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Executive summary¹

- Latest available data indicate a significant increase in overall migration flows to G20 countries in 2019 with about 12.5 million new temporary and permanent immigrants. This represents a 10% increase compared to the previous year.
- The evolution of migration flows in the first six months of 2020 however shows a dramatic drop in immigration trends. The number of new permits issued declined on average by 45% in G20 OECD countries and by over 50% in Japan, Korea, the United States and Australia for example.
- Measures implemented by governments globally to limit the spread of COVID-19 are also having a
 profound negative impact on the possibility of people fleeing war and persecution to access the
 protection they need.
- By mid-2020, the global refugee population reached 26.3 million, increasing by almost a quarter of a million refugees since the record figure reached at the end of 2019. G20 countries hosted 7.6 million refugees.
- During the first half of 2020, there were an estimated 586 100 new claims for asylum lodged globally with States or UNHCR in 'first instance' procedures, 32% less than the same period in 2019. Three-quarters (451 500) were in G20 countries.
- Resettlement, naturalisation and voluntary repatriation of refugees were all significantly reduced worldwide in the first half of 2020. With more people becoming displaced and fewer being able to return, resettle or naturalise, an increasing number find themselves in protracted and long-lasting displacement situations.
- Governments have implemented a broad range of measures in response to COVID-19 including policies to extend work and residency permits, responding to immediate labour needs, ensure access to healthcare for COVID-19 treatment and facilitate the return of stranded migrants. Migrants have also actively contributed to the efforts to limit the immediate effects of the pandemic as frontline workers.
- By highlighting underlying challenges, the pandemic actually offers an opportunity for governments to review their migration policies, draw lessons learnt and be better prepared for future crises.
- In a context of continuing workplace closures and other restrictive measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to working-hour losses in G20 countries amounting to the equivalent of 315 million full-time jobs in the second quarter of 2020, migrant workers were among the hardest hit. While demand for migrant workers has declined in some sectors, demand has increased in others, such as health care and seasonal agriculture.
- With the socio-economic impact of the pandemic felt heavily by the most vulnerable in society, including refugees and other displaced people, continued solidarity and support to those most in need is critical.
- The impact of COVID-19 on remittances is a mixed picture; in the first half of 2020, total remittances received in some countries of origin dipped while in other countries of origin, they recovered after a dip and the total was higher than remittances received in the same period in 2019.
- Countries of origin and destination should consider migrant workers are included in the national response programmes and enhance protection of their rights, safe return and effective reintegration into labour markets.
- In this regard, bilateral and international coordination and the involvement of social partners remain
 crucial. International labour standards and fundamental principles and rights at work provide
 governments and other stakeholders a basis to tackle the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19
 pandemic through fair and effective policy responses to facilitate sustainable and equitable recovery.
- Going forward, identifying common challenges and opportunities, exchanging on good practices and
 joining forces to improve the availability and quality of international data and evidence on migration
 and forced displacement will be key to tackle the future of international migration post Covid-19.

¹ This document, as well as any data and any map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area. The map in Figure 2 follows the practice of the IOM.

Introduction

The 2019 G20 leaders' declaration (Osaka, Japan) "noted the 2019 Annual International Migration and Displacement Trends and Policies Report to the G20 prepared by the OECD in cooperation with ILO, IOM and UNHCR. It stressed that "Large movements of refugees are a global concern with humanitarian, political, social and economic consequences". G20 leaders also emphasized the importance of shared actions to address the root causes of displacement and to respond to growing humanitarian needs" and indicated their willingness to "continue the dialogue on the various dimensions of these issues in the G20."

In 2019, there were about 271 million people living outside their country of birth globally, with two-thirds living in G20 countries.² COVID-19 pandemic has deeply affected both international mobility as well as refugees and migrants in their host communities. Most countries temporarily closed their borders or imposed strict travel restrictions to prevent the spread of the virus. At the same time, many countries had to repatriate large numbers of nationals stranded abroad. In a number of countries, measures were taken to enable workers with specific sectoral skills to migrate, as well as support measures for migrant communities, refugees and other vulnerable groups. Guaranteeing access to health care and COVID-19 treatment, prolongation of visas and easing access to the labour market have been some of the measures adopted by G20 countries since March. It should be noted that these measures, along with other social protection measures such as access to unemployment insurance or economic supports, have been granted on a temporary basis during the pandemic and it is uncertain whether these measures will be adopted further in 2021 or as countries emerge from the crisis.

The present 2020 edition of the joint OECD, ILO, IOM & UNHCR Annual *International Migration and Forced Displacement Trends and Policies Report* for the G20 is composed of three main parts. The first part of the report presents the latest figures on migration and refugee flows and stocks in G20 countries for 2019 and beginning of 2020, including student migration and forced displacement. The second part analyses the latest changes in the management of migration in G20 countries in reaction to the pandemic. The third part looks at the impact of the pandemic on labour market and social inclusion of migrants and refugees. The last section provides some concluding remarks.

1. Recent trends in migration and refugee movements in G20 countries

a. Migration flows in 2019

Latest available data indicate a significant increase in overall migration flows to G20 countries in 2019³ (Figure 1 and Table 1). In total, about 12.5 million new temporary and permanent immigrants entered G20 countries in 2019, which represents a 10% increase compared to the previous year.

The United States and Saudi Arabia are the two main G20 destination countries, with around 2 million new migrants arriving in 2019 each. The composition of the migration is, however, quite different in these two countries as family migration accounts for more than 67% of permanent flows and more than a third of overall flows in the United States while the statistics collected for Saudi Arabia only cover work permits, mostly for migrant workers from Asia. The dynamic is also quite different, as migration flows have declined by 6% in the United States in 2019, but increased by almost 49% in Saudi Arabia. Total migration to Brazil (+50%), to the Russian Federation (+33%) and to Turkey (+23%) also increased sharply.

https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates19.asp.

² UNDESA 2019 International Migrant Stock

³ Data on international migration flows are not available for all G20 countries and are not systematically comparable. The data presented here are compiled from different sources, mainly based on OECD regional monitoring systems, completed with national sources. They include all types of migration ranging from settlement to temporary migration, including students, but exclude visitors. Usually these data would include recognised refugees but not asylum seekers.

