



HOW INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION CAN SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT: A CHALLENGE FOR THE PHILIPPINES



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ABSTRACT. In the last thirty years, the Philippines have gained prominence as a major source country of international migrants. From modest beginnings, the Philippines have successfully managed to tap the global labor market as a source of employment for its nationals. This paper examines the factors and dynamics that enabled the Philippines to promote labor migration on the one hand, and to extend protection to migrant workers and overseas Filipinos, on the other. The role of the state is identified as key in institutionalizing labor migration while advocacy by civil society contributed to the inclusion of migrants' rights in policy formulation. The next challenge for the Philippines is to explore how international migration may be a vehicle for promoting sustainable development.

KEYWORDS. International migration – Philippines, labor migration policy – Philippines; Migrant NGOs – Philippines; overseas Filipino workers; remittances – Philippines.

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INTRODUCTION

The Philippines has come a long way from the 1970s when the country started to participate in international migration. The Filipino diaspora has ballooned to eight million since then, roughly ten percent of the country's 85 million population.¹ As of December 2005, the 7.9 million overseas Filipinos comprised of 3.7 overseas workers, 3.4 permanent settlers, and the rest are migrants in an unauthorized situation.² Compared with other migrants in the Asian region, Filipino migrants are occupationally diverse, women are as migratory as men, and they are more widely distributed throughout the world. As global workers, Filipinos have carved niches in domestic work, seafaring (25 percent of the world's seafarers are from the Philippines), and nursing.

This paper examines the factors and dynamics behind the Philippines' rise as a major country of origin of international migrants and the (future) role of international migration in contributing to national development. Although Filipinos engage in different forms of international migration, the paper highlights the country's long experience with international labor migration. The first part describes the East and Southeast Asian migration systems, which provides the regional context against which the migration experience of the Philippines is situated. The next three parts of the paper revolve the Philippines. Part two begins with a review of international migration trends and patterns from the Philippines since the 1970s, discusses the factors that initiated and sustained international migration, outlines the process of institutionalization of migration, and describes initiatives to engage with the Filipino diaspora. Part three presents the vexing questions that international migration has generated in the Philippines, particularly those relating to development questions. The concluding section reflects on the development implications of future trends: will the future be just an extension of the same trend, i.e., continuing deployment of human resources for the global labor market? What other policy options may be explored to maximize the development impacts of international migration?

EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA AS
SITES OF MIGRATION³

Following the end of World War II and the granting of independence, newly in-

¹ Projected population as of 1 June 2005 (NSCB, 2006:11).

² The estimates are from an unpublished document of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas.

³ The East Asian countries/areas considered here include: People's Republic of China, Hong Kong



dependent Asian countries devoted their energies to reconstruction and nation-building. Between 1945 and 1970, international migration did not merit much comment in the region's life. In keeping with the more domestic orientation at the time, there was more discussion on internal migration, especially the growing rural-to-urban migration. This changed in the 1970s, when economic and political changes unleashed processes promoting international migration in all the world's regions.

TABLE 1
Top 10 Countries of Origin of Immigrants to Australia,
Canada and the United States

AUSTRALIA, 2002		CANADA, 2000		U.S. 2003	
1	United Kingdom	1	China (exc. Taiwan)	1	Mexico
2	New Zealand	2	India	2	India
3	China (exc. Taiwan)	3	Pakistan	3	Philippines
4	India	4	Philippines	4	China (exc. Taiwan)
5	South Africa	5	South Korea	5	El Salvador
6	Philippines	6	Sri Lanka	6	Dominican Republic
7	Indonesia	7	United States	7	Vietnam
8	Iraq	8	Iran	8	Colombia
9	Sudan	9	Yugoslavia	9	Guatemala
10	Malaysia	10	United Kingdom	10	Russia

Source: Asis (2005d: 10, table 1).

From the 1970s, East and Southeast Asia emerged as major regions of origin, transit and destination of international migrants. Asia became an important source of immigrants to traditional countries of settlement (the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) due to the dismantling of national origin as a basis for admitting new immigrants. Up until the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act in the United States, followed by similar changes in the 1970s in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, this criterion favored immigrants of Western European background. Family reunification, humanitarian and labor market considerations became the new bases for admitting immigrants, a change that resulted in tremendous immigration from Asia. The «new» (post-1965

SAR, Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea. The Southeast Asian countries covered in this paper include: Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore.



/1970s) immigration altered the profile of Asian communities in the settlement countries. The bachelor societies and mostly less skilled immigrants of the «old» wave of immigration gave way to more gender-balanced, more occupationally diverse Asian communities. Several Asian countries account for a significant share of Asian immigration to the United States, Canada, and Australia (table 1).

The fall of Vietnam to communist forces in 1975, followed by similar developments in Cambodia and Laos, resulted in a massive refugee crisis. More than three million people left Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos during this period, including boat people desperately seeking safer shores. The Comprehensive Plan of Action (CPA) was later formulated to affect a more orderly process of resettling refugees and repatriating non-refugees. When the CPA ended in 1997, some 2.5 million were resettled in other countries, with the US receiving over a million refugees; another 0.5 million, those who did not qualify as refugees, were repatriated (Castles and Miller, 2003:172). Other refugee migrations broke out in the next decades, but the flights were confined within the region (e.g., Burmese refugees fleeing to Bangladesh and Thailand in the 1990s, or the more recent flight from North Korea to China), and resettlement has ceased to be an option. As in other parts of the world, refugee migration has been mixed up with unauthorized migration, a situation which has rendered refugees more vulnerable and disadvantaged.

International labor migration began in the region in the 1970s, with the demand for huge numbers of workers in the oil-rich Gulf countries. The hike in oil prices in 1973 was «oil crisis» for the rest of the world, but it was a bonanza for the oil-producing countries. With their petrodollars, the Gulf countries – Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates – recruited Asian workers on a work contract basis (typically two years per contract, with the possibility to renew) to carry out their infrastructure projects. South Korea, the Philippines and Thailand, along with South Asian countries – Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan – responded to the call for workers. Indonesia and Sri Lanka entered the scene later, just in time for the emerging demand for foreign domestic workers. These two countries became the primary sources of foreign domestic workers in the Middle East. Recruitment agencies and brokers stepped in to «facilitate» the matching of workers and employers. These entities and related businesses developed into what came to be known as the «migration industry», which has played an important role in sustaining migration in the region. The completion of infrastructure projects by the 1980s shifted the demand of workers and brought in women migrants. Health personnel, clerks, sales workers, professionals, domestic workers, cleaners and service workers were recruited. In later years, other countries in the Middle East – Lebanon, Jordan and Israel – also became labor importing countries. Decades later, the Gulf region continues to rely on migrant workers to run its industries, businesses, service sector and households. Concerned about their dependence on foreign workers, rising unemployment, and demographic imbalance (e.g., more than 70 percent of the UAE's



population are foreign), all the Gulf countries have embarked on nationalizing their work force. Progress has been slow. In particular, the private sector in these countries will continue to draw on migrant workers for some time to come. Except for South Korea, which became a labor-importing country in the 1990s, the rest are still relying on the Middle East as a major destination for their nationals, especially South Asian countries and Indonesia.

