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THE
MYTH OF MIGRATION
FOR DEVELOPMENT



LABOR EXPORT POLICY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES
MIGRANT WOMEN IN CRISIS: EXPERIENCES FROM ASIA
ON THE GLOBAL FORUM ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT
NO BORDERS FOR WORKERS' STRUGGLES

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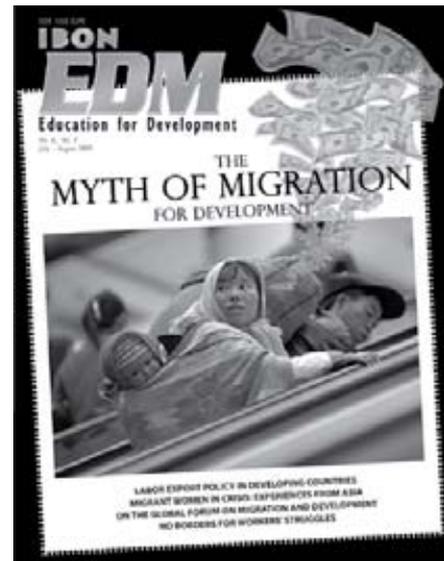
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IBON Foundation and Migrante International



The Myth of Migration for Development

Migration and remittances have become very significant for many economies and been hailed as offering new opportunities for economic development. And certainly migration is a right for people in their pursuit of decent work and livelihoods for themselves and their families. In particular much attention has been given to how remittances increase incomes of receiving households and how these have become an increasingly large part of financial flows to developing countries.

The benefits of migration and remittances to households and to economies as a whole are widely presumed – however their real contribution to development is much more qualified if these are assessed in their broader social, economic and political context. Indeed there is reason to be skeptical of any economic policy thrust that overly relies on these as a primary means to advance economic development.

Households and the Economy

There are two distinct aspects to migration and development. There is firstly the net effect on migrants and their families of a family member going abroad for work. The main benefit is the remittances which increase household incomes, while the main cost is the social stresses due to extended separation from family members.

Second, though less understood but also important, is the impact on the domestic foundations for economic development. While related they are however distinct because what may be good for the household may not necessarily be good for the economy – put another way, reducing the poverty of particular remittance-receiving households will not necessarily reduce poverty in the economy as a whole.



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Migration is doubtless effective in temporarily reducing poverty of particular households while remittances are received. But there is little reason to believe that it is able to make a dent on structural and systemic poverty especially in a country as large and with as many poor as the Philippines.

Overseas remittances have a direct and positive effect on recipient household incomes and reduce poverty, at least while these are received. Remittances self-evidently increase household incomes, purchasing power and consumption. The National Statistics Office's (NSO) October 2008 Survey of Overseas Filipinos (SOF) produced estimates of overseas Filipino workers' (OFW) remittances to households by major occupation group in the April-September 2008 period. It found that laborers and unskilled workers (18.8% of OFWs) remitted an average of P6,333 per month, clerks (5.1% of OFWs) P9,833, service workers and shop and market sales workers (13.5% of OFWs) P10,167, trades and related workers (17.4% of OFWs) P11,000, plant and machine operators and assemblers (15.0% of OFWs) P11,833, and technicians and associate professionals (8.1% of OFWs) P13,667.

To put this into context, the minimum wage in the National Capital Region (NCR) computed on a monthly basis currently stands at P11,620 (from a daily wage of P382). This implies that some 54.7% of OFWs are working abroad as laborers and unskilled workers, clerks, service workers and shop and market sales workers, and trades and related workers to be able to remit back even less than the NCR minimum wage. Meanwhile another 23.1% working as plant and machine operators and assemblers and as technicians and associate professionals are sending back only a little more than the NCR minimum wage.

At the household level there are benefits from investments in social capital – ensuring education and improving health through better diets and health care – which have potentially far-reaching social and economic benefits for the households concerned. The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' (BSP) 2nd quarter Consumer

Expectation Survey (CES) noted that 96.2% of OFW households used remittances to pay for food, 68.2% for education expenses and 62.4% for medical expenses. The same survey found 25.9% of OFW households buying appliances and other consumer durables, while only 10.8% were spending on purchase of houses and only 7.0% on cars or motor vehicles. Just some 8.3% responded that they were spending on investments.

Overseas remittances are also an important source of foreign exchange and purchasing power at the macroeconomic level. These are regarded as significantly contributing to a country's foreign exchange resources and boosting overall consumption spending as well as, to some degree, investments in real estate. Even as there is little reason to expect that saving rates of OFW households will be any different from the generally low savings rates of households in the country, the large amounts of remittances overall have prompted various efforts to leverage at least a portion of these as development finance' such as OFW bonds, in philanthropy, for community investment projects and others.

The BSP recorded US\$16.4 billion in remittances in 2008. This was much larger than net foreign direct investment (US\$1.52 billion) and far outstripped net exports of goods and services (US\$11.1 billion deficit) for the year, also according to BSP data. Remittances were also higher than foreign aid disbursed (US\$1.05 billion, according to the National Economic and Development Authority) and the increase in government foreign debt stock (US\$1.78 billion, according to the Bureau of the Treasury).

The income benefits from remittances for households are arguably considerably offset by the social harm for families due to separation

for long periods of time. There are serious social costs for families when one or both parents are forced abroad to find work. The extended and physical separation can cause severe stress on the relationship of the spouses with each other and can adversely affect the quality of upbringing of children left behind to be cared for by relatives. This should be considered as setting the outer limits to how far migration should be institutionalized as a generalized source of livelihood rather than for instance a stop-gap or exceptional measure. There is presumably a limit to how many families in the Philippines can have missing parents that, when breached, means unacceptably great harm and trauma to family life at the national level.



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Labor Export as State Policy

Nevertheless, the Philippine economy's dependence on migration and remittances is unprecedented. The 8.7 million Filipinos overseas in 2007 was already equivalent to over a quarter of the 34 million total employed Filipinos, some 23% of the labor force, and nearly a tenth of the population then of 88.7 million. Remittances have swelled dramatically over the last three decades with a nineteen-fold increase from an annual



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average of US\$823.7 million in 1981-1990 to US\$16.4 billion in 2008. Their equivalent share in GDP has correspondingly increased nine-fold from 1.3% in 1980 to breach the psychological barrier of 10% in 2005.

Deployments of Filipino migrant workers and remittances are high and sustained although generally no longer seeing the peak high double-digit growth rates in some years of the 1980s and 1990s. The number of overseas Filipinos nonetheless continues to rise with deployments reaching a record 1.24 million in 2007 or an average of some 3,400 Filipinos per day.

The Philippines is one of only five countries worldwide that receive more than US\$10 billion in remittances annually. In 2007 the country was the fourth-ranking remittance-receiving country in 2007 exceeded only by India, China and Mexico. These three economies are much bigger however – India's economy is seven times larger than the Philippines, China's twenty-one times larger, and Mexico's over six times larger – so their inward remittances are a much less significant share of their respective economies.

Measured as a share of GDP, the Philippines is the 19th-ranking remittance-receiving country in 2006. However the other countries in the Top 20 are much smaller and, excluding Nepal, their average population is just a little over four million. The Philippines' population is even larger than of these 18 small countries combined (summing to just 78.9 million in 2006). Nepal is the only other relatively large country in these upper ranks but its population of 28 million is not even a third of that in the Philippines. These give the Philippines the dubious distinction of being by far the largest among the most migrant- and remittance-dependent countries in the world.

Philippine migration policy is disproportionately focused on maximizing the overall inflow of remittances as a development goal in itself without weighing this against the welfare of migrant workers and their families. The government has, for many years now, been aggressive in crafting programs and services aimed at facilitating and encouraging migration. While acknowledging the many social costs, these are effectively downplayed and the resoluteness of the labor export effort often

creates the impression that migration is unequivocally beneficial for the migrants and their families. This is particularly done by overstating supposed development benefits for the economy and the income benefits for households. Migration has relatively immediate and visible quantitative benefits while its significant costs are more qualitative (ex. social costs) or otherwise difficult to quantify (ex. lost economic potential).

Remittances and Underdevelopment

But the fact remains that greatly increased overseas employment and remittances have not been accompanied by economic development for the Philippines as a whole. The country still suffers economic backwardness despite increasing migration and remittances over the last decades and since the start of the government's labor export policy in the mid-1970s. The absolute number of Filipinos in poverty continues to rise with a 530,642 increase in the number of poor families between 2000 and 2006 (to 4.7 million poor families) and a 2.1 million increase in the number of poor Filipinos (to 27.6 million in 2006), according to the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB). The poverty incidence measured in percentage terms also even increased from 30.0% of the population in 2003 to 32.9% in 2006.

Migration and remittances, despite the large numbers and vast sums involved, are still essentially disconnected from local economic activity aside from still being beyond much of the population which greatly limits their possible contribution to sustainable domestic development. Migrants go abroad, work abroad, and send back money to be spent. This is in contrast to agriculture or domestically-grounded industry which involves interacting with different economic units and sectors domestically, as well as creates valuable technological, multiplier and synergistic effects

– yet these are necessary to build solid economic foundations. Peso for peso the income earned from economic activity actually occurring in the country is more developmentally meaningful than from remittances merely received from abroad.

The limits of migration and remittances are little mitigated by efforts to leverage the contribution of remittances at the microeconomic and macroeconomic levels – i.e., improving migrant entrepreneurship, encouraging savings, pooling remittances for private and public investment projects, and so on. Indeed there are several factors negating the theoretically positive multiplier effects. There is not much of capital left behind for reinvestment with remittances largely going first to household debt repayments then to basic subsistence consumption expenditures on food, rent, education and health care. The lack of meaningful investment prospects in the country means that the largest part of 'investment' by OFWs is in mainly small-scale service sector activities such as tricycles, jeepneys, taxis, street restaurants and sari-sari stores. These are minimally productive in a deeper macroeconomic sense, generate few jobs and result in minimal domestic capital formation.

The multiplier effects of local spending are also limited by how much of these go to imported goods in the absence of domestic industry. Any supposed 'brain gain' is also somewhat exaggerated inasmuch as few migrants are really in skilled work and even fewer are in skilled work with technologies appropriate to the Philippine context. Moreover, technology transfer goes beyond just individual migrants 'knowing' the technology and also includes legal license to use these as well as having the local resources and opportunities to put technologies into practice.

From the perspective of the ruling elite, it appears that sending Filipinos is more politically expedient

than addressing basic structural problems. The economic experience of developed countries affirms the necessity at some point of a fairly long period of fundamental domestic economic policy reform measures. For a country in a stage of underdevelopment and of a size such as the Philippines this involves agrarian reform and building national industry. Labor export and remittances can play a role as a supplementary source of income and foreign exchange yet, on the contrary, it appears to have become a cornerstone of development strategy.

