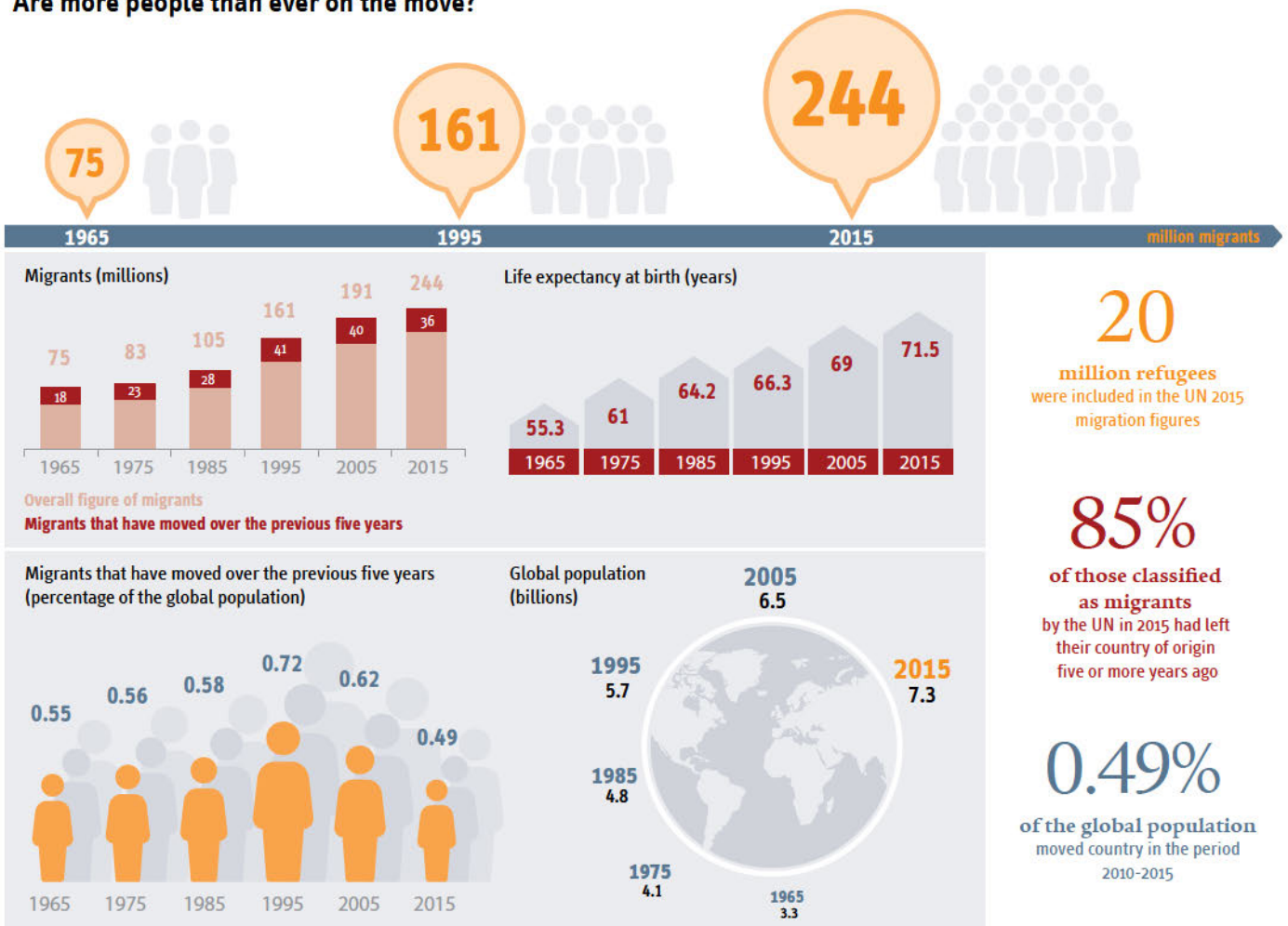


Global migration: getting the trends right

Late in 2016, the UN started negotiations on a new global migration regime. For 20 years, the UN has struggled to mobilise its members to discuss migration, despite heavy support from less-developed economies in the ‘global South’ which see this as a means to gain access to labour markets in Europe and North America. The UN has finally managed to bring the ‘North’ to the table by pointing to the sheer volume of people on the move. But do its headline figures reveal the whole picture?