TABLE 2
Stock of Foreign Workers in Receiving Countries in
East and Southeast Asia, Most Recent Year

COUNTRY	LEGAL [YEAR]	UNAUTHORIZED [YEAR]	TOTAL	SOURCE(S)
Southeast Asia				
Brunei	150000	na	150000	Asian Migration News,
	[2004]		[2004]	30/09/04
Malaysia	1470000	400000	1870000	cited in Bloomberg, 2005;
		(other ests: 300,000;		Asian Migration News,
		500,000)		15/04/05; 31/03/05
Singapore	621000	na	612000	cited in Orozco (2005)
Thailand	1269074	400000	1669074	Asian Migration News,
	[2004]	[2004]	[2004]	15/05/05
		800000		Country statement of
East Asia				Thailand (2005)
Hong Kong	340000	na	340000	cited in Orozco (2005)
Japan	1973747	219428	2193175	2004 figure is cited in
	[2004]	[2003]	[2003/2004]	Migration News, n.d.
				Ministry of Justice cited
				in Iguchi (2005)
	870000		1089428	Estimate by Iguchi (2005)
	[2003]		[2003]	
South Korea	179000	199000	378000	Migration News (2005)
	[April 2005]	[April 2005]	[April 2005]	
Taiwan	312664	16000	328664	
	[Nov 2004]	[Nov 2004]	[Nov 2004]	
Total	6315485	1234428	7549913	
	5211738	1634428	6846166	

Notes: For Japan, the legal figure refers to the registered foreign population; the shaded figure is based on Iguchi's (2005) estimate of foreign workers; the unauthorized figures refer to overstayers. For Taiwan, the unauthorized migrants refer to absconders. The shaded figures are alternative estimates.

Source: Asis (2005a:20, Table 1)



Intraregional Labor Migration

From the 1980s, the export-led economies of Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan soared. Malaysia and Thailand later joined the league of high performing economies in the region. On the road to development, these countries had to recruit workers from the developing neighboring countries (the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Burma, Cambodia and Laos) to work in dirty, difficult and dangerous sectors that have been shunned by local workers. Increasing female labor force participation resulted in the shortage of care workers in the new industrialized countries, prompting them to recruit foreign domestic workers, which contributed to the feminization of labor migration. Thus, labor migration in the region proceeded along gendered lines – with male migrants responding to labor shortage in «public» economic sectors (e.g., construction, manufacturing, agriculture) and female migrants responding to the shortage of care workers in «private» households (Asis, Huang and Yeoh, 2005).

Receiving countries in East and Southeast Asia also adopted a no-settlement, temporary labor migration policy. To ensure that workers do not settle, migrant workers' stay are limited to two-year contracts (which may be renewed); workers cannot transfer sectors or employers; and family reunification is not allowed (some receiving countries do not allow marriage with locals; in the case of women migrants, those found pregnant are repatriated). Initially, countries of origin also thought of labor migration as temporary; it has persisted, and more recently, sending countries are targeting to send more of their nationals to work abroad. Once begun, intraregional migration, both legal and unauthorized, intensified in the region, especially in East and Southeast Asia (table 2).

Unauthorized Migration⁴

Although there is a legal framework to regulate labor migration in the region, unauthorized migration is substantial and country variations are significant. Among the receiving countries, the problem is most serious in Malaysia, Thailand and South Korea, while it is relatively under control in Singapore, Brunei, Hong Kong, Japan and Taiwan (Asis, 2005a). There are four types of unauthorized migrants: (1) migrant workers who do not have authorized work permits (e.g., a tourist turned worker); (2) undocumented migrants refer to those without travel and/

⁴ Unauthorized or irregular migration refers to «any population movement that violates legal migration regimes, either in the state of origin, transit or in the state of destination» (IOM, 1999:4, as cited in Battistella and Asis, 2003:11).



or work documents (this is common in cross-border flows between neighboring countries, such as between Burma and Thailand); (3) overstayers are those who legally entered as workers but remained in the destination countries after their work permits have expired; and (4) runaways or absconders are migrant workers who run away from their employers or sponsors, including those who run away due to difficult working and living conditions. The distinction between legal and unauthorized migration is not as clear-cut as it appears. In the case of runaways, for example, migrant workers may have met the entry and work permit requirements, but harsh conditions may compel them to leave their designated employer or sponsor. Furthermore, unauthorized migration is not just about migrants committing unauthorized practices; the role of employers, brokers and recruitment agencies, and even state policies must be examined as well.

The study on unauthorized migration in Southeast Asia suggests the importance of context in understanding cross-border flows in areas that have shared histories, borders and cultural affinities: Indonesia to Malaysia; Mindanao, Philippines to Sabah, Malaysia; and Burma to Thailand. Population movements in these areas tend to be more «regional» rather than international migration, a fact that needs to be considered in managing these cross-border movements (Wong and Teuku Anwar, 2003, as cited in Battistella and Asis, 2003). Findings from the same study indicate that legal and unauthorized migration are basically driven by the same causative factors on the supply and demand sides; both are mediated by middlemen and brokers; the major difference is in the access of migrants to legal or unauthorized (including traffickers and human smugglers) channels. Migration policies thus must consider both legal and unauthorized migration in a comprehensive manner instead of treating one as independent and different from the other.⁵

Concerns with unauthorized migration initiated regional discussions, beginning with the conference convened in Bangkok in 1999. The focus of the international community on trafficking (and the greater amount of resources for research and action) drew more attention to the issue – Southeast Asia, especially the Greater Mekong Sub-region, was an arena for research and advocacy. After 9/11, unauthorized migration became more linked to security issues, and the discussion since then has veered towards more border control, surveillance, crackdowns and similar measures. Policies and approaches to unauthorized migration must be reviewed, but linking such reform with the fight against ter-

⁵ A comparison of legal, unauthorized, trafficking in persons and human smuggling is elaborated in Asis (2005). This comparison also suggests that while there may be differences in the modes of migration, legal and unauthorized forms of migration may have similar outcomes for migrants – i.e., the working and living conditions of migrants may be similar regardless of whether they are legal or unauthorized migrants, although the level of vulnerability may vary.



rorism breeds a climate of mistrust and hostility against migrants. In framing migrants as potential terrorists, it is easy to disregard the rights of migrants, especially the rights of unauthorized migrants and trafficked persons.