At 1.3 million, new permanent and temporary migration flows to Germany slightly declined in 2019 (-3%) for the second year in a row. Total migration to the EU^4 , excluding intra EU movements, reached a record high level of 3.4 million in 2019 (+9%) notably because of the increase in migration to Spain (+18% in 2019) and the United Kingdom (+14%).

50%

2017-18

2018-19

40%

20%

10%

Figure 1. Recent changes in migration flows to selected G20 countries, 2017-2019, percentage

Source: See Table 1 below.

-10%

-20%

-30%

⁴ Data for the European Union include the United Kingdom until 2019.

Table 1. Migration flows to selected G20 countries, 2010-2019, thousands

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Permanent	Temporary	Students	Definition
Argentina	178	259	292	279	206	263	218	215	224	165	1	1	1	
Australia	580	608	698	768	773	765	756	770	752	765	1	1	1	
Brazil	96	117	133	148	133	114	125	103	122	183	1	1	1	
Canada	482	458	488	494	487	490	549	539	573	594	1	1	1	
China	635	693	715	765	796	764	815	827	895	911				Issuances of residence permits
France	197	193	193	205	211	218	230	247	259	275	1	1	1	Non-EU citizens only
Germany	684	842	966	1 108	1 343	2 016	1 720	1 412	1 382	1 341	1	1	1	Registration of foreigners intending to stay at least one week in the country
India														
Indonesia		56	61	70	74	77	80	86	95	99		1		Registered migrant worker
Italy	424	354	321	279	248	250	263	301	286	261	1	?	1	
Japan	287	267	304	307	337	391	428	475	520	591	1	1	1	Foreigners who entered the country, excluding temporary visitors and re-entries
Mexico	92	91	79	118	109	103	101	102	106	94	1	1	1	Permanent resident cards + temp
Korea	293	307	300	360	407	373	402	453	495	438	1	1	1	Long-term inflows (more than 90 days)
Russian Federation	192	206	283	346	439	421	384	391	375	500	1			Permanent residents (or temporary if declared period exceeds 9 months)
Saudi Arabia	1 640	1 412	1 922	1 840	1 962	2 213	1 823	1 618	1 389	2 064		1		Residence permits until 2016 and work permits since 2017
South Africa		118	145	111	83	75					1	1	1	
Spain	330	336	272	248	264	290	352	454	562	665	1	?	?	Declared change of usual residence
Turkey							274	365	467	578				Immigrants and emigrants by country of citizenship, 2016-2019
United Kingdom	498	488	418	449	551	548	515	563	527	600	1		1	Long-Term International Migration
United States	1 897	1 971	1 976	2 031	2 163	2 292	2 315	2 212	2 183	2 053	1	1	1	
European Union (28)	2 473	2 177	2 097	2 356	2 326	2 622	3 024	3 212	3 171	3 451				All permits to third country nationals

Total G20 11 294 11 368 11 367 12 487

Note: Sources, definitions and coverage of data used vary significantly across countries. This does not allow for aggregations and direct comparisons, but order of magnitude and trends can be described. Data are generally based on national sources, and most often include temporary workers and students. N/A means that information is not available. Inflows to Turkey are estimates based on Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Labour reports.

Source: OECD 2020a National sources; OECD International Migration Database, OAS/OECD (2017) International migration in the Americas - SICREMI, ADBI/ILO/OECD (2020) Building Partnerships for Effectively Managing Labour Migration.

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b. Early evidence on the impact of the COVID19 pandemic on migration flows in G20 countries

The evolution of migration flows in the first six months of 2020 shows a dramatic drop in international mobility and migration. In reaction to COVID-19, most G20 countries temporarily closed their national borders during the period March-June 2020 in an effort to contain the spread of the virus in their territory. In the meantime, most commercial flights were put on hold and many countries limited or suspended the processing of visa applications. Consular and residence permit services had not fully resumed mid-2020, especially for foreigners. Relaxation of admission restrictions in July and August in several countries will also only be gradually reflected in the third quarter data for 2020 once they become available. Only a few countries did not impose restrictions in the first half of 2020. As of 12 October 2020, at least 16 993 and 15 357 travel restrictions were still applicable to people travelling from and to G20 countries, respectively (IOM, 2020a)⁵.



Figure 2: Number of restrictions on people traveling to G20 Member States and EU Member States

Source: IOM, Global Mobility Impacts, Geneva (2020). Available at migration.iom.int.

- 1. This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the IOM, ILO, UNHCR or OECD.
- *Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties.
- 2. Data as of 12 October 2020, based on IATA and official government websites.
- 3. Data include blanket restrictions based on country/territory/area of origin as well as partial restrictions such as changes in visa requirements and medical clearances. See migration.iom.int for detailed methodology.

As a result of this situation, the number of new permits issued declined on average by 45% in G20 OECD countries and by over 50% in Japan, Korea, the United States and Australia for example in the first semester 2020 compared to the previous year (Figure 3). Nonetheless, with few exceptions, flows did not drop to zero in the second quarter of 2020. The continuation of inflows of non-nationals is largely due to the patchwork of exceptions to entry restrictions. Many countries drew up exemptions for certain categories, such as family members of nationals and permanent residents; international students following courses requiring their presence; and essential workers especially in health care but also in agriculture and transportation.

⁵ This number includes international air travel restrictions imposed by G20 countries in the form of travel related measures (total passenger bans, airport closures, or restrictions on passengers arriving from and/or nationals of specific countries), visa requirements changes and/or medical requirements (negative PCR test before arrival, mandatory quarantine, completed Health Declaration forms submitted before or upon arrival etc.). Typically, one country could issue a combination of total restrictions and conditional measures, these are counted separately by country and type of restriction/measure

While this drop in permits in the first half of 2020 might be offset by a rise in flows during the second half of the year, notably for international students, but the current economic downturn will also most likely aggravate the impact on labour migration. Overall, 2020 is projected to be a historical low for international migration in the OECD and G20 area.

