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# INTERNATIONAL LABOR MIGRATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS IN THE APEC REGION

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#### INTRODUCTION

For those trying to find answers to the large number of unresolved and pressing issues resulting from international labor migration, the future development of member-economies of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) provide an area of very special interest. APEC member-economies include the world's two largest exporters of labor (Mexico and Philippines) as well as the world's three largest destinations for permanent migration (United States, Canada and Australia). It includes economies which both import and export labor and those which have passed through the "turning point" or transition from a labor- exporting to a labor-importing country. It also includes the world's most populous economy, the People's Republic of China (PRC), which still exercises strict controls on labor migration, a situation which could change dramatically in the foreseeable future. APEC, which includes all major economies in the fastest growing dynamic economic region in the world, is also ideally placed to provide an

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answer to the growing debate on whether globalization will accelerate or slow down present labor migratory pressures.

So far, the issue of international labor migration has not figured prominently and has even been somewhat played down in APEC deliberations. Some recent initiatives have been taken to support and facilitate the mobility of qualified persons through the sharing of labor market information on skills, wages and working conditions, among others. But the more critical issue of how governments can learn from each other's experiences, cooperate to manage and cope better with the legal and illegal flows of labor across international borders, including better protection of migrant workers, have not been directly examined. While APEC has rightly concentrated on human resources development issues, among others, in order to provide and improve needed skills that would facilitate the movements of capital, goods and services among member-economies, the broader issue of how best to develop and utilize the common pool of skilled and unskilled human resources has not been taken up, even though it has been raised by some of the member-economies.

The purpose of this paper is to identify some of the key issues confronting APEC member-economies which arose from both legal and illegal movements of labor across international boundaries so as to identify the advantages that may may arise from discussions in the APEC forum. In order to identify these key problems and issues, a brief review of existing labor flows within the APEC regions is presented. There is also a brief discussion on how best to explain these flows and, more important, on the possible impact of globalization and increasing trade liberalization on the quantum and pace of the international movements of labor in the APEC region.

# TRENDS IN INTERNATIONAL LABOR MIGRATION<sup>2</sup>

The fact that international migration issues figure prominently in the national agenda and preoccupy an increasing number of governments across the globe reflects the extent of labor migration across nations. While

reliable estimates are difficult to establish, the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that (disregarding the situation in the successor states of the Union Soviet Socialist Republic or USSR) there are between 35 and 40 million persons worldwide who are economically active, legally or illegally, in a country other than their own and who are accompanied by at least as many dependents (Table 1).

No classification can neatly and comprehensively capture the variety of today's international labor migrants. Even the former distinctions between temporary migrants or contract workers and permanent settlers have become blurred. Unskilled or semiskilled labor, including mainly farmers or peasants who leave temporarily or permanently in search of wage-paid activities, represent an important component of cross-border migrants. Skilled industrial or construction workers, who move individually or as part

TABLE 1
Estimate of Nonnationals By Region in 1990
(In millions)

Region	Economi- cally Active	Dependents	Total
Africa	5-6	11-14	16-20
Americas, North	7	8-10	15-17
Americas, Central and South	3-5	4-7	7-12
Asia, South Southeast and East	1-3	3-4	4-7
Asia, West (Arab States)	6	2-3	8-9
Europe (excluding the USSR)	8	12	20
Total	30-35	40-50	70-85

of an enterprise's labor force, constitute another sizable element of present-day migrants. Highly qualified professionals and managers move more frequently than before across the globe, both within and outside transnational enterprises. There is also a small but significant number of young individuals sponsored through government channels, who are sent to upgrade their skills in foreign enterprises and increasingly perform the tasks of normal workers, as well as entrepreneurs admitted by countries on the promise of citizenship if they bring along sufficient funds to generate employment for themselves and for others.

Broadly speaking, two kinds of international labor flows can be distinguished based on these classifications. The first is the movement of highly qualified professionals and managers across countries, whether developed or developing. The second is the movement of mainly unskilled or semi-skilled workers who seek employment in lower rung jobs, mostly in high-and middle-income countries. The exceptions to this general pattern are countries with small populations (for example, Brunei Darussalam and the Arab States of the Persian Gulf and Malaysia) which are in need of migrants from various skill ranges, and the traditional immigration countries (United States, Australia and Canada) which still admit many migrants with skills in the middle ranges, though not necessarily on the basis of skills alone but for family reunification.

It is important, however, to point out that labor-importing countries are not necessarily limited to those which are facing labor shortages or those with a small population. Many developing countries have also become importers of labor well before they reach the level of full employment. This situation arises if the wage level in a developing country is higher than that of its neighboring countries. This results in the inflow of labor, in many cases illegal, mainly from surrounding countries with lower wage rates, well before it has exhausted its own supply of underemployed or unemployed labor. Many developing countries in South Asia, Latin America and Africa find themselves in a similar situation. There is also an increasing number of developing countries which find themselves both as importers and export-

ers of labor, even before they reach the "Lewisian turning point" of having exhausted their supplies of surplus labor.

# LABOR FLOWS IN THE APEC REGION<sup>3</sup>

In examining labor flows in the APEC region, it is convenient to divide the different member-economies into three broad categories. The first includes major destination economies for permanent migration, namely, the United States (U.S.), Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Note that the U.S. also allows in large numbers of temporary migrants, mainly from Mexico, and that the distinction between permanent and temporary migration is becoming increasingly blurred. The second category includes economies dominated by intra-Asian flows of migrant workers. These can be further divided into fast growing economies, which experienced labor shortages and had no recourse but to turn to foreign workers (Japan, Republic of Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore), and emerging newly industrialized economies or NIEs, which are both importers and exporters of labor (Malaysia and Thailand) and the major labor exporters in the region (Philippines, Indonesia and the PRC). Brunei Darussalam and Papua New Guinea may be included in the second category, although they clearly have their own distinct labor market needs. The third category covers economies within Latin America and the Caribbean. Although Mexico and Chile are, at present, the only APEC members in this category, the dominant labor movements in Latin American countries may cause many economies in the region to join APEC in the future.