Other Population Movements

Skilled migration has always been part of population movements in the region, but they have been overlooked because it involved small numbers. Several changes took place since the 1990s. Firstly, the numbers involved in skilled migration increased. Secondly, where before, Asia was a source region of skilled migrants (hence, the concerns over brain drain), in the 1990s, the more developed Asian countries started competing with other developed countries to attract skilled migrants. Thirdly, previously, it was viewed as «brain drain»; more recent discussions see possibilities for knowledge transfer and «brain gain» (e.g., see, Wescott, 2006).

In the future, skilled migration is likely to increase. Countries of destination in the region are targeting to attract more skilled migrants and countries of origin are aiming to deploy more skilled and professional migrants abroad. The boom of India's ICT industry provides an inspiring example of how the migration of skilled personnel can benefit origin countries. Meanwhile, a cautionary note is posed by the issue of nurse migration, particularly its likely impact on the health service delivery in origin countries. These contrasting cases seem to suggest that the impact of the migration of the highly skilled on the origin countries may depend on who leaves and the possibilities for transfer or circulation of knowledge/service.

The new prosperity of Asian countries has also increased the number of self-funded students migrating to foreign countries to further their studies. Student migration may be a prelude to other migrations in the future. Some destination countries, such as Australia, are looking at foreign students who have acquired higher education from their own institutions as possible skilled immigrants. The non-return of students to their home countries can be a loss of skilled human resources – or in the long term, there may be avenues for knowledge transfer.

There has been a rise in international marriages in the region, alongside the rise of international migration. Before the 1970s, international marriages were between Asian women and western men. After the 1970s, international marriages involving Asian partners increased – typically they involve women from less developed countries (also the source countries of migrant workers) and men from the more developed countries (also the destination countries of migrant workers). Migration, thus, is emerging as a solution to the shortage of brides in more developed countries such as Japan, Taiwan and South Korea. International marriages have contributed to increased female migration. The probable links to trafficking (such as the trafficking of Vietnamese women as brides to Chinese



farmers), the involvement of brokers, the use of marriage as a ploy to recruit women into the sex industry or forced labor, and the use of marriage to gain entry and/or residence in another country have provoked questions about the authenticity of these marriages and the well-being of women migrants.

Future Prospects

Trends, thus far, point to an increase in international migration in the future. Economic and demographic differentials will continue to generate both demand and push factors to sustain migration. Most likely, demand factors will assume more importance than they have played in the past. Faced with declining and an aging population, immigration looms as one of possible solutions mulled by countries of destination.

While both origin and destination countries are looking forward to sending and receiving skilled migrants in the future, the demand for less skilled migrant workers will not diminish. The 3D sectors, including the household sector, are unlikely to attract local workers. Female migration is also likely to persist as the demand for household workers tends to be stable; further demand for health care personnel will also involve more women migrants. Thus far, migration policies in the region basically approach migration as the transfer of labor and skills. There is a need to broaden the scope of discussion and to foster more regional cooperation to address migrants' rights, shared responsibility in promoting migrants' rights, and a regional view on how migration can promote a more equitable development.

THE PHILIPPINES: A SUCCESSFUL COUNTRY OF ORIGIN?

For most of the 20th century, i.e., until the 1970s, the United States was the primary destination of Filipinos who ventured in international migration. As a US territory, Filipinos were considered US nationals (but not citizens), which facilitated the migration of Filipino workers to the US.⁶ The first batch of Filipino workers arrived in Hawaii on 20 December 1906. Many more Filipinos, mostly men, were recruited as plantation workers in subsequent years; many later migrated from Hawaii to the Pacific West Coast. Some 120,000–150,000 Filipinos

⁶ The Philippines was ceded by Spain to the United States at the conclusion of the Spanish–American War. Under the Treaty of Paris, signed between Spain and the US on 10 December 1898, the US acquired the Philippines from Spain for US\$20 million.



arrived in the US between 1906 and 1934, with the majority based in Hawaii. There were workers who returned to the Philippines. Those who remained in the US built communities made up largely of bachelors.

The turning point in Filipino immigration to the US and in the other settlement countries came after the immigration reforms. The Philippines rose to become an important source of immigrants in these countries. Based on data from the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, between 1981 and 2003, an average of 55,000 Filipinos leaves the country each year as permanent emigrants.

The 1970s Context

The imposition of martial law on 21 September 1972 by then President Ferdinand Marcos changed the political and economic course of the Philippines. Political repression during the martial law period (1972–1981) led to exile migration by political figures opposed to Marcos. Many middle-class Filipinos, anxious about their future prospects, also left. These flights were mostly to the US, where they continued to fight for the restoration of democracy in the Philippines. A reprise of exile migration and the flight of the middle class occurred following the assassination of Benigno Aquino, Jr., Marcos' foremost critic, on 21 August 1983.⁷

Martial law also had a hand in triggering population displacement in Mindanao. The conflict between the government and secessionist forces reached its apogee with the burning of Jolo, the stronghold of the Moro National Liberation Front, in 1974. The episode led to massive displacement; many fled to Sabah, Malaysia, which recognized them as refugees (Asis, 2005c; Abubakar, 1999). The welcome changed by the late 1970s, when Sabah increasingly regarded later arrivals as economic migrants.⁸

Finally, martial law interrupted the country's march to economic development. Crony capitalism, i.e., the undue advantages enjoyed by Marcos cronies and supporters, and widespread corruption damaged the once-promising economy. External factors, such as the oil crisis of 1973, added to the worsening domestic economic situation. These created emigration pressures, which fortuitously, coincided with the demand for workers in the Middle East. This con-

⁷ Those who left the country during these critical periods were somehow seen as jumping ship (Vergara, 1996; Aguilar, 1999), a view that contrasted sharply with the celebration of the overseas contract workers (OCWs) as the new heroes.

