

Chester World Development Forum



Minutes of the Forum Meeting held on Tuesday 15 November 2022 at 7pm at Chester University

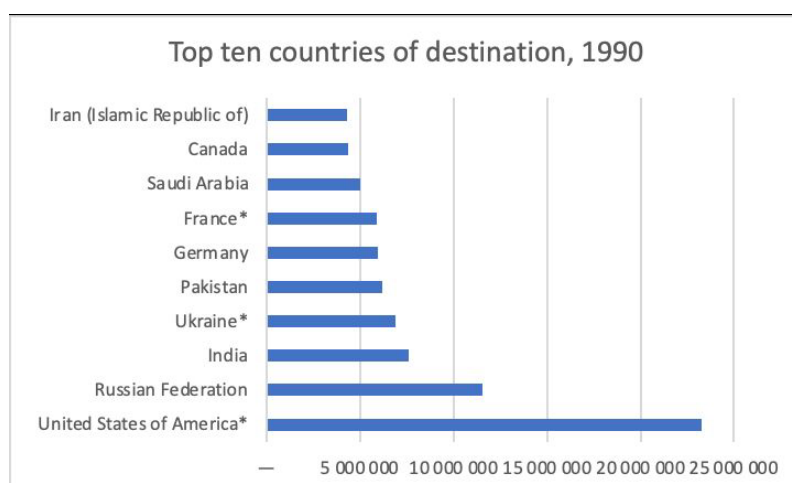
Presentation by Paul Tacon, Global Migration Specialist,
International Labour Organisation, Geneva, on:
“Global Migration: unpacking superficial narratives”

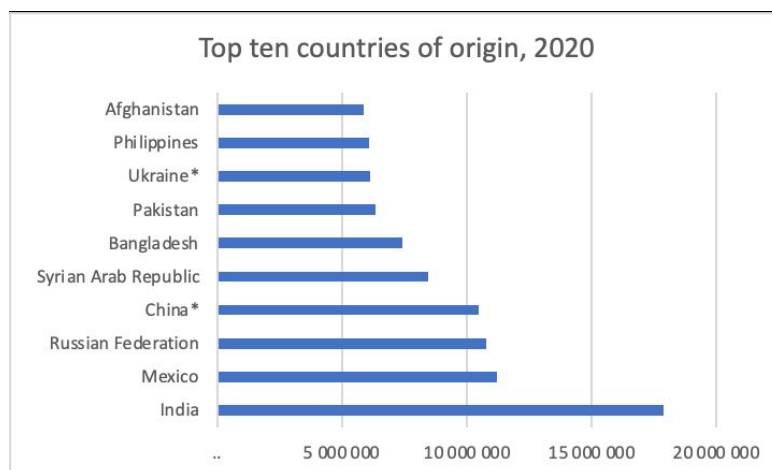
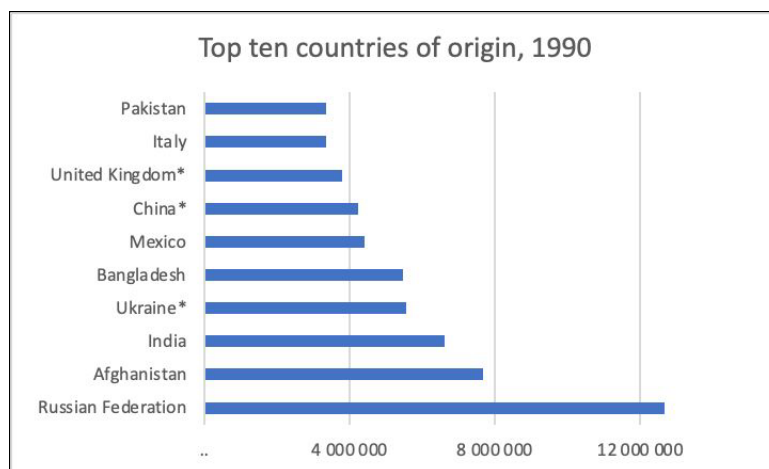
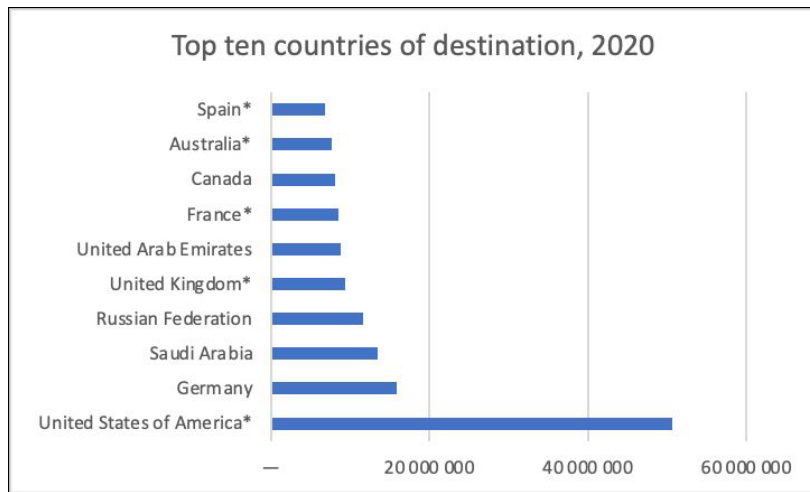
Paul began his talk by posing the question “**Who is a migrant?**” and gave the meeting very clear, widely accepted formal definitions:

- Most importantly - a human being!
- An “International migrant” is defined as any person who changes his or her country of residence” for at least 3 months (UN-DESA, 1998)
- A refugee is “someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion” (Refugee Convention, 1951). Paul pointed out that a refugee, under the law, has specific rights.
- A migrant worker is an “international migrant who, during a specified reference period, was in the labour force of the country of their usual residence, either in employment or in unemployment” (ILO, 2018).