The flows of professionals (those with managerial talents and higher level of skills) into both developed and developing economies, and whose number, though small in relation to total migration flows, is significant and increasing rapidly within the APEC region, is discussed separately in the next section.

### **Major Economies of Permanent Settlement**

In the 1960s, far-reaching changes introduced in the immigration policies of the U.S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand had a major impact on the ethnic composition of immigrants. A significant proportion of those who joined the migration stream to these countries were from the Asia-Pacific rim and mainly from APEC member-economies.

The U.S. received more immigrants than any other country—indeed almost more than all other countries put together. Total legal registered migrants to the U.S. between 1951 and 1960 was 2.5 million, about 3.3 million during 1961-1970, and about 4.5 million during 1971-1980. Of the 7.3 million migrants in the U.S. during 1981-1990, 75 percent were from Latin America and Asia and nearly 3.2 million (about 45 percent) were from APEC member-economies.

The number of immigrants into the U.S. reached 973,977 in 1992, of which 364,639 (37.4 percent) were from APEC economies (Table 2). These were Mexico (213,802), Philippines (61,022), PRC (38,907), Republic of Korea (19,359), Taiwan (16,344) and Canada (15,205). Another 77,735 came from Vietnam and some 26,191 from El Salvador on the Asia-Pacific rim. It is estimated that in 1990, of the total 248.7 million population of the U.S., about 4.7 percent (11.6 million) were of Mexican descent (Stalker 1994). Saith (1966) estimated that there were about 1.6 million Filipinos residing permanently in the U.S. in 1993.

In Canada, the other major destination of migrants from the Asia- Pacific region, immigration has generally been more closely regulated than in the U.S. where significant changes were introduced in its immigration policy which lowered racial and ethnic barriers and removed almost all privileges reserved for European immigrants. According to Richmond (1991), about 20 percent of the total labor force of 11.9 million were immigrants. In the period 1980-1989, about 1.26 million immigrants landed in Canada, of whom about 41 percent were from countries in the Asia- Pacific region. Of the total of 248,200 immigrants who entered Canada in 1992, the largest number came from Hong Kong (15.3 percent) followed by the Philippines (5.2 percent). Other APEC economies included the PRC (4.1 percent),

TABLE 2 Immigrants Admitted to the U.S. From Top Fifteen Countries of Birth, Fiscal Year 1992

Country of Birth	Total		Nonlegalization		IRCA Legalization		
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
All Countries	973,977	100.0	810,635	100.0	163,342	100.0	
Mexico	213,802	22.0	91,332	11.3	122,470	75.0	
Vietnam	77,735	8.0	77,728	9.6	7	-	
Philippines	61,022	6.3	59,179	7.3	1,843	1.1	
Soviet Union	43,614	4.5	43,590	5.4	1,129	-	
Dominican Republic	41,969	4.3	40,840	5.0	24	0.7	
People's Republic of China	38,907	4.0	38,735	4.8	172	0.1	
India	36,755	3.8	34,629	4.3	2,126	1.3	
El Salvador	26,191	2.7	21,110	2.6	5,081	3.1	
Poland	25,504	2.6	24,837	3.1	667	0.4	

TABLE 2 (CONTINUED)

Country of Birth	Total		Nonlega	alization	IRCA Legalization	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
United Kingdom	19,973	2.1	19,757	2.4	216	0.1
Republic of Korea	19,359	2.0	18,983	2.3	376	0.2
Jamaica	18,915	1.9	16,820	2.1	2,095	1.3
Taiwan	16,344	1.7	16,232	2.0	112	0.1
Canada	15,205	1.6	14,958	1.8	247	0.2
Iran	13,233	1.4	12,808	1.6	425	0.3
Others	305,449	31.4	279,097	34.4	26,352	<b>16</b> .1

Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Taiwan and U.S. (2.9 percent each). The large number of immigrants in Hong Kong in recent years is made up mainly of investors and entrepreneurs looking for a safe haven before the handover of Hong Kong to PRC. In many of these cases, the investors brought some of their household members to Canada but still commuted back and forth to Hong Kong—a high-flying lifestyle which has caused them to be dubbed as "astronauts" (Stalker 1994).

Until the late 1960s, Australia, the third largest among the traditional countries of settlement, restricted immigration to Europeans only with very few exceptions. This position was slightly altered before the end of the 1960s when, in response mainly to sustained criticism by some Asian countries, the Australian government admitted a small number of highly qualified and professional workers from Asian countries for permanent settlement. However, by the early 1970s, the so-called "White Australia" policy was drastically changed, if not totally abolished. According to Appleyard (1988), this was accompanied by a rapid increase in trade between Australia and Asian countries after the United Kingdom joined the European Economic Community (EEC). After the Vietnam war, an awareness grew that Australia's future, given its proximity to Asia, was closely linked to the socioeconomic changes taking place in that region.

This change in attitude and policy shifted the balance of immigration substantially in favor of Asia. During 1961-1970, about 91,000 immigrants (6.5 percent) were from Asia. The number increased to 207,000 (23.1 percent) during 1971-1980 and further increased to 40 percent in the mid-1980s. In 1991-1992, almost 33 percent of the 107,391 settler arrivals were from APEC economies, namely, Hong Kong (12.5 percent), New Zealand (6.7 percent), Philippines (5.5 percent), Taiwan (3.0 percent), Malaysia (2.9 percent) and PRC (2.2 percent) (Stalker 1994). The other major source from the Asia-Pacific rim was Vietnam (8.9 percent). As in the case of Canada, those who came from Hong Kong and Taiwan were business people in search of new opportunities in anticipation of the British colony's reversion to PRC.

