# International migration: What data can tell us, and what it can't

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**6th EMN Educational Seminar on Migration
"Causes and Consequences of Forced Migration"
22 – 24 August 2018 | www.emnseminar.sk**

65 YEARS
International Organization for Migration
The UN Migration Agency

IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre GMDAC

# What you can expect today

1. Why data matters
2. What data can tell us
3. Limitations of available data
4. What data can't tell us (yet)
5. Why I have hope

Goal:

1. Sketch what is available at the international level
2. Sensitize data users/ policy makers to limitations

# Why data matters I:

1. **Governance:** Evidence-base for policy-making and programming by identifying or quantifying an issue; monitoring, benchmarking & evaluation

*„Better migration governance hinges on good data"*

Peter Sutherland

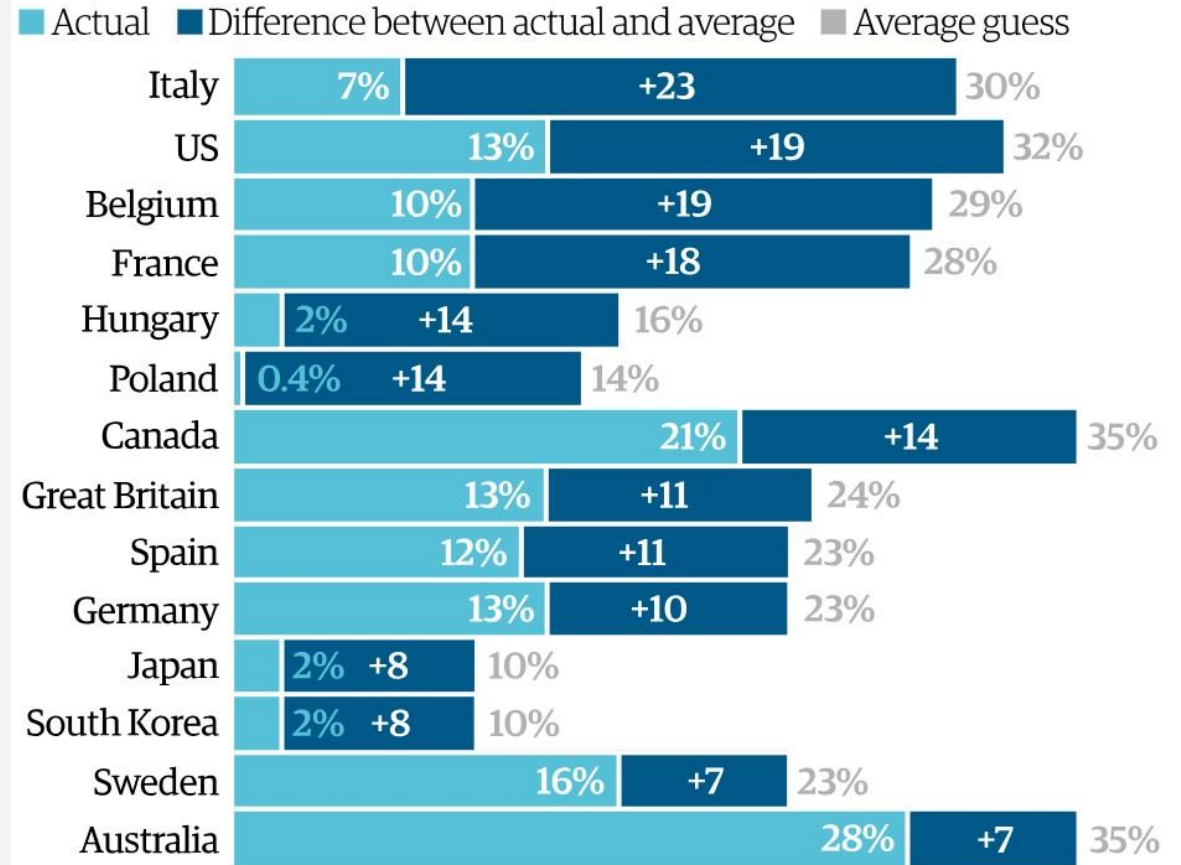Fomer Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Migration

# Why data matters II:

**2. Public Attitudes**: Raising public awareness of migration that is based on facts, debunking myths

→ Example: Brexit and the role of migration data



**Out of 100 people** How many do you think are immigrants to this country?

■ Actual  ■ Difference between actual and average  ■ Average guess

| Country | Actual | Difference | Average guess |
|---|---|---|---|
| Italy | 7% | +23 | 30% |
| US | 13% | +19 | 32% |
| Belgium | 10% | +19 | 29% |
| France | 10% | +18 | 28% |
| Hungary | 2% | +14 | 16% |
| Poland | 0.4% | +14 | 14% |
| Canada | 21% | +14 | 35% |
| Great Britain | 13% | +11 | 24% |
| Spain | 12% | +11 | 23% |
| Germany | 13% | +10 | 23% |
| Japan | 2% | +8 | 10% |
| South Korea | 2% | +8 | 10% |
| Sweden | 16% | +7 | 23% |
| Australia | 28% | +7 | 35% |

GUARDIAN GRAPHIC                    SOURCE: IPSOS MORI

# Why data matters III:

3. International commitments

- Sustainable Development Goals (**SDGs**)
  - 9 direct references (incl. Trafficking, remittance cost, orderly migration, disaggregation)

- Global Compact for Migration (**GCM**)
  - Objective 1: „Collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies"

# Part 1. What data can tell us….

# Global Migration Indicators 2018

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Migrant populations (Stocks) | In 2017, there were around 258 million international migrants globally –3.4% of the total world's population |
| 2 | Migrant flows | In 2016, there was an inflow of foreign-born persons into OECD countries of close to 5 million. |
| 3 | Mobile students | In 2017, there were over 4.4 million internationally mobile students, up from 2 million in 2000 |
| 4 | Remittances | In 2017, the volume of remittances – money that migrants send home – was 466 billion US dollars. |
| 5 | Displacement | By the end of 2017, 68.5 million individuals were forcibly displaced worldwide due to persecution, conflict, generalized violence and human rights violations. |
| 6 | Refugees | The total number of registered refugees reached 25.4 million in 2017. |
| 7 | Missing Migrants | In 2017, at least 6,163 migrants lost their lives or went missing during migration. |

# Global Migration Indicators 2018

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 10 | Human Trafficking & Smuggling | Out of 25 million people estimated to be victims of forced labour in 2016, 5 million may have crossed an international -border. |
| 11 | Returns | There is no harmonized global figure for return migration. In 2017, EU Member States reported 279,215 return decisions issued to third-country nationals. |
| 12 | Integration and well-being | Migrants contributed $6.7 trillion USD to global GDP in 2015 . |
| 13 | Environment | In 2017, 18.8 million people in 135 nations were newly displaced by sudden-onset disasters within their own countries. |
| 14 | Public opinion | Latest available survey data from 2015 show that – on average across the world – 34 per cent  of people would like to see immigration decrease. |
| 15 | Potential migration | In 2015  an estimated 66 million adults, or 1.3% of the world's adult population, had plans to move permanently to another country in the next 12 months. |
| 16 | Migration data capacity | By 2016 , 55 countries had worked with IOM to produce a national migration profile. Three SDG indicators on migration were Tier 1, the highest classification for methodologies in 2018 . |



**Global Migration Indicators 2018**

IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre GMDAC

International Organization for Migration (IOM) The UN Migration Agency

# Int. Migration: Data Sources

| | |
|---|---|
| Global Migration Data Portal | Compilation of various migration (meta-) data across topics at the global, regional and country level (click here) |
| UN DESA | Statistics on international migrant stocks and flows (click here) |
| OECD | Data on migration flows, labour market outcomes of immigrants and more (click here) |
| World Bank | Data on remittances, remittance costs and migrant stocks (click here) |
| UNHCR | Data on asylum applications, refugees, resettlement and more on populations 'of concern' to UNHCR (click here) |
| ILO | Data on migrant workers and recruitment costs (click here) |
| IOM | Data on migration governance and missing migrants. Operational data on various topics including voluntary return, resettlement, human trafficking, displacement, and more (click here) |
| UNESCO | Statistics on student mobility (click here) |
| IDMC | Statistics on internal displacement due to conflicts and disasters (click here) |
| UNODC | Data on human trafficking and migrant smuggling (click data) |
| UNICEF | Estimates of child migration (click here) |
| Gallup/ Pew Research Centre | Data on public opinion on migration (click here) |

