

WORLD MIGRATION REPORT

Update

Migration and Migrants: Latin America and the Caribbean

www.iom.int/wmr/world-migration-report-2018

This *World Migration Report* update provides an overview of the latest data on international migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean. It is based on the most recent estimates from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA). Released in December 2017, the international migrant stock datasets estimate the number of international migrants by age, sex and origin.¹ In addition to presenting current data on international migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean, the update briefly discusses migration trends in Latin America and the Caribbean.²

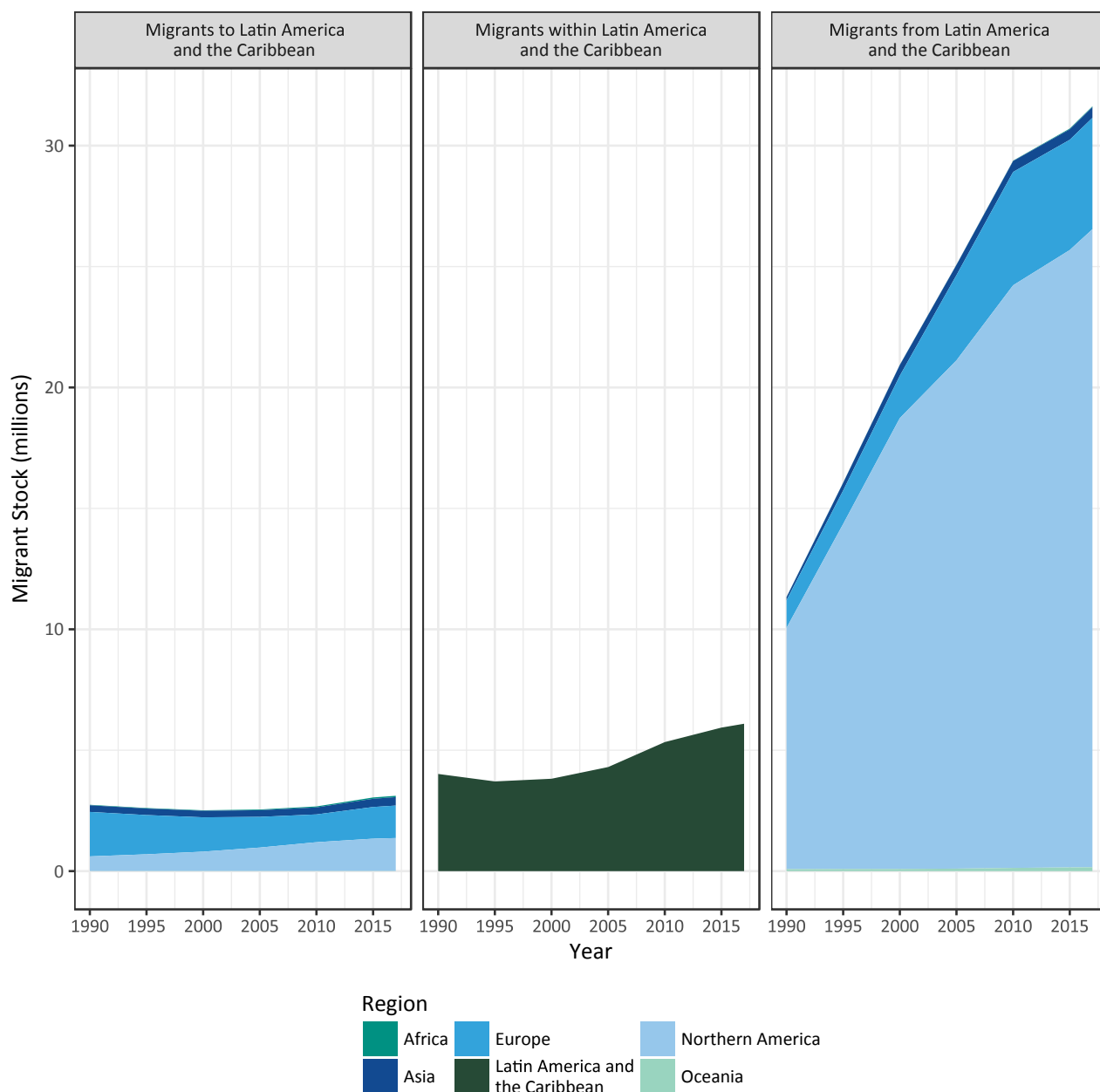
Migration to Northern America is a key feature in the Latin America and the Caribbean region. In 2017, over 26 million migrants had made the journey north and were residing in Northern America. As shown in Figure 1, the Latin American and the Caribbean population living in Northern America has increased considerably over time, from an estimated 10 million in 1990 and 24.6 million in 2015 to 26.4 million in 2017. Another 4.6 million were in Europe in 2017; while this number is unchanged since 2015, the number of migrants from Latin American and the Caribbean living in Europe has more than quadrupled since 1990. Other regions such as Asia and Oceania were home to a very small number of migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean in 2017 (0.4 million and 0.2 million migrants respectively).