In New Zealand, the total number of migrants from APEC countries is lower. There were about 10,000 migrants from Asia during the period of 1961-1970 (3.1 percent of the total) which increased to about 11,000 in 1971-1980 (5.5 percent). Most migrants into New Zealand were from neighboring South Pacific countries. In recent years, there has been an increasing number of migrants from Hong Kong, mainly investors and entrepreneurs, although some of them subsequently moved on to Australia. Between 1987 and 1992, some 13,500 Hong Kong citizens were granted permanent residency in New Zealand, thus, constituting the largest single group of people approved for permanent residency between 1990 and 1992. A total of 34,000 people from PRC, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan gained permanent residency in New Zealand between 1987 and 1992.

Illegal migration tops the list of problems and issues in these countries, especially the U.S. which is especially vulnerable with the 2,000-mile border it shares with Mexico, the main source of illegal migrants (almost 90 percent based on the number of aliens apprehended by the Immigration and Naturalization Services or INS). Estimates of illegal migrants in the U.S., those who enter by land and by boat (mainly from the Caribbean), range from 1.9 million to 4.5 million (Stalker 1994). A large number of these illegal migrants work as farm laborers while an estimated 350,000 illegal immigrants work as domestic help. To combat the rising number of illegal immigrants, the U.S. government is increasing expenditure on border controls and denying access to welfare services to illegal immigrants.

Employment of immigrants has been dependent on the countries= economic situation. In 1992, a survey in Australia showed that one out of three immigrants who arrived in 1990 was unemployed while the unemployed in some ethnic groups was above 80 percent. The government therefore decided to cut immigration by more than 25 percent in 1992-1993, the biggest cut in 25 years. However, the U.S. has not yet responded to the anti-immigrant lobby. Canada, for its part, foresaw a moderate growth in its immigrant flows with around 250,000 settlers per year during the second half of the 1990s.

Another concern, especially in the context of globalization, has been the need to attract highly skilled workers into these countries. The U.S., especially, has taken steps to increase the inflow of foreigners with "extraordinary ability" without the need for prearranged employment or nomination by an employer.

## Intra-Asian Labor Migration

Within the Asian economies of APEC, three streams of labor flows can be distinguished (Pang Eng Fong 1994), each of which has expanded rapidly in the past decade.<sup>4</sup> The first and fastest growing labor flow is that between developing Southeast Asia and industrial East Asia. The second is within Southeast Asia and the third is among Northeast Asian economies.

The first stream involves the flow of mostly unskilled —legal and illegal—workers from Southeast (and South Asia) into Northeast Asia (mainly Hong Kong, Taiwan and Japan) and the flow of skilled and professional workers in the opposite direction.

The labor migration flows are much more complex among Southeast Asian economies: the flow of skilled and unskilled labor into Singapore from its ASEAN neighbors, mainly Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand. Also, the emergence of growth triangles in the region (the most prominent is the Indonesia- Malaysia-Singapore Growth Triangle which encompasses Malaysia's Johore state, Singapore and the Riau Islands of Indonesia) is expanding labor market links within Southeast Asian neighboring countries. Other major flows are from Indonesia and Southern Thailand into Malaysia, from Myanmar into neighboring Thailand and from various parts of Southeast (and South) Asia into Brunei Darussalam.

The East Asian flows are equally complex. They include labor flows into Japan of both legal and illegal migrants (including students and trainees) from PRC, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Philippines, and other South Asian economies. There is also a small flow of unskilled migrants into Hong Kong from PRC and even larger reverse flows of professionals, managers and technicians into the Pearl River Delta area, where many labor-intensive firms have relocated. There is also a mainly illegal flow of workers from PRTC

into Taiwan and the Republic of Korea, and a sizable, short- term unofficial flow of managers and professionals from Taiwan into PRC.

In all the major labor-receiving Asian economies, the major cause for the rapid rise of inflows has been labor shortage brought on by growing economies which could not be met by a relatively slowly growing labor force. During the 1980s, the fast growing Asian NIEs had an annual average growth between 6 and 8 percent while Japan averaged at 4.3 percent, well above the average for industrialized countries (Abella 1996). However, as Pang Eng Fong (1994) points out, the size and timing of these flows have been vastly different. Unlike in Singapore and Malaysia, foreign labor inflows in Japan, Korean Republic and Taiwan did not occur unti many years after the labor shortages. Japan, which first experienced labor shortages in the early 1970s, attracted illegal workers in large numbers only after 1986. Similarly, Korea and Taiwan achieved full employment in the late 1970s but workers (mainly illegal ones) flowed into these countries only a decade later.

It is also important to note that in the East Asian economies, mainly Japan, Korean Republic and Taiwan, the demand for migrant workers was fostered by emerging shortages of labor for certain occupations and sectors. These cover the hazardous jobs in construction, low-paying jobs in the services sectors and dirty or bottom-end jobs in small- and medium-sized manufacturing enterprises —the so-called 3D jobs (dirty, demanding and dangerous).

In the international labor migration scene<sup>5</sup> in the Asian region, the estimated number of foreign workers in 1993 in a labor- receiving economy such as Japan was 1.32 million or 1.5 percent of the workforce as compared to 696,000 in 1969. The 1993 figure is composed of permanent resident Korean workers (316,000), legal temporary professionals (95,000), trainees (17,000), working students (63,000), ethnic Japanese from South America (152,000 in 1992) while the rest were mainly illegal workers. In Hong Kong, the estimated stock of foreign workers in 1994 was 220,000 (7.3 percent of the workforce) consisting of about 50,000 skilled and unskilled foreign workers employed as technicians and construction workers, about 150,000 foreign maids (mostly Filipinos) while the rest were foreign professionals.

