Migration in the 21st Century: Breaking the Myths

Chatham House rule: Informal Discussion
Rome, Italy | 18 December 2019

Arif Husain
Chief Economist
United Nations World Food Programme
What do we know about MIGRATION?
Main types of migration

1. FORCED MIGRATION OR DISPLACEMENT
   - Migration out of necessity
   - Key drivers: Conflict, persecution, disasters, climate change, food insecurity, poverty, etc.

2. ECONOMIC MIGRATION
   - Migration out of choice
   - Key drivers: Economic opportunities, income inequality and employment gaps, lack of education, healthcare or social security, population growth, existence of established networks for migration, etc.

Note: Other types of migration include irregular migration, environmental migration, return migration, etc.
Global migration has been on the rise since 1990

Total number of international migrants and refugees (1990-2019)

Of the 266 million international migrants in 2018, 10% were refugees.

- 26M (10%) Refugees*
- 240M (90%) Other Migrants

*This does not include other forcibly displaced people, such as internally displaced persons (IDPs) and asylum seekers.

The share of immigrants in high-income member countries of the OECD saw a greater increase than those in the global population from 2000-2018.

While this increase was smaller relative to that observed in many high-income countries outside the OECD, it has led to widespread concerns in many host countries about possible large and sudden influx of migrants.
The total number of forcibly displaced people amounted to 70.8 million in 2018.

70.8 million forcibly displaced people worldwide

41.3 million Internally Displaced People
25.9 million Refugees
3.5 million Asylum-seekers

Source: UNHCR, June 2019

1 person is forcibly displaced every 2 seconds as a result of conflict, violence or persecution.
Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

Close to 80% of the 41.3 million are displaced in only 11 countries:

- Syria: 6.1 M
- Colombia: 5.7 M
- Democratic Republic of the Congo: 3.1 M
- Somalia: 2.6 M
- Afghanistan: 2.6 M
- Yemen: 2.3 M
- Nigeria: 2.2 M

Main drivers:
- Armed conflict and violence
- Human rights violations
- Sudden-onset disasters
- Slow-onset disasters

New displacements (2018):
- Conflict: 10.8 M
- Natural disasters: 17.2 M

At least 17 million children under the age of 18 were living in internal displacement around the world at the end of 2018.

More than 5 million were under the age of five.

Refugees

Around 80% of refugees live in countries neighbouring their countries of origin. Over half of refugees in 2018 are under the age of 18, many of whom are crossing borders unaccompanied or separated from their families.

57% of UNHCR refugees came from three countries:
- Syria: 6.7M
- Afghanistan: 2.7M
- South Sudan: 2.3M

78% of all refugees were in situations lasting for more than five years (a sharp rise from 66 per cent in 2018).

Top refugee-hosting countries:
- Germany: 1.1m
- Sudan: 1.1m
- Uganda: 1.2m
- Pakistan: 1.4m
- Turkey: 3.7m

Source: UNHCR, 2018.
The share of migrants from developing countries going to other developing countries was larger than the share going to the “North”

- **North-North**: 16%
- **North-South**: 4%
- **South-South**: 34%
- **South-North**: 32%
- **South-Other High-Income**: 14%

**Note:** South = Low- and middle-income countries, North = high-income OECD countries

Over two-thirds of international migration in Sub-Saharan Africa and 58 percent in Europe and Central Asia is intra-regional.

International migrants and refugees within and across regions and income groups, 2018

*Source: World Bank staff estimates based on UNDESA.*
Why do people move from their countries of origin?
Migration flows are expected to increase in coming years, driven mainly by income gaps, inequality, demographic imbalances, and climate change.

**MAIN DRIVERS**
- INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT GAPS
- ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY
- DEMOGRAPHIC IMBALANCES
- CLIMATE CHANGE

**OTHER PUSH AND PULL FACTORS**
- SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND DISCRIMINATION
- CORRUPTION
- LACK OF EDUCATION, HEALTHCARE AND SOCIAL SECURITY
- MARRIAGE OPPORTUNITIES
- DIASPORA NETWORKS
During 2013–17, the average income in the high-income OECD countries was USD 43,083, compared with USD 795 in the low-income countries — a ratio of 54:1.

At current growth rates, it would take 135 years to close the income gaps.
According to current population trajectories, by 2030....

**In high-income countries..**

For every young person (15-24 years) = three seniors (65+)

In Germany, Italy and Japan

**In developing nations...**

The ratio of old to young will be:

- 1:9 in Uganda
- 1:7 in Nigeria
- 1:2 in India and Mexico

Projected increase of working-age populations in the world's LMICs = **552 million** by 2030

**Consequences**

- large labor-market imbalances
- mounting fiscal pressures as tax bases narrow
- costs of care for the elderly rises
- hardening attitudes toward migration

- Growing pools of young people
- Need to generate sufficient jobs to reach their targets for poverty reduction and growth
- Increase migration pressures, esp. from South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa
In 2017, WFP conducted a migration study “At the Root of Exodus” to explore the nexus of conflict, migration and food security.

The study concluded that food insecurity is a critical ‘push’ factor driving international migration, along with economic opportunities, income inequality, population growth and the existence of established networks for migration.