The total number of migrants from other regions living in Latin America and the Caribbean has remained relatively stable, at around three million over the last 25 years. These were comprised mostly of Europeans (whose numbers have declined slightly over the period) and Northern Americans, whose numbers have increased. In 2017 the number of Europeans and Northern Americans living in Latin America and the Caribbean stood at 1.3 and 1.4 million respectively.

1 UN DESA, 2017.

2 For details on the composition of Latin America and the Caribbean, see *World Migration Report 2018*, Appendix A (page 313). https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2018_en.pdf.

Figure 1. Migrants to, within and from Latin America and the Caribbean between 1990 and 2017



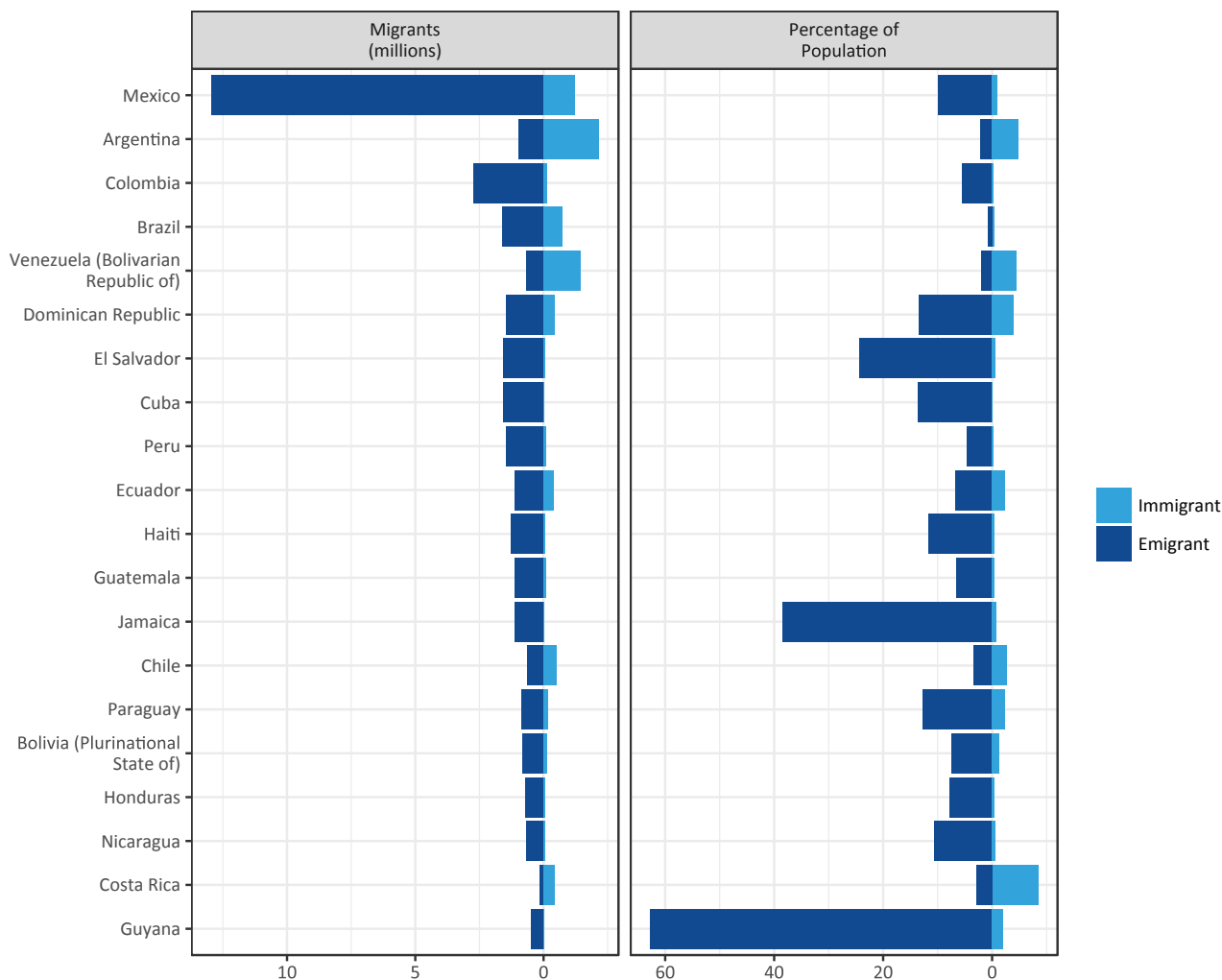
Source: UN DESA, 2017

Note: "Migrants to Latin America and the Caribbean" refers to migrants residing in the region (i.e. Latin America and the Caribbean) who were born in one of the other regions (e.g. in Europe or Asia). "Migrants within Latin America and the Caribbean" refers to migrants born in the region (i.e. Latin America and the Caribbean) and residing outside their country of birth, but still within the Latin America and the Caribbean region. "Migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean" refers to people born in Latin America and the Caribbean who were residing outside the region (e.g. in Europe or Northern America).

Mexico was by far the largest emigration country in Latin America and the Caribbean (figure 2). Around 13 million Mexicans lived abroad in 2017, a slight increase from 12.5 million in 2015. Mexico is also the second largest migrant origin country in the world after India. Most Mexican emigrants lived in the United States, which continues to be the largest country-to-country migration corridor in the entire world (figure 3). Many other Central American countries such as El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras also have large migrant populations in the United States, as do South American countries such as Colombia, Ecuador, Brazil and Peru. Large populations of South American migrants resided elsewhere in the region. In 2017, almost 1 million Colombians lived in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Argentina was home to the largest foreign-born population in the region (with over 2 million migrants), mainly from neighbouring countries such as Paraguay and Plurinational State of Bolivia. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela had the next largest migrant population, followed by Mexico and Brazil. In 2017, Mexico had nearly 900,000 migrants born in the United States. As illustrated in figure 2, of the top 20 migration countries in the region, Costa Rica had the highest immigrant share of its total population (8.4%), due to longstanding migration from neighbouring Nicaragua. Other countries in the region outside of the top 20 had higher migrant populations as a proportion of the total population, such as Belize at 16 per cent.