# Global Migration Data Portal: Data & Migration Statistics

- World Map features 71 migration indicators

- 15 international data providers

- Breakdown by country, sub-region, region

- Automatically generated country profiles based on the indicators, presenting migration trends
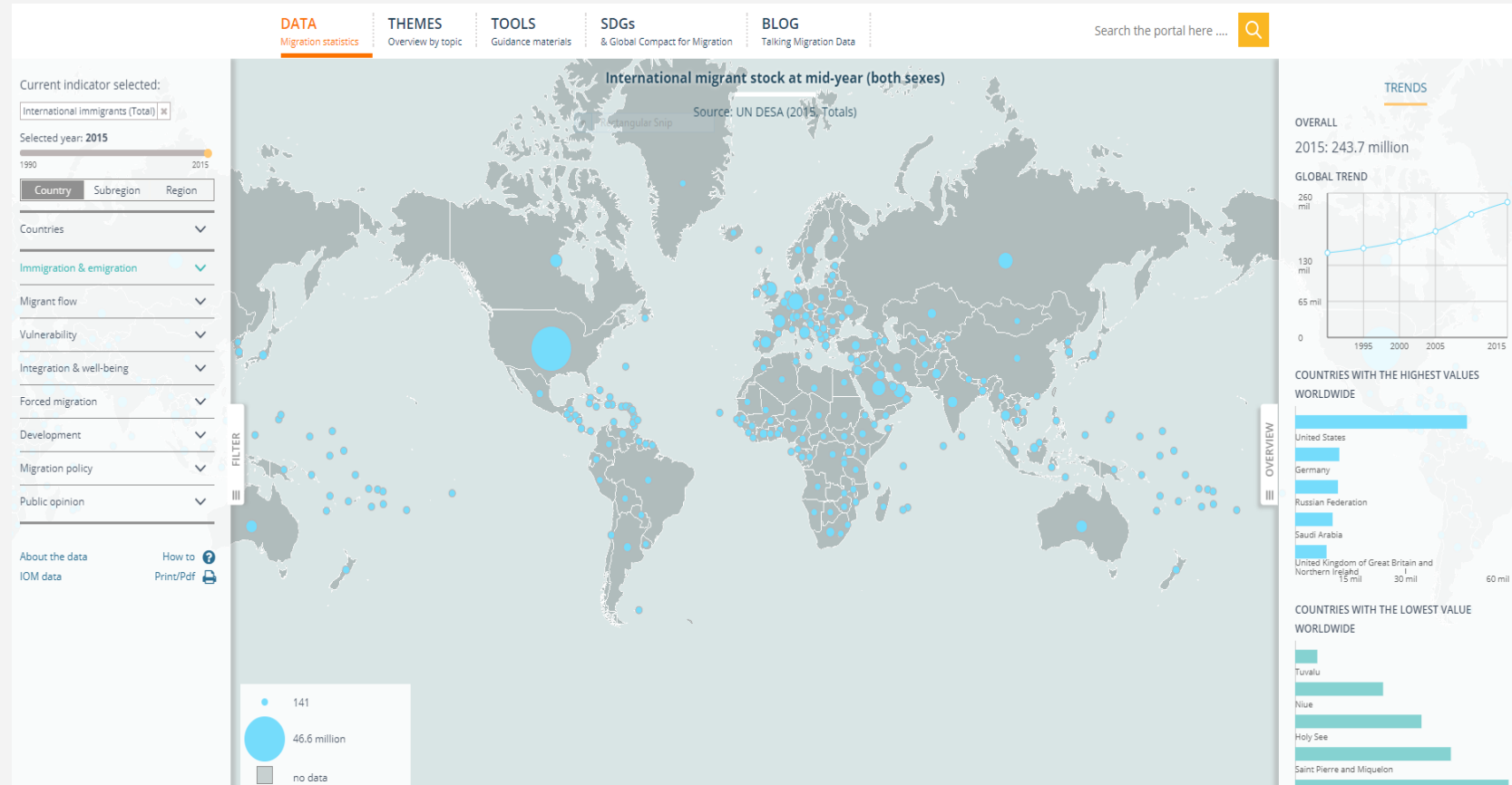


www.migrationdataportal.org (click here)

# BUT: Data is limited in several ways

Sometimes it is better not to know where things come from and what's in it (i.e. Salami). But with migration data is an exception.

1. Harmonization & Comparability
   - Variation in definitions
   - Variation in methods & sources
2. Availability/ Partial Coverage
3. Accesibility & Analysis
4. Extrapolation

# Deep-Dive I: Int. Migrant Stocks

## Limitations:

- Who counts as a migrant?

- Time and channel of arrival?

- How old is the census?

- Does the census include all migrant populations (e.g. Refugees, irregular migrants)?

- What about the second generation?

- E.g. almost 20 per cent of African countries and 10 per cent of countries in Asia do not have recent data on international migrant stocks

**Estimated global international migrant stock, by sex, 1990—2015**
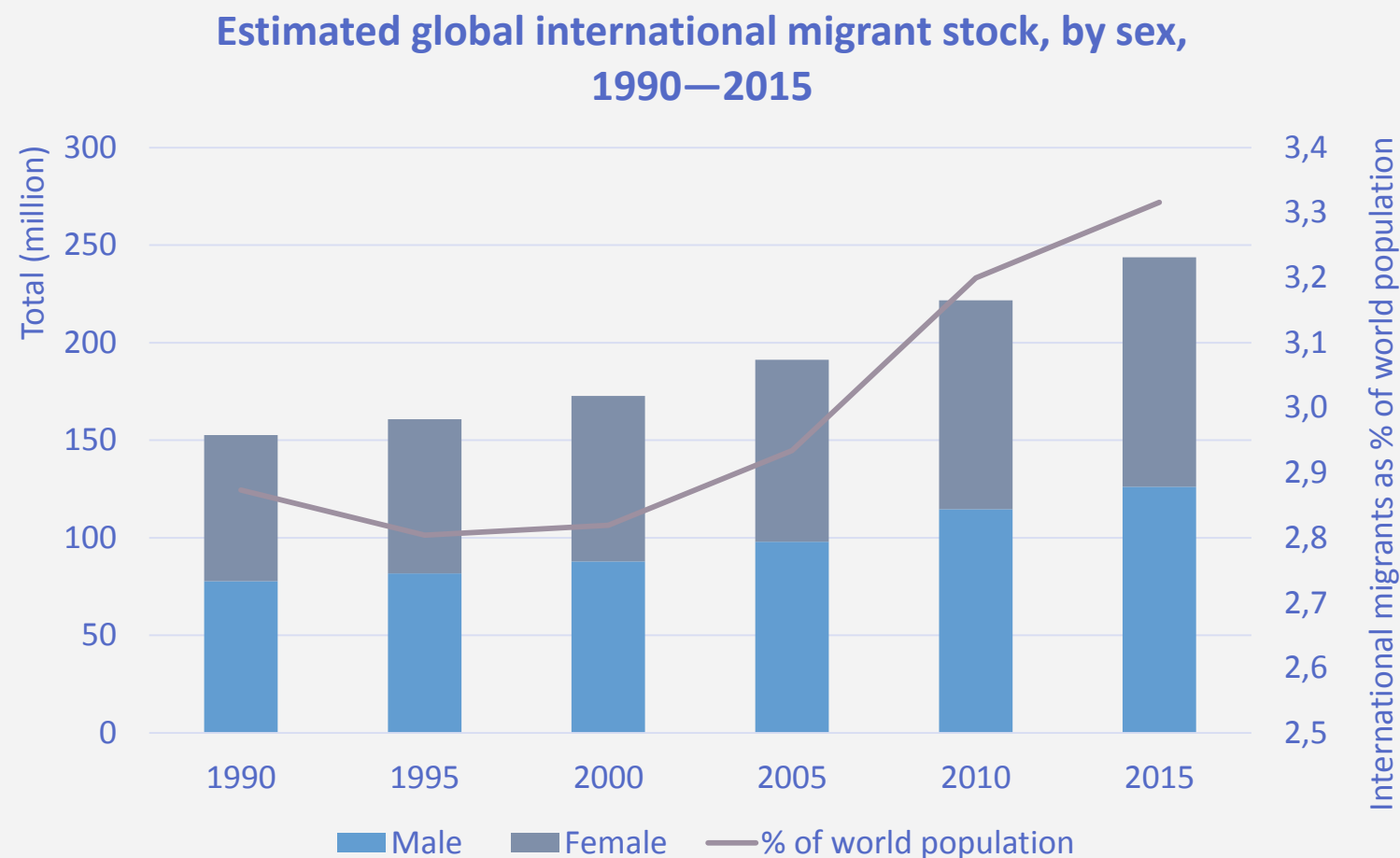


Source: UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA), Population Division, 2015 Revision

# Deep-Dive II: Asylum/refugee statistics

- Lack of comparability between statistics on refugees and asylum-seekers produced by different countries, across displacement situations within countries and to host populations.

- Different sources: administrative registers, population censuses, surveys or combinations of these. In most countries, data are collected using multiple registers, supplemented with information collected through different surveys or census.