A plausible reason for this is that labor export does not threaten any entrenched domestic interests nor conflict with economic interests of foreign corporations – as for example land reform or national industrialization would. The resistance of landlords to agrarian reform and of foreign-dependent agricultural, industrial and service interests are among the local barriers to major policy reforms, aside from the influence exerted by foreign governments and international financial institutions. At the same time a steady flow of Filipinos going abroad and remittances make it convenient for the government to pay less attention to domestic unemployment, underemployment and inequality.

Migrant Workers Rights

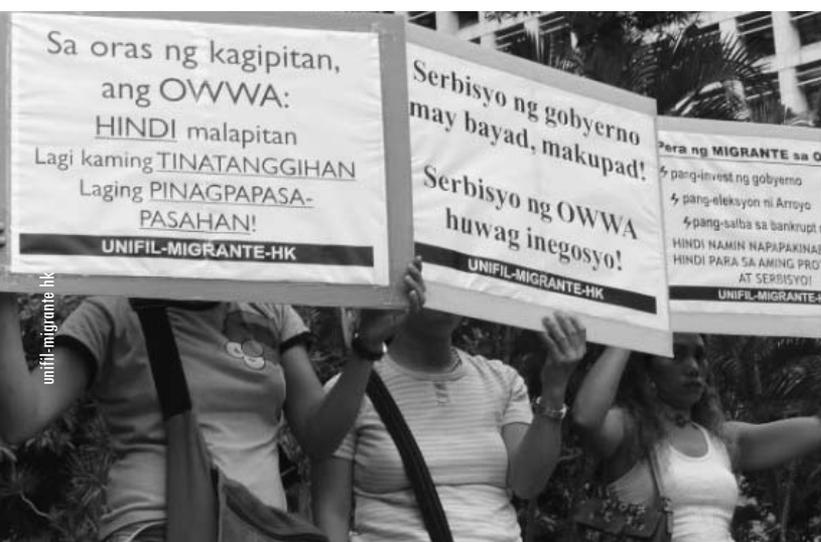
The economic compulsion for the government to keep exporting Filipinos especially to maintain or increase remittances unfortunately appears overriding and precludes undertaking any measures that, directly or indirectly, would constrict the flow of migration. This is even if such measures would immediately and in the long-run go far in lessening the incidence of abuses and migrant rights violations. Even worse is that pursuit of a cheap labor policy could encourage a 'race to the bottom' with the government effectively competing with other labor exporting countries in giving the cheapest and most docile labor to potential employers.

In the context of a labor export policy there is then an underlying conflict between the government as promoter/recruiter of migration in pursuit of overall macroeconomic ends and the government as monitor/protector of migrant rights and welfare which can move in different directions. This goes far in explaining for instance why many migrants in distress are prompted even by Philippine embassies and consulates to essentially concede the violations of their rights by employers.

Continued promotion of migration will undeniably increase the number of Filipinos put in vulnerable situations as well as strain already insufficient national and overseas mechanisms for protection.

Hence one clear way to gauge the government's commitment to promoting migrant rights is whether it is willing to scrap its labor export policy altogether.

This is an extract from the Migrant Workers' Human Rights Research Report prepared by IBON Foundation and Migrante International for the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines.



Migrant workers in Sabah: unsecure, abused and exploited

AsPac groups hold 5-day FFM in Malaysia

Rey Asis



Malaysia is a hotbed of abuses against migrant workers. After the Fact Finding Mission (FFM) in Sabah organized by the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM) and participated in by various NGO's and migrant organizations, this fact is even better established.

The FFM, conducted last June 11 to 16, 2009 was initiated by APMM, in cooperation with TENAGANITA and Migrante International, to ascertain the concrete situation of migrant workers in Sabah, particularly that of undocumented migrants and their families. It aimed to establish facts that can be used to advance the advocacy for the migrant workers and against the arrest, detention and deportation of undocumented migrants. Additionally, it also sought to serve as a springboard for cooperation among groups in Sabah and elsewhere where the rights and wellbeing of migrants are at stake.

Members of the FFM included Rey Asis of Asia Pacific Students and Youth Association (ASA), Roy Anunciacion of Migrante International, Aurelio Estrada and Ade Ahmed Faidullo of the APMM, Cong. Luzviminda Ilagan of Gabriela Women's Party (GWP), Fajar Kurniawan of Lumbaga Banduan Hukum (LBH), Baseer Naveed of the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), Steven Ng and Florida Sandanasamy of Tenaganita in Malaysia, Antonio Salcedo of Osan Migrant Center in South Korea, and Amy Sim of Engender.

In the five days of the FFM, the participants conducted interviews and meetings with migrant workers, NGOs, government officials and even church people who provide assistance to migrants to get a clear picture of the practices and policies in Sabah on foreign workers.

In Kota Kinabalu, they held separate meetings with Jasmih Bin Selamat, Assistant Secretary of the Sabah branch of SUHAKAM, Umbara Setiwan, Vice Consul for the Indonesian Consulate in Sabah, and Bapak Imran Hanafi, principal of Sekolah Indonesia Kota Kinabalu.

For two consecutive evenings, the group went to two different migrant colonies where they interviewed migrant workers and their families. Yohanes, a known personality and migrant leader within the Indonesian migrant community, was interviewed as well.

On the 14th of June, the group was divided into two: one went to Tawau while the other to Sandakan.

The Sandakan team got to interview migrant Filipinos and Indonesians of Papuan descent. The meetings were held in the auspices of mainly Catholic parishes who were providing support to them. Meetings were likewise held with Bishop Julius Dusin Gitom of Sandakan, priests and other lay people who were supportive of the migrants' cause.

A meeting with Dicasaran Acraman, administrative officer of the Philippine Embassy in Malaysia and head of the four-man team in Sandakan, also ensued.

The Tawau team looked into the situation of migrant workers in palm oil plantations. There, they interviewed migrant workers, mostly undocumented, in Tawau proper and Semporna. They also headed to Lahad Datu where they met with Filipino and Indonesian migrant workers

encountering problems of exploitation in a palm oil plantation. They likewise met with church leaders at the Tawau office of Tenaganita.

On the evening of their last day, both groups recouped in Kota Kinabalu to share their findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Major findings of the FFM were:

1. Migrant workers remain to be targets of oppression and exploitation. Even migrant workers with legal working permits have been arrested and detained.
2. From the time they leave their home countries, they are already caught in a vicious debt cycle as recruitment agencies and employers overcharge them on processing, visa and levy.
3. Migrant workers are forced into debt bondage as employers, both in urban and rural areas, hold their passports, deduct from their salaries without any justification and provide no benefits.
4. Corruption in the Malaysian government agencies has been alleged as immigration authorities have been reportedly collecting fees from migrant workers especially at the entry points and Malaysian police receiving or demanding bribes in exchange for the freedom of arrested migrant workers.
5. This web of deceit and corruption apparently leads to the seemingly easy inflow of migrant workers who are amassing by the minute despite massive crackdowns.
6. SUHAKAM, Malaysia's National Commission on Human Rights, has admitted its limited capacity to effect change with regard to the situation of migrant workers. As its representative has stated, the Malaysian government itself does very little in resolving the problem and has, in turn, become part of the problem.

7. Indonesian migrant workers have little trust for the Indonesian Consulate's capacity to address their problems. From marriage issues to urgent labor concerns, the Indonesian Consulate in Sabah has remained inconsistent and hence unreliable in providing support to Indonesian migrants.
8. While a memorandum of agreement exists to ensure Indonesian migrant workers' rights, a problem ensues with one stipulation in the agreement allowing employers to hold their employees' passports.
9. The establishment of Sekolah Indonesia Kota Kinabalu is a recognized development in the agreement between Malaysian and Indonesian governments to provide education to Indonesian children. While tuition is free, certain aspects of the program remain problematic, pertaining to the migration status of the children, the proximity of the school to migrant workers' communities, among others.
10. There are more school-age children and youth in plantation areas yet provision of education is much more difficult due to a number of reasons: distance of the plantations from urban areas, lack or absence thereof of electricity, lack of access to needed materials, lack or absence thereof of school facilities, among others.
11. There is no functioning Philippine Consulate in Sabah due to the contention between the Philippines and Malaysia on the Sabah islands.
12. While a temporary working office in Kota Kinabalu has been established, services to migrant workers will depend mainly on the availability of the consulate representatives themselves.
13. The Philippine government's four-person team in Sandakan only provides passport services to its constituents. It is found out, however, that certain private establishments provide the same services and with the knowledge of the head of the four-person team.
14. No update has been obtained with regards to the mechanisms created by the Philippines-Malaysia working group as the Philippine Consulate representative chooses not to comment on the matter while the representative from SUHAKAM has denied any knowledge of such working group.
15. Trafficking of women and children has been noted through interviews made with migrant workers.
16. Institutions of faith (e.g. Roman Catholic, Anglican) with its organizations are the only existing groups in Sabah that provide assistance and refuge to migrant workers. Aside from the team by Tenaganita based in Tawau, there are no non-secular organizations that cater to the demands and needs of migrant workers.

With such findings, there can be no doubt that advocacy, organizing and education work for migrant workers in Malaysia are very much imperative. Services also should be made available to those who encounter abuses or any type of problems as a worker.

Malaysia indeed is deserving of its reputation as one of the worst areas where migrants are treated as no less than slaves with very minimal rights and protection. It is hoped that with the FFM, advocacy for migrants will be strengthened and actions would be taken to alleviate their plight.#

This is reprinted from APMM News Digest, June 2009. Monthly Newsletter of the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM). Retrieved from <http://www.apmigrants.org/publications/ND%20June%202009.pdf>

Workers on the Move

The Global Crisis and Migrant Labor

IBON International

Migrant workers, faith-based communities and international activists held a public forum in New York last June 22, 2009, examining the current global economic crisis and proposals to deal with the crisis from the perspective of working people, particularly migrant workers. This was held just before the start of the United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development which ran from June 24 to 26, 2009 at the UN General Headquarters.

The forum entitled, “Workers on the Move”, was sponsored by Ibon Foundation, the World Council of Churches, the International Migrants Alliance and RESIST! (International People’s Campaign to Confront Crisis and War) in light of the global financial and economic crisis which continues to deepen and cause untold suffering among working people in the world.



Jonna Buidres

The International Labour Organisation estimates that as many as 52 million more workers would join the ranks of the unemployed this year alone plus millions more in the next few years as the global economy continues to stagnate. Migrant workers, especially women workers and those in irregular status, are among the most vulnerable sectors in the population amidst the downturn as they are among the first to be laid-off or forced to accept lower wages and poorer working conditions in order to retain or get new jobs and continue to send remittances to their loved ones. They are also used as scapegoats of the jobs crisis, hence face increasing discrimination, xenophobia and racism.

