

# WORLD MIGRATION REPORT 2010

THE FUTURE OF MIGRATION:  
BUILDING CAPACITIES  
FOR CHANGE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





## Introduction

Over the next few decades, international migration is likely to transform in scale, reach and complexity, due to growing demographic disparities, the effects of environmental change, new global political and economic dynamics, technological revolutions and social networks. These transformations will be associated with increasing opportunities – from economic growth and poverty reduction, to social and cultural innovation. However, they will also exacerbate existing problems and generate new challenges – from irregular migration, to protecting the human rights of migrants. Most States in the world (and not just in the developing world) lack the capacity to effectively manage the international mobility of persons today, not to mention respond to new dynamics. Despite a temporary dip during the global economic crisis, global migration is expected to resume to pre-crisis levels. The need for better migration management will, therefore, not go away.

The IOM *World Migration Report 2010 (WMR 2010)* recognizes that migration is an integral feature of the world today and promotes a focus on building capacities to enable States and other stakeholders to respond to and plan for migration effectively and in a sustainable way. The report's three main messages on the future of migration have clear policy implications. First, the relentless pace of migration and new migration challenges mean that governments must make a concerted effort to manage migration. Second, it is essential for governments to systematically engage adequate financial and human resources to ensure that States and migrants reap the full potential of future migration. Third, the risk of not putting in place adequate policies and resources is to lose a historic opportunity to take advantage of the benefits of this global phenomenon.

## Global outlook for migration: Why capacity-building matters

Though predictions are difficult to make, some future trends are discernible even if the full scale of their impact on migration is uncertain. The ability to manage such expected change is crucial.

If the overall aim of migration governance is to improve and foster the development of policies that promote humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all, then the importance of strengthening the capacity of governments to adopt a comprehensive approach to migration management cannot be overestimated.

Capacity-building, as defined in the report, is the process of strengthening the knowledge, abilities, skills, resources, structures and processes that States and institutions need in order to achieve their goals effectively and sustainably, and to adapt to change. This can also include the transfer of knowledge and know-how to support existing well-developed government bodies in addressing migration challenges and better understanding the relationship between migration and economic, social and human development.

## Global migration trends: today and tomorrow

There are far more international migrants in the world today than ever previously recorded – 214 million according to UN DESA (2009) – and their number has increased rapidly over the last few decades, up from 191 million in 2005. If the migrant population continues to increase at the same pace as the last 20 years, the stock of international migrants worldwide by 2050 could be as high as 405 million. At the same time, internal migrants account for 740 million migrants (UNDP, 2009) bringing the total number of migrants to just under 1 billion worldwide today.

International migration involves a wider diversity of ethnic and cultural groups than ever before. Significantly more women are migrating today on their own or as heads of households; the number of people living and working abroad with irregular status continues to rise; and there has been a significant growth in temporary and circular migration. Where migrants live and are moving to is also changing. Currently, just over half of the world's population lives in urban areas. By 2050 almost 70 per cent of the world's population will live in urban areas, which is a reversal of global living patterns within a century, up from just under 30 per cent in 1950 (UN DESA, 2010). This has implications for internal migration movements and social cohesion as migrants are often concentrated in

urban areas. New labour migration destinations in the emerging economies of Africa, Asia and Latin America not only emphasize the increasing importance of South–South migration movements, but the need for further investment in migration management in those regions. New patterns of migration will also affect the ethnic composition of States and issues of social integration and cohesion as human mobility patterns change.

Though the global economic crisis has slowed emigration in many parts of the world, the labour force is expected to increase worldwide from 3 billion today to more than 4 billion by 2030, which would represent an even faster increase than overall population growth (World Bank, 2007). By 2025, young people entering the labour market in developing countries will surpass the current total labour force in industrialized countries (UNDP, 2009). The labour force in more developed countries is projected to remain at about 600 million until 2050, while the labour force in less developed countries is expected to increase from 2.4 billion in 2005 to 3 billion in 2020 and 3.6 billion in 2040. On the other hand, many developing countries are characterized by youthful age structures and a rapidly growing population, which is likely to lead to demands for greater access to labour markets in the developed world and emerging economies. By 2025, countries with 60 per cent or more of the population below 30 years of age will nearly all be located in sub-Saharan Africa (National Intelligence Council, 2008).