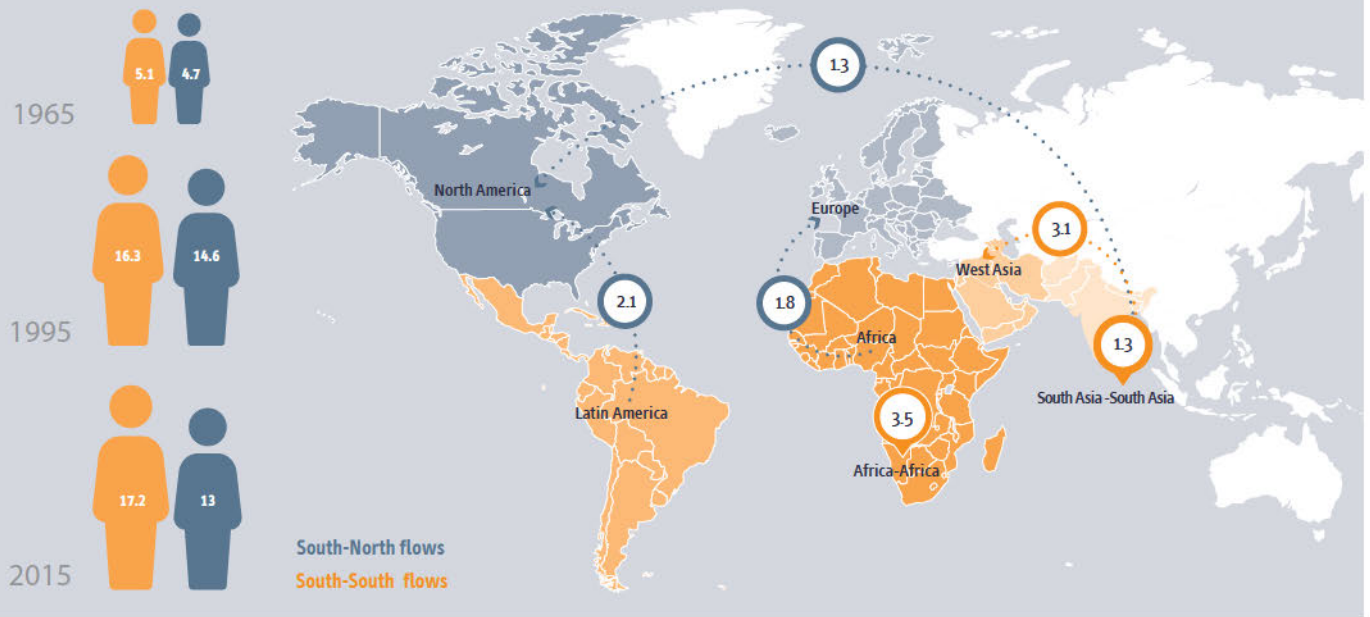
Are more people than ever on the move?



UN figures record 244 million people on the move worldwide – the largest number ever. But if there are indeed more people on the move globally, then this is only because there *are* more people. The global stock of migrants is forever expanding as people everywhere live longer, but the percentage of the current global population that has moved in the last five years is actually small and decreasing.