The panel of speakers at the Forum included Paul Quintos, Policy Officer of Ibon Foundation; Teresa Gutierrez, Deputy Secretary General of the International Migrants Alliance (IMA); and Athena Peralta, consultant for the Poverty, Wealth and Ecology Project of the World Council of Churches.

Mr. Quintos discussed the roots of the global financial crisis, tracing its history to long-running imbalances in the real economy, gross inequities in the distribution of social wealth, and monopoly capitalist control over the global production and trading system. Ms. Gutierrez discussed the implications of the crisis on working people, sharing insights from her participation in migrant workers organizing and mobilizations in the U.S. Ms. Peralta presented an ethical and moral critique of the global economic system which operates on the basis of concentrating wealth in the hands of the few while impoverishing those who are the real creators of wealth – the working people who comprise the majority.

All speakers and reactors from the audience emphasized the need to globalize workers’ response and solidarity to confront the current crisis and build the foundations of a just, equitable and sustainable economic order in place of the old.



Labor export policy of developing countries: The Case of the Philippines and Indonesia

Neoliberal globalization policies have exacerbated the perennial economic crisis in poor countries resulting in greater poverty, unemployment, and underemployment. A further consequence of this is the forced migration of peoples from these poor countries who, for lack of options at home, find work overseas. But this deplorable condition is being depicted as a virtue by many developing country governments who have resorted to exporting labor as de facto state policy.

Labor export is also being promoted by international institutions such as the United Nations (UN) and the World Bank. For instance, on November 15, 2004, the UN, in its Eighty-eighth Session, declared that: “The question is no longer whether to have migration, but rather how to manage migration effectively to enhance the positive side of the tally sheet and reduce the negative. Which forms of migration are desirable, and should be facilitated and under what circumstances? Which forms are undesirable and need to be rechannelled?”¹

The UN has even gone so far as to attach the promotion of labor migration to the trade liberalization agenda of the World Trade Organization (WTO). In the lead up to the WTO Ministerial meeting last December 2005 in Hongkong, the UN declared during its Ninetieth Session on October 21, 2005 that:²

“It is difficult to envisage a world where there is an increasingly free flow of capital, goods

and services without the concomitant increase in the movement of people. Yet, as economies and labour markets are further integrated through the process of globalization, barriers to the movement of people continue to be cited as a major impediment to potential global welfare gains that would benefit developing countries, developed countries and individual migrants and their families. Even a modest liberalization of the temporary movement of persons to provide services under Mode 4 of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) – by all accounts only a small percentage of annual cross-border movements – has been projected to produce annual global welfare gains of between USD 150 billion and USD 200 billion, **outstripping gains expected from further liberalization of trade in goods.**” (underscoring supplied)

Likewise, the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) which began meeting in 2006 promotes the idea “that migration is an opportunity, not a threat, and as such, migration policies can contribute to development and to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.”³

With such high expectations of the economic gains from migration, the governments of the Philippines and Indonesia have resorted to exporting their own people as a development strategy.

The Philippines

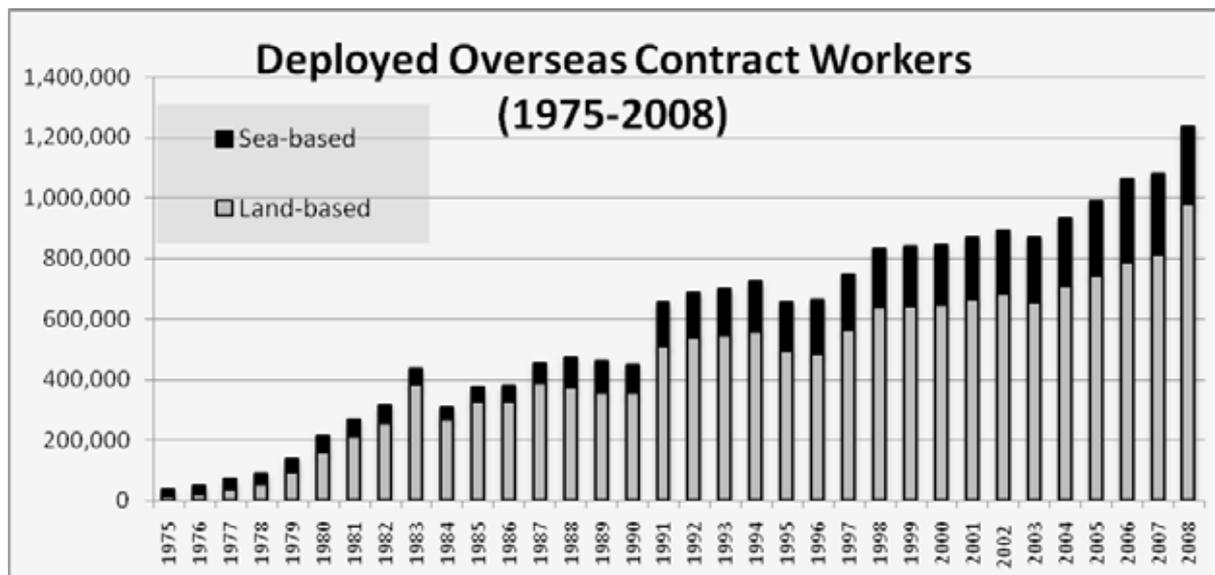
The Philippines started to systematically deploy Filipinos for work overseas during the time of then President Marcos in the mid-70s. This new wave of labor migration came at a time when there was a huge unemployment and underemployment crisis in the country and a social volcano was erupting. While the Marcos regime said that it is only a “stop-gap measure”, poverty as a result of chronic economic crisis continued. And so successive regimes not only continued what Marcos started but institutionalized and intensified the export of labor.

Each successive regime after Marcos has denied that the government is implementing a labor export program (LEP). Under the Cory Aquino regime, the LEP was considered to be an important component of the country’s so-called “development program”. The Ramos regime referred to it as the “international sharing of human resources” and even concocted the “Magna Carta for OFWs and their Families” or Republic Act 8042 when the nation arose and

protested its negligence and inutility over the hanging of overseas Filipino workers (OFW) Flor Contemplacion in Singapore. The Estrada regime vigorously continued from where the Ramos regime left off.

And when the Arroyo regime came into power, one of her first policy announcements practically stated that Filipinos working overseas should “stay abroad”. As a showcase of the LEP’s place in the national economy, President Arroyo passed Presidential Decree No. 76 declaring the Year 2002 as the “Year of the Overseas Employment Providers”. Moreover, her government has promoted globalisation and has lobbied at the WTO for the removal of trade barriers to the export of services and capital through GATS and Mode 4.⁴

It is not at all surprising that the House of Representatives recently passed House Bill 387, otherwise known as “An Act Liberalizing and Accelerating the Processing and Deployment of Overseas Filipino Workers.” This bill would fast track the processing and deployment of OFWs. This bill no longer hides its intention of actively promoting overseas employment “to boost the national income “. In fact, the author of said bill, Rep. Roilo S. Golez (Paranaque City), said this measure corrects the Ramos-era policy that “downplays” the export of Filipino labor abroad.⁵



Rep. Golez further acknowledged that “Our local economy cannot adequately sustain our population growth [thus] the role of OFWs in promoting the national economy and keeping the national income afloat is indubitable.”⁶

In Asia, the Philippines has consistently topped the list of major exporters of human labour since 1996. It is followed by Thailand (763,258), Indonesia (723,139), Sri Lanka (651,635) and Nepal (227,742).

Indonesia

Indonesia’s LEP, on the other hand, is called “Pelita” or “Repelita” (Labour Export and the National Development Programme). It was started by the Suharto dictatorship for similar purposes as his counterpart in the Philippines, namely: 1) to stall the social unrest due to unemployment and economic pressures; and 2) to generate much-needed income for Indonesia. Through a decree issued in 2002 by the Ministry for Labour and Transmigration, Indonesia’s LEP was systematized and institutionalized with the following features:⁷

1. Full deregulation of Indonesian labour export industry: The Indonesian Labour Enterprise (Perusahaan Jasa Tenaga Kerja Indonesia or PJTKI) is given the full authority to look for job opportunities abroad and in deploying Indonesian workers. The Indonesian Consulate approves the job orders in receiving countries. Upon approval, the process of

recruiting Indonesian migrant workers (IMWs) is done by partner recruitment agencies in Indonesia. The role of the Ministry of Labour and Transmigration is reduced to approving the licenses for PJTKI and “verifying job orders”.

2. No direct hiring: PJTKI has the sole control of deploying IMWs. Every IMW has to pass through PTJJKI and its counterpart recruitment agency in Indonesia.
3. No standard contract: Contracts are based on the host country’s policy. The Indonesian government takes a “hands-off” policy and sets no benchmark with regards the IMW’s rights and living and working conditions. It leaves important issues such as minimum wage and other benefits to the decision of the host government and divests itself of political and social responsibility to its nationals.
4. Fees charged to IMWs: Because of the deregulation policy, fees charged by recruitment agencies have no fixed amount. This subjects the IMWs to further exploitation by unscrupulous agencies.

The labor export policy of developing countries amounts to a violation of migrant workers rights. Ms. Eni Lestari, Chairperson of the International Migrants Alliance (IMA) summed it up in her keynote speech at the International Assembly of Migrants and Refugees (IAMR) in Manila on October 28, 2008:

Table 1. Total Number of Migrants Deployed for the Past 5 Years in Selected Countries

COUNTRIES	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Philippines	660,122	747,696	755,684	831,643	841,628
Nepal	2,334	3,408	194,000	28,000	No data
Bangladesh	No data	No data	267,667	268,182	28,721
Sri Lanka	162,572	150,269	159,680	179,114	No data
Thailand	185,436	183,671	191,735	202,416	No data
Indonesia	220,162	502,977	No data	No data	No data

Sources: Scalabrini Migration Centre; POEA

“The governments that comprise the United Nations are the very first one to violate our rights. The moment they failed to give adequate and decent jobs to their own people, they already violate our rights as a people. This failure has forced us as a people to look for greener pastures abroad. The moment they depressed the wages of workers, teachers, health workers, etc. in favor of capitalist super profits, they violate our economic rights as a people. The moment these governments systematically export their own people just like commodities to be bought and sold – they definitely infringe on our right to human development. This is forced migration and modern-day slavery, and not development. And I dare say that these governments discussing about us but without us, this GFMD is the Global Forum on Modern-Day Slavery.”