- Major issues:
  - Duplication (multiple asylum applications)
  - De-registration (moving away)

**Trend of global displacement and proportion displaced, 1997–2016**
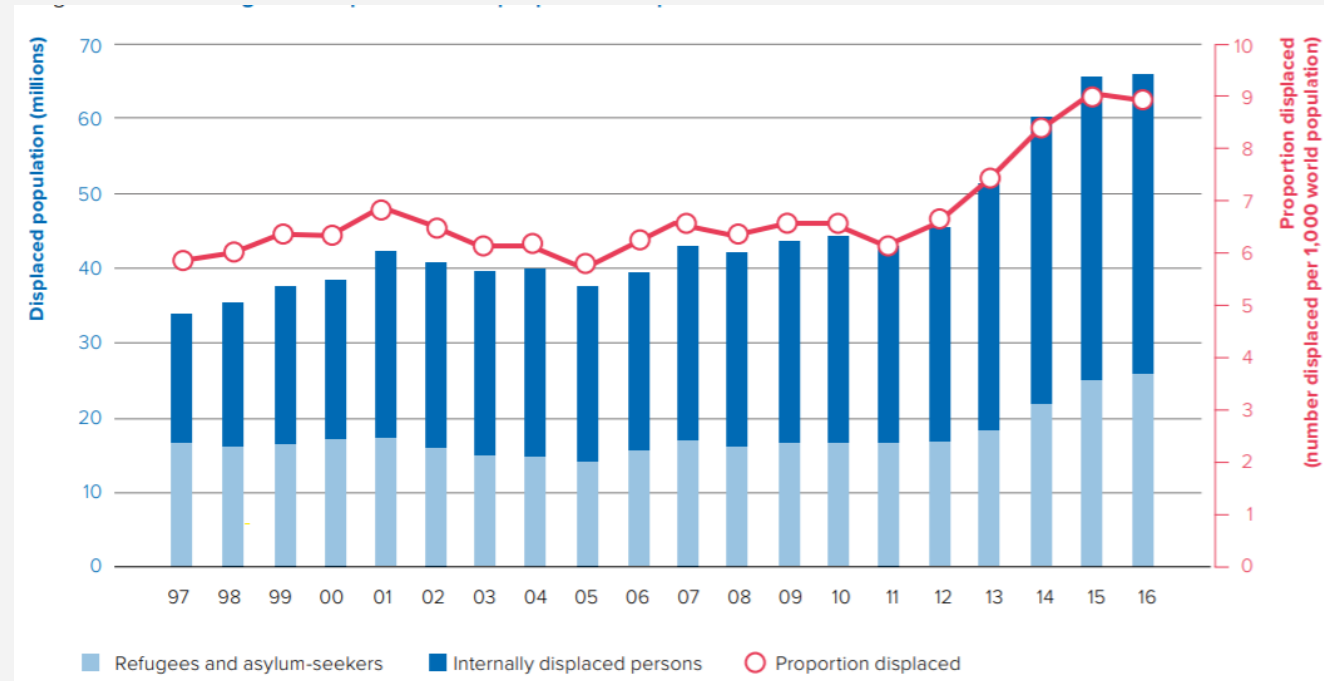
# Deep-Dive III: Displacement statistics

- Sources: IOM DTM; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC); UNHCR; Big Data

- Limitations:
  - Capacity limitations in context of massive population movement
  - Limited access to certain routes and locations due to instability
  - Non-response by migrants
  - Political opposition to collect data
  - Sampling & Measurement issues
  - Limited additional information
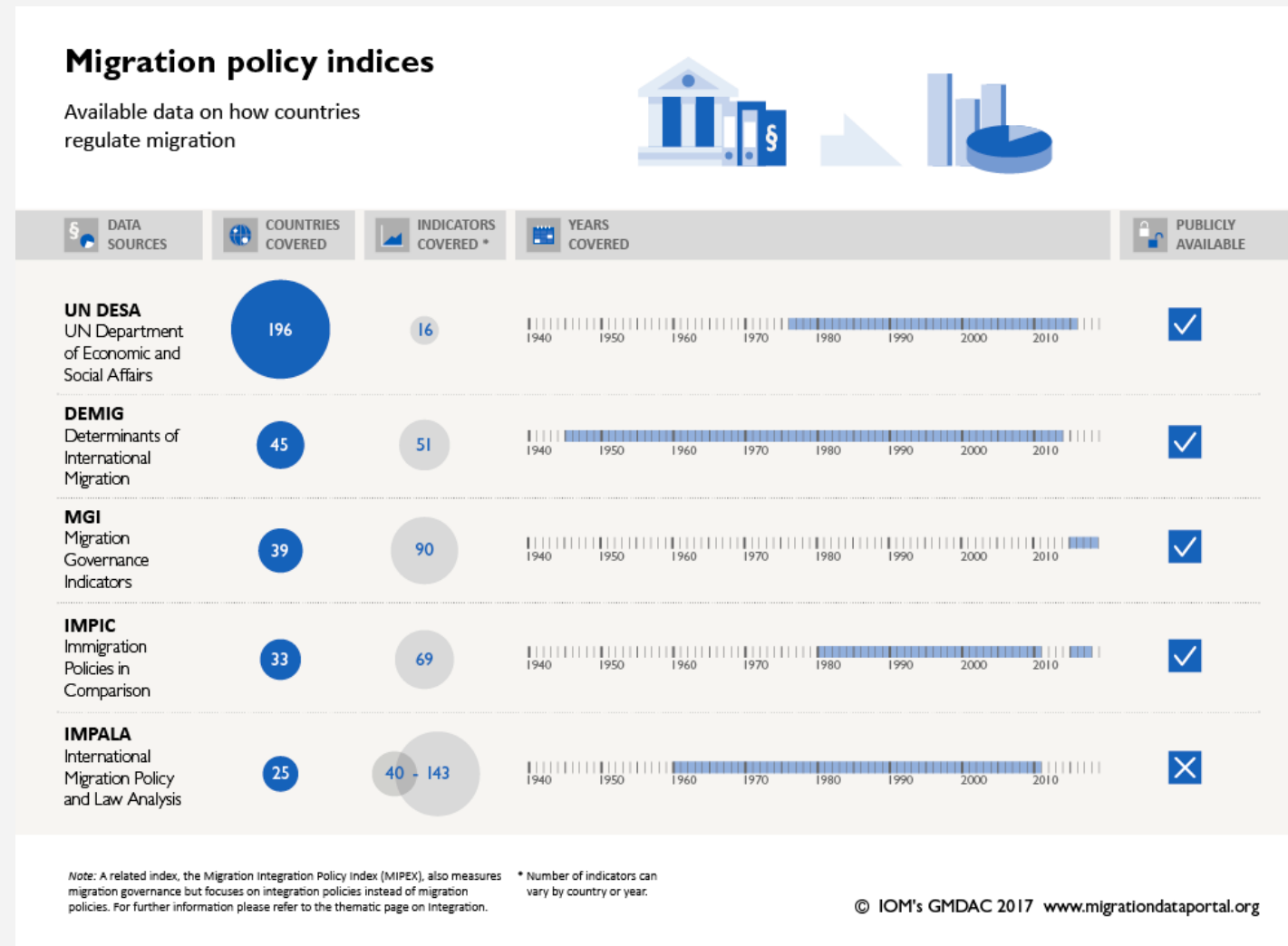  - Estimates of internal displacement based on multiple sources and proxies (i.e. housing destruction)

**IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix**
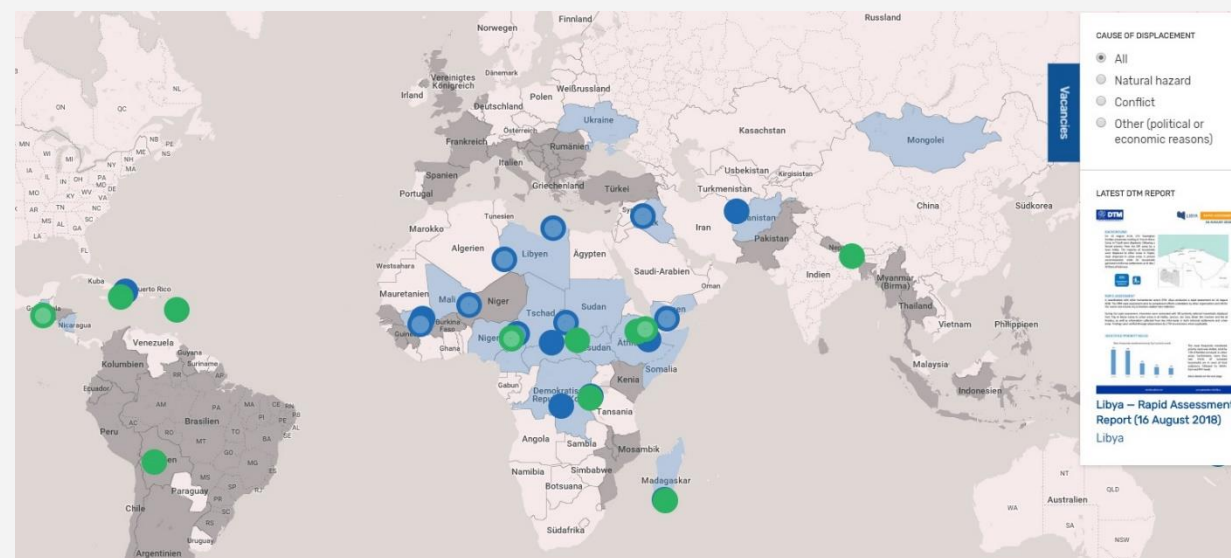
# Deep-Dive IV: Migration Governance/ Policies

## Limitations:

- What is good governance?
- Which policies should be included?
- Do policies lead to good outcomes?
- Input indicators
- Impact often unclear



**Migration policy indices**

Available data on how countries regulate migration

| DATA SOURCES | COUNTRIES COVERED | INDICATORS COVERED * | YEARS COVERED | PUBLICLY AVAILABLE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **UN DESA** UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs | 196 | 16 | 1940 1950 1960 1970 1980 1990 2000 2010 | ☑ |
| **DEMIG** Determinants of International Migration | 45 | 51 | 1940 1950 1960 1970 1980 1990 2000 2010 | ☑ |
| **MGI** Migration Governance Indicators | 39 | 90 | 1940 1950 1960 1970 1980 1990 2000 2010 | ☑ |
| **IMPIC** Immigration Policies in Comparison | 33 | 69 | 1940 1950 1960 1970 1980 1990 2000 2010 | ☑ |
| **IMPALA** International Migration Policy and Law Analysis | 25 | 40 - 143 | 1940 1950 1960 1970 1980 1990 2000 2010 | ☒ |

*Note:* A related index, the Migration Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), also measures migration governance but focuses on integration policies instead of migration policies. For further information please refer to the thematic page on Integration.

