



The least developed countries¹

Fact sheet on population, migration and development

The LDCs host few international migrants ...

By mid-2010, the 49 least developed countries (LDCs) hosted an estimated 11.5 million international migrants, five per cent of the global migrant population. The share of the LDCs in the global population amounted to 12 per cent, more than double their share in the migrant stock.

By mid-2010, international migrants constituted 1.3 per cent of the total population in LDCs. In developing countries, excluding the LDCs, international migrants amount to 1.6 per cent of the total population. In more developed countries, 10.6 per cent of the total population was foreign-born.

Between 1990 and 2010, the migrant stock in LDCs increased by only 3 per cent. During the same period, the developing countries, excluding the LDCs, recorded an increase in the migrant stock of 20 per cent. In the more developed countries, the number of international migrants rose by 55 per cent.

... but relatively many refugees.

By mid-2010, the LDCs hosted 2.1 million refugees, about 13 per cent of the global refugee population (16.3 million), more than double their share in the global migrant stock.

About one of every five international migrants in LDCs is a refugee, as compared to one in six in developing countries, excluding the LDCs, and one in fifty in the more developed countries.

Emigration fuels health worker shortages.

LDCs, in particular those with small populations, are affected by high emigration levels of health workers. Around 2000, there were 14 countries where over half of all locally born doctors worked in OECD countries. Six of these 14 countries (Angola, Haiti, Liberia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and the United Republic of Tanzania) were LDCs facing a critical shortage of health professionals, according to the WHO.

Remittances are a key source of income.

In 2008, remittances represented 5.7 per cent of GDP in LDCs, compared to 1.3 per cent in developing countries, excluding the LDCs, and to 0.4 per cent in more developed countries. Remittances constituted more than one-fifth of GDP in Haiti (20 per cent), Nepal (22 per cent), Samoa (26 per cent) and Lesotho (27 per cent).

According to provisional figures, migrant families in LDCs received US\$25 billion in remittances in 2009, up from US\$23 billion in 2008 and US\$6 billion in 2000. The increase in remittances to LDCs during 2008-2009 is remarkable given that global remittance transfers declined by 7 per cent over the same period due to the global economic and financial crisis.

Population growth is pronounced.

During 2010-2050, the population in LDCs is projected to grow twice as fast as in the rest of the world. By 2050, the total population in the LDCs will reach 1.7 billion people, 18 per cent of the global population.

While most people live in rural areas ...

About 71 per cent of the total population in LDCs lived in rural areas in mid-2010, compared to 25 per cent in more developed regions. Globally, about half the population is living in urban areas.

... urbanization rates are high.

Due to rural to urban migration, natural increase and reclassification of rural to urban areas, it is projected that some 41 per cent of the population in LDCs will be living in urban areas by 2030.

June 2010

¹ Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Rwanda, Samoa, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Sudan, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Yemen and Zambia.