In recent years, substantial numbers of people have migrated - or sought to migrate - from regions that are afflicted by poverty and insecurity to more prosperous and stable parts of the world. By the year 2000, the United Nations estimated that about 140 million persons - or roughly two percent of the world's population - resided in a country where they were not born.

Such population flows, involving increasingly tortuous and dangerous long-distance journeys, have been both prompted and facilitated by a variety of factors associated with the process of globalization: a growing disparity in the level of human security to be found in different parts of the world; improved transportation, communications and information technology systems; the expansion of transnational social networks; and the emergence of a commercial (and sometimes criminal) industry, devoted to the smuggling of people across international borders.

The World Institute for Development Economics Research of the United Nations University (UNU-WIDER) launched two major research projects on migration, first in 2002 by organizing an international conference on Poverty, International Migration and Asylum, focusing on all aspects of migration, and second in 2004-2005 on the theme of International Mobility of Talent, focusing on the transfer of knowledge and human capital from the main centres of knowledge creation to developing countries in order to support their growth and development process. This research identifies and quantifies the movement of skilled people across the global economy, as well as the determinants of these flows, and the costs and benefits to the sending countries in the developing world.

The speakers are the directors and authors of the UNU-WIDER Migration research and will discuss the main findings of the Institute's research in relation to current issues.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON

José Antonio Ocampo is United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA).

PRESENTATIONS

The Economic Costs and Benefits of Immigration

George J. Borjas

The economic impact of immigration on the receiving country is one of the core questions in the immigration debate in many countries. The concern over how immigrants affect job opportunities and the costs of social assistance programs need to be balanced with the gains that immigrants can provide to the host
economy. This presentation examines some of the questions in this debate and summarizes the empirical evidence on the economic impact of international migration flows.

**George J. Borjas** is the Robert W. Scrivner Professor of Economics and Social Policy at Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government.

**Do Refugee Movements Constitute a Form of International Migration?**

**Jeff Crisp**

The relationship between refugee movements and international migration has become a matter of some contention. On one hand, there are commentators who argue that the traditional distinction between refugees and migrants has become increasingly blurred, and that it would now be more useful to subsume both under the general heading of ‘human mobility’. On the other hand, there are those who insist on retaining this distinction, and who argue that such an approach is vital if the international refugee protection regime is to be maintained. This presentation examines the debate on the relationship between refugee movements and international migration and outlines UNHCR’s perspective on this issue.

**Jeff Crisp** is Special Advisor on Policy and Evaluation in the Executive Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. He was previously Director of Policy and Research at the Global Commission on International Migration.

**The International Mobility of Talent: New Ways for International Development**

**Andrés Solimano**

The international mobility of talent can have important development effects on the source nations, on the receiving countries and on the global economy and society. In source countries, the emigration of talent can reduce their human capital base. Developing countries that see their entrepreneurs, scientists, technology experts, medical doctors emigrate can experience a retard in their development potential. In contrast, receiving countries will benefit from an inflow of talent that enlarges their qualified human resource base relieving shortages of high skills people. Depending on the type of human capital received, recipient countries can benefit in the science sector, in health and in culture. Return migration and the international circulation of ideas, technology, and expertise can counter-balance, to some extent, a skewed distribution of gains from the mobility of talent toward receiving countries.

**Andrés Solimano** is Regional Adviser at the Economic Development Division, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, UN - ECLAC - CEPAL.

Admission is free. Please register online in advance at [www.ony.unu.edu](http://www.ony.unu.edu) or unuona@ony.unu.edu Tel: 212-963-6387

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UNU-WIDER Publications on Migration

**Poverty, International Migration and Asylum**

*Edited by George J. Borjas and Jeff Crisp*  
*hardback* 1-4039-4365-6, March 2005  
*Studies in Development Economics and Policy*  
*Palgrave Macmillan*

**Policy Brief No. 8**

**Poverty, International Migration and Asylum**
World Institute for Development Economics Research of the United Nations University (UNU-WIDER) undertakes multidisciplinary research and policy analysis on structural changes affecting the living conditions of the world's poorest people; provides a forum for professional interaction and the advocacy of policies leading to robust, equitable and environmentally sustainable growth; and promotes capacity strengthening and training for scholars and government officials in the field of economic and social policy making. WIDER is the first research and training centre of the United Nations University (UNU), established in Helsinki, Finland in 1984. [www.wider.unu.edu](http://www.wider.unu.edu)