Japan Korea Australia **United Kingdom** Saudi Arabia **United States** Canada China OECD G20 EU27 -100% -80% -60% -40% -20% 0% ■% Change Q2 2020 / Q2 2019 ■ % Change 1st semester 2020 / 1st semester 2019

Figure 3. Change in the number of new permits issues between the first semester of 2019 and 2020 in selected G20 countries

Source: OECD (2020a).

c. The impact of the pandemic on international student migration

The global health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic made it more difficult for international students to complete the administrative procedures necessary to enrol in higher education institutions abroad, and to travel to take up studies. Though international students often benefited from exceptions to the general travel ban, many universities were also closed for periods during the pandemic.

Following several years of often significant increases (e.g. 15 of the G20 countries showing growth in the number of international students since 2016, see Table 2), G20 countries are likely to experience a significant drop in the number of international students due to COVID-19 in the academic year 2020/21. The travel restrictions and university closures imposed in many G20 countries have limited the ability of international students to be physically present at the institution in which they were enrolled or were planning to enrol. This prompted several G20 countries to put in place exceptions aimed at preventing visas or permits from being withdrawn, and to give international students additional time to finish their studies.

In many G20 countries, international students are allowed to stay in the country of study for a certain period of time after graduating to find a job. However, the pandemic compromises students' ability to attain such goals within the usual timeline, given its negative labour market impact. In reaction, a number of G20 countries extended the maximum job search time for international students (see EMN/OECD 2020).

Table 2. International students enrolled in G20 countries, 2018

	Number of	international	International or foreign students				
	or foreign stud	ents (thousands)	as a share of all students (%)				
	2018	Change / 2016	Total tertiary	Master's level	Doctoral level		
Argentina	89	13					
Australia	445	109	27	53	34		
Brazil	21	1	<1	1	2		
Canada	225	35	14	17	35		
China	178	41					
France	230	-16	9	12	38		
Germany	312	67	10	16	12		
India	45	1	<1				
Indonesia	8		<1				
Italy	107	14	6	6	16		
Japan	183	39	5	9	19		
Korea	85	23	3	9	11		
Mexico	7	-5	<1	1	2		
Russia	262	13	4	6	7		
Saudi Arabia	74	-6	5				
South Africa	45	+/-0					
Spain	71	21	3	11	17		
Turkey	125	37	2	5	8		
United Kingdom	452	20	18	35	41		
United States	987	16	5	13	25		
EU Total	1738	150	9	14	23		
G20 total	3950	431	4	8	11		
G20 average			6	11	15		

Source: OECD Education database.

Note: For Argentina and South Africa, total numbers refer to year 2017.

Several G20 countries introduced temporary measures to mitigate the financial impact of COVID-19 on international students already present, for example by increasing the maximum number of working hours allowed for student jobs, opening access to national student support funds or through other financial programmes. A number of G20 countries also extended possibilities for international students to work.

With the pandemic, online studies have become more common, though fully online studies are still the exception – with most universities having moved to hybrid solutions. This has raised the question of admission for mere online studies, with diverging responses by G20 countries.

Looking forward, the pandemic is likely to redraw the international student map, as students are reconsidering their options and the drop in international student figures places those higher education Institutions that were depending heavily on their fees now facing financial difficulties. This could also impact on researchers more widely.

d. Refugee stocks, asylum applications, resettlement and complementary pathways for those in need of international protection

By mid-2020, the **global refugee population reached 26.3 million**,⁶ including 5.7 million Palestine refugees under UNRWA's mandate. With an increase of almost a quarter of a million refugees since the record figure reached at the end of 2019,⁷ this is once again the highest level recorded to date. It is mostly new displacement in Africa's Sahel region which has caused this increase. G20 countries hosted 7.6 million refugees, representing nearly 37 per cent of all refugees under UNHCR's mandate. About half of them were in Turkey.

New displacements and fewer available durable solutions for refugees both contributed to the overall increase in the number of refugees in the countries directly neighbouring crisis countries. The deepening crisis in Africa's Sahel region, led to an increase of more than 100 000 new refugees during the first six months of 2020. Compounded by restrictions on movement due to COVID-19, fewer refugees were able to access asylum or return home. Further, resettlement countries accepted a more limited number of refugees for resettlement than in the past and countries of first asylum struggled to integrate displaced populations during the first six months of 2020.

Turkey continued to host the world's largest number of **people in need of international protection**, with around 4 million refugees and asylum-seekers, 3.6 million of whom are Syrians. Germany hosted the second largest number of people in need of international protection among G20 countries and the fifth largest in the world, with just over 1.4 million refugees and asylum-seekers by the middle of 2020. In June 2020, the majority of refugees and asylum-seekers hosted by Germany came from Syria (614 000), followed by Afghanistan (188 000) and Iraq (177 000). Other G20 countries with large populations in need of international protection include the USA (1.3m), France (521 000), China (304 000), and Brazil (260 000).

Relative to their national populations, Turkey hosted the largest proportion of refugees among G20 countries (1 in 23 are refugees), highlighting the continuing impact of the Syrian crisis. In the European Union, Sweden also has a relatively high proportion of refugees (1 in 40), followed by Malta (1 in 49), Austria (1 in 65), and Germany (1 in 75).

During the first half of 2020, there were an estimated **586 100 new claims for asylum lodged globally** with States or UNHCR in 'first instance' procedures, 32% less than the same period in 2019. Three-quarters (451 500) were in G20 countries. The United States was the largest recipient of new asylum applications, with 155 100 lodged until the middle of 2020. Similar to previous years, applicants from the North of Central America made up almost half of new applications in the United States (Guatemalans: 24 700, Hondurans: 20 200 and Salvadorans: 14 800). Claims from Venezuelans remained high with 16 300 claims.

New applications in Europe were significantly lower than in previous years. Germany (49 000), Spain (44 600), France (38 500) and Greece (24 100) received the most new asylum claims after the United States. While asylum claims in Germany were mainly from Syrians, Iraqis and Afghans, claims in Spain were overwhelmingly lodged by Latin Americans, mainly Venezuelans and Colombians. Globally, Venezuelans lodged the most claims (73 400), as a result of the situation in their country.