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Table 2. Indonesian Migrant Workers Abroad According to Countries of Destination

DESTINATION	PELITA I	PELITA II	PELITA III	PELITA IV	PELITA V	TOTAL	(%)
COUNTRY	1969-74	1974-79	1979-84	1984-89	1989-94		
Saudi Arabia	-	3817	55976	223573	268858	552224	62.9
Other Gulf States	-	1235	5349	3428	5145	15157	1.7
Malaysia	12	536	11441	37785	122941	172715	19.7
Singapore	8	2432	5007	10537	34496	52483	6
Brunei	-	-	-	920	7794	9714	1
Hong Kong	44	1297	1761	1735	3579	8512	1
Japan	292	451	920	395	2435	4497	0.5
Korea	-	-	-	-	1693	1693	0.2
Taiwan	37	-	-	178	2025	2040	0.3
Holland	3332	6637	10104	4375	4336	28784	3.3
USA	146	176	2981	6897	9842	20042	2.3
Others	1653	461	2871	2439	2832	10256	1.2
Total	5624	1742	96410	292262	465972	877310	100

Source: Hugo, 1995

Athena Peralta

Migrant Women in Crisis: Experiences from Asia



Migration and the global financial and economic meltdown

When the U.S. housing “bubble” burst in 2008, it set off an unprecedented financial and economic crisis in the world’s largest economy that was rapidly transmitted, in an era of financial and economic globalisation, to other parts of the world. The global recession has wiped out millions of jobs and thrown many more people into poverty. An important question is: what are the impacts on migrant workers and migrant women in particular who make up half of the migrant labour force?

Driven by processes of global economic restructuring, labour migration has increased steadily in the last three decades. In Asia – a migrant-receiving as well as a migrant-sending region – millions of women have been “pushed”

by economic desperation and “pulled” by the “care deficit” and demand for cheap labour in industrialised societies into largely one-sided migratory flows from poverty-stricken to more affluent nations. Migrant remittances or the money sent home by overseas workers to their families, totalling a sizeable US\$ 308 billion in 2008,¹ are important by-products of these movements. Remitted funds do not only support migrant families’ basic needs, they also generate much-needed foreign exchange for many developing economies.

As the current global economic downturn continues to dampen overall demand for labour and opportunities for migration, the extent to which the crisis has affected female and male migrant workers and their families – in terms of joblessness and deportation, deteriorating working conditions and decline in remittances – merits particular attention.



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Migrant workers' vulnerability

Migrant workers are among the most vulnerable in periods of recession. Because of their relatively weak bargaining positions, heightened in some cases by the absence of legal documentation, they are often the first to be retrenched. Moreover, mistaken perceptions that “migrants take jobs” and “compete for welfare benefits” stoke xenophobia and calls to clamp down on the entry of migrants in receiving countries.²

One out of ten Filipinos are working abroad. Data from the Philippine’s Department of Labor and Employment reveal that 4,000 Filipino migrant workers had been displaced as of 20 January 2009 due to the current crisis. The bulk had been working in Taiwan (Province of China) (3,494), while the rest had been employed in the United Arab Emirates (297), Brunei (69), and Macau (45).³

Bangladesh is another migrant-sending nation. The Bangladeshi Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training reports that 13,000 Bangladeshi workers were repatriated in the first two months of 2009 alone.⁴

In Malaysia, a country that has relied heavily on a large migrant labour force in pursuing an export-oriented growth strategy, around three million workers in a total workforce of 11 million are migrants and an estimated

800,000 are undocumented.⁵ Indonesians and Bangladeshis comprise over half of the foreign workers in the country, with many of them involved in construction and manufacturing. At the start of the year, the Malaysian government announced that it would cut back on the number of migrants to 1.95 million in



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2010 and 1.62 million by 2015; the visas of 55,000 Bangladeshi workers were revoked; and companies were instructed to follow a “foreign workers out first” policy in case of retrenchment.⁶

At the same time, Malaysia is an exporter of labour to neighbouring Singapore. Between 10 to 12 percent of the approximately 300,000 Malaysian foreign workers in Singapore are expected to be let go in the wake of the crisis.⁷

In Thailand, the crisis has caused substantial and adverse changes in the lives of migrants from beleaguered Burma.⁸ Retrenchments have increased. Incomes have declined, affecting migrants’ ability to support their families. And labour mobility has been increasingly limited due to the scarcity of jobs.

Gender-based segregation in migrant jobs

While many migrant workers have lost their employment in the global recession,

there appear to be differentiated effects on women and men due in part to gender-based segregation in jobs. Prevalent notions, for instance, of women as “caregivers” and men as better suited to tasks that deal with machinery and require brawn are reflected in job assignments given to migrant workers. Female migrants are indeed noticeably present in domestic care services and skilled health care professions. However, they are also to be found in export-oriented manufacturing industries such as garments and electronics, particularly in Taiwan, Malaysia and Thailand. Meanwhile, male migrants tend to be concentrated in construction, manufacturing and agriculture.

Studies indicate that the current crisis has threatened the employment security of specific categories of migrant workers.⁹ Jobs in the export

sector – where both low-skilled female and male migrant workers are present – and in construction – where a preponderance of male migrants find employment – have been especially at risk. Meanwhile, jobs in the public health sector – usually held by skilled female migrants (e.g. nurses) – and even in domestic care appear to be relatively protected. Because of the “necessity of work” – that is, the need to keep up reproductive chores within households especially in recessionary times – health and domestic workers could be less impacted on by the current crisis.¹⁰

In the provinces of Chiang Mai and Mae Sot in Thailand, research shows that women migrant workers are bearing a disproportionate share

of current economic burdens.¹¹ Semi-skilled factory workers in knitting factories – where women are in the majority – saw significant cuts in working hours and therefore in income.

Deteriorating working conditions, especially for undocumented women migrants

The above notwithstanding, the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women points out that, contrary to expectation, the current crisis could be affecting women’s labour migration to a lesser degree than men’s at the aggregate level.¹² This is based on the

observation that more contractual workers in export-oriented manufacturing and construction appear to have been laid off compared with undocumented labourers – of whom

women make up the majority. The conjecture is that contractual workers may have been replaced with “cheaper” migrant labour.

Nonetheless, according to the International Labour Organisation, “the deteriorating working terms and conditions of women employed in the informal economy also require monitoring... The plight of domestic workers not benefiting from the protection of labour laws in most countries deserve particular attention in times of crisis”.¹³

No large-scale deportations of migrants

Notably, large-scale deportations and repatriations, such as those that occurred at



the height of the 1997-1998 Asian financial crisis, have not taken place thus far.¹⁴ This may be attributable in part to the global nature of the current crisis, which has adversely affected the demand for labour in both sending and receiving countries. Migrants could be hesitant to return home where the economic situation would still be more depressed than in their host countries. As previously indicated, those that have lost their contractual employment may



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have preferred to stay in their host countries, accepting “distress employment” or informal, irregular and precarious work.¹⁵

Women are still migrating

Indeed, more women are searching for employment in foreign lands in light of rising male unemployment or underemployment in their countries of origin.¹⁶ While migrant outflows in some origin countries seem to have tapered off,¹⁷ the World Bank points out that “new migration flows are still positive, implying that the stock of existing migrants continues to increase.”¹⁸ Migrant outflows from the Philippines increased by 28 per cent in 2008 compared to the previous year with 1.38 million Filipinos leaving the country to find work.¹⁹

Remittances to households have slowed down

The current crisis is expected to make a dent on migrant remittances even though these are

considered more crisis-resilient than other financial flows. Based on the 2008 trends – which indicated a slowdown in remittance flows in the second half of 2008 – the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development projects remittances to the Asia-Pacific region to decrease by 4.2 percent in 2009.²⁰ Since remittances help to augment household budgets, this could have potentially adverse consequences for children’s – particularly girls’ – access to food, schooling, health services and housing. Roughly 80 percent of funds remitted to households are spent for basic needs and services.²¹

Other experts posit, however, that the deceleration in remittance flows may be caused by a reduced confidence in transmitting funds home through the formal banking system following the collapse of major banks in some host countries.²² Migrants could be remitting more money home through informal channels.

Compared to men, women migrants tend to remit money on a more constant basis.²³ Gendered ideas that women – even if they are unmarried – must sacrifice (i.e. work more and save more) for their families remain established. A study of Filipino domestic helpers in Rome reveals that women migrants often go to the extent of taking out loans at high interest rates just to send money to their families.²⁴ The current crisis could intensify such behaviour.

The need for gender-responsive protection for migrants

The current global financial and economic crisis underscores the importance of protective policies for migrant workers in times of depression. Effective policies and measures to uphold migrants’ rights, especially in terms of working and living conditions in the event of retrenchment, must be put in

place and their implementation must be strictly monitored. Particularly in Asia where migration is taking on an increasingly female face, such policies ought to be responsive to the differentiated experiences of female and male migrant workers. But women migrants are not simply waiting for government protection. From Manila to Dubai, from Java to Holland, migrant workers are organizing themselves and actively working to defend their rights and realize their demands.

In Japan, women migrants are campaigning for the recognition of their children as Japanese nationals. Domestic workers are fighting for their inclusion in the wage hike in Hong Kong. Migrant workers in Macau only recently started calling on for the scrapping of various anti-migrant policies. In the Philippines, Migrante International is now gearing up for securing representation in Congress to do what the government has long failed to do – address the needs of migrants and their families. These are but a few of the countless other actions that migrants are engaged in to secure a better future for themselves, their families and their fellow workers.

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On the Global Forum on Migration and Development

Initiative Committee for the Second International Assembly of Migrants and Refugees (IAMR)



www.gfmd-fimmd.org

The 3rd Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) will be held in Athens, Greece on November 4-5, 2009. The first was held in Brussels in July 2007 and the second in Manila in October 2008.

Two things make the GFMD in Athens particularly significant. It will take place in the midst of the worst global economic crisis since the Great Depression. It will also take place in Europe where migrant workers particularly the millions of undocumented face an uncertain future in an increasingly unfriendly environment with the upcoming implementation in 2010 of the European Union (EU) Return Directive.

Every country without exception is bound to be hit hard by the current global economic and financial crisis. But the most vulnerable and expected to be the worst hit are the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America and their migrant workers in the highly-industrialized countries in North America, Japan and Europe.

Before the outbreak of the current crisis, the working classes in all countries for three decades have suffered from an all-round attack on their livelihood and rights. They were blamed for the recurring crisis of the system and subjected to cutbacks in wages, mass unemployment and loss of

job security, attacks on their trade union rights, loss of medical insurance, etc. Now they are being made to shoulder the burden of the current crisis with governments spending the people's money to bail out the big capitalists who have been the very cause of the crisis.

The Washington Consensus which served as the development paradigm for the global economy in the 1990s under the banner of "free market globalization" is now under severe questioning. Even governments who are its staunchest proponents are expediently setting aside some of its most sacred tenets in order to stabilize the economy that is now in complete disarray. Blind faith in the "market regulating itself" is dead.

But this large scale intervention in the economy by the state is but another form of accumulation of capital at the expense of the workers. Whether under the so-called neoliberal policy of "free markets" or the neo-Keynesian policy of

state intervention in the economy, the working classes and the oppressed peoples of the world are victims of exploitation.

The global crisis is going to be a double whammy for many of the migrant-sending countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa. Aside from losing export markets and foreign investments, they are bound to suffer from a drastic reduction in remittances. For many of them, remittances form the single biggest source of foreign exchange earnings.