In the Republic of Korea, around 150,000 legal, illegal, and trainee workers accounted for less than 1 percent of its 12 million strong workforce: foreign professionals (7,840 at the end of 1995), trainees (41,000), and illegal foreign workers (102,000) which are mostly ethnic Koreans from China, or nationals of the Philippines, Bangladesh and Pakistan. The Republic of Korea has experienced one of the fastest migration transitions. Some 200,000 Koreans emigrated in 1982 and a decade later, there were about 100,000 legal and illegal foreign workers in the country. In Taiwan, from zero foreign workers in 1980, the number increased to about 100,000 mostly illegal workers (about 2 percent of the country's labor force) in 1989 and even went up to 220,000 mostly legal foreign workers in 1995. In Singapore, about 250,000 (approximately 18 percent) of the workforce in 1995 were foreign workers, a large increase from 80,000 in 1980 (7.4 percent of the workforce) and 21,000 in 1970 (3.2 percent of the workforce).

Two Asian economies are both importers and exporters of labor. In Malaysia, there were about 1.1 million foreign workers (about 15.5 percent of the workforce) in 1994, of which 563,000 were legal foreign workers and the rest were illegal. At the same time, there were about 250,000 Malaysians working legally and illegally abroad. Similarly, an estimated 500,000 workers from Thailand were employed abroad, including 25 percent each in Saudi Arabia and Singapore. There were also about 500,000 foreign workers in Thailand —200,000 professionals expatriates and 300,000 unskilled farm and construction workers from neighboring countries.

Of the major labor-exporting economies, the Philippines is the second largest with an outflow of 719,602 overseas contract workers (OCWs) in 1994, of which 565,226 were land-based OCWs (there were 12,501 in 1975) distributed among Saudi Arabia (215,631), Hong Kong (62,161), Japan (54,879), Taiwan (34,387) and the United Arab Emirates (27,713). In 1994, about 48 percent of the total OCWs were females which accounted for almost 60 percent of new hires. Majority of the new hires were in the vulnerable occupations, with domestic helpers (26.34 percent) and entertainers (18.17 percent) accounting for almost half of the total. Such occupations are dominated (about 95 percent) by women. The estimated stock

of Filipino workers abroad in 1995 is 4.2 million made up of permanent migrants (around 2 million, mainly in the U.S.), circulatory stocks (1.5 to 2.1 million) and illegal migrants (mostly in Japan, Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia). In terms of labor market impact, land-based new hires account for about 34.7 percent of the total incremental active labor force for the country. In 1994, official remittance flows amounted to US\$2.94 billion, which was 20 percent of export earnings and as much as 4 percent of the 1994 GDP. In recent years, there has been an important change in public opinion and in the policy perspective on migration's contribution to the development process following the hanging of a Filipina maid in Singapore in February 1995. Priority is being assigned to increasing productive employment opportunities in the domestic economy and the gradual phasing out of female migration in the vulnerable categories.

In the case of Indonesia, the dimensions of official labor flows and financial flows are small, if not negligible, in the wider context of the national economy. In 1992, official labor outflows to the following countries totalled 166,244; Saudi Arabia, the major destination (61,2 percent), Malaysia (20,1 percent), Singapore (7.1 percent) and Taiwan (3.1 percent). However, a significant unofficial number of workers leave Indonesia, mostly to nearby Malaysia where the men are employed in plantations and construction sites and the women in factories and domestic service. It is estimated that the total number of Indonesian migrants in Malaysia may be as high as 750,000 with almost two- thirds employed illegally (Martin 1996). There are two striking features of international labor migration from Indonesia. Two-thirds of the total number of migrants were women and majority have no professional expertise. According to official estimates, total remittances in 1994-1995 reached US \$344 million, which is puzzling since the level of remittances per capita is only a fraction of those from other Asian labor-exporting countries. Most probably, a large proportion of remittances of illegal migrants in Malaysia came through unofficial channels. In Indonesia, the government's pronouncements on migration indicated a shift in policy objectives by gradually phasing out the migration of domestic helpers, mainly females, and moving toward the export of more highly skilled workers.

According to Huang (1996), overseas migration from PRC can be divided into four broad categories, namely, (a) labor export through contracted projects, (b) direct recruitment by overseas employers through domestic agents, (c) migration to relatives' or friends' residences in foreign countries, and (d) illegal migration. Under the first category, there were 225,578 workers at the end of 1994 (compared to 31,771 in 1982) working on projects with a contracted value of approximately US \$8 billion. Of the 100,000 students who went to study in other countries between 1978 and 1989, only about 40 percent returned home after graduation. In the 1990s, an annual average of 20,000 Chinese migrated —especially to Japan and Australia— to work part-time or even full-time. It is difficult to estimate the extent of illegal immigration from PRC but Huang (1996) placed the estimate between 100,000 and 200,000 a year.

On the other hand, Brunei Darussalam has a total labor force of about 112,000 (according to a 1991 population census, the population base is approximately 268,000) which consisted of Brunei citizens (about 54,000), permanent residents (7,000) and temporary and other residents employed by establishments in the public and private sectors (45,000). Skilled foreign workers in both private and public sectors come mainly from Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia. In Papua New Guinea, localization has already substantially reduced the amount of expatriate labor from around 30,000 since the 1971 census to around 9,000 at the start of 1982. Since then, the decline has been slow and the demand for foreign labor is more or less stable (Connell 1996). Professionals and executives account for more than 70 percent of all work permit holders. With the decline of the European population, the number of Asians went up. This increase has led to various objections to Asian migrant workers, mainly because members of their families take up other jobs and also engage in commercial activities. Nevertheless, the total number of migrants has remained small and scarce outside urban centers. More recently, Malaysian and Chinese workers were employed by a Malaysian-based company engaged in forestry.

