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The contemporary migration scenario in the Caribbean with emphasis on the contributions of international migration in Jamaica

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Workshop: The Contribution of International Migration to Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, Santiago, Chile, 14th and 15th June 2023

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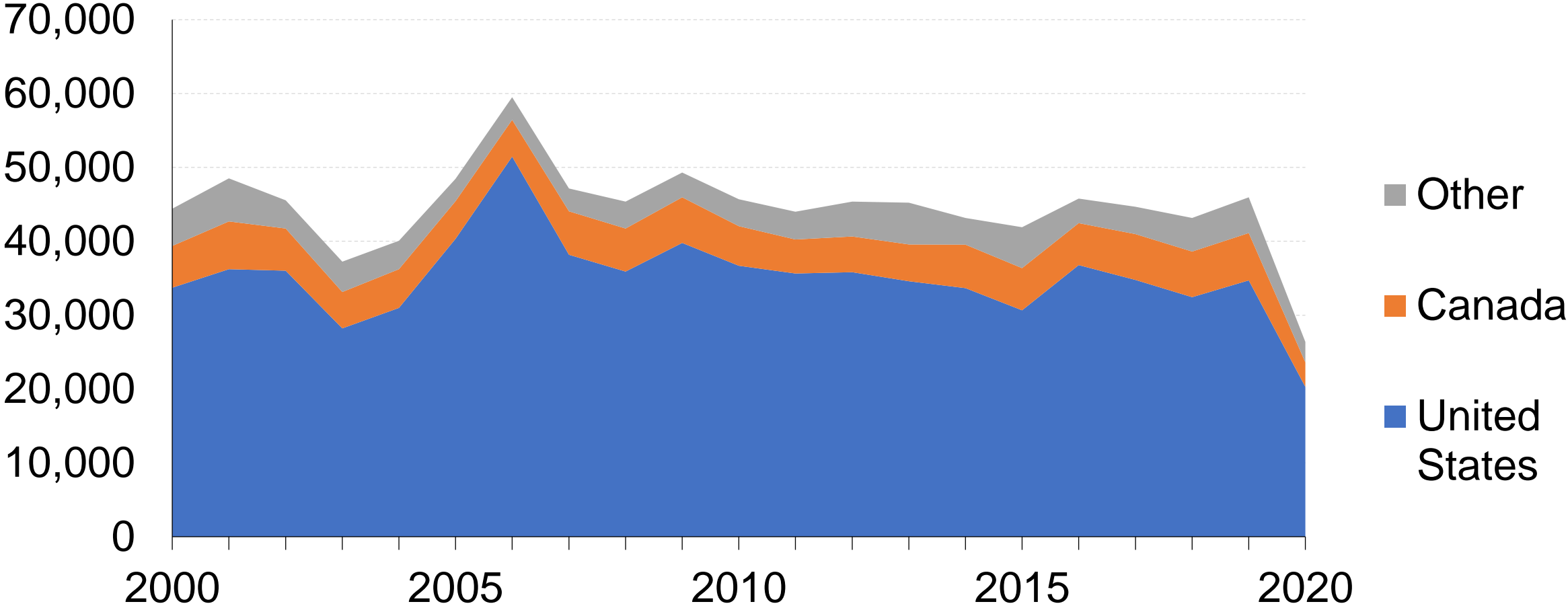
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Migration from/to/within the Caribbean: principal dynamics

- Migration from the Caribbean to long-established destination countries: United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Netherlands, France (and returns)
- Migration into the Caribbean from Latin America, Europe and North America (and returns)
- Migration within the Caribbean, most commonly from lower income to higher income countries; among neighbouring countries; and among countries sharing common languages (and returns)

An average of 45,000 migrants left the Caribbean every year between 2000 and 2020 to go OECD countries

