



MAPID TRAINING PROGRAM - PHILIPPINES

SESSION 1

THE PHILIPPINES*

(re government-generated data on international migration)

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The Philippines

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The significance of international migration in the Philippines has been matched by notable steps taken in the collection, reporting and dissemination of international migration-related statistics, including remittances. This article maps out the international migration data collected by government agencies (the major ones being the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration and the Commission on Filipinos Overseas), describes inter-agency efforts in harmonizing data collection efforts and improving the quality of data, and offers suggestions to broaden the access and use of international migration data at the national and regional levels. Better data collection of international migration to the Philippines and recording of return migration are among the areas in need of improvement.

Introduction

The Philippines' migration profile is mainly that of an out-migration country, of which the most significant is the outflow of international migrant workers or the so-called overseas Filipino workers (OFWs). The trend towards large-scale and organized international labor migration started in the 1970s, when the Philippines was among the countries in Asia which responded to the demand for workers in the oil-rich Gulf countries. Other labor markets beckoned in the succeeding decades, which kept migration going. The demand factors were matched by powerful supply-side factors, mainly the lack of sustainable development in the Philippines and the institutionalization of labor migration. Nowhere

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is the institutionalization of labor migration as evident as in the Philippines where the legal and institutional framework to manage different phases of the migration cycle – pre-migration; migration to the destination countries; and return to migration – has been established. Other than labor migration, the Philippines also ranks among the major source-countries of immigrants to traditional countries of settlement. While OFWs do comprise the largest group of international migrants from the Philippines, the overseas Filipino population encompasses different types of international migrants.¹

The dominance of out-migration *from* the Philippines compared with in-migration *to* the Philippines is clearly reflected in the national recording of international migration statistics. There are more efforts by government agencies to track international migration from the Philippines than international migration to the Philippines. Useful data have been produced in the process, but significant gaps and deficiencies are also notable. About two decades ago, Cariño (1987) assessed the Philippines' recording system on international migration. At the time, he noted that the recording of international migration was fairly recent. He identified several government agencies as sources of international migration-related statistics: Commission on Immigration and Deportation (currently the Bureau of Immigration); Commission on Filipinos Overseas; Philippine Overseas Employment Administration; Department of Tourism; and Department of Education, Culture and Sports (currently the Department of Education). Two agencies, namely, the Commission on Filipinos Overseas and the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration were identified as major sources of data on permanent migration and temporary (labor) migration, respectively. It is instructive to note that back then, Cariño (1987) had remarked on the lack of data on return migration, a major shortcoming which prevents a thorough assessment of the impact of temporary labor migration on the Philippines. The present inventory is an opportunity to survey what has happened since then.

This paper has three objectives: to take stock of the country's international migration information system by mapping out which government agencies produce international migration data (including remittances); to discuss inter-agency efforts to improve the collection and coordination of

¹ The term "overseas Filipinos" is generally used to refer to Filipino nationals and/or their descendants who are based abroad (including OFWs or migrant workers, among others). The Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 defines overseas Filipinos as referring to "dependents of migrant workers and other Filipino nationals abroad who are in distress as mentioned in Sections 24 and 26 of this Act" (Sec. 3c).

international migration-related data in the country; and to present proposals to improve international migration data and information sharing with other countries in Asia. The presentation of findings is organized according to these objectives.

International Migration Data and Sources

International Migration to the Philippines

1. Data from the Bureau of Immigration (www.immigration.gov.ph)

The Bureau of Immigration (BI) is the agency mainly responsible for the “administration and enforcement of immigration, citizenship and alien admission and alien registration in accordance with the provisions of the Philippine Immigration Act of 1940, as amended.”²

All international arrivals and departures from the Philippines in international airports and seaports must fill up arrival and departure cards, respectively. These cards are administered by BI personnel, but these are turned over to the Department of Tourism, whose interest in the cards is to estimate tourist arrivals in the country. As noted by Carriño (1987), the BI (previously known as the Commission on Immigration and Deportation) is primarily oriented to enforcement issues, which continues to this day (i.e., based on the interview that I conducted with a BI official in September 2007). Although the BI collects data on arrivals, departures, and apprehensions, data processing and reporting the data are not part of the agency’s regular activities.

The BI categorizes foreigners coming into the country into two: immigrants and non-immigrants.

Immigrants. Those who enter under the *immigrant category* are further classified into (1) quota immigrants – those who, under the conditions set forth in the Immigration Act, may be admitted in the Philippines not in excess of 50 of any one nationality or without nationality for any one calendar year; and (2) non-quota immigrants, who may be any one of the following – the spouse of a Filipino citizen, an unmarried child under 21 years old of a Filipino citizen, and natural born citizens of the Philippines who have acquired foreign citizenship.

² See Structure and Function, http://immigration.gov.ph/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=59&Itemid=38.

Non-immigrants. Those who are admitted as *non-immigrants* are defined by Sec 9 of the Philippine Immigration Act of 1940 as follows:³

“Sec. 9. Aliens departing from any place outside the Philippines who are otherwise admissible and who qualify within one of the following categories may be admitted as non- immigrants:

- (a) A temporary visitor coming for business or for pleasure or for reasons of health;
- (b) A person in transit to a destination outside the Philippines;
- (c) A seaman serving as such on a vessel arriving at a port of the Philippines;
- (d) An alien entitled to enter the Philippines under and in pursuant of the provisions of a treaty of commerce and navigation (1) solely to carry on substantial trade principally between the Philippines and the foreign state of which he is a national or (2) solely to develop and direct the operations of an enterprise in which, in accordance with the Constitution and the laws of the Philippines, he has invested or of an enterprise in which he is actively in the process of investing, a substantial amount of capital; and his wife, and his unmarried children under twenty-one years of age, if accompanying or following to join him, subject to the condition that citizens of the Philippines are accorded like privileges in the foreign state of which such alien is a national; [As amended by Republic Act No. 5171]
- (e) An accredited official of a foreign government recognized by the Government of the Philippines, his family, attendants, servants, and employees;
- (f) A student, having means sufficient for his education and support in the Philippines, who is at least fifteen years⁴ of age and who seeks to enter the Philippines temporarily and solely for the

³ See “Non-immigrants,” http://immigration.gov.ph/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=29&Itemid=34, accessed on 16 February 2008. References to the “Act” pertain to the Philippine Immigration Act of 1940.