In summary, intra-Asian labor migration has the following distinct features and problems:

- A significant feature of the rapid economic transformation of East and Southeast Asian economies has been the simultaneous growth of labor migration from an estimated one million (including long-term Korean residents in Japan and Indonesians in Malaysia) in the early 1980s to more than three million in the mid-1990s.
- Although labor migration has grown rapidly in the region, only three economies, namely, Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan, have statutes which provide for the admission of unskilled foreign labor. Both Japan and the Korean Republic still have ambivalent policies on the import of foreign labor.
- State policies on the admission of foreign workers are primarily based on the idea of providing flexibility in the labor market. Foreign workers are seen only as fillers in the work gaps, thus, work permits are limited to short periods.
- Mainly as a result of ambivalent migration policies, there has been a
  large increase in the numbers of illegal migrants who find themselves
  increasingly exposed to all types of exploitative work practices.
- There has been a growing number of female workers in Asian labor migration. To cite, more than half of the number of migrants from the Philippines and Indonesia are women. According to Lim and Oishi (1996), "entertainment" is frequently a euphemism for prostitution. They recently did an International Labour Organization (ILO)-sponsored study on the industries fuelling demand for Asian female workers. Outright prostitution is widespread and, in many cases, women contracted to work in legitimate jobs are even forced into prostitution. Women in any occupation who enter illegally or overstay in other countries are subject to exploitation, but the so-called entertainers are particularly vulnerable.

# LABOR FLOWS IN LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN ECONOMIES

At present, only Mexico and Chile from Latin America are APEC members. While most migration flows from Mexico has been to the U.S. (see detailed discussion toward the end of this section) and previous migration from Chile has been mainly to neighboring Argentina, these flows have slowed down considerably in recent years with the rise of unemployment levels in Argentina (almost 20 percent) and the fall in Chile (at present, 5 percent).

However, it may be important to point out that Latin America and the Caribbean area was, in the past, a region of significant immigration activities from 1870 to the 1960s. It was estimated that the net migration to Latin America and the Caribbean from the beginning of the 19th century up to 1970 was 13.8 million, mainly to Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Uruguay, Venezuela, Mexico and Chile. Some 1.55 million migrants were from Asia, and a total of 900,000 were from China, India, and Japan. The largest inflow was made up of Italians moving to Argentina (3 million) while four other flows reached over 1 million each: the Spanish to Argentina, and Italians, Portuguese and nationals from African countries to Brazil.

The picture has changed dramatically after 1970, the region as a whole was losing its people. Between 1976 and 1985, net migration was -1.6 million compared to 1.8 million during 1950-1964 (Stalker 1994). The most significant factor contributing to this change was the drop in immigration from outside the region to Argentina and the massive outflow from Mexico.

During the 1970s and 1980s, most labor movements were within the region, mainly into Argentina and Venezuela. However, these flows also slowed down and the countries are now experiencing higher levels of emigration. Most of the flows into Argentina were from Paraguay, Chile, Bolivia and Uruguay with the men employed in construction and the women in domestic services. Recently, as Argentina began to recover from the recesssion, the government planned to encourage immigration by taking in up to 300,000 Eastern Europeans with middle-level skills from Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania.

Since the 1960s, most immigrants to Venezuela (a large proportion of whom are illegal) came from the neighboring countries, particularly Columbia. In 1981, there were 508,166 Columbians and 25,200 Chileans out of the total 1.07 million foreign-born population. In recent years, there has been a large influx of Brazilians. With the economic difficulties in Argentina the 1980s, there was a slowdown in net labor immigration but since the economic recovery in 1990, the government began to worry about skill shortages and has therefore set its sights on Eastern Europe.

Most of the recent flows in Central America were made up of refugees rather than of labor migrants. In the 1960s, many rural migrants moved into neighboring countries including the seasonal movements of Guatemalans to Mexico. Since the late 1970s, political conflicts have uprooted some 2 million people from their homelands. By 1980, nearly 10 percent of Central Americans were living outside their countries of origin and returned only after an uneasy peace was restored to the region.

The only significant migration flow between Asian and Latin American economies came as a result of the Japanese government's policy to attract foreign nationals of Japanese descent by offering them long-term resident status, a legal protection almost equal to that accorded to Japanese-born citizens. Many were attracted by the prospect of working in Japan, especially the 1.1 million citizens in Brazil and around 80,000 in Peru who have Japanese origin. Between 1988 and 1991, the number of visas issued in Sao Paolo increased from 8,602 to 61,500 while in Peru, about 15 percent of the *nikkei* have gone through the formalities of emigration (Stalker 1994).

Mexico is the world's largest exporter of labor, if both permanent and seasonal migration mostly to the U. S. are included. It also has a significant number of migrant workers from Central America. According to the 1990 Census, the total resident population of Mexico was 85.5 million, the total number of immigrants was 383,000 and emigrants totaled 4.5 million, an increase from 576,000 in 1960 and 2.2 million in 1980. In addition, there is a significant number of seasonal agriculture workers who migrate not only within Mexico but to the U. S. as well. Emigration to the U. S. continually increased through the decades, from 159,000 in the 1950s to 250,000 in

the 1960s, 1.4 million in the 1970s and 2.4 million in the 1980s. It is estimated that there were 4.5 million Mexicans living in the U. S. in 1990 (Vasquez 1993). In the U. S., Mexican workers make up a significant portion of the service sector in major cities (San Diego, Los Angeles, Chicago) and in the agriculture sector in California, Texas, Illinois and Florida (Murillo-Castaño 1984). Total remittances were estimated at US\$2.3 billion in 1989, contributing 1.1 percent to Mexico's GDP and accounting for 10 percent of total export earnings that year (Stalker 1994).

### Flows of Highly Skilled Labor

The high growth of foreign direct investments in the Asia-Pacific region has been accompanied by a striking increase in the flow of professional, managerial and other skilled workers who have been following investments by multinational companies throughout the region. In the earlier years, most multinationals used their own expatriates to manage their operations but most countries have increasingly relied on managerial and professional staff from within the region. Moreover, as foreign investment flows from NIEs have gradually overtaken investments from Japan, a large number of professionals and highly skilled workers from Hong Kong, Korean Republic, Taiwan and Singapore began to work abroad. Companies from these countries are also more willing to employ third-country nationals compared to Japan. In addition, as job opportunities decreased due to economic recession in the region's developed countries (especially Australia and New Zealand), their highly skilled labor moved into fast-growing NIEs and other economies, namely, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and, more recently, the Philippines.