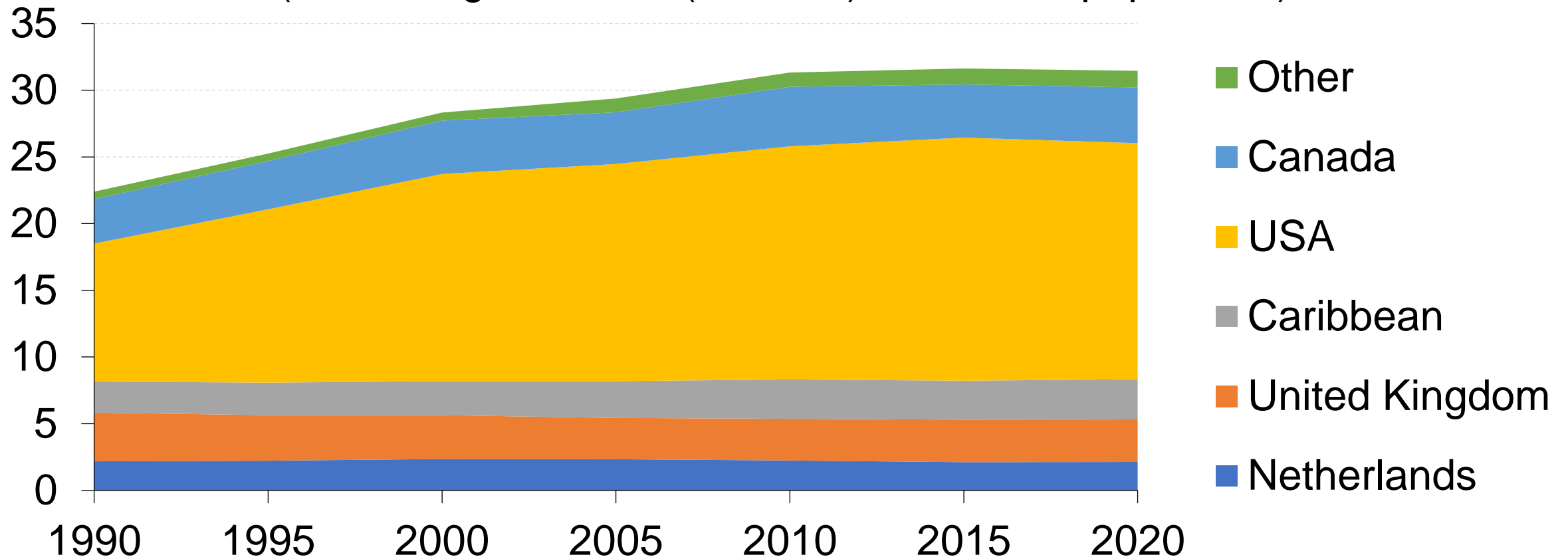
Annual migrant flows from Caribbean to OECD countries



Source: OECD International Migration Database

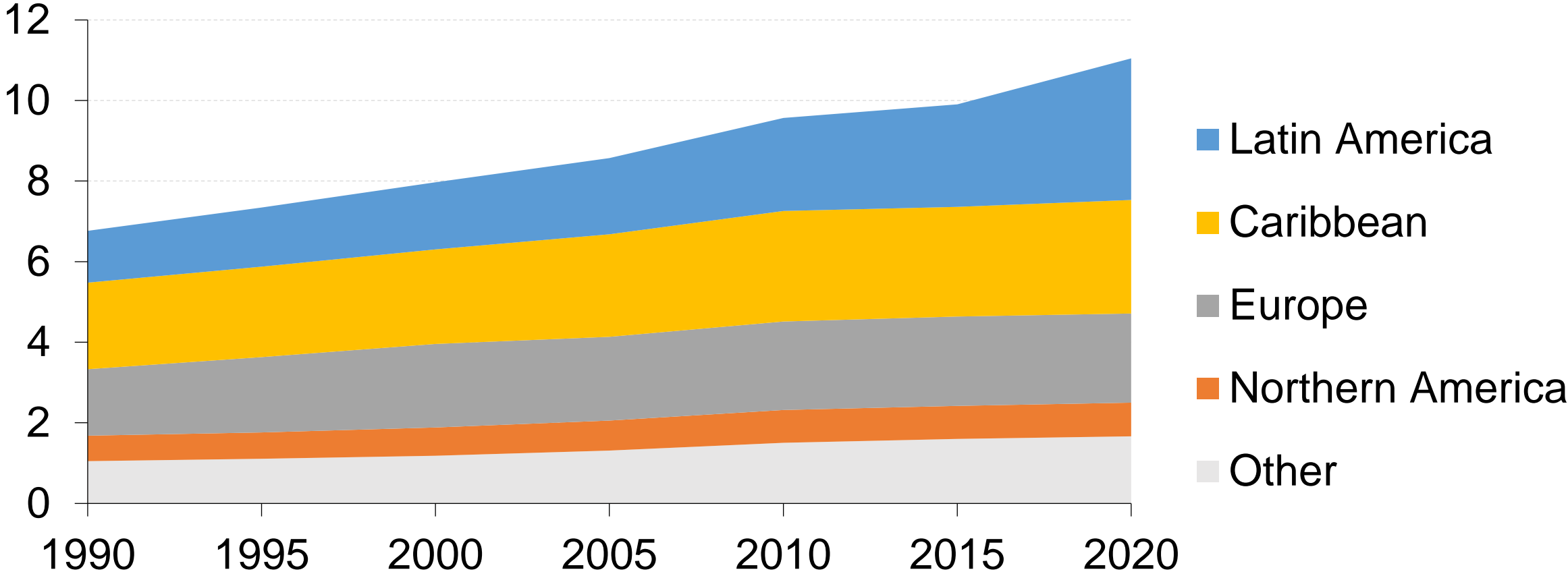
The Caribbean diaspora was growing more quickly than the resident population, but now they are roughly in “equilibrium”