\* Number of indicators can vary by country or year.

© IOM's GMDAC 2017  www.migrationdataportal.org

# Where does international migration data come from?

- Census (Example: Stocks)
  - Quickly outdated
  - not containing necessary questions
  - Not covering humanitarian and irregular migrants

- Administrative data (Example: Asylum Claims)
  - Duplication/ de-registering
  - Limited additional information

- Surveys (Labour Force Surveys)
  - Potential sampling and measurement issue

# Part 2. What data can't tell us....
...at least currently.

# Global data gaps

Good data on migration are essential for countries to effectively manage migration and ensure that migrants are not left behind. Yet significant data gaps exist on a variety of migration topics.

## Data gaps can mean data that are

Not collected or accessible

Incomplete
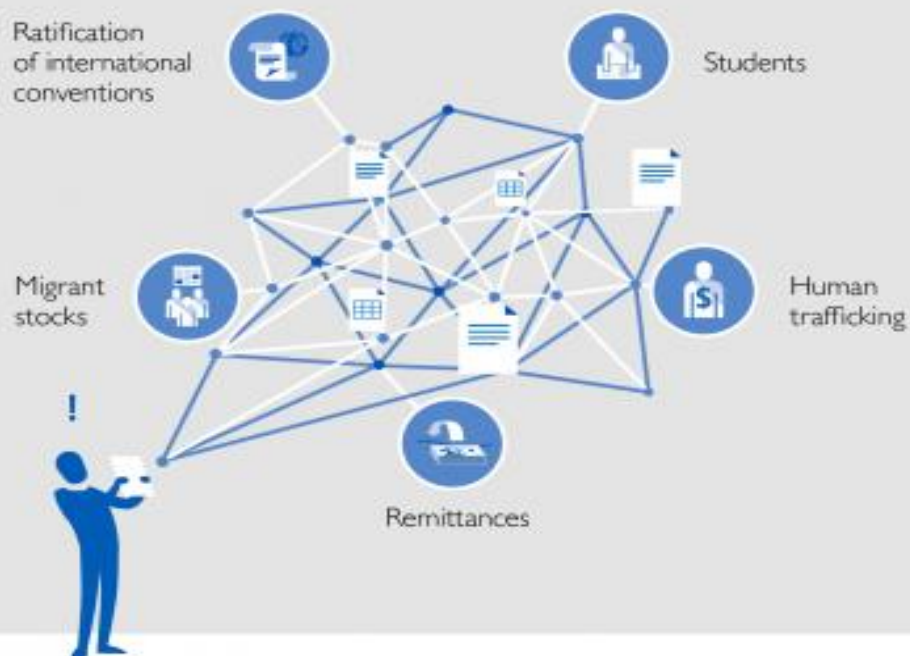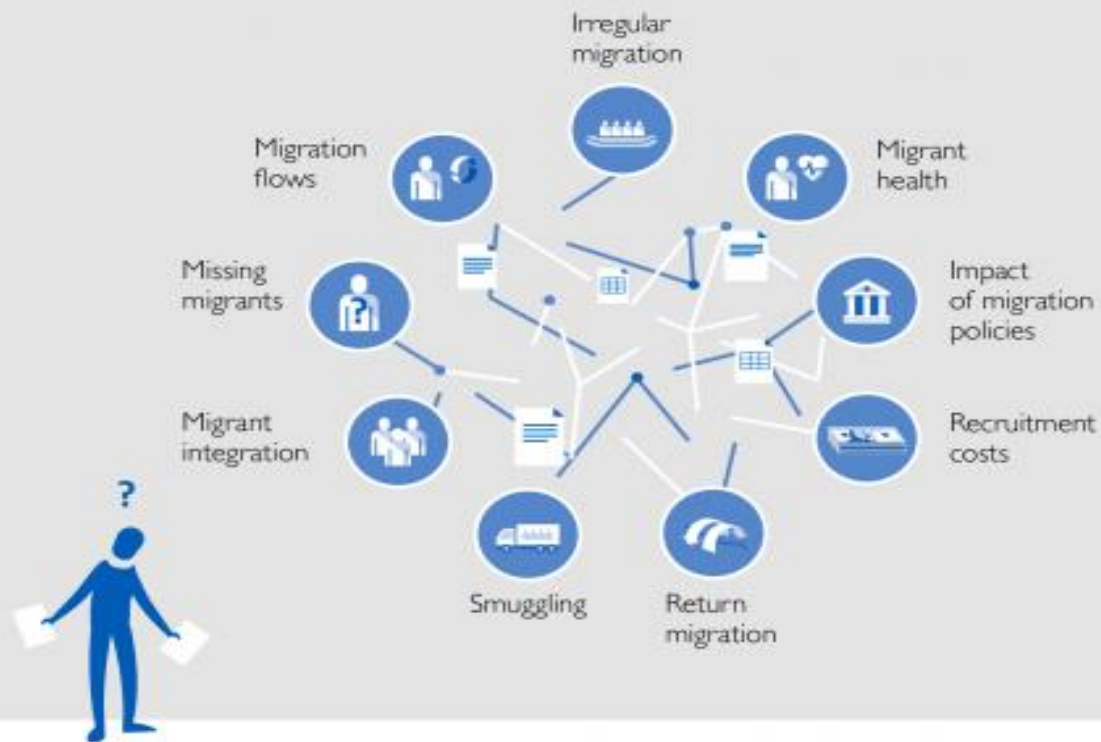
Scattered across various sources

Not disaggregated

Not comparable among countries

## More data are collected on these migration topics:

Ratification of international conventions

Students

Migrant stocks

Human trafficking

Remittances

## Fewer data are collected on these migration topics:

Irregular migration

Migration flows

Migrant health

Missing migrants

Impact of migration policies

Migrant integration

Recruitment costs

Smuggling

Return migration

# Deep Dive I: Flows

1. The EU has the most advanced data infrastructure and regulation, yet it is still difficult to produce reliable migration flow data

2. Only approx. **1 in 4 countries in the world** can provide the UN Statistics Division with data on international **migration flows**

3. OECD covers 30+ countries – definitions across countries vary

→ We don't know how many people crossed a border last year and through which channel!



Based on estimates from:
Abel and Sander (2014) Science Vol. 343 no. 6178 pp. 1520 – 1522
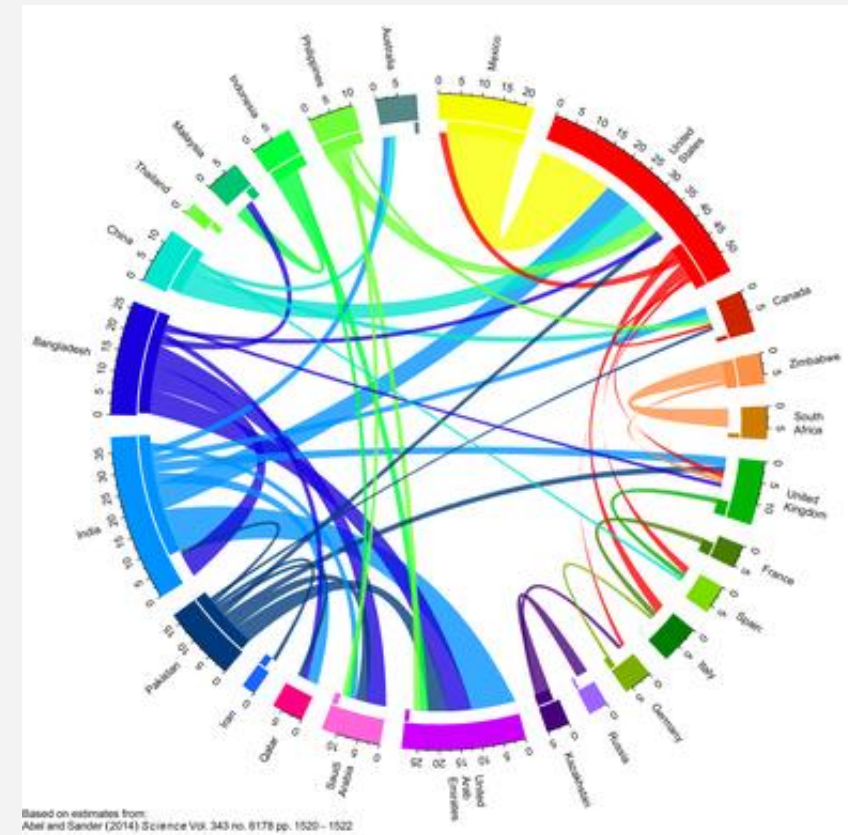
# Deep Dive II: Irregular Migrants

- Estimates limited to few countries:
  - 11 million in the US
  - EU-15: In 2008, 1.9-3.3 million irregular migrants (7-13% of foreign-born population)
- Frontex counts ‚illegal border crossings', however, illegal can turn into legal at time of asylum application
- Challenge to indetify visa-overstayers based on admin. data

→ We don't know how many irregular migrants there are in the world and what the size is relative to regular migration.