Other G20 countries receiving large numbers of new asylum applicants in the first half of 2020 were Canada (22 400), Mexico (20 500), Brazil (19 900), Australia (11 400) and Italy (9 400).

There were **4.2 million asylum-seekers with pending claims as of mid-2020**, slightly higher than the 4.1 million awaiting decisions at the end of 2019, reflecting the sharp reduction in new applications and reduced processing of existing applications.

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⁶ Mid-year statistics are still being compiled for 16 countries including the following G20 countries: Japan, South Africa, the UK, France and other European Union countries (Belgium, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal and Slovenia). All data should therefore be considered provisional and subject to change.

⁷ See https://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2019/.

Resettlement is a critical tool for both the protection of the most vulnerable refugees and as a durable solution. It is also a tangible mechanism for responsibility-sharing and a demonstration of international solidarity, allowing States to help share burden and reduce the impact of large refugee populations on host countries. In this context, more than 1.4 million refugees have been identified by UNHCR as needing access to this key durable solution. In December 2019 at the Global Refugee Forum the three-Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways was also launched and plans for the implementation of the strategy have been disrupted by the pandemic.

In the first six months of 2020, just 17 300 refugees were resettled, 46% fewer than the 32 000 during the same period in 2019. Refugees were most often resettled to the United States (4 500), Canada (4 400) and Australia (3 500). At this rate, resettlement arrivals during 2020 are likely to be the lowest number since the 1970's. The G20 countries received 95 per cent of all resettled refugees.

In the first six months of 2020, just 102 600 refugees returned to their country of origin, compared with 531 000 in the same period of 2019 and 20 300 naturalised, including 10 200 in Canada.⁸ Refugees most commonly returned to South Sudan (66 000), primarily from Uganda, and to Syria (17 700), primarily from Turkey and Lebanon. With more people becoming displaced and fewer being able to return, resettle or naturalise, an increasing number find themselves in protracted and long-lasting displacement situations.

2. Migration policies in the times of COVID-19

Travel restrictions have particularly affected migrants and their families as well as businesses, origin and destination communities. They affected value and supply chains, labour mobility corridors and flow of remittances.⁹

Migration policies, organisational structures and processes are complex and inter-connected. National and regional migration governance that is developed and implemented through a holistic, coherent and long-term approach can be adapted to unexpected and exceptional circumstances and it can help to ensure effective migration governance even during crises. The pandemic also offers an opportunity for governments to review their migration governance, draw lessons and be better prepared for future crises (Milan and Cunnoosamy, 2020). Indeed, G20 countries have implemented a broad range of specific measures in response to COVID-19 and beyond (UN Network on Migration 2020, OECD 2020b, EMN/OECD 2020a, IOM 2020b, ILO 2020 a, b).

Extending work and residency permits. In the European Union, most countries granted flexibility on immigration requirements, including the automatic renewal of residence and work permits. Spain and Germany, for example, did not withdraw permits for migrants who lost their job during the pandemic. Other G20 countries, including France and Italy, automatically extended or renewed permits for a certain period; in some cases until after the end of the state of emergency, in other cases until a pre-defined calendar date. In Italy the Law Decree "Relaunch" gives the possibility for migrant workers in an irregular situation to receive a 6-month temporary work permit, if they had previously worked in agriculture or domestic work. The question of further extension beyond the 6-month validity was not addressed in the Decree. In countries where the validity of certain work permits is conditioned on reaching a certain level of income, for example in Australia and the United Kingdom, additional flexibility was introduced. In many European countries, changes introduced allowed for overstay on a temporary visa, without any negative consequences for future visa applications (EMN/OECD 2020a). Other countries suspended time limits or expiration of migration permits for the duration of the public health emergency, like Brazil. Others did so for a certain period; for example, until 31 October 2020 in South Africa for visas that expired during the lockdown, or until

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⁸ Naturalisation statistics are only indicative at best and provide an underestimate of the extent to which refugees are naturalized as it can be difficult to distinguish between the naturalization of refugees and non-refugees in statistical systems.

⁹ See also https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/migration-data-relevant-covid-19-pandemic.

September 2020 in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for residence permits and visas that expired when migrants were stranded abroad or in the Kingdom due to border closures.

Responding to immediate labour and skills needs. While demand for migrant workers has been declining in most sectors, it actually increased in others. Soon after the global halt to cross-border movements in the first quarter of 2020, some countries realised the importance of foreign workers in certain sectors such as agriculture, construction, health care, care and IT maintenance. Several emergency and *ad hoc* measures were taken by national or local authorities to fast track licensing or wave some requirements for skills recognition in the health sector (OECD 2020c), with a view to supporting healthcare provision in the context of COVID-19. Italy as well as several provinces in Canada and several states in the United States enabled a temporary licencing of doctors with foreign medical degrees. Spain facilitated recruitment in the national health services and offered extended and renewable residence and unrestricted work permits to young regular migrants who were employed in the agriculture sector during the pandemic, while other European countries including Germany expedited applications for the recognition of foreign qualifications of health professionals. France allowed the employment of foreign-trained health workers in non-medical occupations in the health sector. Argentina developed expedited procedures for the recognition of qualifications of Venezuelan migrant workers, at least for the duration of the pandemic (ILO 2020a, IOM 2020c).

Others measures were adopted by G20 countries to maintain access to foreign labour in some key sectors. These can be grouped in three broad categories:

- 1. Extending and increasing the duration of stay_for already employed migrant workers, for instance in the agricultural sector. In the United States, for example, with respect to the H-2A visa for agricultural work, a temporary exception allowed in April 2020 workers whose term was expiring to stay beyond the three-year limit and work for authorised H-2A employers. The extension ended in August 2020. Similarly, in Australia, in April 2020, the Government announced a new visa extending the stay of critical seasonal workers to support the agricultural sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. Australia also allowed Working Holiday Makers to stay beyond the two-year term of their visa, on the condition they worked in agriculture for an additional period. The Republic of Korea extended employment for temporary foreign workers for contracts that were about to end, ensuring access to essential services and preventing migrant workers from falling into irregular status (ILO 2020a).
- 2. Activating inactive migrant population groups as additional sources of labour force. Spain, for example, allowed young third-country nationals aged 18-21, including students and asylum seekers, to work immediately until the end of September. In the European Union, in Belgium, until the end of June, asylum seekers were allowed to work immediately under certain conditions, instead of a previous waiting period of four months. France and a few other European countries allowed international students to work more hours, while Canada and Australia, for example, removed a previous cap on the maximum number of hours international students may work for those employed in essential services.
- 3. Facilitating the admission of temporary foreign workers filling in specific labour shortages. As regards seasonal agricultural workers for example, 13 EU Member States lifted travel restrictions to enter the territory during the pandemic (EMN/OECD 2020b).