A. Destinations of migrants from Caribbean countries of origin
(Percentages of total (resident) Caribbean population)



Migrants account for an increasing share of the Caribbean population with recent growth due to migration from Venezuela

B. Origin of migrant stock in the Caribbean
(Percentages of total Caribbean population)



Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2020). International Migrant Stock 2020.

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Contributions of migration to development in Jamaica: contribution of remittances

- In 2010, remittances contributed around 2.03 billion USD annually to the Jamaican economy (15% of GDP)
- By 2021, this had increased to 3.71 billion USD (25% of GDP), decreasing somewhat to 3.42 billion in 2022
- Several times greater than foreign direct investment and official development assistance combined
- Remittances help stabilize the foreign exchange market and the wider economy, contribute to higher levels of productivity through facilitation of technology transfer and entrepreneurship, enable saving, and reduce poverty and social inequality

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Contributions of migration to development in Jamaica: food security and health

- Most households spend income from remittances in the same way as income from other sources
- They are used to cover basic living expenses such as food, utility bills, education and housing
- Many recipients have one or more persons who depend on the money they receive
- Research has shown that remittances positively impact calorie consumption (McFarlane et al., 2022)
- Remittances may also be used to invest in agricultural production (Thomas-Hope, 2017)

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Contributions of migration to development in Jamaica: quality education

- In 2010, 14 per cent of all remittances entering Jamaica were spent on education (Bank of Jamaica, 2011)
- Of Jamaican emigrants, around one third study abroad
- They gain knowledge, skills and experiences through studying in different cultural environments
- Of immigrants to Jamaica, about 10 per cent are students
- These students contribute to the Jamaican economy either through tuition fees and/or consumption of goods and services

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Contributions of migration to development in Jamaica: gender equality

- Migrants from Jamaica to the USA, Canada and the United Kingdom are more likely to be women than men.
- In the USA and Canada there are about 30% more female than male migrants from Jamaica and in the United Kingdom the figure is 70%
- Higher female participation in tertiary education and migration of health sector workers are both factors behind this trend
- Migration can therefore be seen as a route to economic empowerment for women

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Contributions of migration to development in Jamaica: decent work and economic growth

- There are approximately 10,000 migrants working as part of the Jamaican labour force
- These workers contribute around 100 million USD to the Jamaican economy each year.
- Jamaica's working age population (20-64) is projected to decline from 2028, while its old age population continues to increase
- Immigration increases the size of the working age population relative to the old age population and therefore counteracts population ageing

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There is scope for the Caribbean Diaspora to play a greater role in the subregion's development

- Many Caribbean countries have developed (or are developing) diaspora engagement policies
- These policies address:
 - Human capital transfer
 - Philanthropy
 - Trade
 - Investment
 - Remittances
 - Diaspora tourism
 - Social protection
 - Participation in political decision-making
 - Global Outreach on behalf of the Diaspora

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Declining population growth and ageing are prompting a reassessment of immigration

- The population of the Caribbean is projected to decline from 2038 onwards (the working age population starts to decline from 2030)
- In light of this, some Caribbean countries are adapting their immigration policies to take advantage of the contribution that migrants can make to economic development
- In Barbados, where the working age population has been declining since 2017, the Government, through its Population Commission, is actively considering the role that migration can play in replenishing the declining labour force
- Active consideration is being given to the establishment of a Population Commission to address these issues for the Caribbean Community as a whole

Thank you