

NEWS - GLOBAL | 05 May 2026

IOM Report: Migration Drives Economies and Development, but Gains Are at Risk



Geneva/New York, 5 May 2026 – Access to safe and regular migration pathways continues to support economic growth and development worldwide, according to a **new report** from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) released today during the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) week in New York.

The World Migration Report 2026 shows that restricting these pathways does not stop migration but instead shifts it into more irregular and dangerous routes, increasing risks for migrants and costs for States, while limiting the broader benefits of migration.

Migration continues to play a central role in the global economy. By mid-2024, there were an estimated 304 million international migrants, about 3.7 per cent of the world's population, a share that has grown gradually over time. The number of international migrant workers has been growing too, and during the decade from 2013 to 2022 this number increased by more than 30 million, according to the latest available estimates.

Financial flows from migrants remain a key source of support. Remittances in 2024 were expected to reach an estimated USD 905 billion, including USD 685 billion to low- and middle-income countries. These flows now exceed official development assistance and foreign direct investment combined.

“Across the world, migration helps drive jobs, economic growth, stability and social cohesion,” said IOM Director General Amy Pope. “Every country has the right to shape its own migration policies. The evidence shows, however, that when States cooperate at regional and global levels, migration is better managed, helping to build public trust and deliver stronger benefits for economies, communities and people on the move.”

The report also shows that while the number of international migrants has grown over time, migration patterns vary significantly across regions, underscoring that there is no single global migration story and that responses must be tailored to regional realities.

The report further highlights that access to migration opportunities remains uneven, with pathways expanding more for people in higher-income countries while remaining constrained for those in lower-income contexts, reinforcing global mobility inequalities. This trend is slowing labour mobility and reducing the potential economic gains migration can deliver.

These developments come as global displacement remains at record levels. By the end of 2024, more than 120 million people were displaced worldwide, including refugees, asylum-seekers, and internally displaced persons.

However, most displacement occurs within countries rather than across borders, and is increasingly shaped by a combination of conflict, environmental pressures, and structural vulnerabilities. Many of the largest displacement situations are protracted, requiring longer-term, development-oriented responses alongside humanitarian assistance.

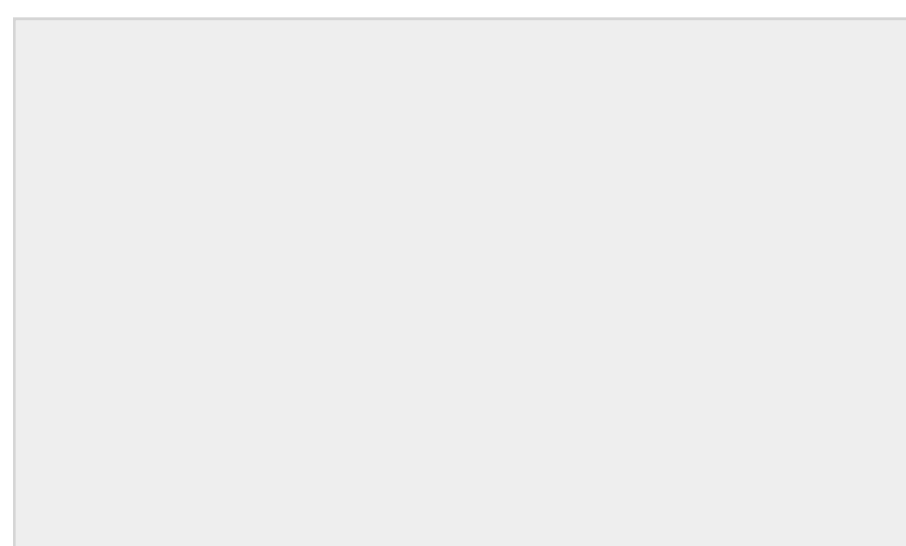
Migration also supports labour markets, helps address skills gaps, and drives innovation. Diaspora communities play a role in maintaining economic and social links between countries, including through knowledge exchange, investment, and remittances.

The report outlines practical steps to sustain these benefits, including expanding safe and regular migration pathways, reducing remittance costs, and supporting skills mobility and reintegration. It also calls for stronger regional cooperation, improved data collection, and more inclusive, evidence-based policies to better manage migration in a rapidly changing global context.

To read the full World Migration Report 2026, click [here](#).