Who is migrating and where are they going?

The number of migrants has almost doubled in 30 years, and migrants represented 3.6% of the world’s population in 2020. In 1990, this figure was 2.9%. The gender balance has remained stable: women made up 49.3% of migrants in 1990 and 48.1% in 2020. However, policies do not always take women migrants into account, so interpreting the data has to be done with caution





Source: UN Population Division, International Migrant Stock Estimates, 2020

These figures haven't taken the pandemic into account. Once that data is available it will reveal a somewhat different picture.

Why are people migrating?

Migration has always been part of the human story. Most people migrate to get a better life for themselves and their families – an improved standard of living, a safer environment and more opportunities. Most people move from poorer to richer countries, but where people go depends on many factors such as existing (family) links, political situations, language, culture, or social networks.

Labour migration is the most important reason for migrating. There were 169 million migrant workers in 2019. This represents 4.9% of the total global workforce, and is made up of 58.5% men and 41.5% women. The largest concentrations of migrant workers are found in Europe, North America and the Arab States.

The second most important reason is seeking refuge, which can either be through internal or international migration. Figures for June 2022 show that there were 101 million people forcibly-displaced and 32.5 million refugees. The refugees were mainly from Syria, Venezuela, Ukraine, Afghanistan, South Sudan and Myanmar. The majority of refugees tend to be hosted in neighbouring countries. However, the number of refugees at any one time can change very quickly because of sudden crises.

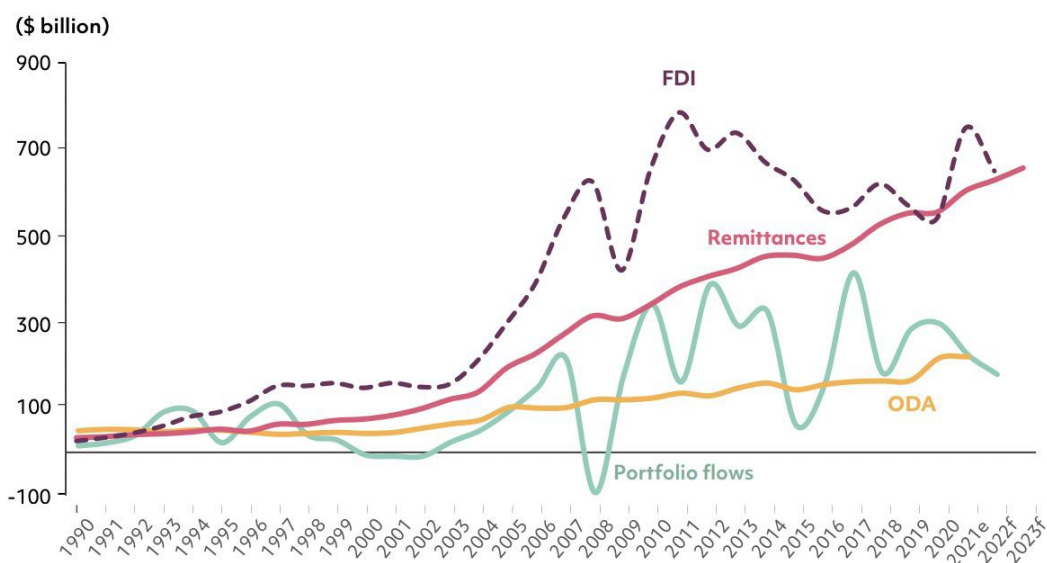
Climate change is also having an impact on migration, an issue being discussed at the COP27 conference. How will countries respond to different types of movement as a result of climate change? The impacts could take place suddenly or slowly. Should there be planned relocation? In this instance, migration could be seen as a form of adaptation to climate change.

Globally, the name “climate refugee” is not recognised because at present it is considered that, once a disaster has happened - for example, a typhoon - then people will return home. BUT it's possible, with countries like The Maldives, that the land will become permanently uninhabitable as a result of climate change. Then the people affected could be seeking asylum elsewhere.

What are impacts of migration?

Clearly, migration has an impact on the labour market in the countries of destination. The graph below shows the estimated amounts of money being sent home by migrant workers (remittances) - \$605 billion forecast for 2023. This is significantly more than Official Development Assistance (ODA). The data does NOT support the view that migrant workers are “taking our jobs”. They are doing jobs that people in the host country do not want to do. There does appear to be very poor treatment of migrants all round.