# Deep Dive III: Emigration and Return

- Emigrants not included in census

- Departures often not recorded in administrative data
  → leads to overestimation of net migration

- Limited information on 're-integration' of returnees

But….it's not all bad

# Positive developments

- ✓ GCM + SDG agenda
- ✓ International Forum on Migration Statistics (OECD/IOM/ÙNDESA)
- ✓ International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics
- ✓ IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre
- ✓ IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix
- ✓ Humanitarian Data Exchange (UNOCHA)
- ✓ Worldbank/UNHCR Data Centre in Copenhagen
- ✓ UN Pulse/ Big Data For Migration Alliance
- ✓ Ongoing support for surveys and censuses (UNFPA, Eurostat, WB, UNICEF)
- ✓ Increased support for capacity building in low-income settings

# Conclusion: Take-aways

1. Relative to the global salience and importance of migration, the data underpinning it, is limited.
2. Other aspects of globalisation (trade, FDI, tourism, aid) rely on more and better data
3. Even when data exists, it is often limited by inconsistent definitions, data collection methods, and regional coverage.
4. There is a clear lack of international data on flows, irregular migration, returns and policies
5. There are ongoing initiatives that go into the right direction
6. Data can *inform* decision-making but cannot replace policy makers drawing the right conclusions from it.
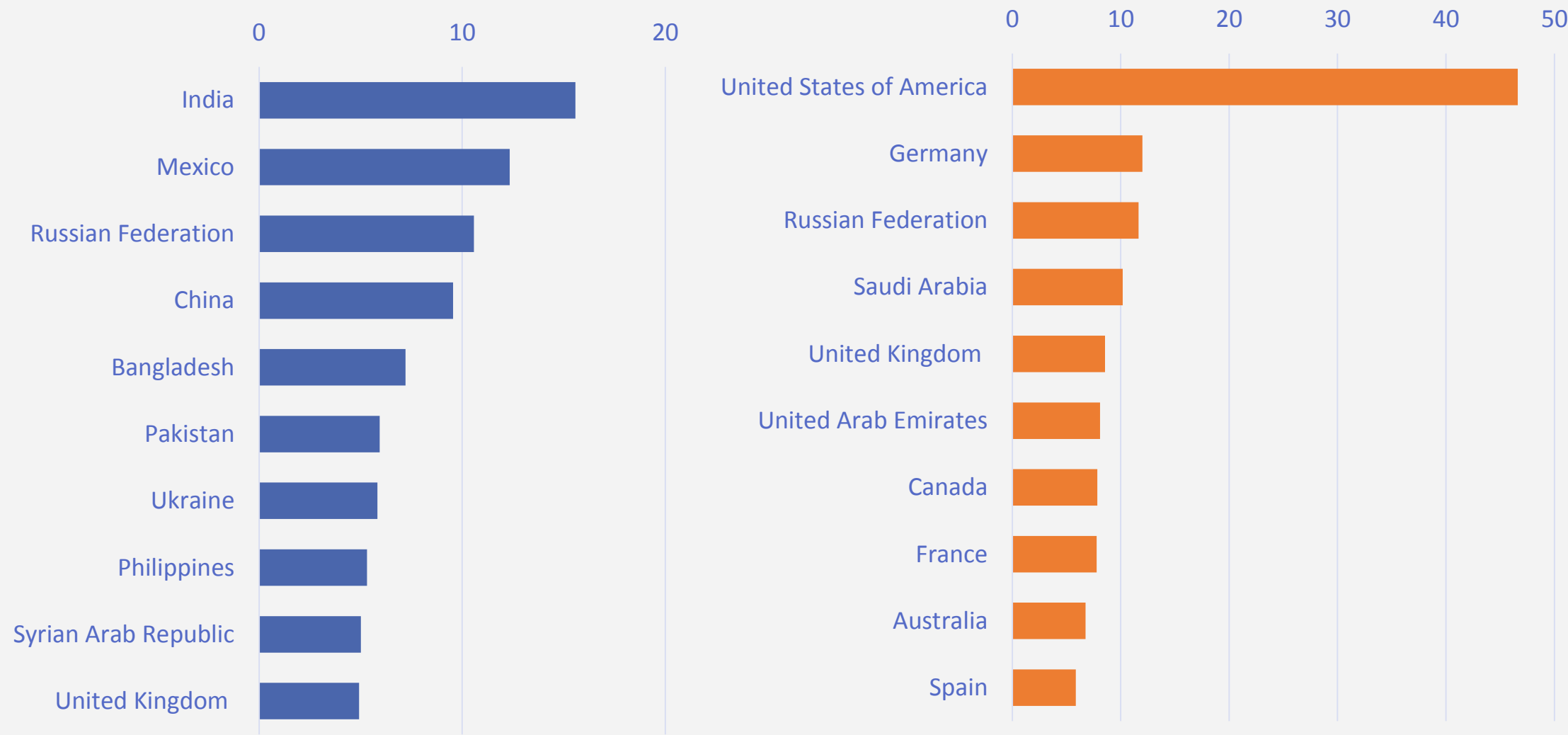
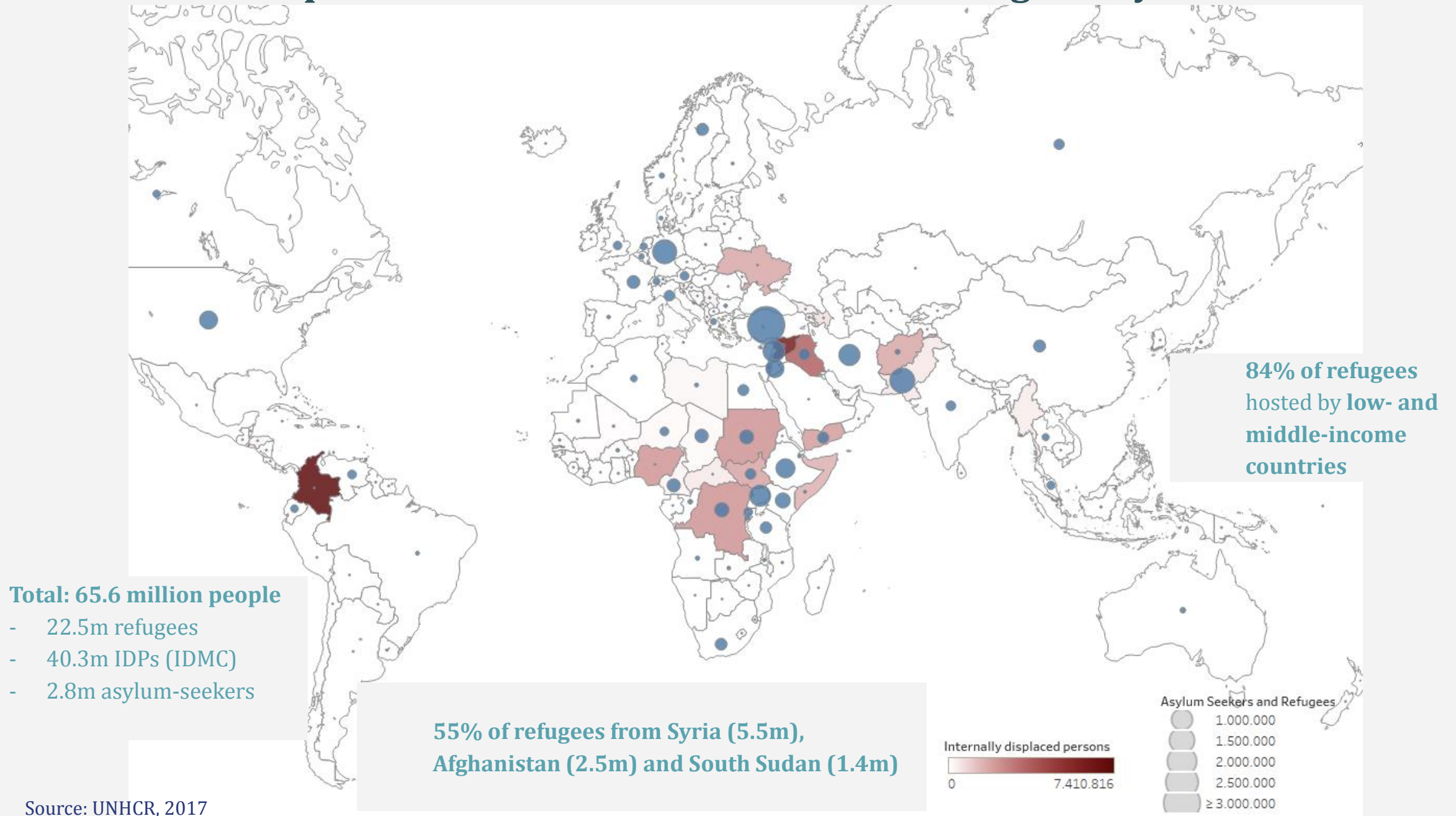# ANNEX

# What do we want to know about migration?

➤ How many                (Emigration/immigration stocks, in/out-flows)

➤ Where from            (origin – destination)

➤ How long              (time of arrival/ duration of residence)

➤ Reasons/ channel       (entry visa/ reason/ channel)

➤ Legal status changes

➤ Profile                (age, sex, education, work experience etc.)