Addressing vulnerability and ensuring access to Covid-19 treatment. Several countries have ensured access to treatment for COVID-19 for all categories of migrants, regardless of migration status. More generally, G20 countries have used a range of information channels in order to inform the public about the COVID-19 symptoms, preventive measures, health advice and overall access to medical services. To ensure that no one is left behind, some G20 countries undertook specific measures to make such information more accessible to migrants, by providing dedicated information material in various languages, help hotlines, targeted social media campaigns or access to social support (UN Network on Migration, 2020, EMN/OECD2020a, IOM 2020b).

Ensuring the continuity of integration service provision has been a particular challenge. For many migrants, in particular recent arrivals, the strict confinement measures or full lockdown caused by COVID-19 meant a disruption to language courses and other support services, in those G20 countries which provide these. To overcome this problem, there has been rapid innovation in the digital and distance-learning sector in a number of countries, including with respect to online tutorials. It appears that moving online went often rather smoothly for more advanced learners. At the same time, it became evident that there is currently little alternative to presence learning for the most vulnerable groups.

Particular challenges also emerged for people in detention centres. To mitigate the spread of the virus, a number of European countries (e.g. Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway) released some migrants from administrative detention (European Asylum Support Office, 2020; UN Network on Migration, 2020) or, in the case of Spain, administrative detention centres were temporarily closed down.

In April, the European Commission prepared a guidance for EU Member States on the implementation of EU rules on asylum and return procedures and on resettlement in the context of the coronavirus pandemic. The Guidance illustrates how to ensure continuity of procedures as much as possible while fully ensuring the protection of people's health and fundamental rights in line with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. At the same time, it recalls the fundamental principles that must continue to apply, so that access to the asylum procedure continues to the greatest extent possible. The Guidance also provides practical advice and identifies tools how to pursue the asylum and return procedures and continue with resettlement-related activities under the pandemic circumstances.

Facilitating return migration: To facilitate the return of stranded migrants to their countries of origin, several G20 members provided logistical, financial or consular assistance to their citizens. France for example provided all its nationals abroad with consular assistance if they cannot find a valid mean of transport to return to France. Most other G20 countries implemented similar emergency actions to repatriate their nationals. In one of the largest repatriation operations in history, India had facilitated the repatriation of more than 1.5 million citizens as of 25 September 2020. Additionally, India has established bilateral air travel agreements with 14 countries in order to resume commercial passenger services, with the aim of enabling stranded Indian citizens -- as well as other nationals with valid visas and residence permits in India -- to travel.

In South America, bilateral and multilateral agreements were signed among countries to coordinate migration flows and to provide corridors for the safe movement of migrants and citizens. Argentina allowed up to 500 daily entries for the repatriation of its citizens and residents through eight land border points, while Brazilian and Paraguayan nationals are allowed to travel through the Ponte da Amizade.

3. Economic and social inclusion of immigrants and refugees and possible impact on countries of origin

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced many countries to impose measures to mitigate its impact, such as lockdown, workplace closures and movement restrictions. According to the ILO estimates, that led to working-hour losses in G20 countries of 16.5 per cent (equivalent to 315 million full-time jobs assuming a 48-hour working week) in the second, and 11.8 per cent (equivalent to 225 million full-time jobs) in the third quarter of 2020, relative to the fourth quarter of 2019 (table 3) for the three quarter of 2020. It has resulted in labour income¹⁰ loss of 10.6 per cent (US\$3.03 trillion, table 4), compared to the first three quarters of 2019. ¹¹ The reasons for the decline vary considerably across countries and are due to shorter

¹⁰ Includes wages for employees and part of income for the self-employed. The returns from the economic activity of the self-employed comprise both labour income and implied capital income (from physical and nonphysical capital). Both income shares fall jointly when working hours are reduced. Only the labour income share is included in the estimates presented here.

¹¹ Figures are based on ILO. 2020. ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Sixth edition: Updated estimates and analysis. September.

working hours, being employed but not working, unemployment and inactivity. Moreover, ILO projections indicate that even in the optimistic scenario of faster recovery rate of working hours than GDP growth, it is unlikely that the working hours globally will return to the pre-crisis level by the end of 2020 (Figure 3) (ILO 2020b).

Table 3. Working-hour losses, G20 countries, first, second and third quarters of 2020 (full-time equivalent jobs and percentage)

		2020Q1			2020Q2		2020Q3		
	Full-time equivalent (40 hours per week) in millions	Full-time equivalent (48 hours per week) in millions	Percentage hours lost		Full-time equivalent (48 hours per week) in millions	Percentage hours lost	Full-time equivalents (40 hours per week) in millions		Percentage hours lost
G20	160	135	7.10%	375	315	16.50%	270	225	11.80%
G20: Advanced economies	16	13	3.30%	75	60	15.30%	42	35	8.90%
G20: Emerging economies	145	120	8.00%	305	255	16.80%	230	190	12.60%

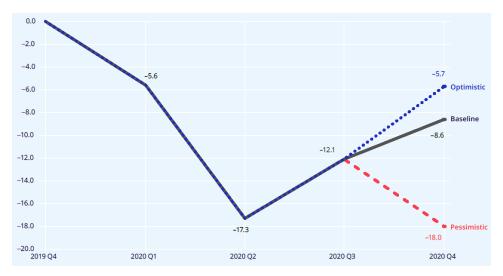
Source: ILO (2020b).