⁸ Clashes between government troops and Muslim groups (including the extremist group, Abu Sayyaf) continue and have resulted not only in massive internal displacement but also protracted displacement – some communities have been caught up in displacements for as long as 35 years (see Canuday, 2006).



vergence of forces, push factors in the Philippines and pull factors in the Middle East, initiated the Philippines into the world of labor migration.⁹

Promulgated in 1974, the Labor Code of the Philippines (Presidential Decree or PD 442), launched the country's labor migration program. PD 442 provided for the creation of the Overseas Employment Development Board (OEDB) and the National Seamen Board (NSB) «to promote the overseas employment of Filipinos and to secure for them the best possible terms and conditions of employment» (Abella, 1978:24). Inspired by Korea's success in securing infrastructure projects, which made use of Korean resources and products (workers, know-how, construction materials and shipping); OEDB and NSB were envisioned to achieve the same feat (Abella, 1978:29–30).

Labor Migration: The Later Years

In anticipation of better economic prospects, labor migration was conceived as a temporary measure to address pressing unemployment and balance-of-payments problems. Instead, the legal deployment of land-based and sea-based workers has been on an upward trend since the 1970s (Table 3). The OFW population is the largest component of the Filipino diaspora (3.7 million) and much more spread out geographically (*see also* Table 4). On 21 November 2006, another landmark event was «celebrated», the realization of the government's target to send a million workers every year. From 1 January to 21 November 2006, a total of 1'011,138 workers were deployed. The target-setting is part of the Arroyo government's employment-generation strategies.¹⁰ Correspondingly, remittances have been increasing (Table 3). In 2006, remittances are expected to hit US\$12 billion. Migrants' remittances have contributed much to the economy, and for this, the state has hailed overseas Filipino workers as the country's new heroes (*bagong bayani*).¹¹

⁹ The public, formal and legal deployment of male migrant workers in the 1970s was paralleled by the less visible and spontaneous movement of women migrating to take up domestic work in Southern Europe (Italy, Spain and Greece) during the same period (*see* Asis, 2005b). Female migration became more visible from the 1980s, when more Filipino women migrated as domestic workers (and entertainers, largely to Japan).

¹⁰ Veronica Uy, «Filipino Deployment Abroad Exceeds 1M Target – Labor Dept,» *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 1 December 2006, http://globalnation.inq7.news/view_article.php?article_id=35819, accessed on 1 December 2006.

¹¹ Many public events are dedicated to overseas Filipinos. These include: National Migrants Sunday (held on the first Sunday of Lent; it is a special day designated by the Catholic Church in the Philippines to remember migrants and their families), June 7 is Migrant Workers Day (a government-inspired event to commemorate the signing of the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipino Act in 1995); Seafarers Sunday (held on the last Sunday of September) pays tribute to seafarers; De-



TABLE 3
Annual Deployment of Filipino Workers
by Sector and Remittances, 1975–2005*

YEAR	LAND-BASED*	SEA-BASED*	TOTAL DEPLOYED*	AMOUNT**
1975	12501	23534	36035	103.00
1976	19221	28614	47835	111.00
1977	36676	33699	70375	213.00
1978	50961	37280	88241	290.85
1979	92519	44818	137337	364.74
1980	157394	57196	214590	421.30
1981	210936	55307	266243	545.87
1982	250115	64169	314284	810.48
1983	380263	53594	434207	944.45
1984	300378	50604	350982	658.89
1985	320494	52290	372784	687.20
1986	323517	54697	378214	680.44
1987	382229	67042	449271	791.91
1988	385117	85913	471030	856.81
1989	355346	103280	458626	973.02
1990	334883	111212	446095	1181.07
1991	489260	125759	615019	1500.29
1992	549655	136806	686461	2202.38
1993	550872	145758	696030	2229.58
1994	564031	154376	718407	2630.11
1995	488173	165401	653574	4877.51
1996	484653	175469	660122	4306.64
1997	559227	188469	747696	5741.84
1998	638343	193300	831643	7367.99
1999	640331	196689	837020	6794.55
2000	662648	198324	841628	6050.45
2001	662648	204951	867599	6031.27

ember is the month of overseas Filipinos (as provided by Proclamation 276, signed by President Corazon Aquino on 21 June 1988), and December 18 is International Migrants Day (an initiative of migrant-oriented NGOs).



YEAR	LAND-BASED*	SEA-BASED*	TOTAL DEPLOYED*	AMOUNT**
2002	682315	209593	891908	6886.16
2003	651938	216031	867969	7578.46
2004	704586	229002	933588	8550.37
2005	733,970	247,707	981677	10689.00

*Figures for 1975 to 1983 refer to number of contracts processed; figures for 1984 to 2004 refer to number of workers deployed abroad. **Amount is in US\$ (in millions).

Sources: (Cols 1–3): Table 5 (Battistella, 1995:265) for figures from 1975 to 1983; www.poea.gov.ph/doc/DepLOYedOFWsByDestination1998.2003.xls; for figures from 1983 to 2003; and www.poea.gov.ph/AR2004/AnnualReports/ar2004.pdf for 2004 data.

Internet sources were accessed on 12 September 2005 and 2 May 2006.

Sources: (Col 4): Table 5 (Battistella, 1995:265) for data from 1975 to 1994; www.poea.gov.ph/AR2004/AnnualReports/ar2001.pdf for data for 1995 and 1996; and www.bsp.gov.ph/statistics/spei/tab11.htm for data from 1997 to 2005.

Internet sources were accessed on 12 September 2005 and 2 May 2006.

Data for 1995 and 1996 are from the POEA Annual Report 2001.

The demand for migrant workers, particularly the preference for Filipino workers, is significant in sustaining labor migration. As the demand for migrant workers expanded from the Middle East to East and Southeast Asia and even beyond the region, the Philippines has successfully managed to stake a foothold in emerging markets and sectors.

Factors internal to the Philippines, however, are equally (if not more) significant in perpetuating migration. I divide these factors into three: persisting economic push factors; the institutionalization of migration; and the development of a culture of migration.