According to estimates on the number of highly skilled labor and service providers in the Asian rim of the Asia-Pacific region (Garnier 1996), almost 50,000 of the 87,000 professionals and managers working in Hong Kong are daily commuters to China's Southern Province (Table 3). In early 1996, there were 110,000 expatriates working in Hong Kong who came from the U. S. (36,000), Canada (29,000), Japan (24,200), Australia (21,100) and the United Kingdom (34,500). <sup>6</sup> More recent estimates from Indonesia

TABLE 3
ESTIMATE OF THE MOVEMENTS OF HIGHLY SKILLED LABOR AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

Country Or Region	Nationals Abroad				Temporary Residence of Highly Skilled Foreigners				
	Business Travels	Short- Term Provision Of Services	Expatriate	Long-Term Highly Skilled Migrants	Business Travels	Short-term Provision Of Services	New Entry Of Expatriates	Posted Expatriates	Year
Australia	-	-	35,000	35,000 (Hong Kong)	202,000	13,000	-	12,500	1993-94
People's Republic of China	-	-	10,000 (construction sector)	-	-	-	-	•	recently
Hong Kong	-	-	87,000	36,000	-	-	6,500	50,000	1991
Japan	1,025,000	5,000	85,000	-	-	-	21,000	64,000	1992
South Korea	315,000 (1988/89)		87,000	-	-	-	18,260	-	1992
Indonesia	-	-	20,000	20,000	-	-	52,000	-	1993
Malaysia	-		10,000	40,000	-	-	8,200	61,300	1993
Philippines	60,000	60,000	40,000	100,000	-	-	-	-	1994
Singapore	<u> </u>	· -	10,000	20,000	-	-	7,500	50,000	1990
Taiwan	-	-	120,000	120,000	-	-	-	-	1992
Thailand	-	-	-	-	-	-	36,600	-	

Source: Gamier (1996).

reported that in early 1995, there were, almost 57,000 expatriate workers in the country with a total wage bill of \$2.5 billion (Amjad 1996). The example of Japan is also revealing. In 1993, about 273,000 Japanese workers residing abroad (25 percent are in Asia) are employed as expatriate staff of the subsidiary of a Japanese multinational. In addition, some 15,000 to 20,000 people were thought to have traveled abroad in the 1990s for short periods (a few months at most) to provide some type of service.

Another interesting development is the steady flow of Asians (especially in the Republic of Korea and other Asian-rim economies) from North America, Europe and Australia as new and equally well-paid opportunities open up in their own countries or in neighboring countries within the Asian region.

### Impact of Globalization on Labor Flows in the APEC Region

The rapid pace of economic globalization, especially in the APEC region, has been made possible through the process of liberalization and the opening up of national economies to a freer flow of goods and services. APEC members are committed to "open regionalism," designed to encourage greater openness throughout the global economy as well as in the region. Its goal of working toward free trade and an open investment area was agreed upon by its member-economies in November 1994 to be realized by 2010 by developed member-economies and 2020 by developing member-economies. Progress within APEC toward regional trade and investment liberalization is meant to supplement the multilateral trade system and to benefit all members of the global economy.

Economic globalization at present has four main characteristics, namely, (a) the large and accelerating flows of foreign direct investment (FDI), (b) the large movement of portfolio capital, (c) easier access to new technology, and (d) the freer movement of goods and services between countries. A priori, acceleration of these flows and the opening of national economies should lead —at least in the medium- and long-term future—to a reduction in labor flows, rather than acceleration. This is primarily because these flows should result in the more efficient use of a country's

economic resources, thus reflecting its comparative advantage. It should imply that labor-scarce economies would specialize in more capital-intensive and skill-intensive production, while labor-surplus economies would specialize in the production of labor-intensive goods. The freer movement of capital should help exploit further each country's comparative advantage and accelerate the trend of multinational corporations by moving production from high-wage to low-wage economies. This movement should mean that industries located in advanced or semiindustrialized countries which are dependent on the use of cheaper migrant labor would be under greater pressure to relocate to low-wage, labor-surplus economies.

However, this trend of reducing demand for labor in labor-scarce economies would need to take into account sectoral growth due to a high overall rate of economic development as a result of globalization and the improbability of relocating production processes to other economies in order to take advantage of low labor costs. This would increase the demand for labor even in the short run, and the foreign workers to take on jobs in the service sector, construction, plantations and domestic services, including 3D jobs which the nationals may not want to undertake. However, long-term technological developments and movements of labor from the more labor-intensive industries should lead to a reduction in demand for foreign workers, except in the case of jobs avoided by nationals.

As globalization is set in motion mainly due to increased inflows of FDI, demand for a more highly skilled work force of professionals and managers will increase across countries. The demand has been rapidly increasing in recent years but will be further accelerated in the future. In the long run, trained nationals may gradually replace the expatriate work force especially since it would be cheaper to hire nationals than expatriates.

The more recent experience of fast growing Asian economies, it would appear, has challenged the conventional economic wisdom that freer flows of goods would substitute for the movements of labor between countries. Based on this experience, there is an argument that the relationship between free trade regimes and migration flows is more often a comple-

mentary one and not substitutionary wherein trade liberalization replaces migration. To what extent should this proposition be accepted?

In examining the experiences of East and Southeast Asian economies, two important developments should be kept in mind: the speed or pace of economic transformation wherein economies, especially the NIEs, achieve very high rates of economic growth for a sustained period of time (something that has never been recorded before in economic history); and the coincidence of this period of high economic growth with changes in the economies' demographic structures which led to a slowing down in the growth of labor force and the emergence of an aging population. These developments were accompanied by important changes in attitudes toward certain kinds of work which younger entrants in the work force were not prepared to accept. In addition, the surrounding labor-surplus economies had workers willing to work abroad whose recent experiences in Gulf countries had prepared them to be more aggressive in seeking employment abroad. Clearly, these combined factors led to a dramatic increase in the employment of foreign workers in the region whose number increased from 1 million to about 3 million in the short period of 10 to 12 years (Abella 1996).

