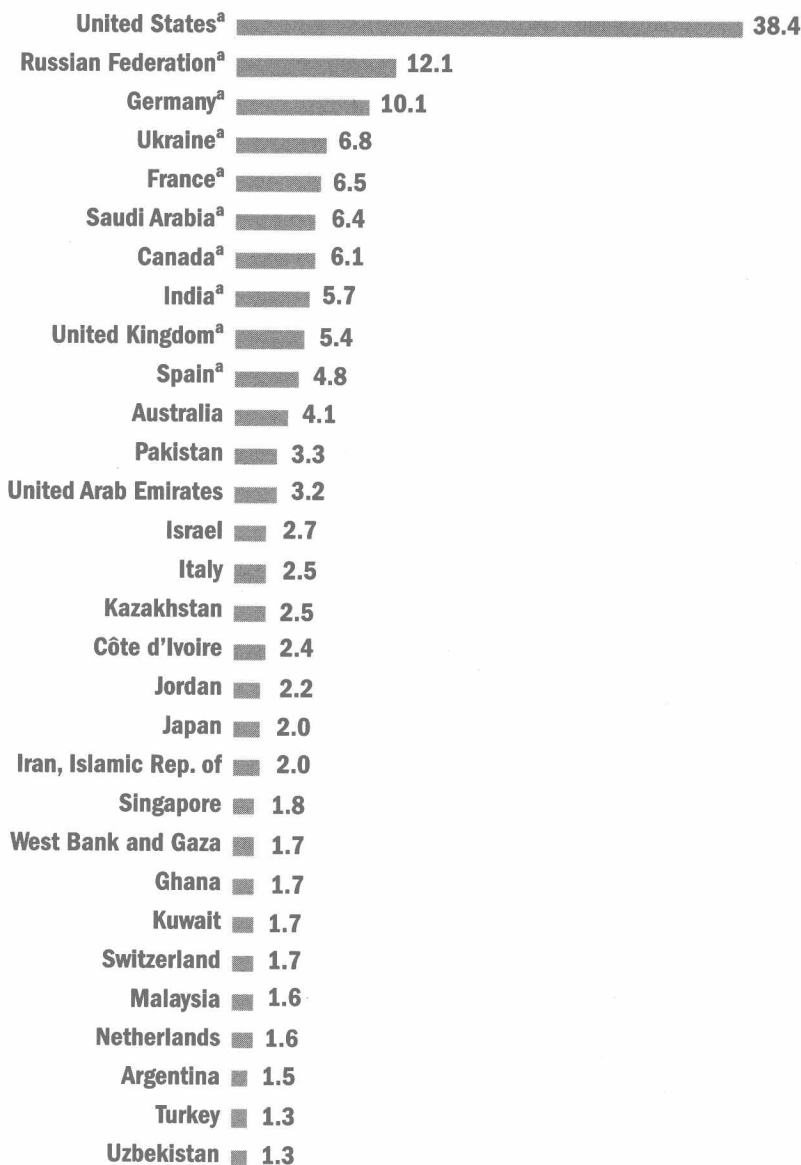
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Migration and Remittances: Top 10 Countries