Many of the migrant-sending countries have become highly dependent on remittances to keep their economies afloat. Receiving countries on the other hand have taken advantage of cheap migrant workers to fill in the gap for skilled and unskilled labor in times of boom. But in the face of the current global crisis, migrant workers are bound to be the first to go when companies in the receiving countries begin firing workers on a massive scale.

The volume of remittances worldwide has grown at an incredible pace. According to the World Bank, the growth in remittances has outpaced the growth of Official Development Aid (ODA) and Foreign Direct Investments (FDI). It is understandable therefore why many governments are eager to get their hands on this pie.

Worldwide remittances rose seven percent in 2007 to \$318 billion according to the latest World Bank report. India topped the global list of the remittance recipients with \$27 billion, followed by China with \$25.7 billion, Mexico with \$25 billion, and the Philippines with \$17 billion.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, remittances reached \$65.5 billion in 2007. In Africa, Nigeria received \$3.3 billion in 2007 with remittances from Nigerians in Europe and the United States accounting for the bulk

of it. Kenya ranked second as destination for remittances in Africa with \$1.3 billion, ahead of Sudan (\$1.2 billion), Senegal and Uganda (\$0.9 million each), and South Africa (\$0.7 million).

Migration and “Development”

The majority of migrant sending countries belong to the countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America that are non-industrialized, economically backward and agrarian with the accompanying mass of unemployed and poor people in the cities and countryside. These countries were earlier the victims of direct colonial rule and later of indirect neocolonial domination by the western capitalist states that now compose the “developed” world. Colonial and neocolonial rule exploited these countries, and such exploitation is the main historical cause of their underdevelopment.

The phenomenon of massive forced migration of people from these countries to seek employment in the industrialized countries of North America, Japan and Europe is a direct consequence of the underdevelopment caused by that historical injustice and exploitation. There is also a great number of refugees fleeing persecution and wars often instigated or waged by the powerful countries contesting for regional and world dominance. The slogan of a multinational migrants and refugees network in Germany sums it up most appropriately: “We are here because you have destroyed our lands.”

The fundamental solution to the problem of forced migration in the poverty-stricken semi-colonial countries is all-rounded development. This development must be mainly self-reliant development making use of the local human and material resources. Foreign aid from the exploiting countries should only be supplementary and must be considered as payment of historical debt.

Such kind of development can only happen through a radical and fundamental change of the present world order. It will call no less for the dismantling of political and economic structures that perpetuate the unequal relations between the exploited and exploiting countries.

Pending such radical change, migrants and refugee organizations must fight for their legitimate rights under the present system even as they work together with the other oppressed and exploited sectors in society to strengthen the factors that would make the realization of the fundamental change in the present world order possible.



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The GFMD process

The GFMD defines itself as an “informal multilateral and state-led multi-stakeholder process” that is meant to “identify practical and feasible ways to strengthen the mutually beneficial relationship between migration and development.”

In its so-called Operating Modalities, the GFMD states that its deliberations are covered by the Chatham House Rule. Simply put, it means that the deliberations are shrouded in secrecy. In number 7 of the said Operating Modalities, participation of civil society is defined thus: “Appropriate arrangements shall be made for the participation of civil society, including relevant NGOs.”

Our experience with the first two GFMDs has only confirmed our worst fears. The GFMD is

just one more of those state-led initiatives that result in backdoor agreements between states at the expense of the people who are the most important stakeholders in the whole process.

In Manila, there was only token consultation with CSOs to serve as window-dressing for agreements and deals sealed behind the people’s backs.

At the second GFMD in Manila, the International Assembly of Migrants and Refugees

(IAMR) distinguished itself from the officially sanctioned CSO parallel forum for being the real voice of migrants, immigrants and refugees. The participants of IAMR were genuine organizations of migrants and refugees from all over the world. They were joined by advocates for migrants’ rights who played a secondary and supportive role. The IAMR could rightly say that in its assembly the “migrants were speaking for themselves” as opposed to both the state forum and the officially sanctioned parallel CSO forum “who claimed to speak on behalf of the migrants”.

The IAMR took a critical position on the concept of development being promoted by the states in the GFMD and the policy on migrants of both the sending and receiving countries.

It took a critical position against the neoliberal paradigm of development that has not only failed to deliver on its promise of development but actually ruined many of the third world economies. Trade liberalization has wreaked havoc on local industries. Trade liberalization has ruined their agriculture due to unfair

competition from highly subsidized commodity exports of imperialist-capitalist countries. The resultant destruction of jobs in industry and agriculture has aggravated the problem of forced migration in the exploited countries.

Deregulation of foreign investments by capitalist countries made it easier for light-footed capital to move in and out of the semi-colonial countries and for the repatriation of profits. Such foreign investments only took advantage of the cheap, domestic labor while contributing little to the development of the local economies.

The migrants organizations in IAMR took issue with the governments of sending countries for blindly embracing the “neoliberal” globalization paradigm that further worsened the exploitation and poverty in those countries. Earnings from remittances are not used for development but to pay off unjust foreign debts that have accumulated over decades of unequal economic relations between the exploiting and exploited countries. Migrant workers are also milked by their own governments through onerous fees with the money often going to the pockets of corrupt officials and bureaucrats.

In recent years, migrant workers in the industrialized countries have faced increasing uncertainty about their future. Because of the creeping economic crisis in these countries, anti-migrant sentiment and legislation have increased. Claims that “foreigners are taking away our jobs” and “migrants cause unemployment” are propagated in order to divide native and migrant workers.

Receiving economies, particularly industrial economies, gain much from migrant labour. Skilled migrant workers provide human capital to the recipient economy without having to shoulder the costs of training and education (the mirror image of the “brain drain” in the

economy of emigration). When industrialized economies suffer a shortage of labor in some sectors, inflows of unskilled migrants benefit capital holders and the more skilled segments of the labor force.

In exploiting the workers, capital does not distinguish workers by their colour, religion, national origin, etc. For capital, labor is a commodity from which it can draw and accumulate wealth through unpaid work and cheap wages. The intensification of exploitation through neoliberal policies results in the precarisation of labor, the abolition of social insurance and the dismantling of democratic rights. The chauvinist circles, the most reactionary and racist forces instigate hatred not only against other countries but also in their own backyard using racial discrimination. Racial profiling is the latest form of racial discrimination that has emerged in this age of “War on Terror”, which victimizes migrant workers most of all.

The issues that migrants/immigrants and refugees are faced with can be solved only through their own struggle and through their own migrant communities. Problems can be solved and rights can be secured only when their struggles are conducted jointly with the workers in each country, with the participation of all the progressive people and with the progressive political and union organizations. After all, workers in the capitalist countries and migrant workers are class brothers and sisters.

The initiative committee for the 2nd IAMR is composed of the following organizations:

1. *International Migrants Alliance (IMA)*
2. *ATIK*
3. *Migrante Europe*
4. *IBON International*
5. *Class March (Greece)*
6. *Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM)*

Teresa Gutierrez

No Borders for Workers' Struggles

It has been over three years since the massive demonstrations led by immigrants occurred in the U.S.

During the spring of 2006, millions of workers came out of the shadows in record numbers in response to escalated government repression against undocumented workers.

It was a sea change, an upheaval and a flex of muscles by some of the most oppressed in this country.

Although there has been little progress made around the principal demand—legalization—and the U.S. government has not only continued its war on immigrants, it has intensified it, the struggle for immigrant rights has not gone away.

It has ebbed but not disappeared. That is a victory for the world wide class struggle.

Repression Intensifying

The attacks on immigrants in the U.S. have not subsided with the exit of President George Bush. Unfortunately, the administration of President Barack Obama has not only

continued an aggressive and inhumane attitude toward migrants, some argue that it has even intensified

The debate for immigrant rights in the U.S. of course takes place within the context of the worst economic and social crisis the people have experienced in decades.

The Democratic Party early on in the administration said that it would be next to impossible to get legislation passed given the economic climate. This is a continuation of the Democratic Party's long history of a lack of political will to fight for a progressive agenda. They show such a timidity and fear of the right-wing in this country that their program almost becomes indistinguishable from the rhetoric and the program of the Republican Party.

In the current tumultuous debate on health care, President Obama has said that the undocumented would get absolutely no kind of health care. The right wing says that President



Broad-immigrant rights human rights

Obama's health care reform would only attract more "illegal" migration.

Both positions are criminal. Health care is a human right, whether you have documents or not, whether you are employed or unemployed. Furthermore, undocumented workers have earned health care over and over with the riches they have made for this country one-thousand fold.

Racism against immigrants persists. A reactionary icon of this racism is the infamous sheriff of Phoenix, Arizona.

Sheriff Joe Arpaio is nationally and internationally infamous for what can only be described as a reign of terror against not only immigrants but against people of color and the poor. Inmates of all nationalities are treated



brutally and constantly humiliated in Arpaio's jails. The sheriff's practices have become so appalling that a national outcry has forced the Justice Department to investigate Arpaio's conduct as well as that of his deputies.

What is happening in Arizona is just a sample of the attacks against immigrants sweeping the country. Racial profiling against "foreign-looking" workers has become epidemic. Driving while Latina/o, Jamaican or Nigerian has become a reason to be stopped, victimized, detained and deported. Should a seat belt break or a tail light bust, you can land in jail or in a hellish detention cell.

Spurred by the economic crisis, the right wing is sharpening their weapons, escalating their racist diatribe. This dangerous rhetoric is leading to more and more anti-immigrant crimes.

In Mount Vernon, Ohio, a group of teenagers was charged with putting a noose around the neck of a Latino boy in May and dragging him in a parking lot. Were it not for the intervention of some strangers who stopped the attack, the youth, Roberto Cantu, might have been lynched.

Despite this noose attack and yelling racist epithets, including "Get the Mexican," Cantu said, only one attacker was sentenced to only 10 days in jail and the charges of aggravated assault were dropped. (Mansfield News Journal, June 17)

Other equally repugnant episodes are taking place around the country. There is horror stories of children placed in foster homes after their parents are detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents. One case involved a Guatemalan woman whose children were taken from her in a round-up. She spent years trying to get her children out of foster care.

In Ann Arbor, Michigan immigrant rights activists report that undocumented workers who cannot show certain papers are not allowed to receive their children's birth certificates.

Government policy at a standstill

The Obama administration has not yet moved forward on passing a progressive, humane, pro-worker immigration policy. In fact, a meeting with members of Congress regarding immigration was postponed several times, much to the ire of immigrant rights activists. Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel said, as the postponed meeting was finally held on June 25, that the “votes aren’t there” for immigration reform. (Christian Science Monitor, June 25). But the fundamental problem is the lack of political will to challenge the right wing.

Not long ago, Vice President Joe Biden was quoted as saying that as long as the economic crisis looms, it will be “difficult” to provide legalization for undocumented workers. This kind of statement promotes further divisions among U.S.-born and foreign-born workers.