Figure 2. Top 20 Latin America and the Caribbean migrant countries in 2017



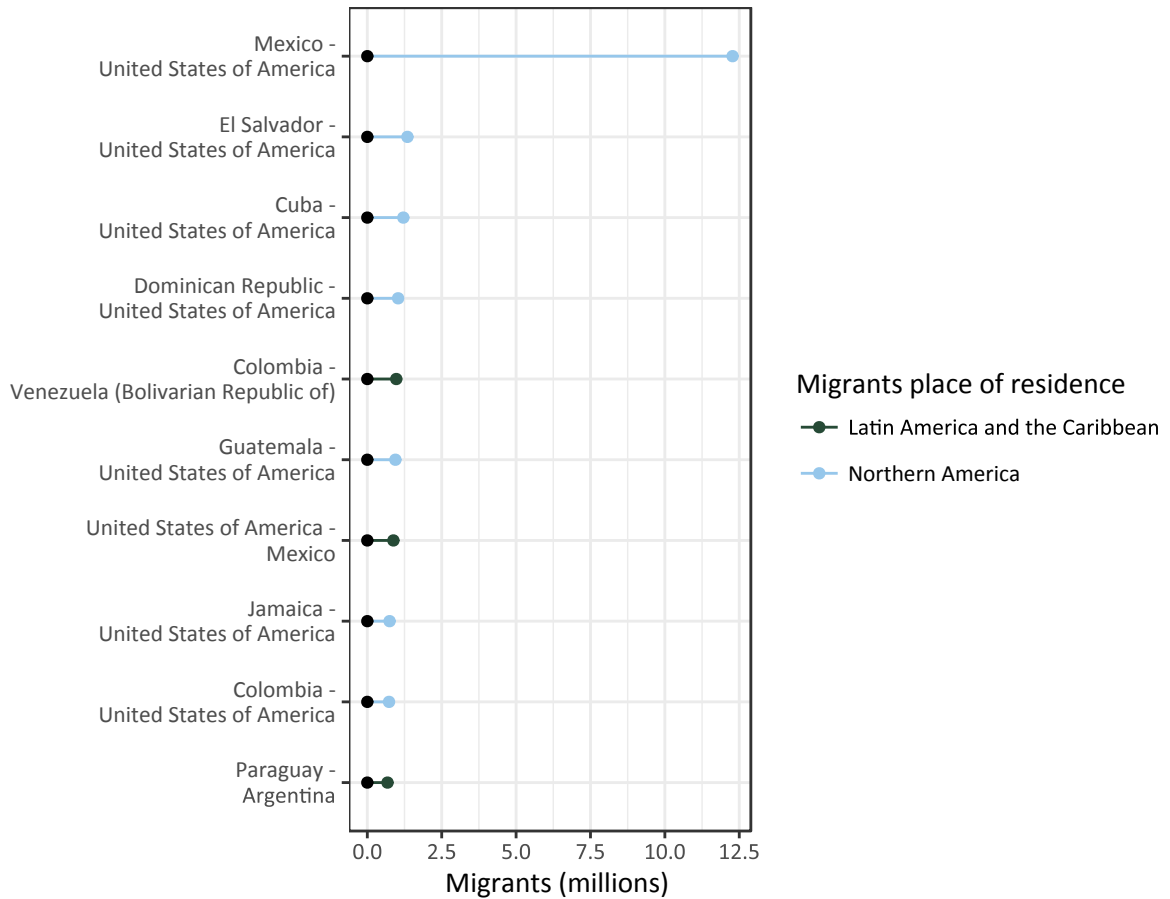
Source: UN DESA, 2017.

Note 1: The population size used to calculate the percentage of immigrants and emigrants is based on the UN DESA total resident population of the country, which includes foreign-born populations.

Note 2: "Immigrant" refers to foreign-born migrants residing in the country. "Emigrant" refers to people born in the country who were residing outside their country of birth in 2017.

The most striking feature of the main migration corridors within and from the region (figure 3) is the dominance of the United States as the main country of destination. Most of the corridors are to the United States, with the remainder all occurring within the Latin American and Caribbean region (e.g. Colombia to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela). These migration corridors represent an accumulation of migratory movements involving countries in Latin America and the Caribbean over time, and provide a snapshot of how migration patterns have evolved into significant foreign-born populations in specific destination countries.

Figure 3. Top 10 migration corridors involving Latin America and the Caribbean countries in 2017



Source: UN DESA, 2017.

Note: Corridors represent an accumulation of migratory movements over time and provide a snapshot of how migration patterns have evolved into significant foreign-born populations in specific destination countries.

For more information, please refer to *World Migration Report 2018* or UN DESA websites below:

- *World Migration Report 2018*
www.iom.int/wmr/world-migration-report-2018
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)
www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/index.shtml