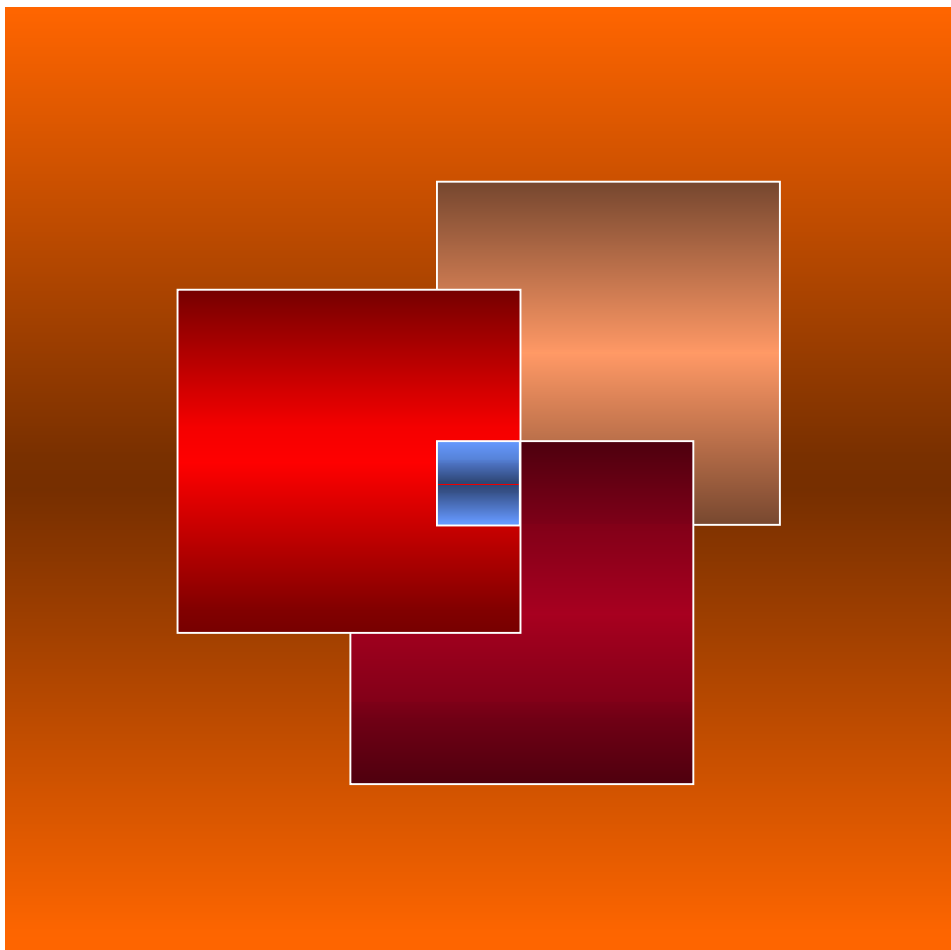


MIGRATION OF THE HIGHLY SKILLED – PRACTICAL PROPOSALS
FOR A MORE EQUITABLE SHARING OF THE GAINS

INFORMAL BRAINSTORMING MEETING
CO-SPONSORED BY THE ILS, THE ILO AND THE OECD



26 AND 27 MAY 2003
ILO HEADQUARTERS, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

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Background and objectives of the meeting

Since the 1990s the number of highly skilled foreign workers admitted in traditional receiving countries has increased (Lowell 2001); there is wide-spread belief that all parties win in open (trade but also other) regimes; and newspapers bring stories of industrialized countries that compete with one another for qualified migrants. These developments have spurred debate over whether or not we witness the onset of a wave of highly skilled migration with extremely negative consequences for the economies of the developing world. The issue is debated because some analysts see a “brain drain” leading to a reduction in economic growth while others point to induced effects of skilled mobility, such as a stimulus to domestic education, and feedback effects, such as remittances and technology transfers, that would offset any negative consequences for the migrants’ countries of origin.

The proposed meeting does not intend to enter this particular debate on the existence or extent of a “brain drain” for individual countries or regions. The meeting’s main objective is to develop *practical proposals* for a more equitable sharing of the gains from the international migration of highly skilled persons. The meeting will focus on *gain sharing* and on ways to *maximize positive effects* of the movement across borders of highly educated workers. Indeed, most experts agree today that (a) developed host countries stand to benefit from the contribution of highly skilled foreign workers; and (b) skilled mobility does have a number of positive effects for receiving countries, migrants and sending countries. The participants will also discuss ways to minimize any negative effects of highly skilled migration on sending countries, so that this type of migration does not add to global inequality.

After a brief introduction by the organizers, the experts will have the opportunity to present the situation in their country and the current and future challenges. The discussions will then focus on specific policy proposals. The meeting’s participants will share information and views on these proposals, update each other on free floating ideas, and will try to build consensus on which proposals are worth being pursued in future. Possibly, the discussion of the feasibility of some of the existing proposals, or analogies with other issue areas, will lead the participants to also derive *new ideas* on how to make migration of the highly skilled more beneficial for everyone involved. Last but not least, the meeting should help to identify areas where further research is needed and clarify the directions for future collaboration between ILO and OECD on the matter.

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Agenda

MONDAY, 26 MAY 2003

14:30 – 14:45 Welcome and introductions (J.-P. Laviee, M. Abella and J.-C. Dumont)

AFTERNOON SESSION | 14:45 – 18:00 CO-CHAIRLED BY M. ABELLA AND J.-C. DUMONT

14:45 – 16:00 Tour de table on how the participants perceive the debate on “brain circulation, brain gain and brain drain”. Do they think that the international mobility of highly skilled persons poses a potential threat to the economic development of developing countries? (*5 to 10 minutes for each participant*)

16:00 – 16:30 Coffee break

16:30 – 18:00 Tour de table on mechanisms for sharing the gains: mutual update on existing proposals and specific proposals by the participants to be discussed in detail the next day (*5 to 10 minutes for each participant*)

18:00 Cocktail hosted by the Director of the ILS

TUESDAY, 27 MAY 2003

ROOM III (R3 – SOUTH)

MORNING SESSION 9:00 – 12:30 CO-CHAIRLED BY C. KUPTSCH AND G. LEMAÎTRE

09:00 – 09:30 Summary of presentations made the previous day and proposition for organizing the debate around the different proposals (C. Kuptsch and G. Lemaître)

09:30 – 10:45 Discussion of specific proposals for sharing the gains (for example related to international recruitment policies; remittances and new ideas for compensation; migration and development policies)

10:45 – 11:00 Coffee break

11:00 – 12:30 Discussion of specific proposals (continued)

12:30 – 14:00 Lunch break

AFTERNOON SESSION 14:00 – 18:00 CO-CHAIRLED BY M. ABELLA AND J.-C. DUMONT

14:00 – 15:30 Discussion of strategies to implement promising ideas

15:30 – 16:00 Coffee break

16:00 – 17:30 Identification of areas for further research (data requirements, conceptual issues, etc.) and suggestions for future collaboration between ILO and OECD

17:30 – 18:00 Closure