Top Immigration Countries, 2005

number of immigrants, millions

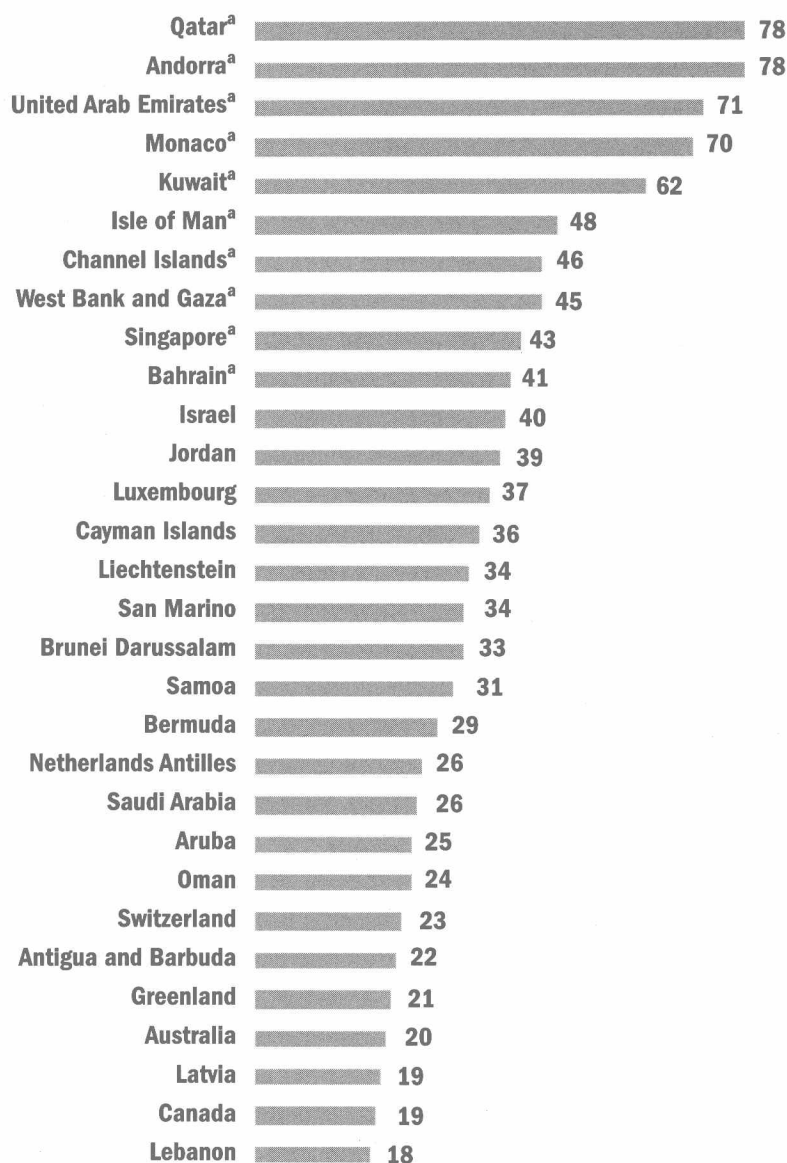


Source: UN Population Division.

a. Top 10 countries.