In addition, current demographic imbalances between developed and developing countries are predicted to increase in the near future. There is a mismatch between the supply and demand for migrant workers, which often contributes to irregular migration and abuses of the rights of migrants. Projections for the 27 European Union Member States over the next 50 years, for instance, indicate a boom in the number of retirees – the support ratio for retirees is expected to change dramatically from the current 4:1 to only 2:1 by 2060 – and a 15 per cent fall in the working age population expected by 2060 (European Commission, 2009). Similar trends are also observed in other industrialized countries such as Japan, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation, to mention a few.

Climate change and its implications for migration have also become a growing policy concern. Most experts agree that migration resulting from environmental change is likely to increase in the foreseeable future, although a significant proportion of this is likely to be internal migration. The most widely cited figure suggests that up to 200 million people could be on the move by 2050, though estimates range from 50 million to 1 billion. What is already certain is that the number of persons displaced by natural disasters is rising as the total number of disasters has increased over the last two decades. In 2008, approximately 20 million people were displaced by climate-related natural disasters (UN-OCHA and IDMC, 2009).

### Capacity-building and migration management: six areas for intervention

Calls to invest in capacity-building in migration management in the light of current and future challenges are widespread. However, there is little cross-national research on current capacity-building needs and requirements, few global inventories of migration capacity-building projects and programmes, and not many assessments of the impact of capacity-building programmes.

*WMR 2010* identifies six broad priority areas for intervention (labour mobility, irregular migration, migration and development, integration, environmental change, and migration governance) that are expected to undergo significant transformations in the coming years as the dimensions and dynamics of international migration change. Not all areas will be of equal importance to all States, and individual governments will need to agree upon priority areas within the context of their migration realities and existing capacities, broad national objectives and goals, and the availability of human and financial resources. Generally speaking, capacity-building in migration normally encompasses the following elements: more timely and accurate migration data; assistance to define national migration policy goals; training of migration officials; effective legal frameworks; coherent administrative structures; and adequate financing.

Within each of the six areas of intervention, the report identifies ten core capacities that are likely to be required for a comprehensive response. These are intended as a working

“checklist” for States and other stakeholders in preparing for change.

The anticipated accentuation of the global mismatch between labour supply and demand places pressure on destination and origin countries to develop the capacity to effectively assess foreign demand while protecting the domestic labour force, regulate admissions and ensure migrant workers’ rights. Linking supply and demand is an important future challenge for managing **labour mobility** more effectively and ensuring that skills reach sectors and destinations where there is demand. To achieve this, capacities may be required in areas such as assessing labour markets from the migration perspective, regulating admissions and selecting migrant workers, and strengthening and implementing bilateral or other labour mobility agreements.

**Irregular migration** is closely linked to the issue of labour mobility. The predicted global mismatch between labour supply and demand may result in further irregular migration, with more people moving for work than currently permitted by legal migration channels. Capacities in regulating migration and employment are therefore essential. Furthermore, capacity is needed to combat migrant smuggling and human trafficking across countries of origin, destination and transit. As irregular migration estimates vary widely and are often imprecise, the ability to generate better data on irregular migration remains an important capacity gap.

The positive link between **migration and development** in contributing to poverty reduction and economic growth is widely recognized and important strides have been made in recent years to ensure that migration is incorporated in development planning. Looking to the future, there are sound reasons to suppose that the potential of migration for development will increase, emphasizing the need for capacities to effectively respond to and take advantage of this potential. Beyond financial remittances, other resources, such as the human capital of migrants and diasporas, also make positive contributions to development. Thus, capacities are also required to better engage diasporas in development and to strengthen the links between circular migration, return and development.

Continuously rising migration flows change and diversify the ethnic composition of societies, resulting in challenges for the successful **integration** of migrants into the host society and the protection of their rights. People move for different reasons (economic or family reasons), for different lengths of time (temporarily or permanently) and appear in different sectors of the labour market (from low- to high-skilled sectors). Integration policies, which range from the granting of citizenship to providing access to housing, are thereby influenced by such differences. Furthermore, as some parts of the world are undergoing a demographic transition, and others will undergo one in the near future, there may be a decline in the proportion of nationals to migrants, placing increased emphasis on policies for managing diversity and social cohesion. Recommendations to promote integration include enhancing capacities to strengthen economic and civic participation among migrants, to strengthen anti-discrimination policies and to mainstream integration across government.