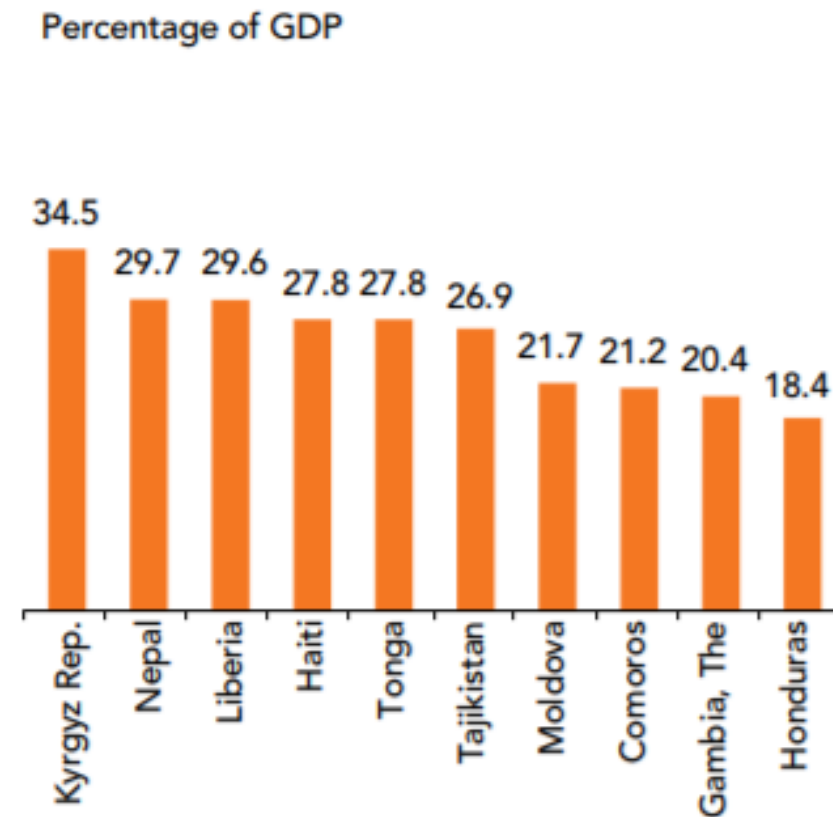➤ Integration           (employment, education, discrimination etc.)

# Top 10 countries of origin (left) and residence (right) of international migrants, 2015 (millions)

**Countries of origin:**

| Country | Value |
|---|---|
| India | ~16 |
| Mexico | ~13 |
| Russian Federation | ~11 |
| China | ~9 |
| Bangladesh | ~7 |
| Pakistan | ~6 |
| Ukraine | ~6 |
| Philippines | ~5 |
| Syrian Arab Republic | ~5 |
| United Kingdom | ~5 |

**Countries of residence:**

| Country | Value |
|---|---|
| United States of America | ~47 |
| Germany | ~12 |
| Russian Federation | ~12 |
| Saudi Arabia | ~10 |
| United Kingdom | ~9 |
| United Arab Emirates | ~8 |
| Canada | ~8 |
| France | ~8 |
| Australia | ~7 |
| Spain | ~6 |

Source: UN-DESA

# Forced displacement due to violence and conflict globally, end of 2016

**84% of refugees** hosted by **low- and middle-income countries**

**Total: 65.6 million people**
- 22.5m refugees
- 40.3m IDPs (IDMC)
- 2.8m asylum-seekers

**55% of refugees from Syria (5.5m), Afghanistan (2.5m) and South Sudan (1.4m)**

Internally displaced persons

0     7.410.816

Asylum Seekers and Refugees

1.000.000
1.500.000
2.000.000
2.500.000
≥3.000.000

Source: UNHCR, 2017

# Top remittance recipients, 2016 (est.)



**$ billion**

| Country | $ billion |
|---|---|
| India | 62.7 |
| China | 61.0 |
| Philippines | 29.9 |
| Mexico | 28.5 |
| Pakistan | 19.8 |
| Nigeria | 19.0 |
| Egypt, Arab Rep. | 16.6 |
| Bangladesh | 13.7 |
| Vietnam | 13.4 |
| Indonesia | 9.2 |

**Percentage of GDP**

| Country | Percentage of GDP |
|---|---|
| Kyrgyz Rep. | 34.5 |
| Nepal | 29.7 |
| Liberia | 29.6 |
| Haiti | 27.8 |
| Tonga | 27.8 |
| Tajikistan | 26.9 |
| Moldova | 21.7 |
| Comoros | 21.2 |
| Gambia, The | 20.4 |
| Honduras | 18.4 |

Source: World Bank, 2017
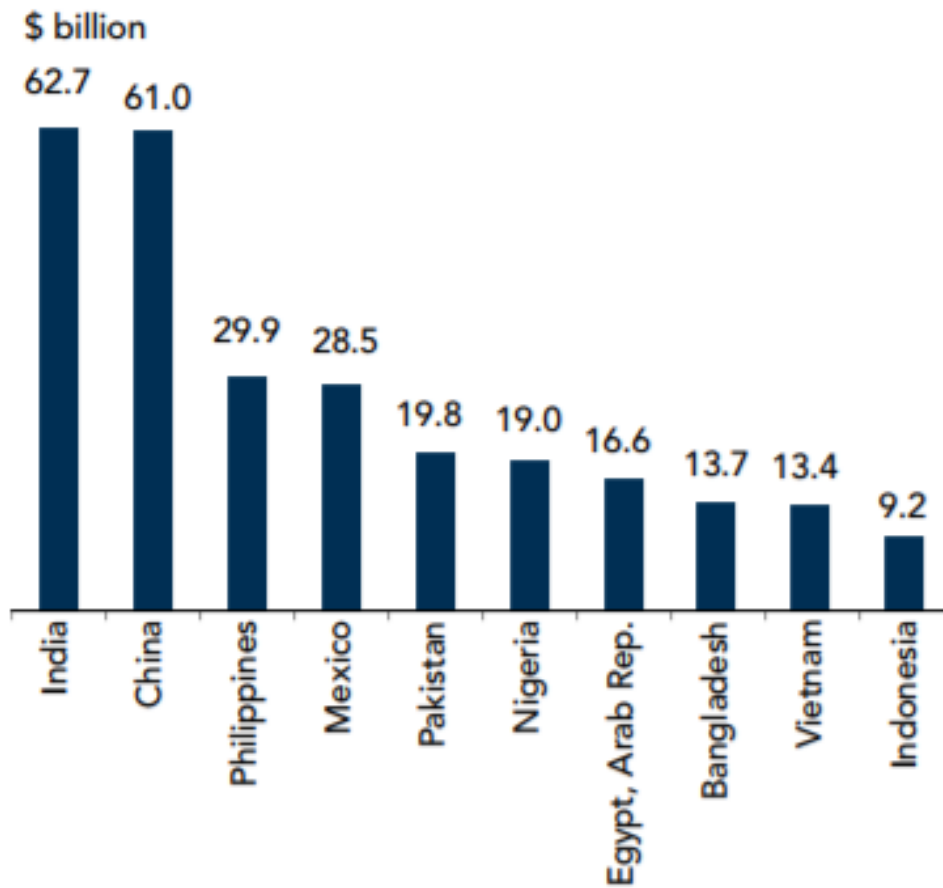
# Migration Governance Indicators

- Tool for governments to self-assess their migration governance and to measure progress towards SDG 10.7.2