Top Immigration Countries, 2005

percent of population

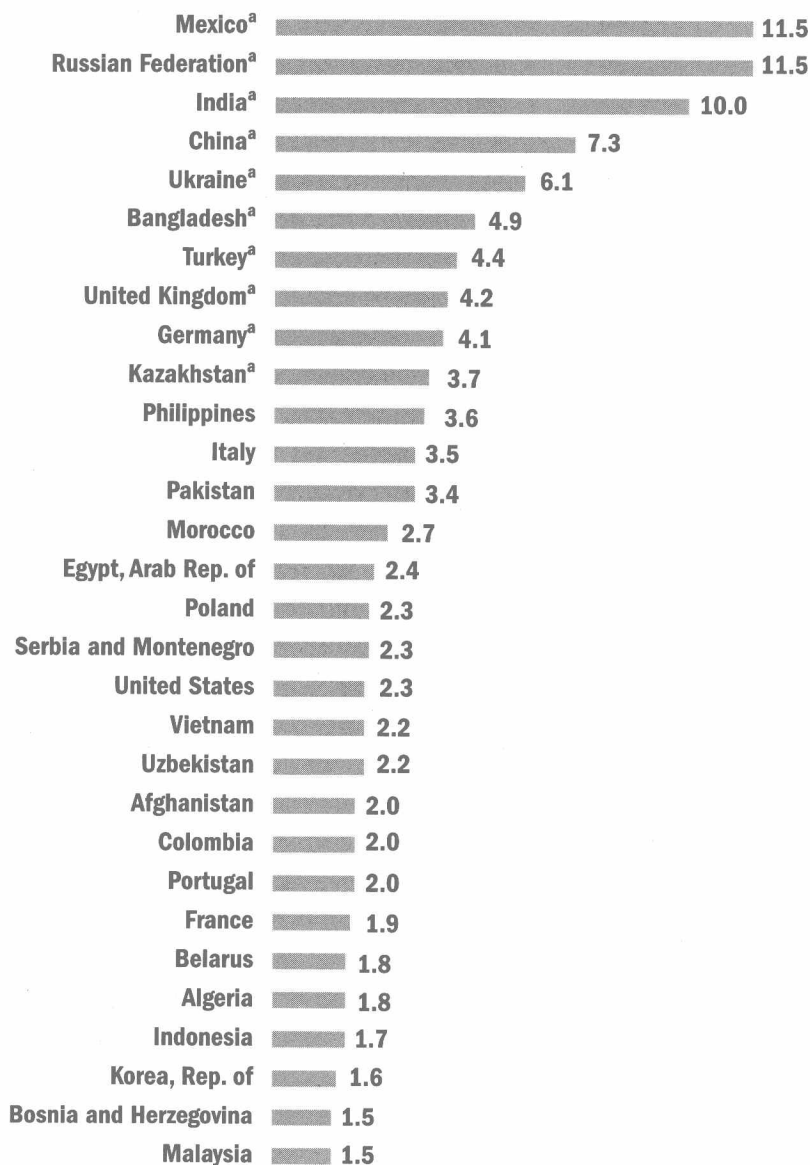


Source: UN Population Division.

a. Top 10 countries.

Top Emigration Countries, 2005

number of emigrants, millions



Sources: Development Prospects Group, World Bank.

a. Top 10 countries.

Top Emigration Countries, 2005

percent of population



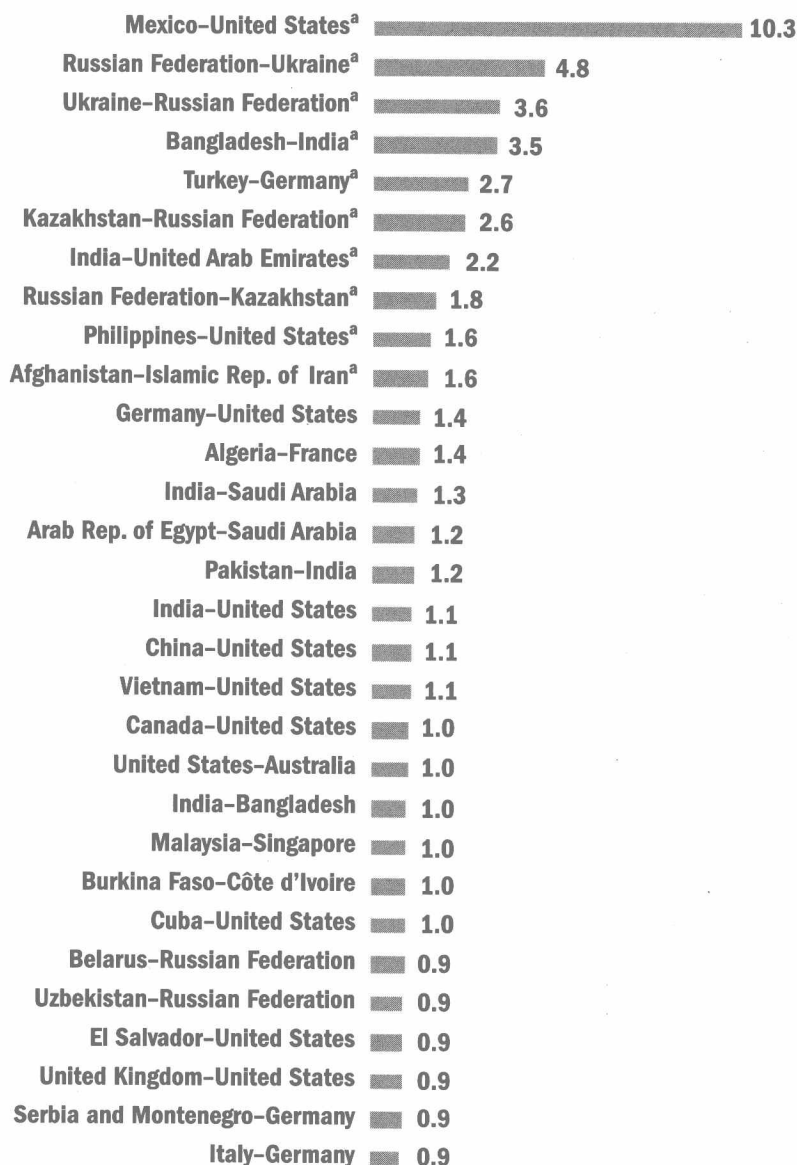
Sources: Development Prospects Group, World Bank.