⁴ In the section “Data from the Commission on Higher Education,” the minimum age is 18.

purpose of taking up a course of study higher than high school at a university, seminary, academy, college or school approved for such alien students by the Commissioner of Immigration; and

- (g) An alien coming to pre-arranged employment, for who the issuance of a visa has been authorized in accordance with section twenty of this Act, and his wife and his unmarried children under twenty-one years of age, if accompanying him or if following to join him within a period of six months from the date of his admission into the Philippines as a non-immigrant under this paragraph.

An alien who is admitted as a non-immigrant cannot remain in the Philippines permanently. To obtain permanent admission, a non-immigrant alien must depart voluntarily to a foreign country and procure from the appropriate Philippine consul the proper visa and thereafter undergo examination by the officers of the Bureau of Immigration at a Philippine port of entry for determination of his admissibility in accordance with the requirements of this Act.”

Registered aliens. Another source of information on foreigners in the Philippines is data on the Alien Certification of Registration (ACR) issued by the Bureau of Immigration – “Aliens who enter the Philippines and *stay over six (6) months* [italics provided] regardless of the visa they have, i.e., whether admitted under non-immigrant or immigrant status, they are issued an ACR including their dependents. The registration is required to enable the BI to precisely chronicle and monitor the stay and activities of the aliens in the Philippines” (De Asa, 2007).

As of this writing, the most current available data on registered aliens are: statistics of registered aliens by immigration status with paper-based ACR as of 18 June 2007; and statistics of registered aliens by nationality with paper-based ACR as of 18 June 2007.⁵ The BI does not post statistics on its website. The said data were obtained from the website of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism.⁶ There were 236,516 registered aliens recorded as of 18 June 2007, of whom 49,963

⁵ The paper-based ACR card has been replaced by a microchip-based ACR I-Card. Holders of the paper-based ACR cards are required to replace them with the ACR-I Card.

⁶ See http://pcij.org/blog/wp-docs/BI_alien_by_immigration_status_june2007.pdf, accessed as of 19 February 2008.

were on immigrant visas, and the remaining 186,553 were on non-immigrant visas. By nationality, the five largest groups are those from: China, 79,061; the United States of America (U.S.A.), 49,699; the Republic of Korea, 20,130; India, 20,215; and Japan, 13,825.

2. Data from the National Statistics Office (www.census.gov.ph)

In the conduct of the census, certain persons are excluded from the enumeration although they are present in the territorial jurisdiction of the Philippines at the time of the census. The 2007 census identifies the following persons as excluded from the enumeration:⁷

1. "Foreign ambassadors, ministers, consuls or other diplomatic representatives and members of their families (except Filipino and non-Filipino employees who have been residents of the Philippines prior to said employment);
2. Citizens of foreign countries living within the premises of an embassy, legation, chancellery or consulate;
3. Citizens of foreign countries who are chiefs or officials of international organizations like the United Nations (UN), International Labour Organization (ILO), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), who are subject to reassignment to other countries after their tour of duty in the Philippines and members of their families;
4. Citizens of foreign countries together with non-Filipino members of their households who are students or who are employed or have business in the Philippines but who are expected to stay in the country for less than a year from arrival;
5. Citizens of foreign countries and Filipinos with usual place of residence in a foreign country who are visiting the Philippines and who have stayed or are expected to stay in the country for less than a year from arrival (e.g., a "balikbayan" [visiting expa-

⁷ A category consisting of "Officers and enlisted men of US Military or Naval Forces and non-Filipino members of their households, irrespective of residence, foreigners who are civilian employees in US military or naval stations and members of their families living within the premises of said stations or reservations" was also excluded from the enumeration up until the 1990 census. The Philippines did not renew the RP-US Military Bases Agreement when it expired in 1991, which marked an end to the presence of US military bases in the country.

- triate] who will return to his/her usual place of residence abroad after a short vacation or visit in the Philippines);
6. Citizens of foreign countries in refugee camps/vessels; and
 7. Residents of the Philippines on vacation, pleasure or business trip, study or training, etc. abroad who have been away or expected to be away from the Philippines for more than a year from departure.”⁸

A question on ethnicity provides a way to estimate the non-Filipino resident population. This item has been included since the 1995 census. However, it seems that data on the non-resident population are not routinely reported. A reference to the non-resident Filipino population based on the 1995 census was discussed in a paper by Yabut (2001). Based on the responses to the ethnicity item in the 1995 census, a total of 47,250 non-Filipino residents were enumerated in the 1995 census. More recent data provide larger and divergent estimates. The 2000 Census of Population and Housing report includes “Table 24. Household Population by Citizenship and Sex: 2000 (Figures are estimates based on a 10 percent sample).” According to this table, of the 76,322,470 Filipinos, 72,420, 531 were Filipino citizens, and the rest – 3,912,119 – were non-Filipino citizens. If the data on non-Filipino citizens reported in the 1995 and 2000 censuses are compared, the difference is huge. The UN (2006) reports a different figure – a foreign population of 374,000 in the Philippines, based on data on citizenship. More investigation is needed to explain these differences.

3. Data from the Department of Labor and Employment (www.dole.gov.ph)

Foreigners seeking employment in the Philippines have to secure an Alien Employment Permit, which is issued by the Secretary of Labor and Employment through the Department of Labor and Employment-Regional Director. Foreign nationals required to apply for an AEP include:

1. “Foreign nationals seeking employment in the Philippines, whether they are non-residents or refugees;

⁸ See <http://www.census.gov.ph/ncr/ncrweb/census.html>, accessed on 1 September 2008.