“High levels of food insecurity lead to higher levels of migration across borders.”
Syrian Asylum Applications in Europe
Global drivers of migration

Out-migration is substantially influenced by:

- **HIGH LEVELS OF UNDERNOURISHMENT**
  Improved undernourishment reduces out-migration by 0.2 percent

- **DOMESTIC ECONOMIC GROWTH**
  Better opportunities within countries of origin offset migration

- **PREVIOUS LEVELS OF MIGRATION**
  Presence of diaspora in the recipient country and/or network effects
Global drivers of refugees

For each 1% rise in hunger
an extra 200 out of 10,000 people will flee their country

For each additional year of conflict
an extra 40 out of 10,000 people will flee their country

Source: WFP, 2017. At the root of exodus: Food security, conflict and international migration.
Key findings

• Countries with the highest level of food insecurity, coupled with armed conflict, have the highest outward migration of refugees. Additionally, when coupled with poverty, food insecurity increases the likelihood and intensity of armed conflicts.

• Food security, conflict and international migration are issues, which cut across the entire humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus with far-reaching implications for policy-makers and the wider international community.

• People leave their countries after multiple internal displacements due to conflict, disrupted livelihoods and food insecurity.

• When migration is conflict-driven, families often travel together.

• Onward migration is driven by a desire for stability triggered by economic factors and food security.

• The use of new technology and social media has revolutionized information flows amongst refugees.
Monitoring the needs of displaced populations
Migration Pulse initiated in 2018 to monitor hunger, migration and displacement

- Covers international migrants and refugees, IDPs, host communities, residents and returnees
- Multiple countries
- High-frequency and near-real time data collection
- Enables gender- and age-specific analysis

**Data collected:** Drivers of displacement, intentions to stay or move, people’s livelihoods and needs, food security, and challenges
Innovative assessment tool: Web surveys

57% globally are connected to the internet (9% increase from 2018-2019)

People on the move are connected: mobile technology is a lifeline for the displaced

Benefits/opportunities:

- Allows accessing subgroups that are often “invisible”
- Reach younger population groups
- Faster and cheaper
- Reduced environmental footprint
- Safe space for people to respond
- Partnership with IOM and others
Migration Pulse coverage: 10 countries

Colombia, Ecuador and Peru

Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iran, Libya and Nigeria

Cross-border migrants
Host communities
IDPs
Returnees
Residents
Profiles of migrant respondents in Libya

2,545 web surveys were completed during round 2 by migrants from 36 countries from North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and Asia.
Key findings of the joint IOM-WFP study in Libya

59%
LEFT OUT OF CHOICE

41%
NO CHOICE BUT TO LEAVE

Top drivers

Drivers of migration

- Poverty
- Conflict/insecurity
- Inability to meet food needs

Top drivers

Search for better income opportunities
Education
Key findings of the joint IOM-WFP study in Libya

Food security status

52% of migrants respondents in Libya were concerned about where their next meal would come from

30% Compromised their food consumption

57% Are adopting coping strategies due to lack of food or means to buy food

Remittances

2/3 of migrants sending remittances back home

Main use of remittances reported by migrants:

- 19% Food needs of family left behind
- 17% Paying of debts
- 14% Education
What we can do to address the root causes of migration
The richest 30 countries in the world spend *far more* money on assisting refugees and asylum seekers in their own countries than humanitarian aid.

Components of DAC countries’ net ODA (2000-2018)

- **People assisted (2016):** 3.8 million
- **People assisted (2016):** 164 million
- **Internal spending on refugees and asylum seekers**
- **Humanitarian aid**

Source: OECD, 2018.
Remittance flows to LMICs are expected to reach USD 550 billion in 2019—more than three times total development aid. They are likely to overtake foreign direct investment to developing countries.

Sources: World Bank staff estimates; World Development Indicators; International Monetary Fund’s Balance of Payment Statistics.

Note: The figure for 2018 is an estimate and for 2019 is a forecast. FDI = foreign direct investment; ODA = official development assistance.
Recommendations- Short-term

Countries of origin

• Adequate humanitarian support must be provided to people who are internally displaced within their own countries, with particular attention on children.

• Invest more in strengthening livelihoods and food security in countries of origin to reduce push factors compelling migrants to leave their countries out of destitution.

Host countries

• Support host communities as they become more vulnerable over time

• Enhance joint planning and investments for dignified returns (for those who wish to return)

Source: WFP.
Recommendations: Mid- and Long-term

- Continue *monitoring the needs of vulnerable migrants* over time to inform more targeted and effective response.
- Advocate for more *uniform policies and approaches* for those involved in responses to international migration.
- Seek *political solutions to conflicts* so people can rebuild their lives and livelihoods.
- Better *inter-agency planning and investments for dignified returns* (for those who wish to return).

Source: WFP.
Thank you
WFP reached 86.7M people in 2018: 37% were refugees, IDPs or returnees

- **3.4M (5%)** returnees
- **13.1M (15%)** IDPs
- **14.7M (17%)** refugees
- **53.7M (63%)** residents

86.7 million people assisted in 2018

37% increase from 2017

Source: WFP Annual Performance Report, 2018