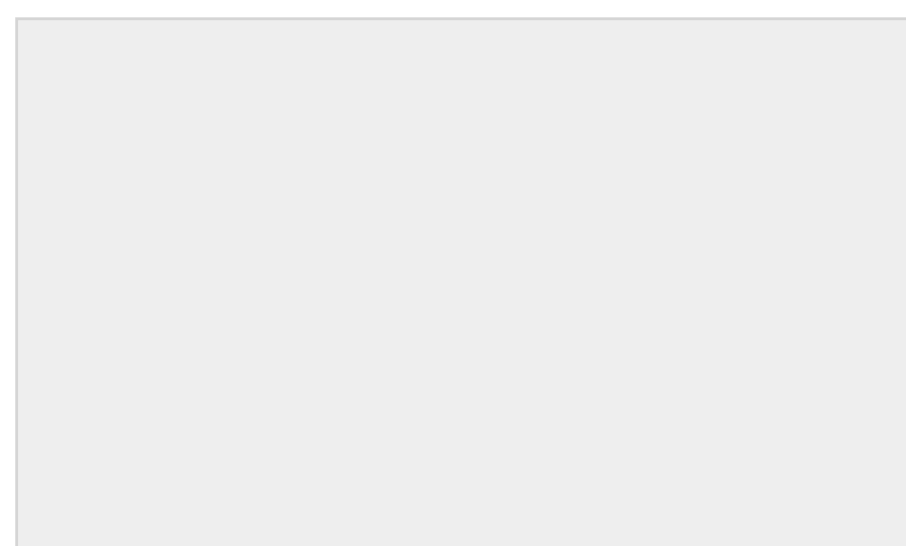
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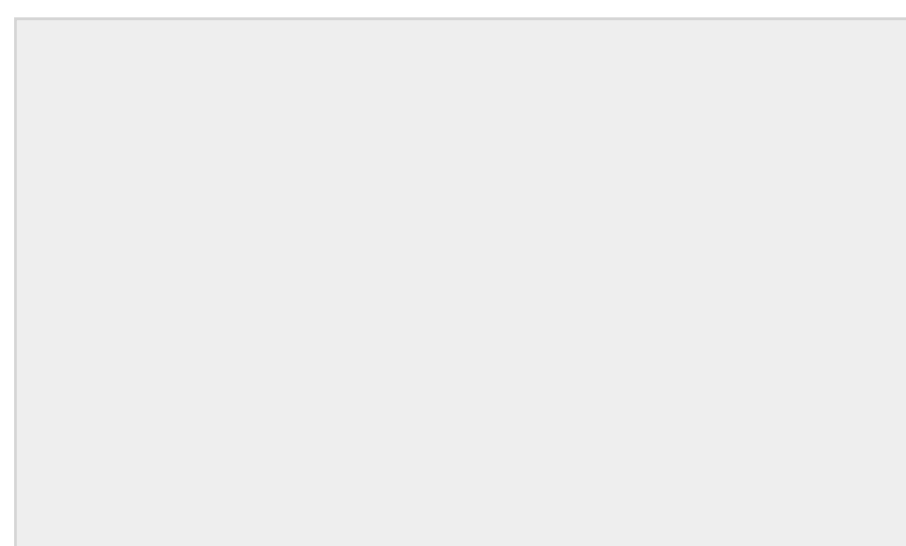
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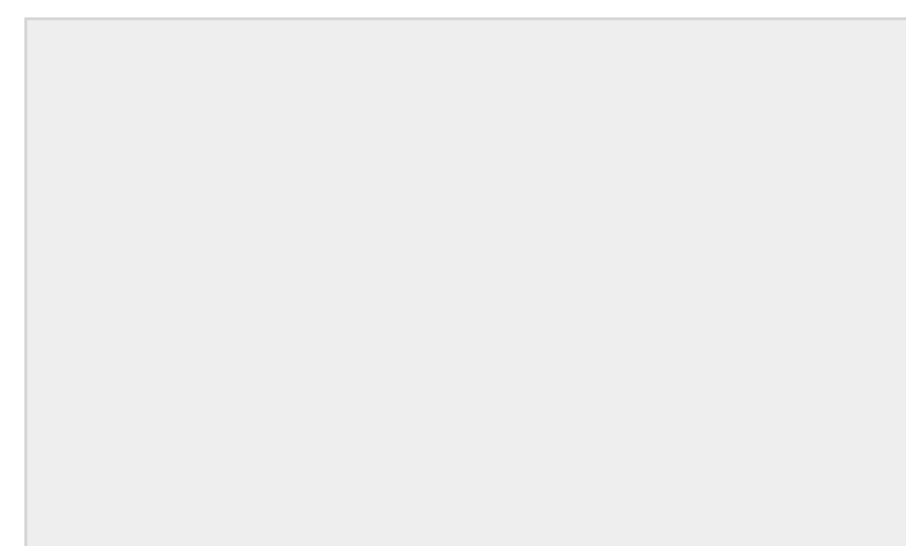
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