2. Foreign professionals who are allowed to practice their profession in the Philippines under reciprocity and other international agreements and in consultancy services pursuant to Section 7(1) of the PRC Modernization Act of 2000; and
3. Holders of Special Investors Resident Visa (SIRV), Special Retirees Resident Visa (SRRV), Treaty Traders Visa (9d), or Special Non-Immigrant Visa (47(a)2) for as long as they occupy an executive, advisory, supervisory, or technical position in any establishment."⁹

The presence of foreigners legally employed in the Philippines is indicated by data on the number of aliens employed by nationality¹⁰ and the numbers of aliens employed by industry.¹¹ The two most recent years for which data are available are for 2006 and - 2007. The number of AEP holders in 2006 and 2007 stood at 12,055 and 11,642 (preliminary), respectively. In terms of the countries [and areas] of origin of AEP holders, the top five sources (in order of importance) for both years were Japan, the Republic of Korea, China, U.S.A., and Taiwan, China. AEP holders are a small fraction of the population of 236,516 registered aliens in the country, which suggests that few come to the Philippines to take up employment. It may be reasonable to speculate that part of the non-immigrant population in the country may be working or engaged in some economic activities without securing the proper documents.

4. Data from the Commission on Higher Education (www.ched.gov.ph)

Data on foreign students in the Philippines are collected by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). CHED considers foreign students as "those belonging or owing allegiance to a country other than the Philippines and studying in any educational institution recognized or owned by the government of the Philippines." They are at least 18 years of age at the time of enrollment and must have completed high school/secondary education or its equivalent.

Data collected from the 1990s show a declining trend in the number

⁹ See <http://www.gov.ph/faqs/alienworkpermit.asp>, accessed on 19 September 2007.

¹⁰ See http://www.phil-lmi.dole.gov.ph/lmi/apec-lmi/e3_001_alien.html, accessed on 17 December 2007.

¹¹ See http://www.phil-lmi.dole.gov.ph/lmi/dolead/aliens_emp.htm, accessed on 17 December 2007.

of foreign students in higher educational institutions in the country: 4,791 in Academic Year (AY) 1994-1995; 5,284 in 1995-1996; 4,864 in 1996-1997; 4,419 in 1997-1998; 3,516 in 1998-1999; 2,602 in 1999-2000; and 2,323 in 2000-2001. The decline has been attributed to the implementation of Executive Order 423, series of 1997, which prohibited the conversion of non-student visas to student visas. In 2000, however, Executive Order 423 was superseded by Executive Order 285, which provided for the conversion from tourist visa category to student visa or issuance of Special Study Permit.¹²

While the number of long-term foreign students may be on the decline, those who come to the Philippines for short-term educational programs, such as English programs, have become more notable in recent years. The surge in the number of Koreans visiting the Philippines is in part due to the large numbers who come to the Philippines to learn English. To facilitate their stay in the country, the Bureau of Immigration introduced innovations to simplify visa processing. The Visa Issuance Made Simple, a scheme to facilitate and expedite the processing time for the issuance of visas, was launched on 14 January 2008.

International Migration from the Philippines

Several government agencies produce data on emigration from the Philippines, of which the three major ones are the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, the National Statistics Office, and the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration. At the outset, it should be mentioned that the bulk of emigration statistics pertain to international labor migration, which started since the 1970s, and has since outnumbered other forms of international migration from the Philippines.

1. Emigration Data from the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (www.cfo.gov.ph)

The Commission on Filipinos was (CFO) established on 16 June 1980 by Batas Pambansa (Republic Act) 79 to promote and uphold the interests and well-being of Filipinos Overseas. Of the migration-related agencies in the Philippines, the CFO is tasked to take care of permanent settlers. Its clientele consists of:

¹² See <http://www.ched.gov.ph/services/students/fs.html>, accessed on 7 September 2007. A Special Study Permit is issued to a foreigner studying in the elementary and high school and other non-degree courses.

- Filipino permanent migrants or permanent residents abroad;
- Filipinos overseas who have become citizens of other countries;
- Filipino spouses and fiancées of foreign nationals leaving the country;
- Descendants of Filipinos overseas, as defined in Batas Pambansa Blg. 79;
- Filipino youth overseas; and
- Exchange Visitor Program participants.

In keeping with its mandate, CFO collects data on the yearly outflow of permanent migrants (since 1981) and Filipino spouses and fiancées leaving the country (since 1989). Between 1981 and 2007, the yearly average of registered permanent emigrants is at 56,906, whereas the mean number of Filipino nationals emigrating to join the foreign spouses or partners during the period 1989-2007 is at 17,561. In the last five years, 2003-2007, the outflows of permanent emigrants and Filipino spouses/partners are summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1
FLOW DATA ON PERMANENT EMIGRANTS AND FILIPINO SPOUSES/PARTNERS,
2001-2007

Type of Emigrant	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Permanent emigrants	52,054	57,720	55,137	64,924	69,028	82,967	80,599
Filipino spouses/ partners of foreigners	18,296	17,399	17,399	18,933	21,100	24,904	23,927

SOURCES: Commission on Filipinos Overseas, Number of Registered Emigrants by Major Country of Destination, 1981-2007 (www.cfo.gov.ph/S89-07-MigrantCountry.pdf), and Number of Filipino Spouses and Other Partners of Foreign Nationals by Major Country, 1989-2007 (www.cfo.gov.ph/Emigrant8107.pdf)

In addition, CFO works with other government agencies (Department of Foreign Affairs, Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, and others) to produce a yearly stock estimate of overseas Filipinos in 193 countries or territories (since 1993). This statistic is an oft-quoted figure on the population and distribution of the overseas Filipino population. Between 1993 and 1995, the stock estimate was simply the total count of overseas Filipinos; from 1996, the total estimate had a breakdown of three categories of Filipino emigrants, namely, permanent, tem-

porary and irregular.¹³ The definitions of these categories are as follows (Roma, 2007):

- “Permanent – Philippine nationals who leave the country with the expressed intention of settling or residing permanently in another country.
- Temporary or non-immigrants – Philippine nationals who have been away from the country for more than six (6) months with the expectation of returning home at the end of their work contracts or tour of duty.
- Irregular migrants – Philippine nationals who leave the Philippines with or without proper documentation (valid residence/work permits) but eventually lost their legitimate status or have overstayed in foreign countries.”