Figure 1.1a Remittances, Foreign Direct Investment, and Official Development Assistance Flows to Low- and Middle-Income Countries, 1990-2023f



Sources: KNOMAD/World Bank staff; World Development Indicators; IMF Balance of Payments Statistics. Also see World Bank/KNOMAD (2016) for sources, methods, and challenges of collecting remittance data.

Note: FDI = foreign direct investment; ODA = official development assistance; e = estimate; f = forecast.

What are impacts for migrants?

The outcomes depend on the conditions under which migration takes place. For instance, some use recruitment agencies who will charge a fee and this gets the migrants into debt. Ideally, migrant workers achieve their goals if their rights are respected ... but often they face discrimination and exploitation. This is exacerbated by gender discrimination and other forms of intersecting disadvantage.

What is being done about it?

There is no “right to migrate” - but migrants have human rights under UN Conventions. For refugees, there is the Refugee Convention and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). There needs to be bilateral, multilateral, and regional dialogue, and national reforms.

For “climate migrants”, there are evolving discussions.

What do the Sustainable Development Goals of 2015 say? Target 10-7 focused on improving the outcomes of migration by “responsible and well-managed migration policies”. This clearly needs considerable international co-operation.



In 2018, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration became the first intergovernmentally negotiated agreement, prepared under the auspices of the United Nations. In it, there are 23 objectives set out as a framework for international co-operation on migration.

What is the future of migration?

One thing is certain - migration is here to stay. An optimistic scenario would involve greater international and national co-operation, a focus on sustainable development and human rights, and positive outcomes from discussions at COP27 regarding “climate migrants”. However, a pessimistic scenario would indicate greater polarisation and runaway climate change without protection for the rights of climate-related migrants.

Comments from attendees:

- Are migrants given information about the country of destination? Some unscrupulous people are employing migrant workers.
- Conflicting views from our government - some migrants welcomed, and some not. Apparently this is not confined to UK
- Has the UK sent any (more) refugees to Rwanda?
- Do migrant workers have a job to come to as opposed to those who come over in a boat seeking asylum?
- Should people have the right to live in whichever country they choose?
- Who is going to take Maldivians – land will disappear by 2050?
- We always hear about how many migrants are coming to this country but is there data on numbers leaving UK permanently? Very difficult to collect substantive data.
- Re remittances leaving UK - migrant workers are contributing to our economy so remittance is likely to be only a small proportion of that.
- Forced labour / “modern slavery” is a major issue.
- The most vulnerable people are not able to move - particularly climate migrants.

Business Meeting

Present: CWDF members Terry Green, Jean Cornes, Lindsay Lloyd-Cussons, Linda and Stewart Shuttleworth, Katy and Brian Rowe, Tony Walsh, Tom Ormiston, Bernard Payne, Catherine Green, Angela Macquiban, Ann McCarthy & John Tacon. Arnold Wilkes, Ron Reid and Bernie Draper joined the meeting via Zoom.

Other attendees: Anne de Reybekill, Isabel Butler, Scarlett Platt, Holly Walker, and Mick & Jane Bull.

Apologies: Heather Swainston and Peter Speirs

1 Finance update:

Bank balance was £211.05 as at 31 October, with £100 owing for our DEC Pakistan floods emergency appeal donation. Taking into account donations received at GBGW and this meeting, and mailings expenses paid to AM, the petty cash stands at £18.79. This makes our current effective total **£129.84**.

2 Website/Social Media updates and updating:

Nothing to report

3 Future CWDF and related events:

Originally, we had booked to have our annual meeting with our City of Chester MP, but our newly elected MP Samantha Dixon is going to be very busy indeed getting to grips with her new responsibilities. We will try to catch up with her later in the year. Stepping into the breach, Gill Miller has volunteered to give a talk highlighting key issues arising from the COP27 meetings in Egypt. Provisionally, the title will be "Loss and damage: understanding the dilemmas and decisions from COP27".

See our Diary for details of events on our website: www.chesterwdf.org.uk

4 Reports from members on recent or forthcoming events

Gill Miller: Wednesday 25 January in the Best Building, University of Chester at 4:30pm: Dr Rich Waller, University of Keele, will give a talk on "Contemporary Energy Crises and Sustainable Energy Futures".

Katy Rowe: on Wednesday 30 November, Chester Friends of Palestine will be hosting a talk by William Bell on Zoom. Search in eventbrite.com to join the meeting.

Tony Walsh: on Friday 18 November, there will be a quiz evening in aid of CAFOD and signing cards supporting Palestinians.

Brian Rowe: on Friday 09 December at 7pm in St Mary's Creative Space, CFoP will host an evening of traditional Middle Eastern music. The two musicians have backgrounds in Bethlehem. £13 a ticket, booking via Eventbrite.

Linda Shuttleworth gave news from *Jamie's Fund*: now working with Ugandan tutors and facilitating training in managing suicidal behavior. Seemingly the suicide rate is increasing post Covid.

5 Date of next Forum meeting

Tuesday 10 January 2023, 7pm in The Unity Centre.

This meeting will also be accessible remotely via Zoom.