Natural disasters, such as floods and droughts, occur with accelerated frequency today and increasing numbers of people are being affected; one outcome of this is increased migration. The effects of climate change are likely to exacerbate this trend. As migration may be one of several adaptation strategies in the face of natural disasters, distinctions between slow- and sudden-onset events are important. Whether people move internally or across borders, permanently or temporarily, also has policy and programme implications. Currently, there is no agreed upon international definition or normative framework pertaining to people moving as a result of **environmental change**; however, IOM has developed a working definition of environmental migrants. Capacities will be required to adequately respond to the challenges of increased environmental migration in the face of continued environmental and climate change at the pre-migration, migration and return or resettlement stages.

Lastly, better cooperation is needed in the field of **migration governance**. As previously stated, the overall aim of migration governance should be to facilitate humane and orderly migration policies for the benefit of all. Thus, strengthening the capacity of governments to

adopt a comprehensive approach to migration is an important aspect of achieving this aim. The capacities needed are not restricted to the national level, but include the local, regional and international levels as well as the involvement of State and non-State actors. Developing national migration policies, enhancing the coordination of policymaking and evaluation of policies, engaging with civil society and the private sector and strengthening regional cooperation, such as regional consultative processes, are all areas where migration governance capacities are needed.

In some instances capacities may already exist in each of these areas, but the policy may not be comprehensive, thereby creating a gap in the effective implementation of policies and programmes. For example, data may be available but not shared; civil society and migrants themselves may not be adequately integrated into the process of data gathering and policy implementation; staff working on the front line of migration management may need additional equipment, training and support; international legal frameworks may exist but may not be ratified; legal frameworks may need to be updated to focus on new areas of migration, or to handle new influxes or outflows of migrants; States may have capacity but partnerships with other actors at home and abroad may be ineffective; and human and financial resources may exist, but policy is focused on a narrow range of concerns due to public opinion. For many States and institutions, technical know-how – the operational knowledge and skills needed to pursue goals effectively – presents a greater challenge than lack of financial resources.

## Migration and the economic crisis: A snapshot across the regions

Since the publication of the last WMR in 2008, the world has been affected by the worst global recession since the 1930s. Global gross domestic product declined by 2.2 per cent in 2009 according to the World Bank. Therefore, *WMR 2010* has placed special emphasis not only on the capacity implications of economic crises in terms of labour mobility, but also on the effects

on migrants themselves and migration policy across the world.

### Stocks remain unchanged but flows have slowed down

The overall stock of migrants has not decreased as a result of the economic crisis. In most regions of the world, the total number of migrants in 2010 was higher than in 2005. This is partly due to the fact that immigrants arriving in many countries do not fall under the heading of labour migrants. For example, family-related migration, a less affected migration stream, has been the main channel of legal entry into several countries such as the United States and Canada for many years.

However, flows of new migrants have slowed in many parts of the world, reflecting the decline in job opportunities in destination countries, and the impact of restrictive measures made by several countries to reduce labour migration. For example, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand responded to the economic crisis by ceasing to issue or renew work permits. Recruitment agencies in Egypt and Jordan have reported a drop by up to a half in demand for labour in the Gulf region since the beginning of 2008, especially for skilled labour. The Australian Government reduced the number of permanent and temporary migrants admitted, for the first time in ten years.

Several reports also suggest that the flow of irregular migrants attempting to enter destination countries slowed in 2009–2010. The number of attempted illegal border crossings has fallen by about a third or more in the United States and Europe since 2008. However, border apprehensions are only one measure of irregular migration. Given that many migrant workers have lost their jobs and not returned to their country of origin, it is likely that the number of migrants who are working in precarious forms of employment in the shadow economy has increased, though it is difficult to estimate the scale of this phenomenon.

### Return rates lower than expected

The total number of migrants also remains high, because relatively few migrants returned to their country of origin during the crisis, despite

the fact that a number of countries introduced new measures to encourage migrants to return. Voluntary return policies put in place by Japan, Spain and the Czech Republic have had varied rates of success. Low return rates are also due to the fact that conditions at home – for example, unemployment and poverty rates – may be worse for the migrant than those in the destination countries.