The stock estimate is derived from the following data (Roma, 2007):

- Emigrant registration from CFO
- Statistics on legally deployed overseas Filipino workers from POEA
- Reports from Philippine Embassies and Consulates
 - Number of passports issued
 - Reports on intermarriages
 - Assistance-to-nationals cases
 - Head count
- Other sources
 - Statistics on tourist arrivals from the Department of Tourism
 - Reports from Filipino associations and organizations abroad
 - Censuses of foreign governments on their immigrant population

The methodology used in arriving at the stock estimate is based on the following formula (Roma, 2007):

$$A_p = B_t + C_{t..p} - D_{t..p}$$

where

¹³ Excluded from the stock estimate are the following: members of the diplomatic corps and their families; members of the military or peace keeping forces; students, scholars and trainees abroad; asylum seekers and refugees; those seeking medical help and health-related purposes; those on pilgrimage or other religious purposes; and businessmen, investors and related purposes (Roma, 2007).

AP is the overseas Filipino population at time p

Bt is the stock of Filipinos abroad as of time T

Ct..p is the total outflow of migrant Filipinos from the Philippines since time T until time P, and

Dt..p is the total return flow of migrant Filipinos to the Philippines since time T until time P.

The formula above has been employed from the very beginning. In 2007, one change was introduced, i.e., the assumption about the length of overseas employment of Filipino workers – up until 2007, the average period of overseas employment was assumed to be seven years; in 2007, it was increased to 10 years, based on data suggesting that OFWs are lengthening their work stints overseas (Interview with Golda Roma, 14 August 2008).¹⁴ Although the formula attempts to cover the different sources of addition and attrition to the overseas Filipino population, the resulting estimate is an “educated approximation.” It should be noted that the base refers to all Philippine passport holders, and changes brought about by births, deaths and repatriations (which include OFWs in distress, deportees) are considered to the extent that these are reported or known. For example, children born in the U.S.A. to Filipino parents get included in the estimate when the parents apply for a Philippine passport. When CFO estimates are compared with data on the Filipino population in the host countries, oftentimes they do not converge.

Other than the total count of the stock of overseas Filipinos, basic demographic details such as distribution by age and sex are not available. Table 2 presents stock estimates of the overseas Filipino population for the last seven years. The number of permanent and temporary migrants shows a steady increase over time while the number of irregular migrants shows a decline up to 2006 and an increase in 2007. The decline in the number of irregular migrants is marked between 2004 and 2005, which could be due to the repatriation of Filipinos in Malaysia (particularly Sabah) and the Republic of Korea. Meanwhile, the increase between 2006 and 2007 may be explained by reported increases in irregular migration to the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.), Malaysia, Singapore, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic. Filipinos go to these countries using a tourist visa (or visit visa in the case of the U.A.E.) and then overstaying to work. The estimate of irregular migrants includes the number of trafficking or related cases who were rescued; the most number of cases

¹⁴ Attorney Golda Roma is the Acting Deputy Executive Director of the CFO.

have been uncovered in Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong (China) and the U.A.E. (Interview with Golda Roma, 14 August 2008).¹⁵ Through the

TABLE 2
STOCK ESTIMATES OF OVERSEAS FILIPINOS, 2001-2007

Type of Migrant	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Permanent	2,736,528	2,807,356	2,865,412	3,187,586	3,391,338	3,556,035	3,692,527
Temporary	3,049,622	3,167,978	3,385,001	3,599,257	3,651,727	3,802,345	4,133,970
Irregular	1,625,936	1,607,170	1,512,765	1,297,005	881,123	874,792	900,023
Total	7,412,086	7,582,504	7,763,178	8,083,848	7,924,188	8,233,172	8,726,520

SOURCE: Commission on Filipinos Overseas, "Stock of Overseas Filipinos, As of December 2001 - December 2007, www.cfo.gov.ph/Stock%202001.pdf to www.cfo.gov.ph/Stock%202007.pdf

years, the overseas Filipino population hews closely to about 10 percent of the total population.

2. Emigration Data from the National Statistics Office (www.census.gov.ph)

The Census. The census is a basic source of information on the count, composition and distribution of the Filipino population. In the post-World War II period and as an independent republic, the Philippines has been conducting a census since 1948 which was followed in 1960 (the first time that it was a census of population and housing), and every ten years henceforth. A mid-decade census was implemented in 1975, 1995, and August 2007. The National Statistics Office is mandated by the government to conduct censuses on a regular interval, i.e., every ten years as provided for under Batas Pambansa 72 (BP 72), "An Act Providing for the Taking of an Integrated Census Every Ten Years Beginning in the

¹⁵ The CFO is involved in the rescue of trafficked persons. Executive Order No. 548-A created the Task Force Against Human Trafficking, with CFO tasked to supervise the coordination between and among agencies engaged in human trafficking drive.

Year 1980," with May 1 as the reference day for the census (Africa and Esquivias, 2000).

As a source of data on international labor migration from the country [italics added], it was only from the 1990 Census of Population and Housing that the census included a question on overseas workers.

In the census of 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2007, "persons enumerated as members of the household" include the following:

1. Persons who are present and whose usual place of residence is the housing unit where the household lives;
2. Family members who are overseas and who had been away for not more than 5 years from the date of last departure at the time of the census are considered members of the household;
3. Persons whose usual place of residence is the place where the household lives but are temporarily away at the time of the census for any of the following reasons:
 - a. on vacation, business/pleasure trip or training somewhere in the Philippines and are expected to be within 6 months from time of departure
 - b. on vacation, business/pleasure trip or study/training abroad and are expected to be back within a year from time of departure
 - c. working or attending school in some other place but comes home at least once a week
 - d. confined in hospitals for a period of not more than 6 months at the time of enumeration except when they are confined as inmates of TB pavilions, mental hospitals, leprosarium or leper colonies, drug rehabilitation centers, etc.
 - e. detained in national/provincial/city/municipal jails or in military camps for a period of not more than 6 months at the time of enumeration except when their sentence or detention is expected to exceed 6 months
 - f. on board coastal, inter-island or fishing vessels within Philippine territories
 - g. on board ocean-going vessels but are expected to be away for not more than 5 years from date of departure
4. Boarders/lodgers of the household or employees;
5. Citizens of foreign countries, excluding members of diplomatic missions and non-Filipino members of international organiza-

tion, but including Filipino balikbayans who have resided or are expected to reside in the Philippines for more than a year from their arrival; and

6. Persons temporarily staying with the household who have no usual place of residence or who are not certain to be enumerated elsewhere.¹⁶

“Persons enumerated as members of the household” are identified from the question (P1): Who are the persons usually residing here as of May 1, 2000?”