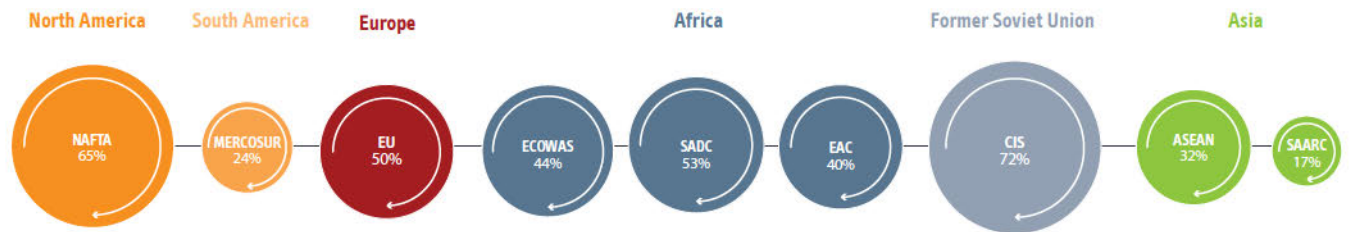
Do people move only South to North?

Top three South-South and South-North migration flows 2010-2015 (millions)*



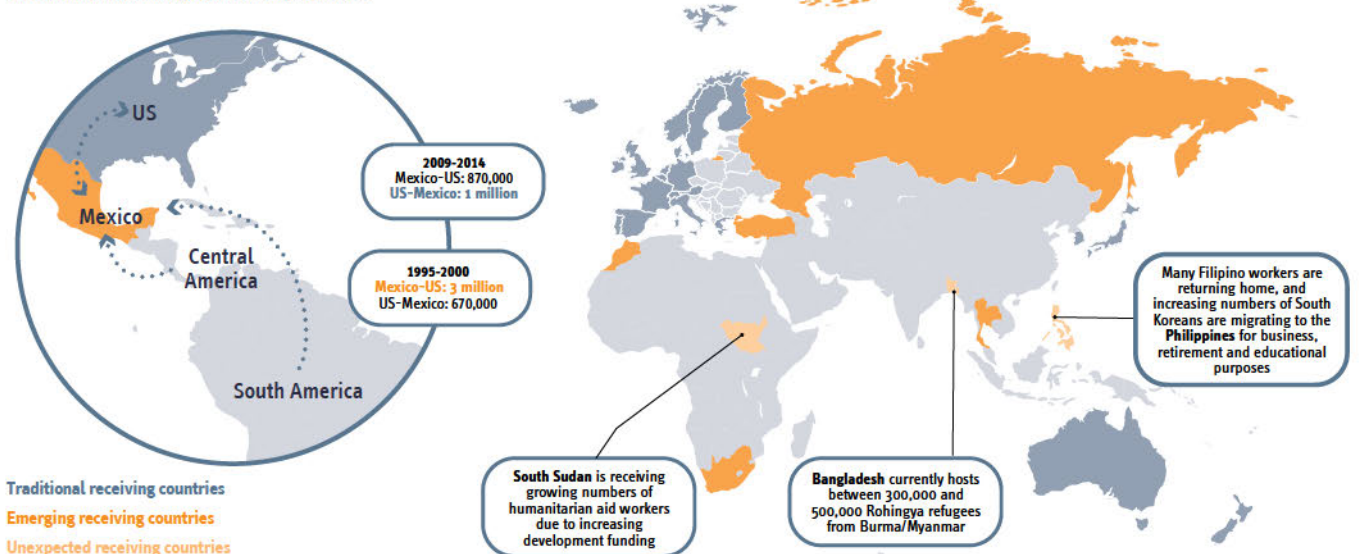
Intra-regional migration flows (2010-2015)

Percentage of the region's migrants that stay within the territory of their respective regional integration body



Countries of the global South have much more in common with the North than they did 20 years ago when it comes to immigration. As they and their neighbours grow wealthier, they have themselves become countries of transit and destination. South-South migration is one of the great opportunities of global development, but also a potential disruptor. For this reason, the EU will have to look beyond its traditional allies in the North when it comes to migration control.

Traditional and emerging receiving countries



* Note: The global South and North are defined according to the UNDESA classification whereby the 'North' includes Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand and Japan, and the 'South' all the other regions of the world.

Data sources: UNHCR Population Statistics; UN Population Division; World Bank; World Health Organisation; G.J. Abel, 'Estimates of global bilateral migration flows by gender between 1960 and 2015' (forthcoming, 2017); Pew Research Center, 'More Mexicans Leaving Than Coming to the US' (November 2015).

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