



## Intra-Regional Labour Mobility in the Arab World

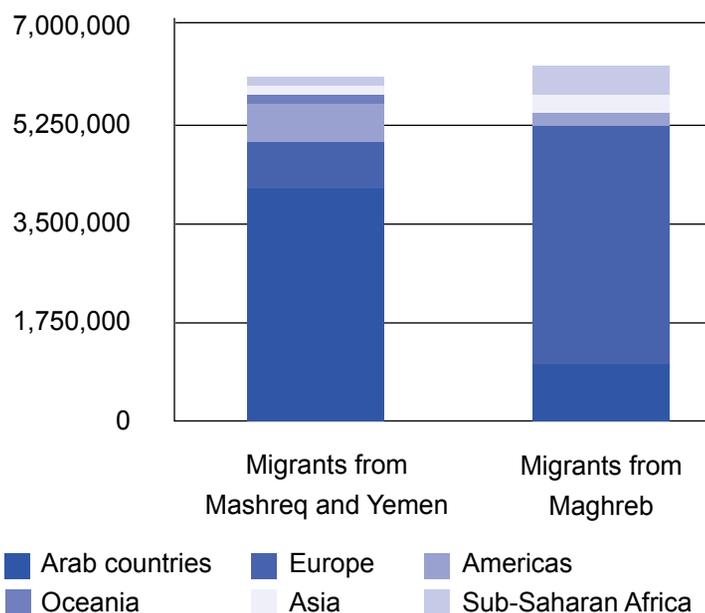
Intra-regional migration flows are very important in the region, and out of 13 million Arab migrants in the world, 5.8 reside in Arab countries.

Migration contributes to the circulation of financial and human capital within the region. Remittances sent to Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon from other Arab countries are 40 to 190 per cent higher than trade revenues between these and other Arab countries.

- The estimated population of the Arab world today is almost 352.2 million people, and this number is expected to rise to 598.2 million by 2050. According to UN estimates the total number of migrants in the region reached 28.6 million in 2010 (UNPD, 2009).
- Income and development differentials are the main drivers behind the mobility of workers in the region. The average GDP per capita in Arab countries is 8,200 USD, ranging from almost 75,000 USD in Qatar to 2,090 USD in Yemen (UNDP, 2009).
- The total labour force in the Arab region accounted for 38 per cent of the total population in the region in 2006, and more than half of the Arab labor force is concentrated in four countries – Egypt, Sudan, Morocco, and Algeria – which represent around 70 million workers. However, despite the progress made, unemployment rate in the region has reached 14.2 per cent in 2009 (over 14 million workers), and is amongst the highest in the world (global average is 6%), and is noticeably concentrated amongst youth in the Arab region (IOM, 2010). Fast growth of the labour force and difficulties in creating employment opportunities at home result in strong migratory pressures in countries of origin.
- Intra-regional migration flows are very important in the region, and out of 13 million Arab migrants in the world, 5.8 reside in Arab countries. Two thirds of migrants from Mashreq live in other Arab countries and, while intra-

regional migration dynamics from Maghreb to the Arab region are not as strong, a million migrants from Maghreb countries move for work within the region (DRC, 2007).