An “overseas worker” is defined in the census of 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2007 census [italics provided] as follows:

a household worker who is currently out of the country due to overseas employment. He or she may be presently at home on vacation but has an existing overseas employment to return to. “TNT”¹⁷ workers are included if the household still considers them as members and if the respondent mentions their names when the enumerator asked about the names of the household members. *However, immigrants are excluded* (italics added).¹⁸

Overseas workers are captured in the household roster by way of the question: “Is ___ an overseas worker? (For persons below 10 years old, mark ‘No.’).”¹⁹ In the 2007 census, for persons 15 years and over, the usual occupation and place of work were asked (P13 and P14, respectively). The place of work question includes two pre-coded categories: “0000 Same city/municipality” and “8887 Foreign Country.” For other answers, the name of the city/municipality and province must be specified.

In the 2000 census, questions on the place of residence 5 years ago and 10 years ago, asked of persons 5 and over and 10 years and over, respectively, include “foreign country” as one of the response categories.

¹⁶ National Statistics Office (2003), “2000 Census of Population and Housing.” Report No. 2 (Philippines), Volume 1, Demographics and Housing Characteristics, January.

¹⁷ TNT stands for “tago nang tago” (literally, “always in hiding”), a colloquial term referring to migrants in an unauthorized situation.

¹⁸ National Statistics Office (2003), “2000 Census of Population and Housing.” Report No. 2 (Philippines), Volume 1, Demographics and Housing Characteristics., January.

¹⁹ This was P12 in the 2007 census; P8 in the earlier censuses.

Answers to this question can be the basis for estimating the overseas Filipino population (not just overseas workers). The questions are:

P20 (For persons 5+) In what city/municipality did ___ reside on May 1, 1995?

- 0007. Foreign country
- 0008. Same city/municipality
- 0009. Unknown

P24 (For persons 10+) In what city/municipality did ___ reside on May 1, 1990?

- 0007. Foreign country
- 0008. Same city/municipality
- 0009. Unknown

The residence questions were not asked in the 2007 census. Instead the 2007 census probed into the residence history of households in temporary relocation areas – current residence, date moved to current residence, usual place of residence before moving to the temporary relocation area, and intention to reside in previous residence within a year.

In published reports, there is at least one table in the 1990, 1995 and 2000 censuses pertaining to overseas workers and/or residence in a foreign country 5 years ago.

2000 census:

- 1) Table 12. Present residence vis-à-vis residence 5 years ago (Note: Foreign country is one of the coded response categories)
- 2) Table 15. Overseas workers, 10 years old and over, by highest educational attainment, sex and age group, 2000

1995 census:

- 1) Table 11. Percent distribution of overseas workers, 10 years old and over, by age group, highest educational attainment, sex and region, 1995

1990 census:

- 1) Table 24. Overseas workers by age group, highest educational attainment and region

The final results of the August 2007 census placed the Philippine population at 88,574,614 persons as of 1 August 2007. The results down

to the *barangay* level, the smallest political and administrative unit in the Philippines, were made official with the signing by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of Proclamation No. 1489 on 16 April 2008.²⁰

The Survey on Overseas Filipinos. In addition to the census, the NSO carries out several specialized surveys to collect more detailed information on specific topics. Since 1992, the NSO has been conducting the Survey on Overseas Filipinos (SOF) every year as a rider to the Labor Force Survey.²¹

The SOF has a two-fold aim: (1) to obtain national estimates on the population of overseas Filipinos, including overseas workers, and their socio-economic characteristics, and (2) to provide estimates on the amount of cash and in-kind transfers received by the families and the mode of remittance. The SOF is a nationwide survey involving a probability sample of about 41,000 households. For the purposes of the survey, only those family members who traveled outside the Philippines within the last five-year reference period (e.g., the reference period for SOF 2007 is from October 2002 to September 2007) are included.

The SOF defines overseas workers as (NSO, n.d.):

- “1. Filipino overseas contract workers (OCW) who are presently and temporarily out of the country to fulfill an overseas work contract for a specific length of time or who are presently at home on vacation but still has an existing contract to work abroad. They may be landbased or seabased.

Landbased workers – these are overseas contract workers who are hired either by direct hiring of an employer abroad; or through the assistance of Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA); or through a private and licensed recruitment agency. They may have returned to the Philippines for a

²⁰ National Statistics Office (2008), “Official count reveals . . .” Press release 2008-30, 16 April 2008, <http://www.census.gov.ph/data/pressrelease/2008/pr0830tx.html>, accessed on 16 August 2008.

²¹ The SOF was preceded by the Survey of Overseas Workers in 1991. Earlier, from 1982 to 1988, data on the characteristics of overseas workers were collected using a one-page rider questionnaire in the Integrated Survey of Households (ISH). In 1987, ISH Form 2 or the Labor Force Survey questionnaire was revised – a column indicating contract workers was added in order to estimate the number of overseas contract workers (OCWs) (NSO, n.d.).

vacation (annual or emergency leave), or have transferred to other employers, or were rehired by their former employer.

Seabased workers – these are overseas contract workers who worked or are working in any kind of international fishing/passenger/cargo vessels. Included also are OCWs who worked or are working for a shipping company abroad.