- *Push Factors.* From the 1970s, the Philippines have been moving from one economic crisis to another. In the 1970s, it was the oil crisis; in the 1980s, the economy nose-dived towards the end of the Marcos years; in addition, the imposition of structural adjustment programs during this period and military coups in the post-Marcos years kept the economy from moving forward; and in the 1990s and beyond, the economic crisis in Asia and political instability in the domestic front stalled economic growth. In short, the political and economic environment has not been conducive for investments, which are critical for generating employment. At the same time, it is not poor enough to receive development assistance. The challenge of generating jobs is especially daunting given the demographic profile of the Philippines (Table 4). The country's population has grown to 85 million in 2005 – and since the population is young



(median age is 21.4 years), this calls for investments in human capital formation and huge capacities for creating jobs. In the absence of sustainable development (Table 5), push factors continue to exert pressure on families and the country to pursue overseas employment.

TABLE 4
Overseas Filipino Population, Stock and Flow Data, 2005

A stock of Overseas Filipino Population, Dec. 2005					
	REGION/COUNTRY	PERMANENT	TEMPORARY	IRREGULAR	TOTAL
	World Total	3,391,338	3,651,727	881,123	7,924,188
	Americas/Trust Terr.	2,758,067	304,457	357,923	3,420,537
	United States	2,326,675	111,835	157,998	2,723,182
	Asia, West	2,330	1,565,726	112,750	1,680,806
	Saudi Arabia	244	976,427	18,000	994,671
	Asia, East & South	186,906	891,088	238,238	1,316,232
	Japan	114,980	139,791	30,619	285,390
	Europe	211,351	523,442	123,282	858,075
	United Kingdom	52,977	72,638	7,480	133,095
	Oceania	232,366	57,692	31,770	321,828
	Australia	211,664	930	2,900	215,494
	Africa	318	61,525	17,160	79,003
	Seabased Workers		229,002		229,002
B. Top Ten Destinations of Land-based OFWs (Deployment, 2005)					
RANK					
1	Saudi Arabia	193,991			
2	Hong Kong	94,553			
3	United Arab Emirates	81,707			
4	Taiwan	46,714			
5	Japan	42,486			
6	Kuwait	40,248			
7	Qatar	31,418			
8	Singapore	27,599			
9	Italy	21,261			
10	United Kingdom	16,799			
	TOTAL, LANDBASED	733,970			
	TOTAL, SEABASED	247,707			

Sources: Data on the stock of overseas Filipinos as of 2005 are from an unpublished document of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas; data on the deployment of land-based OFWs in 2005 are from the Philippine Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (www.poea.gov.ph/stats/2005/deployment.xls, accessed on 23 May 2006).



TABLE 5
Economic–Demographic Profile of the Philippines

Total population, 2005 (projected)	85,258,000
Ave. annual growth rate, 1995–2000	2.36%
Ave. annual growth rate, 2005–2010	1.95%
%Population below 15 years old, 2000	37.00%
%Population 60 years old & over, 2000	6.00%
Simple literacy rate of pop. 10& up, 2000	92.30%
Simple literacy rate of pop. 10& up, 2003	93.40%
Unemployment rate, Jan 2006	8.10%
Unemployment rate, Jan 2005	11.30%
Poverty incidence, 1997	28.10%
Poverty incidence, 2000 (rev)	27.50%
Poverty incidence, 2003	24.70%

Source: Sectoral statistics of the National Statistics Coordinating Board (www.nscb.gov.ph/secstat/d_popn.asp; www.nscb.gov.ph/secstat/d_popnProj.asp; www.nscb.gov.ph/secstat/d_educ.asp; www.nscb.gov.ph/secstat/d_labor.asp; www.nscb.gov.ph/secstat/d_educ.asp; www.nscb.gov.ph/secstat/d_labor.asp; accessed on 23 May 2006 and 1 December 2006).

- *The Institutionalization of Migration.* The Philippines' success in securing a niche in the global labor market did not happen by chance. The role of the state in shepherding the country to this path is critical. The Labor Code of 1974 served as the template for the program, but over the years, many innovations have been introduced resulting in the institutionalization of migration. To date, the Philippines have perhaps the most extensive institutional and legal framework governing the international migration of its people.

There are separate government agencies dealing with permanent migrants and OFWs. The Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), established in 1980, is the agency primarily concerned with permanent emigrants and permanent residents abroad (*see* www.cfo.gov.ph). CFO offers orientation and educational programs to prepare departing emigrants, including a guidance and counseling program specifically designed for women migrating abroad as *fiancées* or as spouses of foreign nationals. It has also developed various programs to promote closer ties between emigrants and the Philippines.¹²

¹² LINKAPIL Program (Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino – Service to Fellow Filipinos), also known as Link



Several government agencies are involved in the labor migration program: the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA). OWWA and POEA are attached agencies of the Labor Department. The main tasks and functions of these agencies are summarized below:

- Created in 1982, POEA, integrated and took over the functions of the Overseas Employment Development Board and the National Seamen Board. It oversees the licensing and regulation of recruitment and placement agencies; it handles adjudications related to recruitment violations; it processes the documents, contracts and work permits of departing Filipino workers; and it is responsible for market development and the placement of workers in government-to-government hiring.
- OWWA evolved out of the Welfare Fund, which was established in 1977. OWWA takes care of the welfare of OFWs and the families left behind. To serve OFWs abroad, it manages the Overseas Filipinos Resource Centers; it deploys welfare officers to major destination countries to assist OFWs with welfare-related problems; and it is the focal agency for reintegration programs. Recently, the workers' education program was transferred from POEA to OWWA.
- The DOLE sends labor attaches to Philippine missions abroad; 34 Philippine Overseas Labor Offices (POLOs) are present in various regions. POLOs provide assistance on employment-related matters and undertakes labor market studies in their areas of jurisdiction.
- The DFA represents the face of the government to overseas Filipinos. As stated in the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipino Act of 1995, «The protection of the Filipino migrant workers and the promotion of their welfare, in particular, and the protection of the dignity and fundamental rights and freedoms of the Filipinos abroad, in general, shall be the high priority concerns of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs and the Philippine Foreign Service Posts» (Sec. 72). The same act also provides for the establishment of the country-team approach in Philippine missions (Sec.28) wherein «all officers, representatives and personnel of the Philippine government posted abroad regardless of their mother agencies shall, on a per country basis, act as one country-team with a mission under the

for Philippine Development, was developed in 1989 to match the donations of Filipinos with the needs of communities in the Philippines (*see* www.cfo.gov.ph/linkapil.htm). Presently, CFO is lobbying the US government for the following causes: equity rights for Filipino veterans who served in World War II, permanent residency to some 30,000–52,000 Amerasian children (children fathered by American soldiers), the portability of Medicare benefits (in support of Filipinos in the US who wish to retire in the Philippines), and inclusion of the Philippines as a testing center for the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX–RN).



leadership of the ambassador». A specific office under the DFA, the Office of the Undersecretary of Migrant Workers Affairs (OUMWA), provides legal and repatriation assistance to overseas Filipinos in distress.

