



WORLD MIGRATION REPORT DATA SNAPSHOT

Long-term trend in international migration

As the saying goes “a picture can be worth a thousand words”, so these data snapshots have been provided to help explain changes in migration through innovative data analysis. The “thousand words” can be found in the report itself—clicks on the link below.

Table 1. International migrants, 1970–2020

Year	Number of international migrants	Migrants as a % of the world's population
1970	84 460 125	2.3
1975	90 368 010	2.2
1980	101 983 149	2.3
1985	113 206 691	2.3
1990	152 986 157	2.9
1995	161 289 976	2.8
2000	173 230 585	2.8
2005	191 446 828	2.9
2010	220 983 187	3.2
2015	247 958 644	3.4
2020	280 598 105	3.6

Source: UN DESA, 2008; UN DESA, 2021a.

Note: The number of entities (such as States, territories and administrative regions) for which data were made available in the UN DESA International Migrant Stock 2020 was 232. In 1970, the number of entities was 135.

This data snapshot shows the growth in the number of international migrants globally over the last five decades. The estimated total has more than tripled, increasing from 84 million in 1970 to around 281 million in 2020. As a proportion of the global population, however, the number of international migrants has increased only slightly, from 2.3 per cent to 3.6 per cent.

It is estimated that COVID-19 may have reduced the growth in the international migrant population by around two million. In other words, had there not been COVID-19, the number of international migrants in 2020 would have likely been around 283 million.

Read more about this data output on long-term migration trends in Chapter 2 (Global Overview) of the World Migration Report 2024. The full report can be accessed [here](#). The interactive data visualization platform is [here](#).

This WORLD MIGRATION REPORT DATA SNAPSHOT has been produced by [IOM Research](#) (research@iom.int).

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