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LABOR IMPORTATION AS THE STEROID
FOR NATIONS' ICT SUCCESS:
A DEBATE

We often discuss brain-drain as a problem for developing nations, but what about the flipside of this issue -- the countries that have been net recipients of ICT talent? We would expect that importation of foreign ICT talent has been critical to the success of those receiving nations. Has it? Economists have posited theories of growth that center on the importance of ideas, but still cannot account for skilled immigration.

We count about two dozen nations that have been importing ICT talent. Of course, the largest receiving nation is the United States, but smaller emerging economies, such as Singapore and Ireland, have also been importing ICT labor. Even developing nations are recently seeing net ICT labor inflows: Dubai's internet city would not be possible without new labor from outside the emirate; Costa Rica's booming tech center has become reliant, in part, on other Latinos filling shortages.

Important policy issues include effective government importation as well as handling the downsides, such as: displacement of local workers, downward pressure on wages, and xenophobia.

In our panel we will present the contours of the debate and then briefly focus on a few nations as case studies, followed by key points for policy and theory. The audience is welcome from countries that are both net exporters and net importers of ICT labor.

The high-level structure will be: 1) overview, 2) three mini-cases (Ireland, Japan, Virgin Islands), and then, 3) dialogue with the audience.

Erran Carmel and Anthony D'Costa will present the overview and contours of the issues (15 minutes). This will be followed by 3 mini-cases of 7 minutes each. Willie Golden will present the case of Ireland which has seen net inward migration since the rise of the Celtic Tiger in the 1990s. Anthony D'Costa will present the case of Japan which has traditionally resisted labor immigration. Bill DeLone will present the case of the US Virgin Islands (in the Caribbean) with its very small native skilled work force. The remainder of the time will be a moderated dialogue with audience and panel.

Erran Carmel (American University and Univ. of Maryland, Univ. College; USA) is the author of two books: *Global Software Teams* and of *Offshoring Information Technology*
Anthony P. D'Costa (Copenhagen Business School, Denmark). His latest books are *The New Economy and Development: ICT Challenges and Opportunities* and *The New Asian Innovation Dynamics: China and India in Perspective*.
Willie Golden (National University Ireland, Galway) is the dean of the college of business and was previously Director of the Centre for Innovation and Structural Change.
Bill DeLone (American Univ., USA) is Director of the Center for IT & the Global Economy and is on the board of a Virgin Islands technology park.