The Philippines has elaborated legislations, policies and programs to promote the empowerment of migrants; it has also ratified international instruments protecting migrants' rights.

The Philippines is the first sending country in Asia to come up with a law, the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 (Republic Act or RA 8042), for the specific purpose of protecting its migrant population.¹³ Following are some key provisions aimed at protecting migrants from pre-departure to their return to the Philippines:

- limiting the deployment of workers to countries that ensure protection, and banning deployment if necessary;
- imposing stiff penalties for illegal recruiters, including legal recruiters committing irregular practices;¹⁴
- free legal assistance and witness protection program for victims of illegal recruitment;
- providing support and assistance to overseas Filipino, whether legal or in an unauthorized situation;
- establishing the protection of Filipino migrant workers and the promotion of their welfare as the priority concern of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs and the Philippines Foreign Service Posts;
- establishing the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Resource Centers in countries where there are many Filipinos;
- creating the Office of the Undersecretary of Migrant Workers Affairs and the Legal Assistance Fund; and
- institution of advisory/information, repatriation and reintegration services.

The state initially promoted overseas employment to solve domestic problems. As labor migration expanded, reports of abuses against workers multiplied.

¹⁴ The title of RA 8042 is «An act to institute the policies of overseas employment and establish a higher standard of protection and promotion of the welfare of migrant workers, their families and overseas Filipinos in distress, and for other purposes.» It was signed into law on 7 June 1995, just months after the execution of Flor Contemplacion in Singapore in March 1995. Contemplacion was a domestic worker found guilty for the death of a Singaporean boy and another Filipina, Delia Maga. Many Filipinos believed she was innocent and was a victim of the government's lack of concern for OFWs.

¹⁵ This provision is being challenged by the recruitment agencies. Also, the recruitment agencies are pushing for the deregulation of labor migration, which will make overseas employment a matter between the worker and employer. Both amendments are being opposed by the NGO sector.



Early on in the program, rampant reports of illegal recruitment and irregular practices prompted the state to prohibit the participation of recruitment agencies. However, because of the huge demand for workers in the Middle East, the state had no choice but to relegate recruitment and job placement to the private sector. The state concentrated on regulating and monitoring the migration industry (Asis, 1992). As the labor market increasingly became a buyers' market, and with the participation of women in labor migration, the welfare dimensions of labor migration loomed larger. The advocacy and conscientization work by migrant-oriented NGOs played an important role in raising the issue of workers' protection and holding the state accountable for the welfare of its people.

The enactment of the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 (RA 8042) is important for what it signified rather than for what it has actually achieved. Although RA 8042 has some fundamental limitations and conflicting provisions,¹⁶ it establishes the protection of the Filipino migrant worker as a foremost priority. As Sec. 2(a) states, «In the pursuit of an independent foreign policy and while considering national sovereignty, territorial integrity, national interest and the right to self-determination paramount in its relations with other states, the State shall, at all times, uphold the dignity of its citizens whether in [the] country or overseas, in general, and Filipino migrant workers, in particular». RA 8042 also provides in Sec 2(c) that the state «does not promote overseas employment as a means to sustain economic growth and achieve national development. The existence of the overseas employment program rests solely on the assurance that the dignity and fundamental human rights and freedoms of the Filipino citizen shall not, at anytime, be compromised or violated».

In addition to RA 8042, the Philippines enacted other laws to protect migrants' rights:

- The Philippines is one of the few countries in the region that has a law, the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003, which establishes policies and institutional mechanisms to provide support to trafficked persons.
- The state went a step further by granting overseas Filipinos the right to vote. The Absentee Voting Act of 2003 (RA 9189)¹⁷ grants qualified overseas Filipinos to vote in the national elections (president, vice-president, senators and party-list representative).
- Another step to extend the state to overseas-based Filipinos was the enactment of the Philippine Citizenship and Retention Act of 2003 (RA 9225),¹⁸ which

¹⁶ For details on conflicting provisions, see Battistella (1995) and PMRW (2003).

¹⁷ The title of the law is «An act providing for a system of overseas absentee voting by qualified citizens of the Philippines abroad, appropriating funds therefore and for other purposes.» It was signed into law on 13 February 2003, after more than a decade of lobbying.

¹⁸ The title is «An act making the citizenship of Philippine citizens who acquired foreign citizenship



grants Filipinos who have acquired another citizenship the right to reacquire or retain their Filipino citizenship.¹⁹

- The Philippines has ratified the following international instruments: the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, the 1976 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, the 1990 International Convention for the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; the 2000 Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air.²⁰ It has also ratified ILO Conventions 97 (Migration for Employment Convention) and 143 (Migrant Workers (Supplementary) Provisions).²¹

In summary, the overseas employment program has built an extensive bureaucracy, it has passed several landmark legislations, and it has developed the institutional, legal and policy framework to address various aspects of the program. On the whole, the set-up looks good. However, from the point of view of NGOs and migrants' associations, the picture is far from perfect. There are glaring gaps between legislation and policy on the one hand, and enforcement and on-the-ground realities on the other. The comprehensive program aimed at protecting migrants at all stages of the migration process, from pre-departure-to onsite-to return and reintegration is hampered by the lack of resources to implement the provisions effectively. One program area in need of radical refinement and improvement is reintegration. Due to the lack of economic opportunities in the Philippines, the temporary work abroad has become the de facto source of employment for many Filipinos. Migrants, thus, extend their employment abroad for as long as it is possible to do so. The failure of development that pushes people out is the same reason that keeps migrant workers from returning to the Philippines for good.²²

permanent, amending for the purpose Commonwealth Act No. 53, as amended and for other purposes.» It was signed into law on 29 August 2003.

¹⁹ Some 364,000 overseas-based Filipinos registered – Filipinos based in the Middle East and Africa and Asia-Pacific, i.e., overwhelmingly migrant workers, accounted for 86 percent of all registered overseas Filipinos; those in the Americas accounted for 4 percent of the total registered. Sixty-five percent (233,092) cast their votes in the May 2004 elections (www.dfa.gov.ph/news/pr/pr2006/budget/2005/oavdual.pdf, accessed on 30 April 2006).