Ignacio Meneses, a leader of Latinos Unidos in Detroit and a key organizer of that city’s May Day rally, debunked this lie.

Meneses pointed out that legalizing the undocumented would raise the standard of living of all workers; that it would help the economy as the undocumented could come out of the shadows, join unions, buy cars and homes, and join the fight for workers’ rights.

Not legalizing the undocumented continues the age-old ruling-class tactic of divide and conquer. In addition, as the “Buy America” campaign fills the air, that also leads to a dead end. Instead of building class solidarity, “Buy America” only fuels competition among workers here and abroad. It also leads to anti-immigrant attacks as Mexican or Chinese workers are seen as the enemy by those influenced by this reactionary rhetoric.

The only solution to the war on immigrants—and to the war against all workers—is solidarity, organizing and fighting back. Together in unity, workers can meet the challenges ahead.

The economic crisis is headlined with a “jobless

recovery” which has made social conditions for immigrant workers even harder. The only road to recovery for the masses of people around the world is to organize in our name. Hopefully, May Day 2010 will fill the streets around the world with workers united no matter if they are documented or not.



Teresa Gutierrez is a Co-Coordinator of the May 1st Coalition for Worker & Immigrant Rights. The coalition was formed in 2006 as a result of the migrant upsurge. It is fighting for legalization and is in unity with many coalitions with the goal of uniting all the struggles that workers face. The May 1st Coalition feels strongly that only by united workers of all nationalities with our without documents can we win the needs for the people. There are no borders in the workers struggle.

Turning the Tide for Seafarers

Atty. Edwin Dela Cruz

Without the seafarers of the world, the global economy would stop on its tracks. About 90 percent of world commerce is transported by sea, on board 50,000 merchant ships, registered in some 150 countries, and manned by about 1.2 million seafarers of various nationalities.¹

The merchant shipowners altogether earn an average annual income of US\$380 billion, which is five percent of the world economy.¹ The average annual profit of an individual merchant shipowner is US\$5.42 million, but only about US\$636,000 goes to the seafarers as wages, showing a clean 800 percent profit in relation to wages. For example, a capesize vessel, the Anangel Happiness has secured a hire rate which would repay her purchase cost in a mere five years, while the working life of the vessel could span 25 years.²

Wages of the crew are always kept at a minimum to maintain the level of profit. This is coupled with the high risks, extreme conditions and hardships entailed by work at sea. Despite the strategic importance of seafarers to world commerce, they are among the most exploited and oppressed of workers.

The working conditions and dangers of seafaring are also worsened by the shipowners' scheme of resorting to "flags of convenience" or FOCs. As the ship is considered an extension of the flag state, the working conditions on board are supposed to be governed by the labor laws and standards of the country where a ship is registered and whose flag it is flying. Under the FOC system, the real shipowners create dummy corporations and register the vessel in some small states like the Bahamas, Honduras, Liberia, Panama, Costa Rica, Marshall Islands, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, to name a few.

According to Franz Fischler, Commissioner of the European Union's Fisheries Commission, "The practice of flags of convenience, where owners register vessels in countries other than their own in order to avoid binding regulations or controls, is a serious menace to today's maritime world."³



These FOC countries do not care about the labor conditions on board nor the shipworthiness of the ships flying their flags. This allows the prevalence of substandard shipping and the proliferation of floating coffins across the seas. It also deepens the exploitation of seafarers who are made to accept very low wages and to work under extreme and dangerous conditions on board their vessels.

The Filipino seafarers, comprising a quarter of the world crew, are among the most exploited and oppressed workers under the FOC system. Existing benefits and rights of Filipino seafarers are being watered down and diminished to make them more “competitive” against new entrants from the former eastern block and other third world countries. The Philippine government treats seafarers as commodities and joins other third world governments in a race to the bottom.

Through the years, organized unions of seafarers under the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) struggled to fight the FOC system. A worldwide boycott of FOCs was organized in the early 1950s and later, industrial actions were taken to impose standard collective agreements on FOC ships. ITF inspectors ensure the implementation of ITF Collective Agreements which set the wages and working conditions for FOC ships. They are assigned in major seaports to board and arrest FOC ships that violate international labor laws.⁴

Many Filipino seafarers, with the help of ITF inspectors, were able to fight for decent wages and acceptable working conditions through collective crew actions and strikes, and

detention or arrests of ships. The detention and arrest of vessels for violations of various labor standards, safety, and other reasons have increased during the past years. In the European Union, detention of ships rose from 844 in 2005, to 1,174 in 2006, and to 1,280 in 2007.⁵

The International Labor Organization (ILO) takes effort to maintain international standards with the passage of 70 conventions on maritime labor. This is also to lessen the exploitation and oppression of seafarers, especially under the FOC system. But under the ILO rules,

these conventions are only binding to countries that have ratified. The Philippines, for example, has only ratified four of the 70 ILO Conventions and has not signed and ratified the rest. Similarly, most FOC states also refuse to sign and ratify these maritime conventions.

This has led the ITF, the ILO, seafarers’

organizations and other stakeholders in the maritime industry to adopt a superconvention that would cover and consolidate the existing conventions. On February 23, 2006, the Governing Body of the ILO in its 94th session adopted the Maritime Labor Convention. Known as the MLC 2006, it is a single and coherent instrument embodying the current maritime labor standards, and the fundamental principles of other labor conventions. In its preamble, it states that given the global nature of the shipping industry, seafarers need special protection.

The MLC 2006 sets out standards on seafarers’ rights and addresses issues on wages and hours of work, decent working conditions, health and safety, and the right to redress grievances. Consolidating up-to-date provisions of existing ILO instruments on maritime concerns, the MLC 2006 is intended to be globally applicable,



farm4 static flickr

easily understandable, readily updatable and uniformly enforceable. It is seen to complement the key Conventions of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) such as the SOLAS (Safety of Life at Sea), STCW (Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers) and the MARPOL (Marine Pollution). The MLC 2006 is designed to become a global legal instrument that, once entered into force, will be the “fourth pillar” of the international regulatory regime for quality shipping.

Filipinos and other seafarers would benefit from the immediate ratification and implementation of this convention. This would promote an even playing field where seafarers and their manning states no longer compete to lower standards and wages. The evils of the FOC system would also be addressed effectively as the flag state’s responsibilities are now clearly defined. The enforcement of the rights and standards under this convention will now be the responsibility of the flag state, the port state where the ship is found, the labor-supplying state that mans the seafarers, and the shipowner and its recruitment and placement agents. This would complement the existing inspectorate of the labor federation of ITF and the various church-based seafarers’ centers like the Stella Maris of the Apostleship of the Seas and the Seafarers Mission of the Protestant churches.

For the convention to be enforced, it must be ratified by at least 30 countries representing at least 33 percent of the world’s gross tonnage. To date, five countries have ratified the Maritime Labor Convention of 2006, namely Liberia, Marshall Islands, Bahamas, Panama and Norway. This has fulfilled one of the two conditions for the entry into force of the convention, since Panama is the largest flag state with nearly 25 percent of the world’s merchant fleet.⁶ Now, all that is needed is for twenty five countries to ratify the convention.

Recalling that more than 25 percent of world seafarers are Filipinos, a problem now lies with the Philippine government with its failure or

deliberate refusal to ratify the convention. The government owes it to the Filipino seafarers to ratify this convention the soonest time possible, and to repeal all national laws and policies that worsen the exploitation and oppression of the Filipino seafarers. They, who have contributed so much to our national economic survival, are at least entitled to decent wages and working conditions.

Seafarers are not commodities to be offered in the world market. They are human beings with rights and dignity, equal to all other workers whose collective labor has kept the global economy flowing through the ages. The good intentions of international instruments, such as the Maritime Labor Convention of 2006, will remain illusory if seafarers themselves do not fight for and claim their rights. As governments continue to neglect their responsibility to uphold the rights and to protect the welfare of workers, seafarers’ organizations and advocates must remain vigilant. Seafarers must persist in organizing, uniting, and launching concerted actions to expose and oppose schemes of exploitation. Only they can turn the tide in their favor.

Endnotes

¹ *Seafarers Situationer, Module I, 2009, International Seafarers, Action Center (ISAC) slide 11.*

² *Ibid. slide 19.*

³ *UNCTAD Review of Maritime Transport, 2008.*

⁴ <http://www.itfseafarers.org/illegal-practices.cfm>

⁵ http://www.itfseafarers.org/FOC_campaign.cfm

⁶ http://www.ilo.org/global/About_the_ILO/Media_and_public_information/Feature_stories/lang-en/WCMS_103260/index.htm

⁷ *Ibid.* (http://www.ilo.org/global/About_the_ILO/Media_and_public_information/Feature_stories/lang-en/WCMS_103260/index.htm)

Atty. Edwin de la Cruz is President of the International Seafarers Action Center (ISAC), a non-profit action center for the protection of seafarers rights and welfare.

Confronting the Climate Crisis: Preparing for Copenhagen and Beyond

Nairobi, Kenya, 30 August 2009

We, the leaders of various people's movements, community based groups, academia, NGOs and civil society organizations meeting in Nairobi under the banner of Peoples Movement on Climate Change (PMCC) to discuss strategies to confront the Climate Change Crisis for Copenhagen and beyond from 27 to 28 August 2009,

DO HEREBY AFFIRM THAT

Irresponsible and unaccountable consumption concentrated in the Industrialised North, and some countries of the South has and continues to cost Africa by creating an ecological crisis; The people of Africa, as well as other developing nations are creditors of a massive ecological debt;

This ecological debt continues to accrue today through the continued plunder and exploitation of Africa's resources, its people, labor, and economies;



The groups most affected by climate change are indigenous peoples, women, especially poor women in the rural areas, noting that the phenomenon has a connection with resources such as land or water, and related farming and business activities that they are specifically engaged in;

The negative effects of climate change are sharply felt on agriculture and food sovereignty. This is manifested through soil degradation, deforestation, intensified food insecurity,

super weeds, desertification, cultural shock, identity loss and forced consumption of unsafe, untraceable food;

Imposed false solutions (GMOs, agro-fuels, synthetic fertilisers, agrochemicals) deepen these effects and perpetuate food aid dependency;

The current unbalanced global trade relations and policies between the Industrialised North and the Global South are a contributor to the negative ecological effects of climate change.

OUR CALLS

We reject the principle and application of Carbon Trading, which is a false solution based on inventing a perverse property right to pollute. A property right to air;

We demand that human rights and values be placed at the centre of all global, national and regional solutions to the problem of climate change;

We call on colleagues in the social and economic justice movement globally to rigorously campaign against the undemocratic corporate led agendas which will dominate the deliberations and processes at COP 15;

We emphasize that ecological, small holder, agro-biodiversity based food production can ensure food and seed sovereignty and address climate change in Africa.