➢ 90+ indicators
➢ 40 countries
➢ Not a ranking
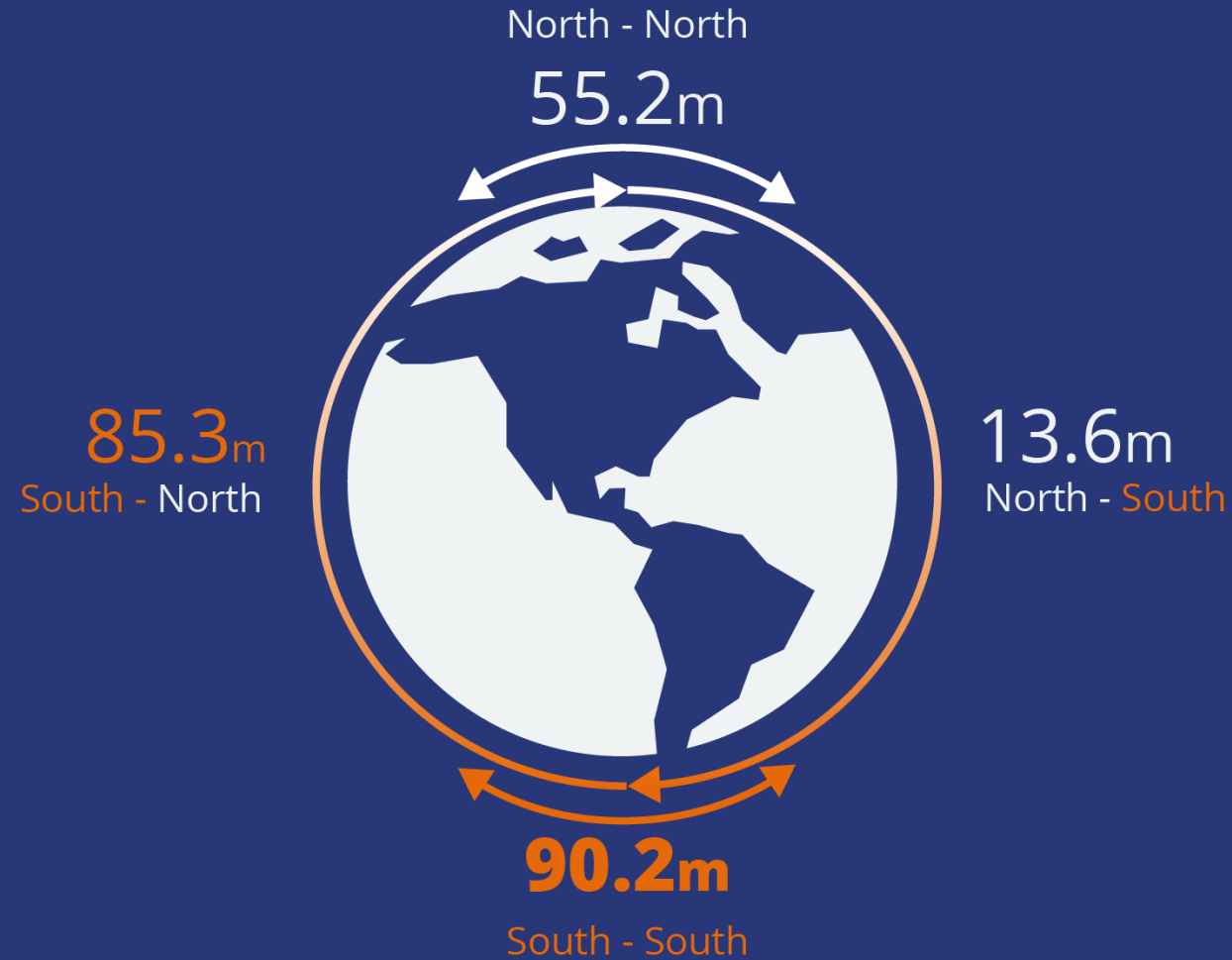➢ Based on policy structures, not assessing impacts
➢ Not prescriptive

# 2. Administrative data sources on international migration

- Border data collection systems
  - Head-counts, border control data, apprehensions
- Permits issued
  - Residence permits
  - Work permits
- Other:
  - Population registers
  - Alien registers
  - Registration at national consulates
  - Reports to financial and/or social security authorities
  - Refugee determination/ family reunification/ returns

# South-South migration

## Exceeds South-North migration

An estimated 84% of international migration in West Africa is within region*

North - North
55.2m

85.3m
South - North

13.6m
North - South

90.2m
South - South

Source: UNDESA Trends in International Migrant Stock, 2015

# 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

- Adopted in September 2015 at the UN Summit for Sustainable Development, as a new global development framework for the next 15 years (2015-2030)

- The plan of action, highlighting poverty eradication as the overarching goal – "leave no one behind"

- Has at its core the integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions

- Ambitious: 17 Goals + 169 Targets

# Summary: What data exists at the international

| Information | Data source | Pros | Cons |
|---|---|---|---|
| How many immigrants are there? | UN DESA/ OECD /IOM | All countries/ territories covered | Based on estimates for many countries, inconsistent definitions and sources |
| How many emigrants are there? | UN DESA/ OECD | same | Based on destination countries |
| How many emigrants return to their country? | Eurostat/ ?? | n/a | Does not exist |
| Remittances | Worldbank | All countries/ territories | Does not include many types of in-kind remittances and small cash transfers |
| Socio-economic and skill profile of migrants | UN DESA/ UNICEF | Age, gender available | Educational background, work experience n/a |
| Channel/Reason of migration and status changes | OECD/ UNESCO | Partly available for OECD countries | Inconsistent definitions, initial status/ channel not known |
| Integration | OECD/Eurostat | Available for OECD countris | Often not accounted for background, differnt sources, limitmed survey data |
| Forced displacement/ Resettlement | UNHCR/ IOM | Broad coverage | Status changes biased due to mobility, differnt definitions, different mandates/access |
| Irregular migrant population | ?? | National estimates available | By nature, not available or not public |
| Migration potential/ public opinion | Gallup/PEW | Similar methods | Subjective self-reported data |
| Policies | IOM/ Research inst. | Available for increasing number of countries | Quickly outdated, descriptive, normative, input indicators, impact not clear |

# Migration in the 2030 Agenda

- For the first time, international migration is included in universal development goals and targets

- Addresses the need for safe, orderly and regular migration

- Recognizes positive contribution of migrants for inclusive and sustainable development, that the impact of migrants on economic and social life needs to be factored into planning

- The principle of "leave no one behind" urges Governments to look into the plights of special population groups, such as migrants, and migrant sub-groups that are especially vulnerable (e.g., migrant children)