²⁰ The Philippines are among the 143 state parties to the 1951 Convention on Refugees and its 1967 Protocol; it is among the 97 and 89 state parties to the 2000 Trafficking Protocol and Smuggling Protocol, respectively (UN, 2006:78). As of 22 January 2007, It is one of 35 countries that ratified the 1990 Migrant Workers Convention (www.december18.net, accessed on 31 January 2007).

²¹ The Philippines is listed among 21 countries that have ratified C143 (www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/ratifce.pl?c143, accessed on 1 December 2006). The Philippines has reportedly ratified C97, but it is not yet included in ILO's list of state parties (www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/ratifce.pl?c097, accessed on 1 December 2006 and 31 January 2007).

²² One example of a good practice is the Development Action for Women Network's (DAWN) training



- *Culture of Migration.* After more than three decades of large-scale migration, Filipinos have become a people who have grown quite at home with mobility. In addition to the eight-million Filipino diaspora, many of those who remain at home are thinking of migrating. A nationwide survey of adult Filipinos conducted in 2005 revealed increasing numbers of Filipinos – 26 percent in July, 33 percent in October – agreeing with the statement, «If it were only possible, I would migrate to another country and live there». Even children also have plans to work abroad someday. In a nationwide survey of children in the ages 10–12 years old, 47 percent said they had plans of working abroad someday; the percentage is higher, 60 percent, among the children of migrants (ECMI/AOS–Manila, SMC and OWWA, 2004).

Aside from the state's role in facilitating migration, other institutions in Philippine society have also become migration-savvy and are playing supporting roles to the migration dreams of Filipinos. One of these is the migration industry. There are over 1,000 licensed recruitment agencies for land-based workers, and another 300–400 manning agencies for the seafaring sector. The illegal practices of licensed agencies and the outright abuses of unauthorized brokers are exacting heavy costs on migrants and their families. The educational system, particularly the commercialization of education in the country, is highly responsive to the demands of the global labor market, coming up with curricula and training program promising to produce trained workers in the soonest time possible. In a milieu that is heavily oriented to leaving, fostering a sense of hope that the good life can be possible in this country is a formidable challenge.

PROS AND CONS OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

The non-economic impacts of international migration on Philippine society and institutions have been the subject of speculation for many years. Discussions on the social, cultural and political ramifications of migration tend to be laced with ambivalence, disquiet and concern. Fears over the negative impacts of international migration on the family have received much attention. The extended separation of family members is feared to erode the stability of the family unit, raising concerns about marriages and parent-child relationships. The participation of women, especially mothers, in labor migration has been met with much more alarm than male

and livelihood program for former entertainers to Japan, a means to provide them with an alternative to migration (see www.dawnphil.org).



migration. Firstly, the concentration of women in domestic work and entertainment brought out anxieties about their safety and well-being. Secondly, concerns about the left-behind families, especially the well-being of young children, evoked worst-case scenarios of neglected children, delinquency, and dropouts.

When male migration was the typical pattern in the 1970s, families generally fared well because the women left behind assumed the responsibilities of the migrant fathers. When women migrated and men were the ones left behind, studies noted that fathers do not necessarily take on the caregiving roles of the migrant mothers; instead, these were passed on to other female family members. When mothers leave, families go through more adjustments. On the whole, even if migration has expanded women's roles, it has not resulted in fundamental gender role changes in the family (*see also* Parreñas, 2005). As to the impacts of parental absence on the left-behind children, on the whole, the 2003 children and families study in the Philippines found that the children of migrants are doing well or are even better off than the children of non-migrants in school performance and health indicators. Children of migrants tend to attend private schools and they are more active in extra-curricular activities. Remittances, thus, are being used to invest in children's education (ECMI/AOS-Manila, SMC and OWWA, 2004; Asis, 2006a; 2001).

Despite the separation of family members, the family continues to be an importance point of reference for the children; the migrant parents and the left-behind caregivers (*see also* Asis, Huang and Yeoh, 2005). While the importance of the family has not diminished, the practices of «being family» have changed because of the separation of family members. Children of migrants continue to regard their parents as their role models. Improvements in communications technology have immensely helped in maintaining family ties, although family members acknowledged that communication is not adequate substitute for presence. On the whole, the survey data show children and families as adjusting to migration. However, qualitative data reveal that the emotional costs for the children, the migrants and the left-behind caregivers cannot be ignored (ECMI/AOS-Manila, SMC and OWWA, 2004).

The economic impacts of international migration are more easily appreciated, particularly at the level of families and households. Since remittances are private transfers, families and households are the ones who directly benefit from them. Typical uses of remittances include the purchase of land, construction or renovation of houses, underwriting the education of family members, especially children, starting small businesses, the purchase of consumer durables, and savings. Findings from studies confirm that remittances translate into better material conditions for migrants' families. Children of migrants in a nationwide survey reported higher levels of home ownership and ownership of consumer durables compared to children of non-migrants (ECMI/AOS-Manila, SMC and OWWA, 2004). However, the impact of remittances beyond the family is less



clear. There are, in fact, concerns about growing inequality between migrant and non-migrant households, and apprehensions about materialism, conspicuous consumption, careless use of remittances, and families becoming dependent on remittances. Findings from research indicate that OFW families put remittances to good use (Asis, 2006c)

Recent pioneering studies inquiring into the development potentials of migration suggest that collective remittances by overseas Filipinos are contributing to local development (*see*, for example, Baggio and Asis, 2006; Powers, 2006; Ateneo Center for Social Policy, 2005; Opiniano, 2005; Maas, 2005; www.filipinodiasporagiving.com). Overseas Filipinos have banded into some 4,000–12,000 organizations (Bagasao, 2005, as cited in Powers, 2006:16). These organizations include hometown associations, provincial/regional/ ethnic groups, family or clan associations, alumni associations, professional organizations, sports clubs, faith or church-based, labor unions, e-groups or web-based organizations, federations of migrants' associations and so forth. Based on the database of 129 overseas organizations listed in the Philippine Diaspora portal (www.filipinodiasporagiving.org), an overwhelming majority (99 out of 129) are based in the US and Canada; some 25 are in Europe; and the remaining ones are distributed in the other regions (Powers, 2006:17). Most migrants' associations have been formed for purposes other than to promote or support development efforts in the home country. Nevertheless, they are open to the idea of contributing to development goals. In times of disaster, for example, migrants' associations are quick to mobilize resources to contribute to relief efforts back home. Some migrants or migrants' groups have been supporting some projects in the Philippines on their own initiative – e.g., medical missions and other humanitarian projects. Migrants and migrants' associations also welcome the idea of supporting festivities, programs or community projects if requested (Baggio and Asis, 2006). The various modes of cooperation between migrants' associations and selected institutions in the Philippines are outlined in Opiniano (2005).

