

WELCOMING THE STRANGER

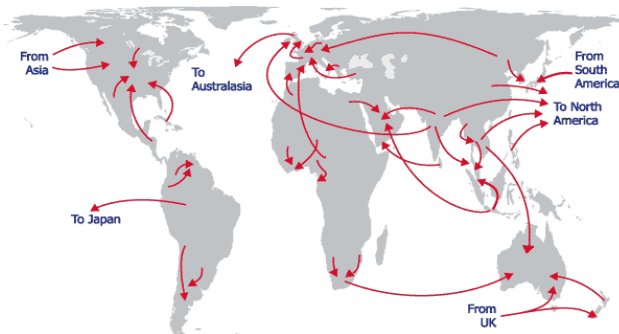
ASIA CONSULTATION HONG KONG NOV 14 – 18 2011

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalisation has brought unprecedented movement of people across the world: seeking work, to escape natural disasters or conflict, or as victims of the international trafficking of human beings.

For some people this movement is voluntary and positive: migration has shaped our societies over centuries. But for many millions movement is the forced flight of the refugee seeking safety or the destitute seeking relief from extreme poverty and results in exposure to extreme danger and exploitation. This is what the Archbishop of Canterbury Most Revd. Rowan Williams has called ‘the mobility of the vulnerable’. This paper looks at the vulnerabilities and risks of those people who are the victims of this mobility, and considers how the Anglican Alliance might take forward the work across the Communion to support them.

According to the UN, the total population of migrants and refugees now stands at around 191 million. This is about six per cent of the world’s labour force. The vast weight of this burden is borne by developing countries, particularly in Africa. All regions of the global south have migrant-sending and migrant-receiving countries. The map below gives a brief glimpse of global migrant flows.



Many people also migrate across greater distances, including from the global south to the wealthier global north. This makes migration a cross cutting issue, relevant and important to people from in all parts of the Anglican Communion. Throughout the world, migrants often face similar issues of exploitation, stigma and abuse, although patterns of settlement and support structures may be very different.

ANNEX 1: From pstalker.com/migration/mg_map.ht

Youth and young adults are most likely to migrate. People between 18 – 29 years old account for up to 57% of international migrants. They migrate to study, gain employment, reunite with family or marry, or for humanitarian reasons. Women, who make up nearly half of all migrants, also face specific protection problems.

There are many causes of migration. There are push factors which stem from difficult circumstances in the country of origin, such poor governance, conflict, lack of freedom, poverty and environmental disasters and pull factors such as the hope of better prospects abroad.

Economic migrants who move to find work and a better life play an important role in their host community, as well as continuing to contribute to their country of origin through remittances and family and kinship links. However, they can also find themselves trapped in marginal or unregulated employment, and the Church has played a major role in winning legislative protection: the Church in Hong Kong is an outstanding example of this, and its work is a focus for the Asia consultation.

Since the global financial crisis broke in 2008, migrants have faced even greater challenges. Many have lost work or seen their incomes decline, which also affects those who depend on their remittances. At the same time, financial hardship among host communities has at times led to an upturn in hostility and xenophobia, sometimes resulting in conflict and violence. As unemployment levels rise around the globe, governments have tightened migration regimes. This has led to a contraction in migration. The nature of migration is also undergoing some

profound changes – many more migrants are now heading to the global east, and China is fast becoming a destination of choice, particularly for people of Asian or African origin.

1.1. INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS FOR MIGRATION

There are three major frameworks for protection and regulation of the global movement of people:

- The protection afforded to economic migrants is largely extended through international labour conventions and instruments, like the UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. However, this is less than comprehensive.
- The framework for refugees is the 1951 Geneva Convention and 1967 additional protocol. It is primarily the responsibility of states to ensure that their treatment of refugees respects international principles. Globally, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has a mandate to provide international protection to refugees and seek permanent solutions to their problems
- A separate body of international law is developing to tackle the issue of human trafficking, in which people are moved across borders by networks of gangs and agents operating for profit, and trading in the most vulnerable of people. Increasingly a problem in a globalised world with freer and easier movement of people, trafficking can take many different forms: it can be for labour, for sexual exploitation, for organs and of children. The Palermo Protocols¹ (2000), an addendum to the UN Convention against Transnational Crime, commits ratifying states to prevent and combat trafficking, protecting and assisting victims and promoting cooperation among states.

1.2. MIGRATION AND CHRISTIANITY

Action to support migrants and refugees is an opportunity for Christians to support the most vulnerable and oppressed, and building mutually supportive relationships between migrants and host communities. It is one way that we can show our love for each other. We have a biblical mandate to ‘Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt’ (Deuteronomy 10:19) and migration theology encourages us to treat migrants with charity and justice, according to the biblical tradition of hospitality.

