Migration Trends and Patterns in the Arab Region

Regional Consultation on International Migration in the Arab Region

In preparation for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

UN House, Beirut, 26-27 September 2017

Karima El Korri
Chief, Population and Social Development Section
Social Development Division
International migration: a reality affecting millions of people moving to Arab countries ...

- 35 million migrants, which make up 8.5% of the population in the region. 18 million are labour migrants.

- Migrants from Asia account for over 50% of the migrant stock, while 37% come from other Arab countries.

- Top three countries of destination are Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Jordan.

- 11.6 million female migrants, 33% of migrant stock.

- Youth make up an estimated 12% of migrant stock.
... and from Arab countries

Over 25 million migrants originate in the region. >50% remain in the region

Origin of migrants:
The Mashreq: 57% ; The Maghreb: 21 %
Arab LDCs: 20% ; GCC: 2%.

Top destination countries: Jordan, France, and Saudi Arabia.

Arab region hosts more than 16 million internally displaced persons and over 8 million refugees.
Three main patterns of migration in the Arab region: Labor, forced and mixed migration

1. Labor Migration
   - The movement of persons from one state to another for the purpose of employment.

2. Forced Migration
   - Population movements from and to the Arab region largely as a result of people fleeing conflict, occupation, or acute climate conditions.

3. Mixed Migration
   - Complex population movements including refugees and displaced people, asylum-seekers, migrant workers and others mostly in irregular situations.
Migration to the GCC sub-region

25.4 million migrants in 2015, 48% of the sub-region’s population.

Most migrants come from Asia.
India: 8.2 million; Bangladesh: 2.8 million; Pakistan: 2.8 million.

Top Destination Countries: Saudi Arabia (10.2 million), United Arab Emirates (8.1 million).

38% of migrants are female.

Labour migrants comprise 67% of all workers.
Migration From the GCC sub-region

- 700,000 migrants, which account for 2.6% of the population.
- Saudi Arabia is the largest country of origin, followed by Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates.
- 45% migrated within the Arab region, 23% to North America, and 16% to Europe.
- Largest number of outbound students from the Arab region were from Saudi Arabia (2013).
Migration to the Mashreq sub-region

- Over 7 million migrants in 2015, twice as many as in 1990.

- Top Origin Countries: Over 82% of migrants come from Palestine (3 million), Syria (2.3 million), and Iraq (400,000).

- Top Destination Countries: Jordan and Lebanon.

- Female migrants make up 50% of migrant stock.

- The sub-region hosted over 2.3 million refugees (UNHCR, 2016).
Migration from the Mashreq sub-region

- 14.8 million migrants from the sub-region in 2015
- Top Origin Countries: Syria, Palestine and Egypt.
- Most migrants remain in the sub-region, mainly in Jordan, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia.
- Largest share of female migrants come from Palestine.
- The Syrian conflict has resulted in over 5 million refugees.
Migration to the Maghreb sub-region

- Over 1 million migrants in 2015, 1.3% of the total population.
- Top Origin Countries: 71% of migrants from the region, mainly from the State of Palestine, Somalia and Iraq.
- Libya hosted the largest number of migrants (12.3%). Algeria is the second largest receiving country.
- Female migrants make up 35% of migrant stock.
- Key transit point for crossing the Central Mediterranean to Europe.
Migration from the Maghreb sub-region

- Over 5 million migrants from the subregion in 2015.

- Top Origin Countries: Morocco (3 million), Algeria, (1.7 million)

- Top destination countries: France 51%, Spain 14%, and Italy 11%.

- Female migrants make up 48% of migrant stock (2015).

- Key transit point for migrants from sub-Saharan Africa.
Migration to LDCs

1.1 million migrants in 2015, which account for 1.3% of the population.

Top Origin Countries: 36% of migrants came from other Arab countries, mainly from Somalia, Eritrea, South Sudan, and Ethiopia.

Djibouti had the highest proportion of migrants: 13% of the total population in 2015.

The proportion of female migrants is around 48%.

Yemen is a key transit country for migrants from the Horn of Africa to the GCC countries.
Migration From LDCs

Over 9 million migrants in 2016, 35% of all migrants from the Arab region.

Top Origin Countries: Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen (represent 95% of migrants from the LDCs).

Main countries of destination: Saudi Arabia, followed by South Sudan and Kenya.

In 2015, 48% of the migrants in the Arab LDCs were female.

The number of migrants from LDCs increased by 141% between 2010 and 2016.
Remittance flows to the Arab region

Remittance inflows to the Arab region by sub-region, 1970 – 2016e (USD millions)
Data sources:

- World Population Prospects, 2015 revision, Population Division, UN DESA
- World Bank annual remittance data, April 2017 update

Thank you