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INFORMATION COLLECTION ACTIVITIES ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION *

The Asia Pacific Migration Research Network **

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The Asia Pacific Migration Research Network (APMRN)

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In 1995 a number of Asia Pacific scholars moved to form the Asia Pacific Migration Research Network (APMRN) in partnership with the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme of UNESCO. The organisation was initially confined to East Asia, South East Asia and the Pacific but in 2001 it expanded to include countries of South Asia.

It is a collaborative organisation of academics, non-government organisations and policy makers interested in all aspects of migration. Each regional network of the APMRN is autonomous and networks exist in Australia, Bangladesh, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, the Pacific (based in Fiji), Thailand and Vietnam. Taiwan is an unofficial member of the APMRN.

The main concerns of the APMRN are twofold:

1. to increase awareness of the long-term effects of migration and ethno-cultural diversity as factors in social transformation; and

2. to contribute to strategies to develop effective policy responses to alleviate negative effects of migration.

Type of data or information relating to international migration that your organization routinely collects and/or compiles

The APMRN does not collect primary data but encourages empirical research and the collation of existing data sets. The APMRN works mostly with researchers rather than government officials so it has had little impact on official data collection systems.

The major sources of data in the region are:

a. Individual country data on migration - poor in most cases except for Australia and New Zealand

Australia reports the arrival of long-term immigrants, short-term immigrants, Australian residents returning after short-term residence abroad for work as well as several categories of visitors arriving and data on long-term emigrants, short-term emigrants, persons departing for types of visits abroad, and non-residents leaving after short-term residence in Australia for work;

Indonesia reports data on long-term immigrants and short-term immigrants and long-term emigrants departing;

The Republic of Korea reporst data on long-term immigrants, short-term immigrants, several categories of visitors, Korean residents returning from work abroad and data on long-term emigrants, short-term emigrants, persons departing for visits abroad, and non-residents departing after short-term residence in Korea for work;

India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Vietnam report no statistics on international arrivals or departures (United Nations, 1998, Table 36).

b. Regional data collected by the Asian Migrant Centre, an NGO in Hong Kong

c. OECD that is collected for a selected number of Asian countries (Japan, Korea)

Purpose of gathering such information

Data gathered relate to migration but are small samples of internal and international migrants. The absence of adequate data is a frequent complaint from researchers and makes the measurement and evaluation of impacts very difficult.

Examples of projects that have been hampered by lack of data - Ford Foundation funded projects on:

return skilled and business migration (forthcoming) - virtually no data are available on return migration except from censuses (Taiwan). In this recent project we wanted to measure this and assess the impact but it was impossible;

irregular migration (forthcoming) - again no data, not included in Dept. of Labor statistics in countries;

female migration (Chantavanich *et al.* 2001) - Philippines data are the best but the study relied heavily on sample surveys.

COSTED study on Mobility of S&T Professionals was hampered in similar ways which means that it was not possible to identify major flows out of India, rates of return (permanent or temporary)

The use made of this information by your organization

Not applicable

The way to disseminate the information gathered

Not applicable

Difficulties encountered in gathering the information

Not applicable

Areas where the data collection efforts need to be strengthened

1. National systems of international migration statistics need to be improved to yield better data for national planning and analysis with regard to international migration and migrants.

   Bilsborrow *et al.* (1997) review the advantages and disadvantages of different types of data collection, for example, border control practices, population censuses and surveys, population registers, and administrative sources, for the major categories of international migrants, as well as routes to documenting the numbers and characteristics of specific categories such as labour migrants, asylum seekers and refugees.

   By category, by gender, by skill level or education, by age, etc.

2. Survey data also need to be improved - Bilsborrow *et al.* have developed model questionnaires for the collection of data on international migrants as well data on non-migrants for purposes of comparison (Bilsborrow *et al.* 1997, 250-260, 317-318).

3. Reasons for collecting particular sets of data need to be thoroughly thought through. The *Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia (LSIA)* provides information on immigrants currently residing in Australia. The data have largely been used to 'sell' the government's migration policy and justify the trend towards more skilled migration and less family reunion.

   Some Asian Governments do not want to collect or advertise emigration data for political and other reasons — they do not want to record a 'brain drain'.

   Irregular migrants are also a very sensitive topic and countries do not include them in their labour statistics and may not want to. Similarly for refugees.

References
Bilsborrow, R. E., Graeme Hugo, A.S. Oberai, and Hania Zlotnik. 1997. *International Migration Statistics: Guidelines for Improving Data Collection Systems*, Geneva: International Labour Office.

Chantavancih, S., C. Wille, K. Angsuthanasombat, M. Asia, A. Beesey and Sukamdi 2001 *Female Labour Migration in South-East Asia: Change and Continuity*, Bangkok: Asian Research Center for Migration.

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