2. Other Filipino workers abroad with a valid working visa or work permits. Included also are crew members of airplanes such as pilots, stewards, stewardesses, etc. example: Filipinos working in countries [and areas] such as the U.S. [U.S.A.], Taiwan [Taiwan, China], Saipan [Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands], etc. with a working visa.
3. Filipinos abroad who are holders of other types of non-immigrant visa such as tourist/visitor, student, medical and others but are presently employed and working full time.”

The SOF does not consider the following persons as overseas workers (NSO, n.d.):

- “1. Filipinos whose place of employment is outside the Philippines but whose employer is the Philippine government. Examples are Filipinos who worked or are working in Philippine embassies, missions and consulates abroad.
2. Filipinos who are sent abroad by the Philippine government or by private institutes for training, scholarship or any other similar purpose, even if they are known to be working abroad. Note that students who are sent abroad by private individual who are working or had worked there are excluded in this category.
3. Filipinos working in other countries who are hired as consultants/advisers of International organization such as the United Nations International Monetary Fund, etc.
4. Immigrants to other countries even though they are working abroad.”

3. Labor Emigration Data from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (www.poea.gov.ph)

The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) is the agency that oversees the deployment of Filipino workers. All legally deployed workers must have their requirements and contracts processed by the POEA, which makes it the primary source of data on departing migrant workers and their characteristics, and the destinations and jobs they will work at overseas.

POEA collects flow statistics, i.e., data on the yearly deployment of OFWs. It has been collecting and reporting statistics on labor migration from 1984.²² The documentation system of the POEA distinguishes between two major classifications of OFWs based on their place of work: "land-based workers," i.e., those working on land; and "sea-based workers" or seafarers. Those who are land-based are further classified into "new hires" and "rehires"; among the sea-based, the parallel categories are "engaged" and "re-engaged." The new hires are those hired by an *employer* for the first time, including former OFWs who are hired by a new employer, while rehires are those whose employment contracts were renewed by their current employers on an annual or bi-annual basis. Similar definitions hold for the categories "engaged" and "re-engaged" as applied to sea-based workers.

Table 3 presents annual deployment data in recent years, 2001-2007. The years 2006 and 2007 are significant in the sense of breaching the 1-million mark target. In terms of major destinations, although Filipino workers can be found in all the world's regions, the Middle East has retained its prominence, with a total market share of 45.3 percent of all land-based workers. Of the top ten destinations, four are in the Middle East (in italics) – *Saudi Arabia*; *United Arab Emirates*; Hong Kong (China); *Qatar*; Singapore; Taiwan, China; *Kuwait*; Italy; Brunei Darussalam and the Republic of Korea. Japan used to rank among the major destinations, but deployment levels were adversely affected by a policy change on stricter entry requirements for entertainers which was implemented in March 2005. Also significant was the implementation by the Philip-

²² Data on international labor migration were previously collected by the Overseas Employment Development Board and the National Seamen Board (under the Department of Labor and Employment). These two bureaus were later merged into the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration in 1982. Between 1975 and 1983, reported data referred to the number of contracts processed; from 1984, POEA data distinguished between the number of contracts processed and the number of Filipino workers deployed overseas.

pine government of household worker reforms (among others, the reform increased the minimum salary of domestic workers to US\$400) in 2007, which reduced the deployment of domestic workers. Both of these changes affected the migration chances of women migrants. For the first time since 1992, women migrants comprised less than half (46.6 percent) or a minority relative to men, of the newly hired land-based workers (POEA, 2007).

TABLE 3
ANNUAL DEPLOYMENT OF OFWs BY PLACE OF WORK, 2001-2007

Year	Land-based	Sea-based	Total
2001	662,648	204,951	867,599
2002	682,315	209,593	891,908
2003	651,938	216,031	867,969
2004	704,586	229,002	933,588
2005	740,632	247,983	988,615
2006	788,070	274,497	1,062,567
2007	811,070	266,533	1,077,525

SOURCE: Philippine Overseas Employment Administration,
www.poea.gov.ph/html/statistics.html

The statistics available on POEA's website are presented in Table 4. The POEA database includes the personal details of OFWs, their contract details, and their corresponding departure dates.²³ The administrative data collected by the POEA generates data on the number of contracts processed, the number of workers deployed by sex, by major skills category and by country of destination, which are consolidated into yearly reports and are posted on the website (Table 4). In general, existing data

²³ The personal details collected from OFWs include the following information: surname, first name, middle name; city and/or provincial address; sex; civil status; birthday; highest educational attainment; passport number; dependent's name, age, address and relationship; and beneficiary's name, age, address and relationship. The contract details collected include: the OFW's position; benefits and salary; place of work/country of destination for land-based workers, or vessel name for seafarers; contract duration; and name of employer (Baldoz, 2007). Some of the background and contract information of OFWs would be useful to report, e.g., data on marital status or the educational attainment of departing workers, but these are not processed and made readily available.

provide basic information on the annual outflows of legally deployed OFWs over time.

TABLE 4
DEPLOYMENT STATISTICS COLLECTED BY POEA²⁴

Compendium of OFW Statistics ²⁵	2005, 2006, 2007
Deployed Landbased Filipino Workers by Destination (New hires and Rehires)	2005
Deployment of Landbased OFWs, by Country	1998-2003
Deployment of Landbased OFWs, by Country per Month	2003
Deployed New Hire Landbased Workers, by Sex	1992-2002
Deployed Landbased and Seabased Workers	1984-2002
Deployed Workers, Seabased and Landbased	1984-2002
Deployment per Skill per Sex	1992-2006
Deployment per Skill per Country per Sex	1992-2006
Deployment per Country per Skill per Sex	1993-2006

SOURCE: Philippine Overseas Employment Administration,
www.poea.gov.ph/html/statistics.html

Missing Data: Unauthorized Migration and Return Migration

1. Unauthorized Migration

The Bureau of Immigration's data on foreigners apprehended for immigration violations constitute an official source of data on unauthorized migration *in* the Philippines. However, these are not available, although there are media accounts on aliens not allowed entry, or aliens arrested and those deported on migration-related violations. It would be helpful if annual data on unauthorized migrants or immigration violations are

²⁴ The Statistics section of the POEA website also includes statistics on the stock estimate of the overseas Filipino population and remittances.