The more important question, therefore, is whether migration is a passing phenomenon or a more permanent feature of development and growth in the East and Southeast Asian region. Abella (1996) argues that, taking into account the positive projected economic growth in the region, the negative growth of the labor force and increased demand for labor in the service sector in these economies will mean a growing deficit in labor supply in the coming decades.

While there is a reason to believe that these Asian economies will continue to be dependent on the use of foreign labor, there is at the same time no reason to believe that there would be an appreciable increase in these flows. The gradual movement of more labor-intensive industries from the labor-scarce to labor-abundant economies in the region has been apparent in the last decade. As globalization and liberalization intensifies and further opened up other economies in the region, including Vietnam and PRC, the relocation of labor-intensive industries would further increase.

What is perhaps more challenging for the major labor importers is their response to changes in incremental labor demand in response to structural changes, especially the aging population and the growth of jobs in sectors which the local population is reluctant to take. There will arise two types of trade-offs: first is allowing a more organized labor immigration system to provide services to the aging population and thus improve their quality of life and second is meeting the employment demand of a number of sectors, especially construction, essential services and small-scale manufacturing, which the local population does not want to undertake. In this regard, "real demand" can be translated by the major labor importers into officially allowing foreign workers into the country, or they can feign ignorance on the existence of illegal workers. The way these choices are decided will have a far-reaching impact on the lives and conditions of work for foreign workers in these countries.

While it is clear that more work is needed to project labor supply and demand in the APEC region, some broad conclusions can already be made:

- (1) Demand for highly skilled labor will increase and there will be greater movement of such labor in the region. Already, countries such as the U. S. and Japan are adjusting their laws in order to better tap the emerging global labor market for highly qualified workers. Thus, the U. S. Immigration Act of 1990 permits the annual settlement of 40,000 foreigners of "extraordinary ability" without the need for prearranged employment of nomination by a U. S. employer. A further 40,000 immigrants of "exceptional ability" may be admitted when U. S. businesses require such services. In the case of Japan, the country admitted 18 categories of foreigners with notable skills or business acumen until 1990, but added ten more categories that year as well as simplified the formalities and facilitated relevant procedures for admittance (ILO 1996).
- (2) Most of the labor-receiving economies in East and Southeast Asia will continue to be dependent on foreign labor. Although it is difficult to project the additional demand for foreign workers in these countries, it will certainly be a major challenge for these economies

- to gradually adjust their economic structures to reflect their comparative advantage.
- (3) The impact of globalization on the more advanced economies of APEC as well as in the Latin American region has not yet been separately examined. Demand for higher skills will increase in the former, and in the latter, there will be greater intraregional movements as the recovery proceeds as well as inflows of foreign migrants especially from East European countries.

# KEY ISSUES IN INTERNATIONAL LABOR MIGRATION IN THE APEC REGION

The review of major labor flows within the APEC region and the accompanying issues and problems that face both labor-sending and the labor-receiving countries, clearly points to the fact that while labor markets on the whole have functioned well, the regulatory and institutional framework has not always responded adequately to the challenges posed by international movements of labor, especially in recent years. Boutany and Papademetriou (1994) have suggested that, in a global context, "a crisis of legitimacy in migration policy has developed, caused primarily by quantitative and qualitative changes in migration and perception." Yet, as Martin (1996) points out, while one is struck by the ability of societies and governments in Asia to lay the basis for rapid economic growth and economic integration through trade and investment, "an outsider is also struck by the absence of transparent plans to deal with the long-term consequences of labor migration" at the same time. Miller (1996) also points out that "international migration looms as a key factor affecting prospects for world order and disorder in the late 20th century." Yet theories of international relations and world politics as well as studies of bilateral and regional relations have relatively little to say about international migration. He further states that the "key question for the next century is whether democratic ideals will foster regional integration which facilitates unproblematic labor migration."

There is, however, a growing realization that these issues cannot be tackled solely at the country level given the widespread involvement of a large number of countries in the migration stream. The need for a global approach in the management of migration and the need for policy harmonization is becoming all the more urgent. Also, it is now increasingly accepted that essential in the development of a successful approach is the need for a dialogue between labor-receiving and labor-sending countries at the bilateral, regional and global levels. There are also emerging instances of successful efforts at collaboration as illustrated by greater harmonization in the approach of three main competitors (Australia, Canada and the U. S.) for international labor skills through permanent migration, as well as notable instances of international cooperation among Latin American countries on refugee flows that resulted in concrete steps like legalization opportunities through pacts and international agreements (Miller 1996).

In this regard, it is especially important to mention ILO's standard setting activities and redress mechanisms to protect migrant workers and secure equality of treatment between nationals and nonnationals. ILO Convention No. 97 (Migration for Employment, 1949) and Convention No. 143 (Migrant Workers, 1975), call upon governments to respect the basic human rights of all migrant workers, male and female, to prevent clandestine migration for employment and stop manpower trafficking activities. 7 ILO Conventions on protecting migrant workers might have been topical at various points in time, most of the member states who ratified the agreements have been sending rather than receiving workers at the moment of ratification. This trend is confirmed by the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrants and Members of Their Families which was elaborated on with the technical assistance of the ILO and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1990. So far, only five countries (all laborsending) have been willing to be bound by the agreements in the Convention, Egypt, Colombia, Morocco, the Philippines and Seychelles.

While clearly there is a wide range of important and diverse issues arising from international labor migration which deserve high priority and immediate attention, this section focuses attention on a limited number of

issues which could play a part in the better management of migration flows in the future.