We support the call by African leaders for reparations on climate change and support the initiative of the upcoming AU ministers of environment meeting and call for African governments to embrace more people centered alternatives for the African peoples.

Urge African governments to engage civil society groups positively and collaborate with them to build common national and international responses on the problems of climate change;

OUR STRATEGIES

Immediately activate existing networks and resources within our ranks, to build each other's capacities to engage meaningfully on pro-people solutions to the crisis of climate change; Launch a call to action for a coordinated global response to climate change, based on solidarity and practical collaboration between affected peoples of the Industrialised North and the Global South;

To create synergy of platforms, networks and initiatives amongst African communities most affected by climate change and henceforth use any appropriate political space to articulate their concerns;

That such political spaces should include the annual continental, regional and national social forum spaces, as well as the parallel People's Summit of the people of Southern Africa amongst others;

Facilitate dialogue of women directly affected by climate change to engage with policy makers at both local and national levels as well as regional and global level;

Organize and mobilize communities for action towards food sovereignty-based food self sufficiency through research, articulation of issues and capacity building for informed engagement and alternatives;

To mobilise agricultural, pastoral, fisher folks and other affected communities to have a common face and voice in Copenhagen;

Urgently reform the unbalanced global trade relations and policies, with specific focus on

Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and their ecological effects on Africa;

To continue our engagement on ecological debt and call for reparations for the climate crisis and seek alternative modes of channeling such resources to the people of Africa;

To support African governments call for reparations and increased space for negotiations for a progressive deal that does not impoverish Africa further;

Commit ourselves to a coordinated follow up on any outputs from Copenhagen.



WE THE UNDERSIGNED

Africa Peoples Movement on Climate Change (A-PMCC)

Nairobi, 30 August 2009.

C/o IBON Africa,

Kirichwa Road, Off Arwings Kodhek,

P.O.Box 5252-00100, Nairobi, Kenya.

Tel: 254 20 3861590

Website: iboninternational.org

This declaration was the outcome of the workshop, "Confronting the Climate Crisis: Preparing for Copenhagen and Beyond", held in Nairobi, Kenya on August 27-28, 2009. It was led by the Peoples' Movement on Climate Change (PMCC), Kenya Debt Relief Network (KENDREN), and IBON Africa. The workshop was attended by 46 participants representing 37 organizations. These attendees form the core of the newly established A-PMCC network.



After Mourning and Melancholia, A Testimony to the Uncanny Filipina Gaze

Or, Anticipating the Revenge of the Balikbayan Cargo Cult (Part 2)

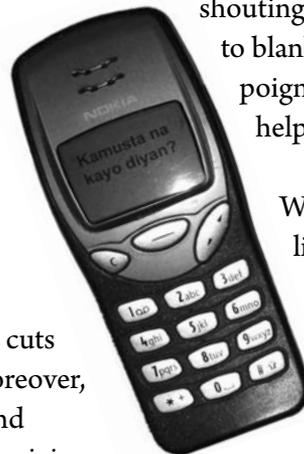
E. San Juan, Jr.

A Review of MARISOL (2009)—a film directed by Hella Wenders; cinematography by Merle Jothe; produced by Barbara Mutschler and Florian Gerstenberg; German Film and Television School, Berlin, Germany. Part 1 of this review was published in a previous issue of Education for Development Magazine (Vol. 8, No. 2).

Jump-Cuts and Syncopations

Marisol is a parent without power. Her reliance on electronic media—cellphone, computers, Internet—as a way of preserving contact with her husband and children is contingent on her budget, her free time, and access to such prosthetic devices. Despite this electronic prophylactic, Marisol's distance from her family is underscored by the fact that she cannot really maintain long exchanges with her children—in one scene, the scream of the German child cuts off her connection with her family. Moreover, her customary deference to the husband insures that she will always be at the receiving end of the line, unable to initiate action except as a response to his call for help. In short, Marisol's

agency seems undercut, annulled, diminished. When her sister Wena, at the start of the film, reminds her of their dreams, based on their mother's sacrifice as an OFW herself, Marisol is unable to release pent-up feelings except by shouting to the anonymous space outside, to blank windows facing her apartment—a poignant image of frustration and helplessness.



Where or who is the Other who can listen to Marisol? In the process of grappling with this crisis, Marisol is driven by an imperious need to express herself, defying external law or inner prohibition. It is this need to communicate that the film foregrounds, an emergency appeal. This, I submit, is the film's over-riding purpose: to

compel us to listen, to understand. It's a powerful challenge hurled to cyberspace and the open market, in quest of a responsive audience/viewers. Solitude is conceivable only because of its opposite: community, solidarity. After the news of Wena's death, Marisol is faced not only with the tragic deprivation of her other self. Wena incarnates Marisol's submerged speaking self, the poet-rhetor, who reminds her of their common dream. It is the erotic Other that is sacrificed so Marisol can go on. The reality-principle dictates that she defers her return so that the sister can return—literally, Wena's homecoming in a coffin as the other "balikbayan box." Marisol rhetorical question to the empty urban space: "What do you want me to do?" is really addressed to the audience, the others who care. She demands from Luis (via cellphone) to talk to her sleeping children; but her "load" aborts communication. The camera switches to Marisol walking the Berlin thoroughfare like a somnambulist, one of the few close-up shots—except for the cellphone/computer screen faces of her sister and family. She counts and wraps the money to send, via her friend, as though praying in her kitchen-sanctuary.

In one of the most dramatic moments of the film, with images of gleeful playing children alternating with shots of the WESTERN UNION office, Marisol runs in front of two policemen whom she served earlier. She wants to be arrested, interrogated. Her muteness is a desperate appeal for help—to be deported and sent home. However, her friend suddenly intervenes, wresting her away before the police can demand her ID and thus authenticate her identity: Marisol the mother/outlaw. Fast forward and we see Marisol repeating Wena's poetic utterance—"Where did you come from? Where are you going? ...bruised, struggling, crawling on all fours out of the abyss, craving for bliss without end," demanding more from her compatriots, from those who are watching and

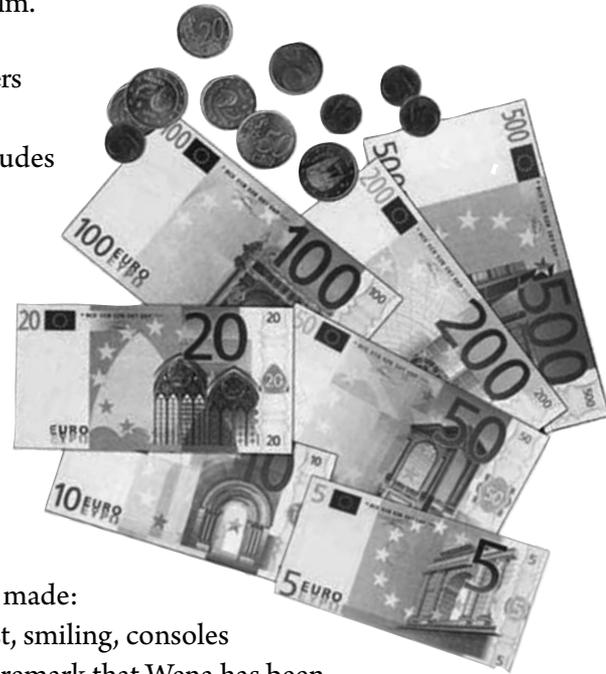
witnessing this film.

The film itself offers German women's solidarity. It concludes with prayers for Wena's soul by Marisol's friends, via computerized tele-screens attending Wena's burial. A gesture to acknowledge Filipino mores is made:

the Filipino priest, smiling, consoles Marisol with the remark that Wena has been bumped "first class" on her flight to heaven. This quasi-religious ceremony in secular Europe, the quiet camaraderie and unobtrusive solidarity, the calculatedly subdued ending—all these displace our anxiety about the crime, leaving us with Marisol's thoughtful, handsome face. We surmise that she will resume her normal life with possibly more awareness of the injustice and danger that lurk behind the civilized facades of the wealthy employing nations. Is there surplus vision or needs accumulated in her consciousness that calls for collective action?

The Dreamer Sacrificed

More questions are triggered by the film's somewhat abrupt end: Is Marisol, as shown in this film, a pathetic example of the helpless OFW? Postcolonial scholars are anxious to counter the stereotype belief that subalterns like female domestics don't have agency. They disagree with the view that OFWs are totally victims of patriarchal discourse and masculinist violence. They argue that Marisol has agency: she invents a fictional person, "Olivia Flores,"



that orders a one-way ticket. She shouts that one day she will reveal her real name, fulfill her dream of doing what she wants (as the song “Anak” hints, without repentance). Her maternal and nurturing power is fully demonstrated by her ability to calm the screaming German child in her care, even though that task also confirms her distance from her family.

Here are the partial answers. When the film opens, we see sailors and workers exercising in harmony in front of a ship about to embark. City landscape smoothly blends with the recollection of Marisol’s mother and her balikbayan box



peppered with kisses, imagining herself contained in the box sent to her children. This “balikbayan” box that holds gifts, token commodities, etc. functions as the chief synthesizing trope, the allegorical synapse or synergistic node of the film. While we

observe Marisol packing her “balikbayan” box, ensuring the safety of its delivery, we also keep in mind what is not shown—the absent montage of her sister’s body being deposited as in a cargo container for shipping home, paid for by Marisol’s savings. We never see Marisol’s own box being shipped, but we see the coffin of her sister being laid to rest in her grave, surrounded by her mourning relatives—“bumped first class” in a flight to heaven. Our last image is of Marisol’s melancholy, thoughtful face, as the camera focuses on her, somewhat distanced from her community, replicating her earlier pose at the food-shop as she ponders giving up to the police. The solitary domestic is left bereft of companionship, isolated,

even though we remain aware that it is there in the margins. Do we allow the priest to have the last word, the last “joke”?

Probably not. The film’s intent is to arouse questions and disturb our peace. The film’s style of articulating closed and open spaces succeeds in dramatizing Marisol’s dilemma between “risk-taking” and “security-maximizing,” to use sociological jargon. The arrangement of the scenes is meant to stage the dilemma all OFWs face: one between striking on your own, daring to struggle against customary prohibitions—as the theme song “Anak” warns against—or opting for safety behind law, patriarchal authority, and the opium of religion. It’s a classic existential situation.