²⁵ The compendium puts together deployment-related statistics for a given year. The 2006 and 2007 compendium includes information on the provinces of origin of contract workers, which is derived from the membership data of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA).

reported on a regular basis.

As to unauthorized migration from the Philippines, there are several official sources of data:

- The Commission on Filipinos Overseas is one of the basic sources of information on the stock of Filipinos in an unauthorized or irregular situation overseas.
- Another source of stock data on unauthorized overseas workers is the Survey on Overseas Filipinos. As described earlier, the annual survey collects data on OFWs with and without contracts. In addition to the numbers, personal details, such as age and gender distribution, and the geographical and occupational distribution of unauthorized migrants are important data to consider.

2. Return Migration

Return migration should be covered under immigration. But since there are no such data, it is placed in this section. Up until now, there seems to be no interest or no systematic efforts to monitor the return of Filipinos to the country. Given the temporary nature of labor migration, the return of Filipino migrant workers should be as assiduously monitored as the departure of workers. In general, many countries, not just the Philippines, are unable to monitor and measure return migration. In any case, more efforts are needed to address this data gap. The establishment of the National Reintegration Center for OFWs (www.nrco.dole.gov.ph) in March 2007 provides an opportune time to look into a very basic component of developing policies and programs for return migrants – data on return migration. The departure and arrival cards filled up by departing and arriving overseas Filipino workers are potential sources of data on the return migration of Filipino workers. However, since these data are not processed, they have not been analyzed to measure and study return migration. It is also important to take account of more short-term return migration of other members of the overseas Filipino population. The inclusion of return migration questions in future censuses is one possibility. A survey on migration (including internal migration) can provide more information about return migration and many other aspects of the migration experiences of the Filipino population. The Philippines has had several nationwide fertility and health surveys; a nationwide survey on migration is long overdue.

*Remittances*²⁶

Remittances have become staple fare in discussions on international migration, especially for origin countries. The Philippines ranks among the top recipients of remittances, alongside India, Mexico and China.

The *Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas* (BSP) is the agency responsible for the compilation and dissemination of remittances data as part of the balance of payments (BOP) statistics. The BSP's BOP compilation is guided by the Balance of Payments Manual, 5th Edition (BPM5) of the International Monetary Fund. For the last five years, 2003-2007, remittances have been on an upward trend (Table 5), which is a continuation of past patterns. For the period January-June 2008, remittance inflows reached US\$8,241,361, which is 17.16 percent higher for remittance inflows in the same period in 2007 (US\$7,034,178).²⁷

TABLE 5
REMITTANCES TO THE PHILIPPINES, 2003-2007

Year	Remittances (in US\$)
2003	7,578,458
2004	8,550,371
2005	10,689,005
2006	12,761,308
2007	14,449,928

SOURCE: *Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas*, Overseas Filipinos' Remittances, <http://www.bsp.gov.ph/statistics/keystat/ofw.htm>, accessed on 21 August 2008.

The concept of residency is crucial in the recording of remittance transactions. Guided by the BPM5, the BSP adopts the one-year period to determine the residency of the transactor – i.e., an individual is not considered as a member of a resident household if he/she works continuously for one year or more in a foreign country. The BSP adopts the fol-

²⁶ The sources for this section are from BSP (n.d.) and Guerrero (2007).

²⁷ *Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas*, Overseas Filipinos Remittances, <http://www.bsp.gov.ph/statistics/keystat/ofw.htm>, accessed on 21 August 2008.

lowing definitions in addressing the residence issue of overseas Filipinos, particularly OFWs:

Sea-based workers are considered as Philippine residents regardless of the length of work contract because of the mobile nature of their work.²⁸

Among land-based workers, performing artists, which normally have a 6-month contract, are considered as Philippine residents; the rest are considered as non-residents because they normally have a two-year contract.

Remittances may be transferred through formal and informal channels. Those which go through formal channels come from: 1. cash remittances which are reported by commercial and thrift banks, offshore banking units and foreign exchange corporations which are subsidiaries of local banks); and 2. remittances through money transfer operators, local agencies and door-to-door remittance services tied with banks (BSP, n.d.). To account for remittances that are transferred through informal channels, the BSP computes a "raising factor," based on the results of the Survey of Overseas Filipinos.²⁹

Cash remittances sent by resident OFWs (i.e., seafarers and entertainers) enter as "compensation of employees" in the Income Account – which records the gross compensation of workers, including remittances in cash and in kind, expenditures of the worker in the host country and other amount not remitted to the beneficiary. On the other hand, cash remittances sent by non-resident OFWs (i.e., all land-based OFWs except performing artists) are recorded as "Workers' remittances" in the Current Transfers Account.

In estimating remittances, the BSP also needs to estimate the stock of OFWs, which it does monthly based on a moving total computed as follows:

$$\text{Stock}_{t=1} = \text{Stock}_{t=0} + \text{number of deployed}_{t=1} - \text{number of workers with finished contract}$$

²⁸ Seafarers' contracts are typically for 10 months.

²⁹ The Survey of Overseas Filipinos collects data on the different modes of remittance transfers and as such, it provides the parameters for estimating informal remittances.

Remittances are then estimated as follows:

1. Compensation of employees (CE)

a. Seabased workers

$$CE_{\text{Seabased}} = \text{Remittances} / 0.80^{30}$$

b. Performing artists

$$CE_{\text{Performing artists}} = \text{Stock of workers}_{t=0} \times \text{average salary per worker}_{t=0}$$

Plus: number of deployed $_{t=1}$ x ave. salary per worker $_{t=1}$

Less: number of workers with finished contract x average salary per worker prevailing at the time of their employment

2. Workers' remittances – estimated as the residual of total cash remittances less cash remittances of resident OFWs plus remittances in kind.³¹

One issue about the estimation of remittances is the different framework used by the BSP and the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB), the Philippines' policymaking and coordinating body on statistical matters, in defining residency of migrant workers. In the Philippine System of National Accounts (PSNA) framework used by the NSCB, all migrant workers are considered residents regardless of their length of stay abroad. This issue is one of the discussion points in interagency initiatives. Other limitations pertain to the monitoring of unauthorized migrants; the tendency of an upward bias in the headcount of migrants (double counting of workers, possibility of counting vacationing workers, non-coverage of return migrants); and the limitations of SOF (it does not capture the required sample intended mainly for OFWs) (BSP, n.d.).