### Unemployment rates higher among migrants than the native population

The global economic crisis has made many migrants around the world more vulnerable, as migrants have been among the first to be affected by job losses. This is reflected in the high unemployment rate for migrants in comparison to natives. For example, the unemployment rate for Mexican and Central American immigrants in the United States (11.4% in June 2009) was greater than the unemployment rate for native-born Americans (9.5%) (MPI, 2009). In Europe, migrant unemployment rates are generally higher than unemployment rates for nationals and grew faster than unemployment rates for nationals between 2008 and 2009.

### Remittances have declined but not uniformly at the global scale

Higher unemployment among migrant workers has meant that they are less able to send remittances to their country of origin. However, as the rate of returns has been lower than expected, remittances have remained fairly stable, and some countries have even recorded an increase in remittance flows. In 2009, the World Bank estimated that USD 316 billion was remitted to developing countries – a decrease of 6 per cent, compared to 2008 (World Bank, 2010). For example, the first signs of a decline in remittance inflows were felt as early as the third quarter of 2008 in some African countries, with negative growth reaching up to -40 per cent in Uganda in the first quarter of 2009. Remittances to Latin America and the Caribbean, which had increased by more than 15 per cent between 2000 and 2006, slowed in their growth in 2007 and 2008. However, some regions have seen an increase in remittance transfers. For example, countries that send large numbers of migrants to Gulf States, such as Bangladesh, Pakistan and the Philippines, saw remittances increase overall between 2008 and 2009.

## The future of migration: Where do we go next?

The international community is giving increasing attention to migration, but many countries still lack the capacity to manage migration effectively. Thus, governments are not taking full advantage of migration (e.g. migration for development) and may experience its more negative consequences (e.g. more irregular/vulnerable migrants).

Today, States are facing new migration challenges that they did not encounter in the past. Growing numbers of migrants from increasingly diverse backgrounds can increase diversity and cultural innovation, but can also make effective integration more difficult to achieve. The protection of the human rights of migrants will become an even more pressing priority, while the question of the rights of vulnerable migrants and how to protect them will become increasingly important. Mismatches between labour supply and demand will continue as labour surpluses increase and the demographic imbalance between the developed and developing world widens. To help prevent existing capacities from being put under strain by new migration challenges, it is necessary to take early action, to have partnerships between governments and State and non-State actors and to create policy coherence in migration management.

Therefore, *WMR 2010* confirms that migration capacity-building is an essential and worthwhile investment. At the same time, it highlights the need for effective and sustainable capacity-building across a range of migration areas. The report acknowledges that a comprehensive approach to capacity-building is only a first step and needs to be followed by implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Lastly, *WMR 2010* calls for several steps to improve migration management capacities, as outlined below.

### I. Rigorous analysis of core capacities

Under each of the six thematic areas for intervention, the report has selected ten core capacities. Equally, there may well be additional core capacities that have not been identified or paid sufficient attention. Thus, the objective of further analysis would be to try to achieve a degree of consensus around an inventory of core capacities.

This would allow States and relevant stakeholders to prioritize capacities as well as achieve a degree of comprehensiveness, while always acknowledging that capacity requirements will vary according to national and regional contexts.

## 2. Systematic review of existing capacities worldwide

A systematic review of existing capacities worldwide is needed, which could provide examples of good practice that might be adopted elsewhere. These should refer not only to governmental capacities, but also non-State actors. Examples of good practice from developing countries are lacking in particular and require further investigation.

## 3. Assessment of current capacities

A combination of needs and capacity assessment exercises can be used to identify gaps in responding to migration

issues facing particular States, institutions or other stakeholders and assess their current capacities in relation to them, especially in determining their effectiveness. Identifying capacity gaps is another important component of such an exercise.

## 4. Identification of core priorities

As this report is not intended to be prescriptive or to provide a “one-size-fits-all” model, the identification of capacity-building priorities by individual States, institutions and relevant stakeholders is key. The core capacities outlined in the report can serve as a basis to help guide this process. The interconnectedness of migration governance may mean that, though the responsibility for capacity assessments may rest with certain national actors, other support roles such as training could be taken on by regional and international organizations.

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IOM International Organization for Migration

17 route des Morillons CH-1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland  
Tel: +41 22 717 9111 • Fax: +41 22 798 6150  
E-mail: [hq@iom.int](mailto:hq@iom.int) • Internet: <http://www.iom.int>