Aside from the government-led program to link overseas Filipinos' donations with the development needs of communities in the Philippines, the initiatives of several NGOs – e.g., mobilizing migrants' savings programs to support enterprises in migrants' communities or in preparing migrants for their return (*see*, www.unladkabayan.org, www.atikha.org, among others) – and the participation of the private sector (*see* Asis, 2004) – are worth looking into.

CONCLUSION

One of the conclusions that came out of the report of the 2005 Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM) and the report of Secretary-General Kofi Annan to the UN General Assembly (released on 6 June 2006) is the need to



harness the development potentials of international migration. The Philippines, with its extensive migration experience, is one country which needs «to forge this linkage between migration and development» (GCIM, 2005:24). It is a success story in terms of becoming the primary source of workers and skilled personnel in the global labor market. The Philippines can also be adjudged successful in developing good practices to promote migrant empowerment. In turn, the higher wages commanded by Filipino workers, their access to support, and their level of empowerment translate into economic empowerment as well. The Philippines is also successful in terms of remittance inflows from its overseas population. But beyond the social mobility experienced by the families of migrants and the community projects supported by migrants' collective remittances, the development impacts of migration are not that evident. Migration may be one of several strategies to promote development (specifically, employment generation), but it cannot suffice as a major development strategy. None of the Asian countries that had made the transition from country of origin to country of destination made it on the strength of deployment and/or remittances (Asis, 2006c).

The momentum for further migration is certainly great and the Philippines may be «typecast» into the role of producer of workers for the world. As noted earlier, going abroad has been woven into the life plans of ordinary Filipinos. Even young children are interested to work abroad, and are inclined to choose courses that would prepare them for the global labor market (ECMI/AOS–Manila, SMC and OWWA, 2004). Young adults are also on the lookout for job prospects abroad, regardless of their family's migration background (Asis, 2006b). The nursing example illustrates the thorny issue of respecting personal decisions and dealing with social impacts. The renewed demand for nurses is finding its way into the choices individuals and families make about education. Nursing programs have proliferated in response to increased demand. An interesting development is the phenomenon of «second courses», i.e., those who have completed a university education who are taking up nursing as a second course to increase their chances of working abroad. The case of doctors enrolling in nursing programs highlights the lengths that people will go through to be able to work abroad.

If left unchecked, these trends may result in the Philippines having an oversupply of nurses, who may end up unemployed. The glut in the number of maritime graduates is one sad example: the POEA has registered about 550,000 seafarers, but at least 300,000 are waiting for the opportunity to land a job (Bernardi, 2005:4). Another possible consequence is that the proliferation of nursing programs may result in sub-standard training, resulting in half-baked graduates who may not be able to pass the licensure examination. The more successful ones get to leave, but when they do, their personal decisions can have repercussions on the larger society. In the case of nurses' migration, there have been reports of provincial hospitals or rural clinics closing down or on the verge of a shut-down because of the departure of nurses. The large numbers of nurses leav-



ing the country has revived discussions on how to stem this migration, including imposing compulsory service. At the same time, the government is also lobbying with the US to include the Philippines as a testing center for NCLEX.

Similar discussions have also cropped up in relation to pilots and airline mechanics who are being pirated by foreign airlines (Flores, 2006). On the one hand, there are calls to impose a moratorium on the departure of these skilled professionals, but on the other hand, there is also the recognition of the right of individuals to seek jobs abroad. A short-term solution that the Department of Labor and Employment came up with is to require departing workers to inform their employers six months ahead instead of one month. This will delay the departure of prospective migrants for some time, but they will eventually leave.

The government's announcement to send a million OFWs every year is an unprecedented policy and a clear departure from the spirit of Sec 2 (c) of RA 8042. This target is also mentioned in the Medium Term Development Plan (2004–2010). The statement of former Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas in the 2001 POEA Annual Report (and which were echoed in the 2002, 2003 and 2004 reports) presages an emphasis on market development:

We used to be primarily concerned with welfare. I think in most of the countries of the world, while welfare continues to be a vital concern, the standard for taking care of the well-being of our compatriots have significantly improved. *What we probably need now is a greater focus on marketing* [italics added] and how to ensure that the deployment of our workers can be done faster, better, and at the least cost to them. We probably also ought to set the ground rules for being able to meet market demands very quickly (Annual Report, POEA, 2001:1).

There was much jubilation at the Department of Labor and Employment when the one million mark was breached in November 2006. The challenge for the Philippines is to reflect long and hard on how international migration can be an instrument for sustainable development. It is clear that the Philippines will have to go beyond a labor deployment orientation in its approach to international migration. It will require, first and foremost, the integration of international migration scenarios in development planning. Trends in labor and skilled migration have to be considered in relation to a national human resources development plan, and appropriate actions must be developed to address present and future needs. Career or vocational guidance in high schools needs been strengthened to help young people make choices about careers and life plans. Scholarship programs or subsidies may be offered to students taking up courses or training that are in short supply. Corollary to this is the monitoring of academic and training institutions to ensure that they provide quality education.

The state will also need to explore prospects for cooperating on development programs in engaging with receiving countries that draw on workers and



skilled personnel from the Philippines. The policies and programs on the return and reintegration of OFWs, the ties with skilled and highly trained overseas Filipinos, and transfer of knowledge and resources must be laid out. In relation to its diaspora population, the Philippines should continue and build on the good practices it has initiated in the area of migrant protection. Cooperation with migrant-oriented NGOs, faith-based organizations, and migrants' associations must be sought and strengthened. More studies are needed on how migrants' associations are formed (or disbanded), their transnational links to the home country, how they can be partners in development, and how the state and its institutions can play a more positive role in the transfer of contributions from overseas Filipinos to the country. The Philippines can also benefit from the experiences of other countries of origin and their engagement with their diaspora to bring about development in the home country – Mexico's *Tres por uno* model of cooperation with migrant and government counterparts, Taiwan's success in reversing the brain drain, and other examples may offer some insights on possibilities and much-needed proactive and fresh approaches.

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