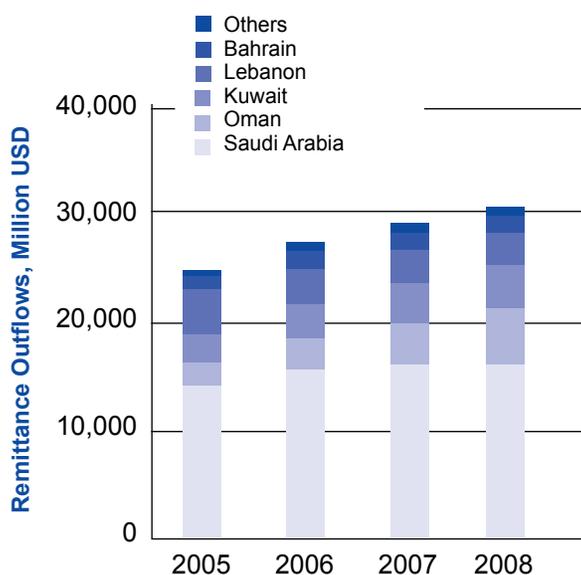
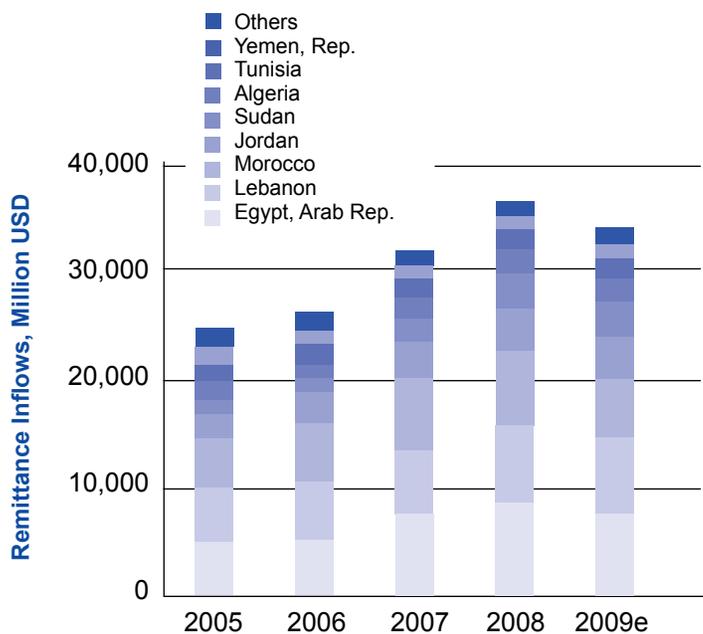
### Arab migrants according to regions of destination.



Source: DRC, 2007.

- In the past decade, the fast growth of the contractual labour force in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries has resulted in stabilizing the number of Arab workers, while the number of Asian workers has increased. As a consequence, the percentage of Arab workers in the GCC has significantly declined from 72 per cent in the beginning of 1970s to 56 per cent in 1985, and 31 per cent in 1996. Nowadays, the percentage is estimated to be around 25 per cent (IOM, 2010).
- According to World Bank calculations, in 2009 Arab countries received a total of 35.1 billion USD in remittance in-flows, while the amount of remittance outflows in reached almost 31 billion USD (Ratha et al, 2009).

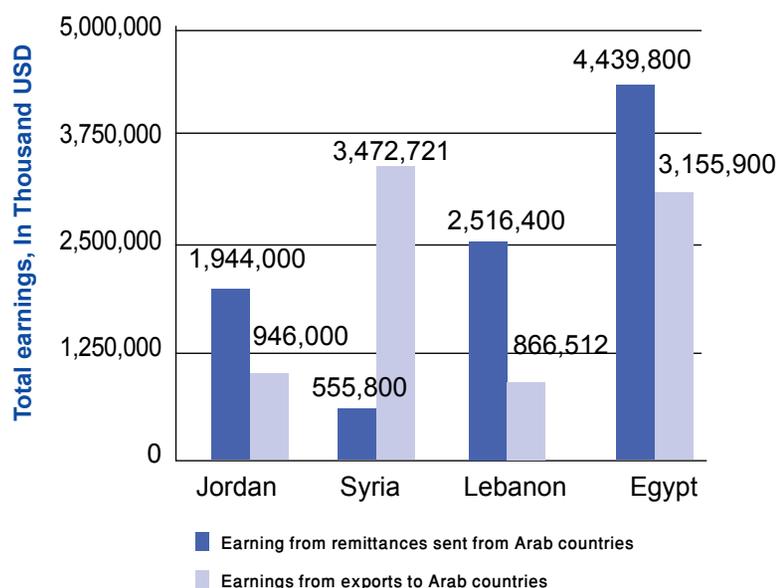
## Remittance flows to and from the Arab region



Source: Ratha et al, 2009. Data for the United Arab Emirates and Qatar is missing.

- Migration contributes to the circulation of financial and human capital in the region and thus significantly contributes to regional integration and development. For instance, remittances sent to Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon from other Arab countries are 40 to 190 per cent higher than trade revenues between these and other Arab countries. (IOM, 2010).

## Arab countries share in remittances and export to select Mashreq countries



Source: IOM, 2010

- The percentage of female migrants in GCC countries is about 29 per cent of the total migrant force, a figure that has declined steadily since 1960 and one that remains significantly lower than other averages in the Arab world. In 2005, women represented 49.2 per cent of all migrants in the world (UNDP, 2009).
- Forced migration also continues to be one of the main drivers behind human mobility in the Arab region. The region hosted 4.7 million Palestinian refugees and an estimated 2 million Iraqi refugees (IOM, 2010).

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