Note: Countries with less than 1 million population excluded.

a. Top 10 countries.

Top Migration Corridors, 2005

number of migrants, millions

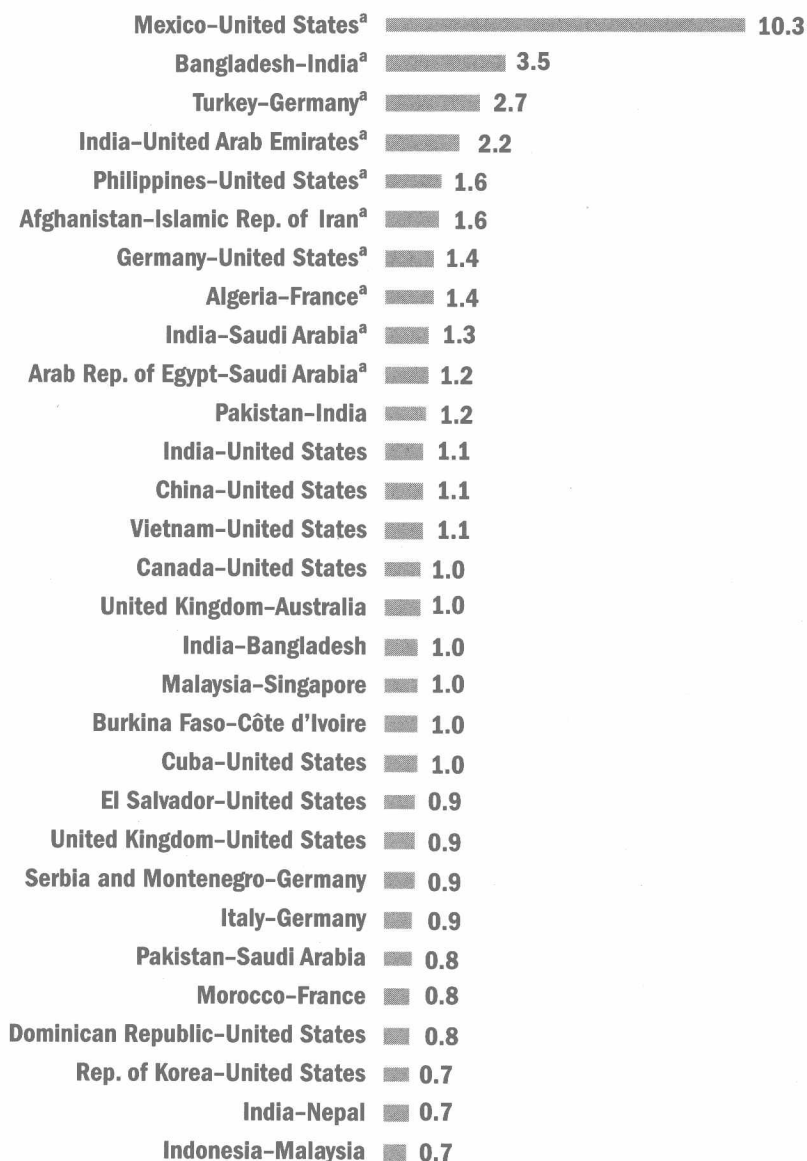


Sources: Development Prospects Group, World Bank.

a. Top 10 countries.

Top Migration Corridors (excluding Former Soviet Union), 2005

number of migrants, millions



Sources: Development Prospects Group, World Bank.

a. Top 10 countries.