³⁰ For sea-based workers, it is assumed that 80 percent of their salaries are remitted – sea-based workers are required to remit 80 percent of their income to their beneficiaries in the Philippines.

³¹ Remittances in kind are based on the ratio derived from the results of the Survey on Overseas Filipinos.

Interagency Efforts and Addressing Limitations

In the Philippines, inter-agency efforts to coordinate the collection and reporting of international migration statistics are provided in Sec. 20 of the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 (also known as Republic Act or RA 8042).³² The yearly stock estimate reported by the Commission on Filipinos Overseas is one such product of inter-agency cooperation. The Interagency Committee on Shared Government Information System for Migration was convened by the Department of Foreign Affairs in 2002, and was supplemented by small group meetings with the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (Castro, 2007). The *Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas* has spearheaded an interagency committee on overseas employment and tourism statistics for the purpose of rationalizing data collection and harmonizing measurements methodologies on OFW incomes and international travel variables (Castro, 2007).

Initially, one of the basic concerns of the Task Force on Overseas Filipino Statistics (TFOFS) is how to improve the counting of OFWs. However, in the series of meetings and workshops conducted by the TFOFS since its creation in 22 March 2004, it was decided to expand the coverage of study to include the measurement of all overseas Filipinos (OFs), instead of limiting only to counting the OFWs. The TFOFS and the Interagency on Committee on Labor, Income and Productivity Statistics (IACLIPS) of the NSCB are working on an operational framework for counting OFs. The proposed framework looks into the coverage of OFs, mapping out of agencies producing OF counts, data sources, and methodology (Domingo, 2007).³³

Some assessment of international migration data have been acknowledged and noted by various government agencies. Among the

³² Sec. 20. *Establishment of a Shared Government Information System for Migration* – An inter-agency committee composed of the Department of Foreign Affairs and its attached agency, the Commission on Filipinos Overseas [the CFO has been transferred to the Office of the President], the Department of Labor and Employment, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, the Department of Tourism, the Department of Justice, the Bureau of Immigration, the National Bureau of Investigation, and the National Statistics Office shall be established to implement a shared government information system for migration. The inter-agency committee shall initially make available to itself the information contained in existing data bases/files. The second phase shall involve linking of government facilities in order to allow free-flow data exchanges and sharing among concerned agencies.

³³ The framework has been endorsed to the National Statistics Coordinating Board, the Philippines' policy making and coordinating body on statistical matters, in June 2008 (Interview with Golda Roma, 14 August 2008).

observations that have come up from these assessments are:

1. To explore the possibility of using arrival/departure cards to collect data on departing/returning Filipinos
2. To revise the arrival/departure card to reflect information on the length of stay and purpose of travel (e.g., student migration from the Philippines is not tracked at all)
3. To clarify and adopt common terms and definitions (e.g., OFWs is not the same as overseas Filipinos)
4. To review the design of NSO's Survey of Overseas Filipinos
The NSO acknowledges two major limitations of the SOF:
 - a. The overseas workers covered in the report are those who left for abroad to work during the period April 1 to September 30, which is only a portion of all workers who are abroad during the period.
 - b. It does not ask for the total salary received by the OFWs. Hence, the remittance reported by the survey may just be part of the total salary received by the OFWs.
5. To review discrepant estimates
The estimate of OFWs in the SOF and the CFO's stock estimate of temporary migrant workers are not consistent – the latter provides a bigger estimate compared to the former, and the difference is substantial (usually, the SOF estimate hovers in the million range while the CFO figure is three times as much). The sources of this discrepancy must be uncovered.
6. To address data gaps and reporting of information concerning international migration to the Philippines
7. To include other stakeholders, such as academics and researchers, in committees and bodies tasked to review data-related issues
The participation of academics and researchers can contribute in reviewing the usefulness and limitations of existing definitions and data.

8. To review and address the gaps in the various phases of generating migration data: collection, data processing, reporting and dissemination, information sharing, and review and assessment

To date, the bulk of international migration-related data in the Philippines is produced by government agencies. Some NGOs undertake data collection, but these are limited to selected concerns (e.g., welfare cases). Research centers such as the Scalabrini Migration Center do not collect migration statistics as such; rather they are more likely to collate or put together data from various sources in order to have a better picture of migration trends and patterns.

Suggestions for the Migration Information System in Asia (MISA) Project

The experience of mapping out international migration data and sources in the Philippines has been a useful exercise. The article has provided information concerning the following: definitions, categories and types of international migrants in and from the Philippines; the variety of international migration data produced by relevant government agencies; problems, limitations and gaps of existing migration information systems; and initiatives to coordinate migration information systems. There is no lack of international migration statistics in the Philippines; similarly, it can be said that there is no lack of efforts to coordinate the production of migration data. These efforts must be sustained with a view to coordinating, harmonizing and improving the migration information systems in the country.

Moving beyond the national picture, the exercise suggests that such a stock taking is a basic tool in bilateral and regional discussions. The need for information sharing and coordinating data collection efforts is typically mentioned in regional plans of action, but this has not been matched by resources devoted to improving international migration data. Thus far, steps towards sharing of migration information have been mainly in the area of security and enforcement. The scope for bilateral and multilateral cooperation in information sharing, however, can be expanded to meet other purposes. Reliable, timely, accessible and comparable migration data can contribute to the formulation of responsive policies and programs. An initiative such as the Migration Information System in Asia (MISA) should be embedded in regional discussions on international migration.

As the coordinator, the Scalabrini Migration Center is mostly re-

sponsible for the review of the country papers and the migration data submitted by the MISA coordinators. A committee of reviewers – which will include representatives from international organizations in the region such as the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the International Organization for Migration, among others – will strengthen the review process and will help ensure that efforts to improve migration data will be sustained in the years to come.

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