- (1) There is need for a concerted action by both labor-receiving and labor-sending countries to reduce the flows of illegal migration, especially the trafficking of illegal migrants by international criminal and smuggling syndicates. In many cases, migrants are passed along a chain of smugglers, safe houses, and other varied transit points. To combat this trafficking, joint action is needed at the global and regional level. APEC can play an important role in furthering these efforts.
- (2) Both labor-receiving and labor-sending countries need to jointly address the problems and high costs of the labor- recruiting industry. One of the major factors that encourages illegal migration is the high cost of securing employment abroad and migrants find it more attractive to move through illegal channels which they perceive to be less costly (they later discover that is not necessarily the case). Clearly, better exchange of information on labor needs and mechanisms for recruitment between labor-sending and labor-receiving countries would greatly facilitate the process. The question of whether it is more efficient to conduct recruitment through government channels (that is, government-sponsored agencies) or private recruiting firms needs to be examined. Checks and balances are necessary and needs to be impartially examined and discussed in appropriate fora in order to devise more efficient and effective mechanisms to facilitate legal cross-border flows at reasonable costs to the migrant. The need to develop a more efficient system becomes all the more important if APEC economies wish to facilitate the movement of higher skilled workers to meet shortages and surpluses (see number 6).
- (3) Many of the labor-receiving economies in the APEC region need to develop more transparent plans to deal with foreign workers to replace their rather ambivalent policies. Many countries, which at

present tacitly approve illegal migration to meet labor shortages, need to take a more realistic attitude toward foreign workers and take necessary steps to ensure that "real demand" for imported labor is met through legal channels which provide full protection to migrants and recognize their genuine rights. This way, countries can learn from each others' experiences, including policies on the integration of migrants into the domestic economy. In this context, many APEC economies should keep in mind Max Frisch's summary of the European experience, We asked for workers, we got people instead... and face reality that some of the migrants will inevitably settle in their territories and plan for a smooth integration.

- (4) There is little doubt that the highest priority must be given to combatting the exploitation and abuse —physical, sexual and others— of female migrant workers given the increasing feminization of labor migration in the Asian region. This would require action at the national, regional and international levels and by the migrants themselves. For a such as those organized by APEC can play an important role in increasing awareness, in developing measures in combatting the exploitation of female migrant workers, and encouraging member-economies to adopt and respect International Labor Standards for the protection of the rights of migrant workers.
- (5) Steps must be taken to provide greater social protection to migrants, especially equal treatment in qualifying for social security benefits and the removal of territorial restrictions. The adoption and respect for ILO Convention No. 118 (Equality of Treatment [Social Security] Convention, 1962) and Convention No. 157 (Maintenance of Social Security Rights Convention, 1982) can play an important part in achieving this goal.
- (6) There is a need to ensure timely and regular exchange of information on shortages and surpluses of higher level skills, and to institute measures to facilitate the movement of skilled labor. This will greatly assist in facilitating the growth of investment and trade flows among APEC member-economies. Some important steps in this

- regard have already been initiated by APEC under its Working Group on Hman Resources Development.
- (7) There is a need to develop strategies and policies which will maximize the benefits of overseas migration for the labor-sending economy and the migrant himself while, at the same time, minimizing the possible adverse effects of migration on the economy. These policies should include measures to facilitate the productive "reabsorption" of return migrants. Again, APEC members could learn from each others' experience in dealing with macroeconomic and sectoral issues arising from international migration and the flow of remittances into the national economy.

#### CONCLUSION

APEC has already initiated steps to monitor the labor markets of its member-economies in order to, among others, facilitate the movements of highly skilled labor within the region. There is little doubt that APEC can play a leading role in extending the scope of global economic liberalization in the most dynamic economic region in the world. It must respond through imaginative solutions to the challenges and pressures brought about by liberalization while, at the same time, assist in ensuring that sustainability and reaping the benefits of fast growth among member-economies will be possible with globalization and liberalization.

The issue of international labor migration definitely poses a challenge due to different perceptions but APEC can meaningfully contribute in the quest for a more orderly and humane management. Further work on the analysis of labor market issues that deal with some of the issues proposed may be a good starting point.

#### Annex A

The Migration for Employment Convention (Revised) 1949 (No. 97) and the accompanying Migration for Employment Recommendation (Revised) 1949 (No. 86) are milestones in international migration legislation and put emphasis on inter alia, medical services, equality of treatment with respect to remuneration and membership in trade unions, the provision of free public employment services and the supervision of employers or private agencies in the recruitment, introduction and placement operations. The Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention 1962 (No. 118) addressed problems faced by migrant workers and their families in qualifying for certain benefits and the territorial restriction of benefits. Part I of the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention 1975 (No. 143) constitutes the international community's first attempt to tackle the questions of irregular migration movements and illegal employment that became acute at the beginning of the 1970's. Part II seeks to promote greater equality of opportunity and treatment of lawful migrants with respect to employment and occupation. The Maintenance of Social Security Rights Convention 1982 (No. 157) represents a comprehensive attempt to cover migrant workers and their family members, particularly those who, due to the temporariness of their moves and employment, may not be able to benefit from acquired rights.

#### NOTES

- 1. See APEC Joint Ministerial Statement on Human Resource Development, Manila, 11 January 1996.
- 2. This section is based on ILO (1996).
- 3. This section relies extensively on Stalker (1994) and in part Amjad (1992).
- 4. The description of the flows that follows is also taken from Pang Eng Fong (1994). This section relies extensively on Stalker (1994) and in part Amjad (1992).
- 5. This survey is based primarily on Martin (1996), supplemented in parts by Abella (1996), Kang (1996), Amjad (1996), Saith (1996), Nayyar (1996), Connell (1996) and Huang (1996).
- 6. Far Eastern Economic Review, 25 April 1996, p. 55.
- 7. For details of major ILO COnventions and Recommendations on migrant workers, see Annex A.

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