Table 4. Share and amount of labour income lost due to working-hour losses during the first three quarters of 2020 (before income support measures; 2019 market exchange rates), G20 countries

	Labour income loss (per cent)	Labour income loss (billion 2019 USD)
G20	10.6	3030
G20: Advanced economies	9.1	1890
G20: Emerging economies	12.5	1140

Source: ILO (2020b).

Figure 3. Working-hour loss estimates for the first three quarters and projections for the fourth quarter of 2020, world (percentage)



Source: ILO (2020b).

a. Labour market inclusion of migrants in host communities

Migrant workers are among the most vulnerable workers. They are often the first to be laid off notably because they are more likely to hold more precarious jobs¹². In the OECD area, while it is still early to assess the labour market impact, most countries experienced increases in the unemployment rate for both native-born and immigrants, with a much larger increase for the latter. The largest increases for immigrants were observed notably in Canada, Spain and the United States (OECD 2020d). In the United States, unemployment of immigrants was lower than for the native born by almost one percentage point before the pandemic, it is now 2 percentage points higher. In Spain, the employment rate for native-born declined by about 3 percentage points, and by almost 9 percentage points for immigrants.

In some cases however, migrant workers may not qualify for national COVID-19 policy response schemes, such as wage subsidies, unemployment benefits or social protection measures. In a survey among migrant workers employed in ASEAN countries, 32 per cent of respondents encountered employment challenges and abuses, including contract termination or threats thereof, being compelled to work against their will and/or being required to take unpaid leave/sick leave (ILO 2020c). This has left migrant workers with limited access to sources of income and often resulted in expiration of visa or work permits, putting them into undocumented or irregular status. With border closures, many were stranded in the country of destination with few possibilities to travel back home (ILO 2020d).

In order to address the economic impact of the crisis on migrant workers, countries have implemented or are in the process of developing measures to enable them to benefit from income support schemes. Brazil, for example, has established a support programme for the unemployed or socially vulnerable that migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers can also benefit from. Similarly, a number of G20-OECD countries, and sometimes sub-national authorities, modified their access to, and the duration of, unemployment benefits, with some changes likely to benefit migrants in particular as these often have less stable contracts and a lower contribution history. In Spain, for example, the minimum duration of work required to qualify for unemployment benefits, 360 working days during the last 6 years, was suspended. Spain also adopted a permanent national minimum income scheme which benefits both nationals and regular migrants having resided in Spain for at least one year, as well as their families. France modified the regulations for partial unemployment to employees affected by the lockdown, including migrants. Many countries also introduced support measures for employers and businesses, most of which tend to be open to foreigners. One example is the emergency law of March 2020 in Italy, introducing a wide set of measures to address the economic impact of the crisis.

While many of the jobs held by migrant workers during the pandemic are temporary, informal or unprotected, it is even more important to monitor the broader socio-economic impact to protect their rights and address the vulnerabilities they face. Special measures to extend visas, to introduce amnesties, or to facilitate work or residence permit renewals could contribute to migrants' access to essential services, avoiding an increase in irregularity. As the lockdown measures are being progressively lifted in more countries, migrant workers should – like any worker - enjoy adequate safety and health protection in their return to work, and be provided with appropriate and accessible information regarding health and safety at the workplace. There is also a need to address the special hazards migrant workers face in communal or work-site housing. To ensure necessary measures are taken by labour recruiters and employers, a set of recommendations were developed by IOM to enhance migrant worker protection in the times of crisis (IOM 2020 d & e).

Additionally, coordinated actions of governments, employers' and workers' organisations can help to address labour market issues. This includes health, safety and adequate working conditions, support to businesses, and extension of social protection. Tripartite social dialogue is a key tool to ensure that the policies and strategies are effective to address the socioeconomic consequences of COVID-19 (ILO 2020i).

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¹² Almost 1.6 billion (67%) informal economy workers were significantly impacted by lockdown measures and/or working in the hardest-hit sectors. According to the ILO estimates, the first month of crisis resulted in a decline in earnings of informal workers of 60% globally. (ILO 2020b)

More generally, international labour standards and fundamental principles and rights at work provide a basis for governments and other stakeholders to tackle the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through fair and effective policy responses to facilitate sustainable and equitable recovery. They can serve as a "decent work compass" for designing rights-based approaches to ensure protection of all workers, regardless of gender. Such principles cover a wide range of situations pertaining to the world of work with specific guidance and extend to the specific situations of those migrants who have been particularly vulnerable during the COVID-19 outbreak (ILO 2020e). The agricultural sector provides a good example in the context of the pandemic (see Box 1).

Box 1 Seasonal agricultural workers and the COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic and the corresponding mobility restrictions severely disrupted food supply chains, highlighting the importance of foreign labour in this sector. To address this issue, many countries have introduced exceptional measures, such as lifting travel bans, visa extensions and regularisations for seasonal agricultural workers.

The COVID-19 outbreak has cast a light on the low social valorisation of agricultural work and in particular on the exclusion of agricultural workers from the general protections of labour law. Better working conditions, higher wages and other improvements for the workers in the sector could be achieved through redesigning seasonal worker schemes, taking into account some basic principles and mechanisms:

Embedding the structural contribution of seasonal workers in national policy design. The coherence of migration and labour laws needs to be promoted, taking into account labour market and general economic needs.

Skill retention, training, and recognition. The technical skills and expertise that agriculture workers acquire 'on the job' are often underestimated. To increase retention, 'upgrading' the social status of agriculture work and facilitating recognition of prior learning, as well as expanding skills development programmes for migrant workers, might play a positive role.

Towards more cooperation across borders and policy coherence. Origin and destination countries can ensure effective coordination in the context of seasonal migrant worker schemes, as well as through bilateral labour migration agreements, that can allow for enhanced monitoring of working and living conditions.

Addressing unequal wages in the agriculture sector. The starting point for this could be extending minimum wage legislation to cover migrant workers in countries, where this is inexistent, and enforce its application where it does exist.

Strengthening social dialogue mechanisms and representation. Workers' and employers' organisations need to be involved in developing, adjusting and implementing seasonal migrant workers' schemes in accordance with labour market needs. Agriculture workers should be granted access to representation mechanisms.