What stands out, however, is a nexus of loaded signifiers. Marisol’s situation of risk and maternal resolve is a play on the motifs of the homely and the unhomely, both condensed in the German word “heimlich” which Freud made famous in his essay, “The Uncanny.” Marisol’s homeland (embodied in the electronic images of husband, children, Wena) becomes a cyberspace mirage, fading in and out, charged with frightening possibilities, destroying the bourgeois ideology of privacy and monogamous, heterosexual normativity. Meanwhile, Marisol’s network of friends/ compatriots serves as a linkage to the emergent community of Migrante International, allowing the sisters of Gabriela Silang and of Rosa Luxemburg to meet. In this sense Marisol’s female gaze becomes uncanny, answering the misogynist question—“What does a woman want?”—with the threat and promise of slaying the patriarchs: the capitalist State, Hong Kong criminal employers, predatory transnational agencies, and the entire corrupt, unredeemable Filipino bureaucracy/oligarchy parasitic on OFW remittances, colluding

with U.S. imperialism in keeping the country impoverished and subservient since the end of the Filipino American War of 1899-1913.

Marisol, stricken with anxiety and desperation, nearly surrendered to authority. That trauma-filled episode in which Marisol's identity was at stake, dissolved quickly with her friend's swift snatching of her body from the clutches of the State. Marisol is the mother who displaces the absent father—subaltern fathers have been emasculated by the neocolonial Arroyo state, obeisant to the imperial behest of the U.S. and predatory finance capital. While the paternal German welfare-state harbors threats such as the police and alienated employers, it permits temporary escape from enclosures such as the workplace (bar, house with German children to attend). It is also outside Gigi's restaurant/bar where Wena's poems are recited—a cry for help, an assertion of the right to happiness with loved ones, the right to self-fulfillment with others. In antithesis, some enclosure are hospitable: Gigi's Meeting Point, the church-like place where balikbayan boxes are stored and confidential exchanges with the Filipino priest take place, Marisol's bedroom, her friend's car. The Filipino priest serves as the index of the traditional homeland, accessible as listener to illegal migrants, a native counterpart to the

Western psychiatrist/psychoanalyst, filling in for the absent authoritarian Filipino State.

For Whom the Bells Toll?

Art, cinema, surely cannot take the place of everyday working life or dominate it. But it's useful for understanding oppressive institutions and imagining alternatives. Without it, we will remain victims of commodifying capital, money, and consumer goods dictating the content of our souls. Is it enough to be thankful to Hella Wenders and her co-workers for this richly compressed film and take pleasure in the character of Marisol, in her quiet fortitude, her patience, her dignified forbearance amid such a paralyzing ordeal? After all, it is her sister, not her children or her husband or mother, who dies in this film.

As I have suggested earlier, Wena symbolizes Marisol's authentic self, the exuberant twin-soul, who articulates her dreams and the future for her, as well as for millions of OFWs—for the whole dispossessed and diasporic Filipino nation. There is no chain migration here, only



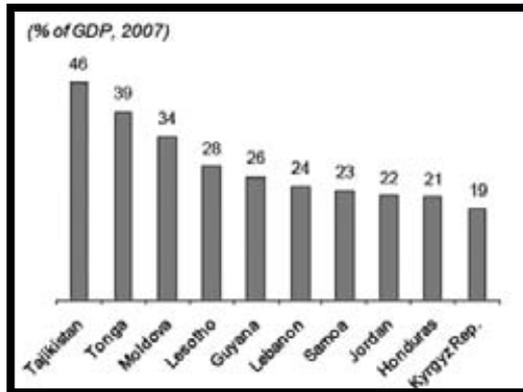
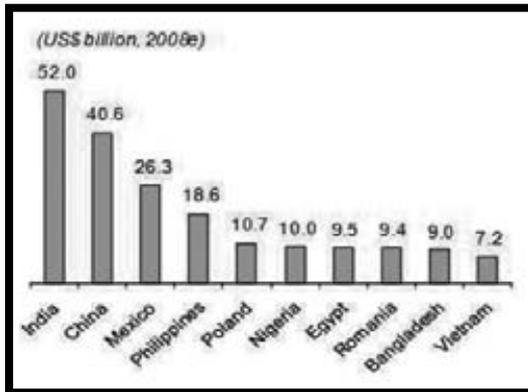
the extended family held together in a web or network of virtualized kinship and solidarity, enabled by modern means of communication, specifically cellphones, computerized television, etc. Despite geographical dispersal, communal and familial bonds are precariously maintained, affections sustained despite interruptions and reifying noises. Wena's transmission is sometimes delayed, so that the unfolding of time is never linear, often recursive, sometimes anachronistic. This message of the film concerning the unpredictable dialectic of proximity and distance, past and future, open and closed spaces, necessity and accident, which escapes commodification by commercial establishments represented here by WESTERN UNION/ASIA IMBISS, is perhaps the most profound lesson to be inferred: organization and political consciousness-raising are needed. Perhaps we can rescue Wena from the dead and make her speak to her sister again. She might say to Marisol that she needs to break out of her routine and question the condition of her life together with others, such as the OFW group, Migrante International, is doing. We do not need the cheap consolation of evangelical religion, the escape that Sarah Balabagan, the OFW flogged in Saudi Arabia, has chosen. We have other models: for example, Connie Bragas-Regalado, the fighter for migrant rights, or the women in Migrante Europe who attend to the needs of undocumented kababayan. This film is directly a critique of such packaged evasion. It is an oblique critique of individualist self-help. It sharply poses the limits of such solitary claustrophobic efforts even as it partly celebrates Marisol's courage, resourcefulness and strength, knowing that her family and community (in the interstices of the film-shots) are with her in the struggle. She becomes Olivia Flores, the incommensurable trickster-figure.

As the film unfolds, Wena the domestic emerges in the network of communal exchanges as Wena the poet, inventor of images and figures that transform barriers into opportunities, unleashing the energies of dream for advancing the concrete projects of everyday life. This film succeeds in enabling our discovery of this poetic voice within the domestic serf, the insurgent dreamer, who may be suppressed now, but will always haunt us, especially those vampires and parasites who feed on the remittances of these postmodern indentured servants, even "modern-day slaves," as Bridget Anderson aptly describes them.

In the process of inventing the correct praxis, Marisol draws sustenance from Wena's words. Maintaining tactful aesthetic distance, the film allows us to empathize with that sacrificed voice whose words penetrate windows and walls (the Berlin Wall seems to have metamorphosed into a Chinese 'Great Wall' in Hong Kong) to open up a gap, the revolutionary break, not only for reunion with her family but also re-possession/liberation of the ravished homeland where bodies and souls, bloodied from fierce global class wars, can once again be reunited, nourished and fulfilled in collective sharing. Mabuhay kayong lahat, Marisol!

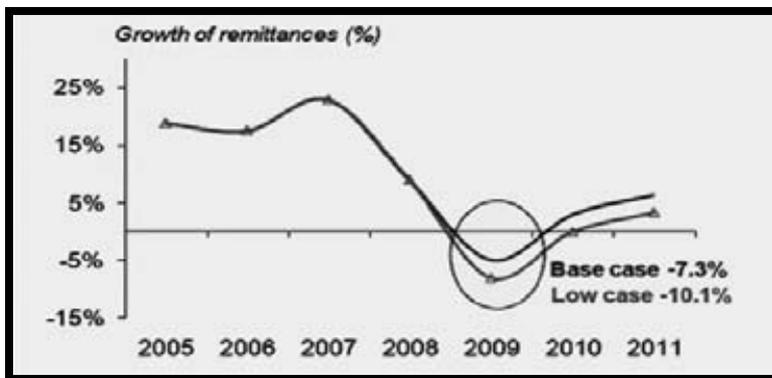
E. San Juan, Jr. is director of the Philippines Cultural Studies Center, Storrs, Connecticut, USA. He has taught at various universities in the US and around the world: University of Connecticut, Washington State University, Brooklyn College (CUNY), University of the Philippines, Leuven University in Belgium, and Tamkang University/National Tsing Hua University in Taiwan, among others. His latest books are US IMPERIALISM AND REVOLUTION IN THE PHILIPPINES (Palgrave), IN THE WAKE OF TERROR (Lexington), TOWARD FILIPINO SELF-DETERMINATION (SUNY Books), and CRITIQUE AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION: Lessons from Antonio Gramsci, Mikhail Bakhtin and Raymond Williams (Edwin Mellen Press). He is currently Spring 2009 Fellow of the W.E. B. Du Bois Institute, Harvard University.

Top recipients of migrant remittances among developing countries in 2008



Source: Migration and Development Brief 10, July 2009 Migration and Remittances Team Development Prospects Group, World Bank

Remittance flows to developing countries expected to decline in 2009 but recover in 2010



MIGRATION AND REMITTANCES

Outlook for remittance flows to developing countries, 2009-11

	2006	2007	2008e	Base case forecast		Low case forecast	
				2009f	2010f	2009f	2010f
\$ billion							
Developing countries	228	285	328	304	313	295	294
East Asia and Pacific	53	65	78	74	76	71	71
Europe and Central Asia	37	51	57	49	50	47	48
Latin America and Caribbean	59	63	64	60	61	58	57
Middle-East and North Africa	26	32	34	32	33	31	31
South Asia	40	55	74	71	74	69	69
Sub-Saharan Africa	13	19	20	18	19	18	18
Low-income countries	20	25	31	29	30	29	29
Middle-income countries	208	261	297	275	282	266	265
World	309	380	433
Growth rate (%)							
Developing countries	17.2%	25.2%	14.8%	-7.3%	2.9%	-10.1%	-0.3%
East Asia and Pacific	13.4%	23.4%	19.6%	-5.7%	3.0%	-8.8%	-0.5%
Europe and Central Asia	24.1%	36.5%	12.0%	-14.9%	3.0%	-17.2%	0.5%
Latin America and Caribbean	18.1%	6.6%	2.1%	-6.9%	1.0%	-9.4%	-2.0%
Middle-East and North Africa	4.6%	21.4%	8.6%	-6.2%	3.3%	-9.8%	-0.4%
South Asia	19.7%	40.1%	32.8%	-3.6%	3.9%	-6.4%	0.5%
Sub-Saharan Africa	34.5%	47.3%	6.5%	-8.3%	4.4%	-11.6%	1.1%
Low-income countries	23.8%	23.2%	25.3%	-5.0%	3.8%	-7.2%	0.7%
Middle-income countries	16.7%	25.4%	13.9%	-7.5%	2.8%	-10.4%	-0.4%
World	14.3%	22.9%	14.0%

e=estimate; f=forecast

Source: www. Worldbank.org/prospects/migration andremittances for data definitions and the entire dataset.1

Migrants Say No to the GFMD!

Stop criminalization
of undocumented migrants.
Oppose all Fortress Europe laws
and anti-migrant policies.

End forced migration.
Create jobs at home.

Uphold and protect the rights
of migrants and refugees.



2nd International Assembly of Migrants and Refugees

Athens, Greece

November 1-4, 2009

The 2nd International Assembly of Migrants and Refugees is an international conference organized by organizations of grassroots int/migrants, refugees and displaced peoples to counter the Global Forum on Migration and Development. It is being organized by the International Migrants Alliance (IMA), Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM), IBON International, Class March (Greece), ATK (Germany), Union of Working People (Greece) and Migrante Europe (The Netherlands).