

Key takeaways

This Report provides a comprehensive analysis of international migration and its potential to serve as a force for growth and shared prosperity in *all* countries.

- **It focuses on people who lack citizenship in the country in which they live: about 184 million people across the world, including 37 million refugees.** About 43 percent of them live in low- and middle-income countries. Migrants are sometimes defined as “foreign-born.” This Report takes a different view because people who have been naturalized enjoy the same rights as all other citizens.
- **Rapid demographic change is making migration increasingly necessary for countries at all income levels.** High-income countries are aging fast. So are middle-income countries, which are growing older before they become rich. The population of low-income countries is booming, but young people are entering the workforce without the skills needed in the global labor market. These trends will spark a global competition for workers.
- **This Report presents a powerful framework to guide policy making based on how well migrants’ skills and related attributes *match* the needs of destination countries and on the *motive* for their movement.** The match determines the extent to which migrants, countries of origin, and countries of destination gain from migration. The motive may create international law obligations for the destination country: people who move because of a “well-founded fear” of harm or persecution at home—refugees, by definition—are entitled to international protection.
- **The match and motive framework enables policy makers to respond appropriately, and the Report identifies the policies needed.**
 - *When the match of migrants is strong, the gains are large for themselves and for countries of origin and destination.* This is the case for the vast majority of migrants, whether high- or low-skilled, regular or irregular. The policy objective should be to maximize gains for all.
 - *For refugees, when the match is weak, the costs need to be shared—and reduced—multilaterally.* Refugee situations can last for years. The policy objective should be to lower the hosting costs while maintaining adequate standards of international protection.
 - *When the match is weak and people are not refugees, difficult policy challenges arise, especially when migrants are in irregular and distressed circumstances.* It is the prerogative of destination countries to regulate entry of these migrants, but deportation and refusal of entry can lead to inhumane treatment. The restrictive policies adopted by destination countries can also impose costs on some transit countries. The policy goal should be to reduce the need for distressed migration—and development can play a critical role.

- **Origin countries should actively manage migration for development.** They should make labor migration an explicit part of their development strategy. They should lower remittance costs, facilitate knowledge transfers from their diaspora, build skills in high demand globally, mitigate the adverse effects of “brain drain,” protect their nationals while abroad, and support them upon return.
- **Destination countries can also manage migration more strategically.** They should use “strong match” migration to meet their labor needs, facilitating migrants’ inclusion while addressing social impacts that raise concerns among their citizens. They should let refugees move, get jobs, and access national services wherever they are available. And they should also reduce distressed, high-risk movements in a humane manner.
- **International cooperation is essential to turn migration into a strong force for development.** Bilateral cooperation can strengthen migrants’ match with destination countries’ needs. Multilateral efforts are needed to share the costs of refugee-hosting and to address distressed migration. New financing instruments should be developed to help countries care for noncitizens in a predictable manner. Voices that are underrepresented in the migration debate must be heard, including developing countries, the private sector and other stakeholders, and migrants and refugees themselves.