Sources: ILO. 2020f.

b. Impact on countries of origin

Loss of or decline in migrant workers' income is also affecting their families in countries of origin. According to World Bank estimates, remittances are expected to decrease by about 20 per cent in 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic and shutdown (World Bank 2020a), which could result in rising poverty rates and further economic slowdown, especially in low and middle-income origin countries (Box 2).

Migrants who were able to return home may face similar challenges as in the countries of destination – little possibility to work due to lockdown and workplace closures. Moreover, returnees expand the pool of jobseekers that is already large due to the impact of the pandemic, which creates labour market and wage pressures.

Countries of origin have faced increased financial burden to mitigate the effects of COVID-19, and return migrant workers would require more support to sustain their livelihood and wellbeing. Measures that countries of origin have undertaken include cash or in-kind food support, enhancing consular services in destination countries, setting up helplines, information services, legal assistance and humanitarian support to stranded workers, in addition to the general financial support provided to the private sector (e.g. wage subsidies, tax relief, and reduced interest rates) (ILO 2020a). Employment services need to expand their operations on skills recognition, matching and development to foster return migrant workers' labour market

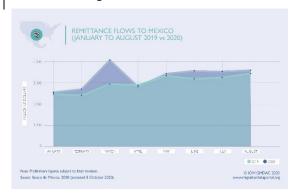
reintegration. However, this might be challenging to implement due to the reduced fiscal space that many developing and emerging economies are facing (ILO 2020g).

In this unprecedented situation, countries of destination and origin would have to adapt policies to support migrant workers and those returning home. In many origin countries, return migrant workers were beyond the scope of national response programmes. Bilateral and international coordination could ensure their better protection, safe return and effective reintegration into labour markets. India, for example, initiated regional discussions with Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka on topics such as skills development and recognition, ethical recruitment and labour market needs, with a view of promoting, cooperation, dialogue and peer-to-peer exchange. Migrants returning from G20 countries, such as from China to Myanmar, received support via Migrant Workers Resource Centres (MRCs) implemented by local authorities, NGOs and labour organizations. The measures include Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) for service providers, care packages and other reintegration services (UN Network on Migration, 2020).

Box 2. Impact of COVID19 on remittances – a mixed picture

During the first months of the pandemic and the unprecedented disruption to economic activity and mobility, the World Bank projected that migrant remittance flows would decline sharply by about 20 percent in 2020. Remittances to low and middle-income countries (LMICs) were projected to fall by 19.7 percent to \$445 billion, representing a loss of a crucial financing lifeline for many vulnerable households (World Bank 2020b). However, six months into the pandemic, the situation remains mixed.

Despite the initial drop in the flows in some countries, in other corridors migrants continued sending money back to their families in unchanged or even larger volumes as before. In March 2020, remittance flows to Mexico were 1.5 times higher than in February 2020 and in the first half of 2020, Mexico saw an estimated 10.5 per cent increase in remittances compared to the same period in 2019 (Banco de Mexico, 2020). Currency fluctuations and the financial behaviour of migrants in times of crises could be factors behind this differing trend.



The considerable disruption to livelihoods and safety of migrants and their families, exacerbated by the interruption of remittance flows, mobilised an unprecedented number of advocacy and policy responses, such as the Swiss-UK Call to Action, the Remittance Community Taskforce coordinated by IFAD, the policy guidelines from the UN Network on Migration, and the remittance chapter of the Era of COVID19 and Beyond, sponsored by Canada and Jamaica. All these initiatives stressed the importance to work towards better data and more robust methodologies of measuring remittances and broader migrant contributions to development, to enable more nuanced analyses

and targeted policy responses.

Diaspora organisations, convened for global virtual dialogues facilitated through <u>IDiaspora.org</u> platform, issued a <u>joint statement</u> against xenophobia and discrimination. It is expected that they will play an important role during post-COVID-19 recovery, be it through restoration of trade ties, tourism, or investment. To enhance ways of measuring migrants' broader economic contributions to development, including during COVID-19 and recovery, IOM is launching new guidelines to policymakers and practitioners - *Contributions and Counting: Guidance on Measuring the Economic Impact of Your Diaspora Beyond Remittances*. ¹³ It started piloting these in several countries.

Source: IOM (2020f)

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¹³ Forthcoming in late 2020.

c. Responding to forced displacement challenges during the pandemic

As of mid-October, some 38 million people around the world are confirmed to have been infected with COVID-19¹⁴. Countless others are suffering from the socio-economic impact of the pandemic, especially the millions of forcibly displaced whose lives often depend on employment in the informal sector¹⁵.

Measures implemented by governments to limit the spread of COVID-19, including limiting freedom of movement and border closures, are having a profound negative impact on the possibility of people fleeing war and persecution to access the protection they need. A useful measure of the impact of these measures is refugee registration – which dropped significantly in the period between mid-February and mid-April and has remained at these lower levels since then, most notably in East Africa and Middle East/North Africa. For countries that conduct refugee status determination, the possibility to seek asylum has also been affected as many countries have applied administrative measures (e.g. temporary closure of asylum authorities, suspended asylum interviews, suspension of registering asylum applications), which resulted in a drop in the number of asylum applications as well as in the number of decisions issued starting from March 2020. For the millions of persons who are stateless, the COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the plight they face in accessing services, such as health, which often require documentation. Many countries have suspended birth registration, raising the risk of increased statelessness for new-born, especially those from minority groups.

On 17 April 2020, a declaration by the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee allowed for the scale up of the coordinated humanitarian response to COVID-19. Multi-lateral and bilateral development actors likewise responded. For the forcibly displaced, inclusion in government, COVID-19 socio-economic impact surveys, financing and programmes is a priority. Ensuring that the forcibly displaced are integrated into recovery and development strategies as full participants is essential to ensure cohesive, sustainable recovery On 25 March, UNHCR also adapted its life-saving protection and assistance activities across all regions, to prepare and respond to the pandemic across countries worldwide in a coordinated manner and address the needs of the most vulnerable in close collaboration with governments, partners, forcibly displaced and stateless persons.