# Migration issues have moved to the forefront of policy agendas

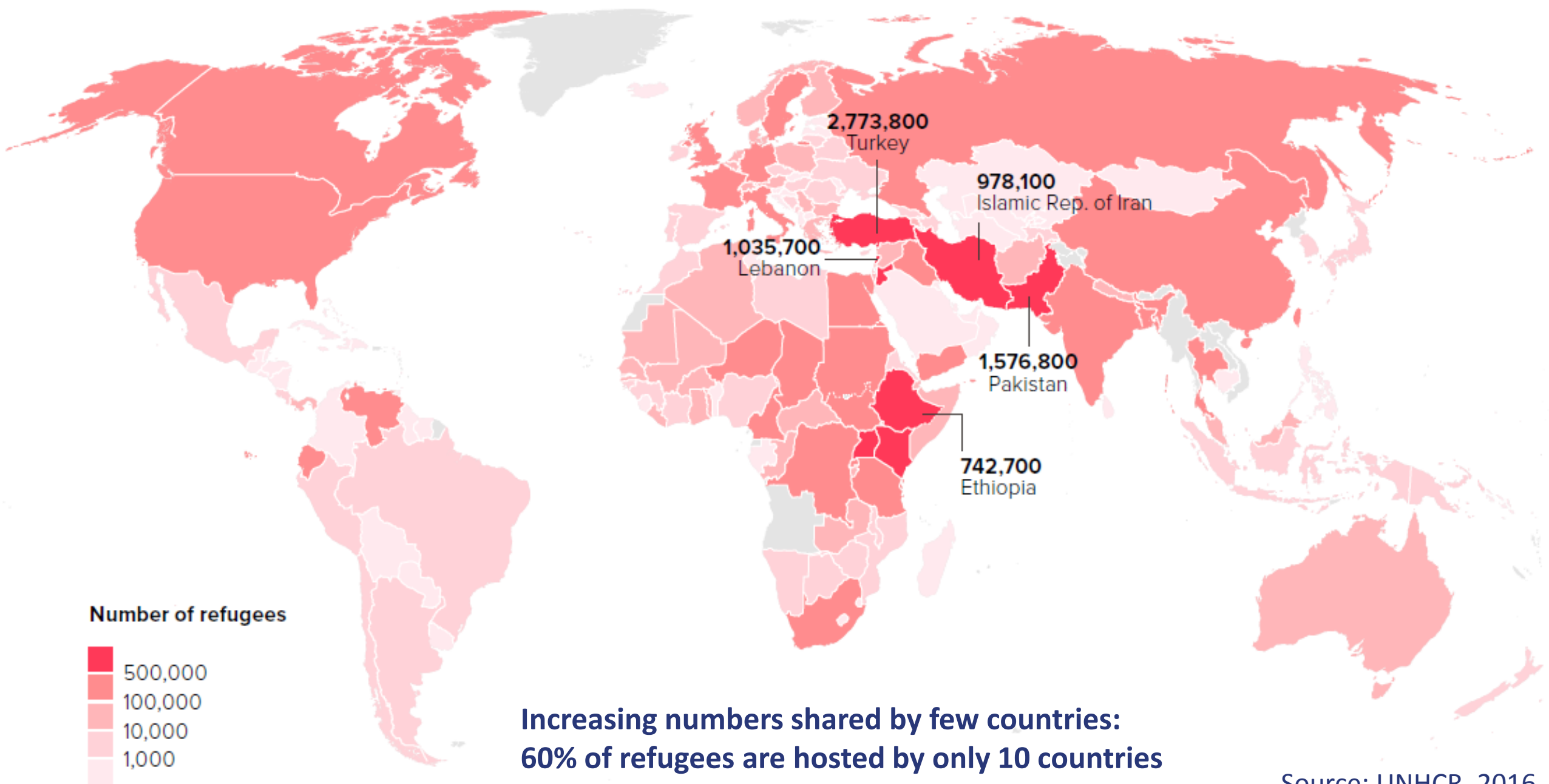**Trend of global displacement and proportion displaced, 1997–2016**
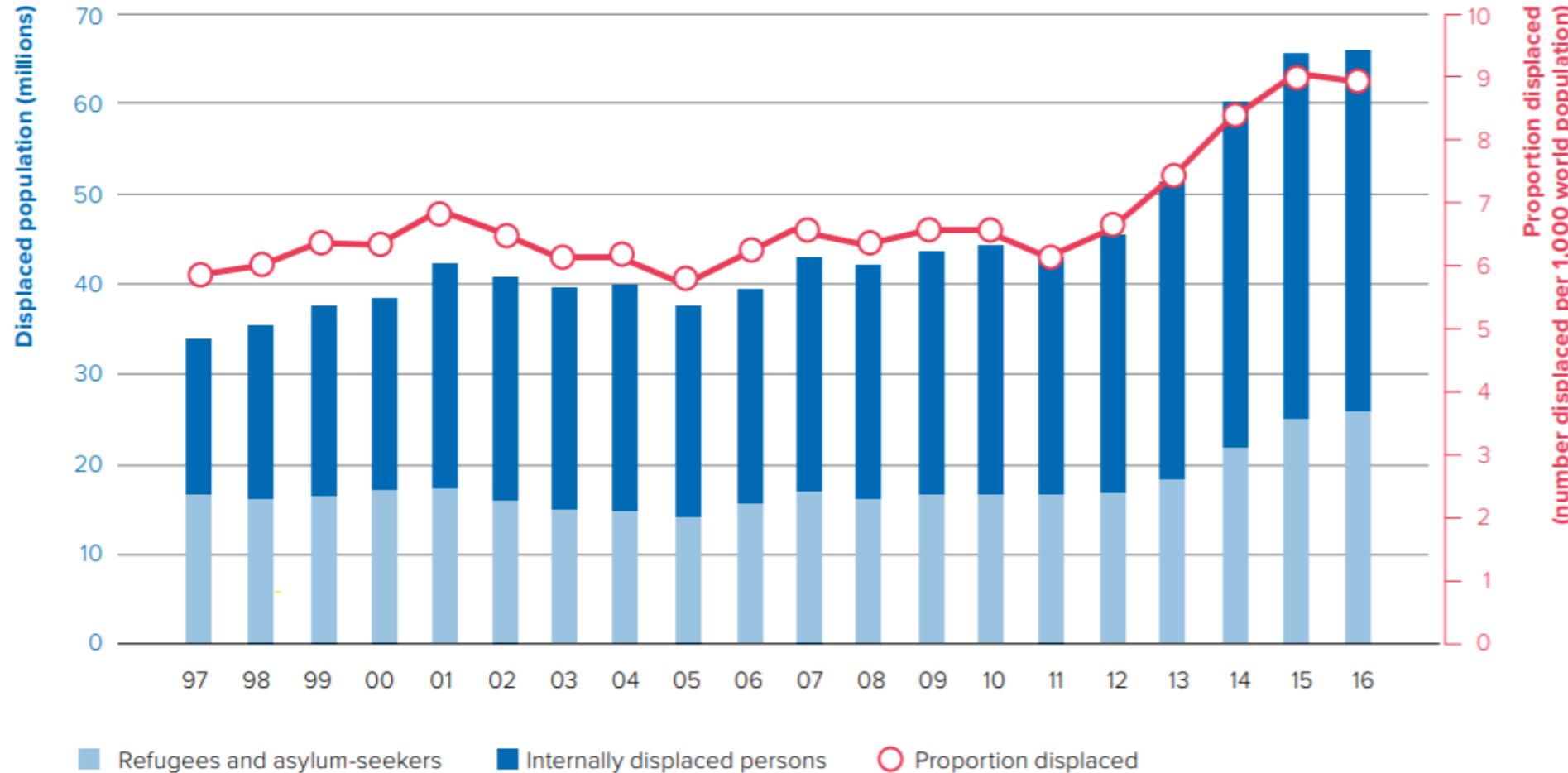


- Highest levels of forced, displaced
- Vulnerable groups facing increased risks
- Unequal distribution of growing refugee population
- Resettlement / durable solutions not keeping pace

Source: UNHCR, Global Trends, 2016

# Refugees, including persons in refugee-like situations, mid-2016:



**2,773,800**
Turkey

**978,100**
Islamic Rep. of Iran

**1,035,700**
Lebanon

**1,576,800**
Pakistan

**742,700**
Ethiopia

**Number of refugees**

- 500,000
- 100,000
- 10,000
- 1,000

**Increasing numbers shared by few countries:**
**60% of refugees are hosted by only 10 countries**

# Direct references

**The SDGs call for:**


**10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES**

10.7. Increasing safe, orderly and regular migration and improving migration governance

10c. Lowering remittance costs

➔ Facilitating orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility
➔ Implementing planned and well-managed migration policies
➔ Lowering remittance transaction costs <3%


**8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**
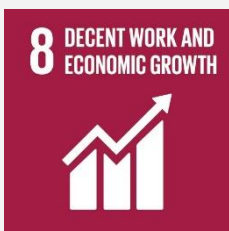
8.7 Combatting labour trafficking and forced labour,

8.8 Promoting decent work and migrant labour rights

➔ Promoting decent work
➔ Combatting labour trafficking, forced labour and child labour
➔ Improving labour migration governance


**4 QUALITY EDUCATION**
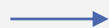
4b. Increasing student mobility

➔ Increasing international student mobility through scholarships
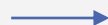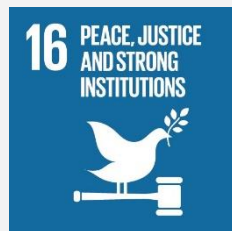
# Direct references

**The SDGs call for:**


**5** GENDER EQUALITY

→ 5.2. Eliminating trafficking of women and girls

→ 5.4 Protecting migrant domestic workers

➔ Addressing trafficking and exploitation of women
➔ Empowering domestic workers


**16** PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

→ 16.2 Combatting child trafficking

➔ Countering all types of trafficking and exploitation
➔ Addressing trafficking and exploitation of children


**17** PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

→ 17.18 Increasing disaggregation by migration

➔ Increasing disaggregation of data by migratory status
➔ Improving data across migration topics (by proxy)


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# 10.7



- Under Goal 10 on **reducing inequalities**
- Effective migration governance is key for safer, more orderly and regular migration
- Includes promoting regular migration that respects the rights of migrants, and leveraging the positive development impact of migration for migrants themselves as well as for all communities and countries

**Comprehensive and effective migration management involves a wide range of action areas.**

*This includes but is not limited to:*

*Migration **mainstreaming**, protecting migrant **rights** and promoting their wellbeing, improving migrant **integration** in host communities, promoting **regulated labour mobility**, improving **migrant health**, addressing migrants' vulnerabilities and developing specialised programs for refugees and IDPs, facilitating **family reunification**, addressing **irregular migration** and providing pathways to regularity, countering migrant **smuggling** and **trafficking**, facilitating resettlement, assisted voluntary **return and reintegration** of migrants, and developing durable solutions for displaced persons….*

# Where does migration stand in the SDG framework?

| Tier I | An established methodology exists and data are already widely available | E.g.: Undernourishment<br>HIV infections<br>Access to electricity |
|---|---|---|
| Tier II | A methodology has been established but for which data are not easily available | E.g.: 1. Maternal mortality<br>2. Literacy rate<br>3. Public transportation access |
| Tier III | An internationally agreed methodology has not yet been developed | E.g.: 1. Wastewater safety<br>2. National recycling rate<br>3. Well-managed migration (10.7.2) |

**\*\*Most migration related indicators are ranked as Tier II or III by the UN Statistics Division\*\***

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# Key data gaps globally

- Only approx. **1 in 4 countries in the world** can provide the UN Statistics Division with data on international **migration flows**

- In **Asia only 10 of 48 countries** could provide the UN with **data on inflows and outflows** of migrants between 2005 and 2014

- Only **4 in 10 African countries** are able to provide information on the **age of migrants**

- For **17% of countries in Africa** the most recent **data available from censuses** referred to years **prior to 2005**

- There are **no global figures** indicating **irregular migration**

United Nations (2016)