As a result, more than 9 million refugees and internally displaced in 151 countries have accessed protection services and over 3.9 million refugees have accessed health services. Millions of articles of essential equipment such as PPE have been procured, received as in-kind support, shipped and distributed. Cash has proven essential in the response, with \$338 million distributed in total.

However, challenges remain. Testing and tracing remain elusive in the many remote areas in which UNHCR operates and data for key sectors shows that forcibly displaced and stateless persons are particularly vulnerable to the socio-economic impact.

Health and social protection: There were 25 837 reported COVID-19 cases among forcibly displaced and stateless persons as of 04 October 2020. Countries have been generously including forcibly displaced and statelessness in the national Covid preparedness and response plan. However, more than 85% of refugees are hosted in low- and middle-income countries which often have weak health systems and limited capacity to manage persons with severe complications from to COVID-19. The pandemic is drawing attention to these already overburdened public health systems, and to the very low capacity and limited service availability outside of major centres, including in many refugee hosting areas. COVID-19 is negatively impacting access, utilization and availability of health services, particularly non-COVID critical care services but also routine health and nutrition .services. The pandemic has highlighted the importance for

¹⁴ This includes some 25 800 refugees, asylum-seekers and other forcibly displaced and stateless persons in 98 countries, of whom 253 have died.

¹⁵ Rapid assessments by the ILO on the impact of COVID-19 in various parts of the world reveal systematic decrease in refugees and other displaced persons household income, including the fact that they were also more likely than nationals to be permanently or temporarily laid off due to the crisis. (ILO 2020j). UNHCR has also registered COVID-related incidents of xenophobia, stigmatization or discrimination against refugees, IDPs and stateless persons in 45 countries.

refugees to access social protection based on the principle of equality of treatment and non-discrimination (ILO 2020d) and how social protection has proven to be a central element of the COVID-19 response. Including refugees in government social protection responses such as cash- and in-kind transfers, support to informal and formal workers and social health care is critical to meet increased protection and basic needs and to prevent them further falling into poverty.

Livelihoods: Refugees have a lower ability to cope with shocks and low access to credit and insurance markets, and inclusion in national social protection schemes. Based on data from a separate sample of eight large hosting countries (making up 37% of the total global refugee population), 60% of refugees work in highly impacted sectors, such as accommodation and food services, manufacturing, real estate and retail trade (UNHCR, 2019). Refugee women appear to be the most impacted, with almost all indicating that their sources of income had been disrupted. Even before the pandemic, more than 70% of refugees live in countries with restricted right to work, with a majority excluded from participating in the formal economy and its related protections (UNHCR, 2019). The protection implications of this are concerning – with many refugees resorting to negative coping mechanisms. In Colombia, Peru and Ecuador, adverse economic conditions as a result of lockdowns have resulted in tens of thousands of Venezuelans to return.

Education: UNHCR's reporting shows that 1 645 000 refugee children and youth in 29 countries are not attending school due to institutional closures as of September 2020. COVID-19 will continue to have negative spill-over effects on education outcomes. School enrolment and completion rates, particularly at secondary school, are generally lower for refugees than nationals and the limited access to continued learning at home during school closures and additional pressures on schools on reopening are expected lead to significant dropouts.

Meeting Basic Needs: Following the restrictions and measures put in place by many governments to curb the spread of COVID-19, many refugees were unable to engage in their regular casual work, leaving them vulnerable with challenges to meet basic needs. UNHCR's post-distribution monitoring for cash assistance, protection monitoring and evaluation, suggest that — even before COVID-19 — only 4% of the targeted population was meeting their basic needs and 53% were meeting less than half. Refugee food assistance was not meeting the needs in some 14 countries due to shortfalls in WFP pipeline (in-kind and cash), in particular in East, West and Central Africa.

Rapid remote surveys by telephone are being undertaken by UNHCR and its partners, including ILO, in many regions, including the Americas, MENA, and East Africa, to assess the needs of its assisted populations. The results of these data collection efforts show the increasing struggle of refugees to meet their basic needs. For instance, in Lebanon, one of the largest refugee-hosting countries in the world, over half of surveyed Syrian refugees reported having lost their already scarce livelihoods. As a result, UNHCR has estimated that the percentage of Syrian refugees below the poverty line increased from 73 to around 90 per cent, and the percentage of households eligible for cash assistance increased from 55 to around 80 per cent.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has already substantially impacted the international migration map. Cross border movements have been significantly affected and will not revert in the near future to pre-crisis levels, not least because the pandemic has put a break on labour demand in a number of sectors where foreign labour plays an important role. Further, the hiring of high-skilled individuals and the business practices of firms regarding international mobility and travel may evolve, impacting business trips and intracompany transfers. Likewise, international studies and cultural exchange will also be affected.

During the pandemic, a number of key support services for migrants and refugees and their families, including consular services, resettlement, integration programmes and return operations, have been disrupted. As mentioned above, G20 countries have, however, taken active steps to mitigate the immediate impact of the crisis – including on migrants and refugees - but there will be further challenges ahead as the health crisis transforms into a major socio-economic crisis in many countries. In particular, when current relief measures will be phased out many migrant workers may be at risk of losing their regular status and social protection provided by temporary or emergency measures, when the COVID-19 related measures expire.

In this situation, the future demand for foreign labour could be weak, even if its levels will depend on the pace of recovery and the national employment policies in place to address the economic and social disruptions. As the situation in many origin countries could be less favourable in terms of job opportunities, migrant workers will continue to seek employment abroad, driven by search for better living and working conditions. The gap between migration intentions in origin countries and opportunities in potential destination countries could increase further, reinforcing the migration pressure and fuelling anxiety in public opinion of host countries.

At the same time, with the socio-economic impact of the pandemic felt heavily by the most vulnerable in society, including refugees and other displaced people, continued solidarity and support to those most in need is critical.

Going forward, identifying common challenges and opportunities, exchanging on good practices and joining forces to improve the availability and quality of international data and evidence on migration and forced displacement will be key to tackle the future of international migration post Covid-19.

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