Around the Communion, local churches welcome migrants and refugees into their communities, sharing resources and offering support as they integrate into new environments. Migrants, in turn, bring a wealth of experience and diversity which can enrich local church life.

The number of international migrants in Asia increased between 1990 and 2010

	Number of migrants (thousands)		Increment (thousand) 1990-2010	Average annual growth 1990-2010
	1990	2010		
ASIA	50,876	61,324	10,448	0.9
Central Asia	6,628	4,970	1,658	-1.4
Eastern Asia	4,484	6,485	2,002	1.8
South-Eastern Asia	3,060	6,715	3,654	3.9
Southern Asia	20,196	14,304	-5,892	-1.7
Western Asia	16,508	28,850	12,342	2.8
OCEANIA	4,365	6,015	1,650	1.6
Australia/New Zealand	4,105	5,674	1,569	1.6
Melanesia	91	111	19	1.0
Micronesia	111	151	40	1.5
Polynesia	58	79	21	1.5
Northern Africa	2,278	2,010	-268	-0.6

Source: United Nations, Population Division/DESA, 2011

As the Anglican Church is a diverse community of believers of all languages, races and peoples, with a strong presence in many countries that receive migrants and refugees, as well as in countries of extreme poverty and conflict from which people flee, it is well placed to integrate migrants. Drawing on our culture of internationalism and shared Christian faith, we have created structures to help minister to migrant communities in each region of the world.

One exciting development in the Anglican Communion’s global ministry to migrants and refugees is the recent formation of the Anglican Refugee and Migrant Network (ARMN), hosted by the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui. It has a mandate to encourage coordination, consultation and action of refugee/migration issues and to determine and work towards eliminating the root causes which lead to forced migration and create refugees.

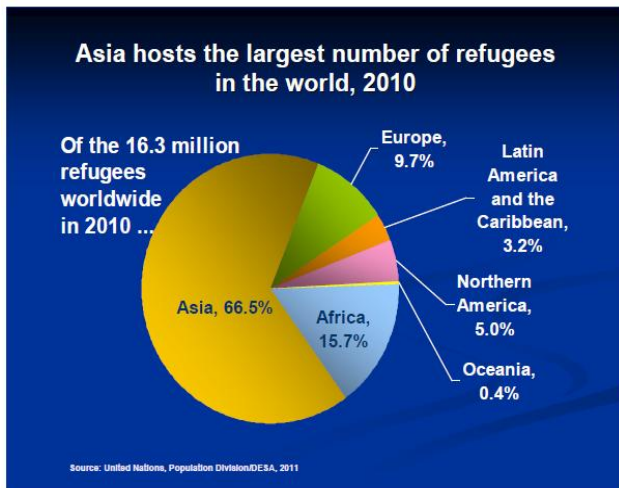
An important question for the Anglican Alliance is how we can add value to this work, bringing a development perspective to the issue particularly in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific.

¹ The Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, supplementing the United Nations convention against transnational organized crime, 2000.

2. MIGRATION BY REGIONS

2.1. SOUTH AND SOUTH EAST ASIA

According to the UN, Asia hosts over 50 million of the world's migrants. It also hosts the largest number of refugees globally. Migration generally flows from poorer countries with vast labour surpluses to fast growing newly industrialised countries. These charts give a breakdown and also some statistics on other regions.



Because Asian governments try to strictly control migration, migrants' rights are often limited. Although temporary labour migration is encouraged, migrants are generally not allowed to reunite with their families or settle permanently in their host countries. While most migration in the region is temporary, trends toward long-term stay are becoming evident in some places.

According to the ILO, up to one in four Asian migrants may have an irregular (illegal) status. Governments often turn a blind eye when the economy needs cheap labour and then have campaigns of mass expulsions during downturns. This has been the case during the global financial crisis, when in some cases vigilantism to expel migrants has led to conflict and violence.

A key trend in Asian migration is that many migrants in the region are women, working as domestic workers, entertainers, in the hospitality industry and factories. These jobs offer poor pay, conditions, and status; conditions which leave women open to abuse by their employers. Women also migrate for marriage, often migrating into rural areas when local women leave for cities.

In Thailand, hundreds of thousands of people from neighbouring Myanmar live in nine refugee camps along the border. Many are from minority ethnic groups fleeing persecution. Myanmar's military junta is waging a systematic campaign against civilians, including forced labour, land confiscations, displacement, sexual violence and the destruction of property. Many of those affected are Karen, an ethnic group which seeks autonomous rule within Myanmar. Although the Thai government has a policy of assisting refugees, the military is pressuring them to return home before it is safe. It also limits the access of NGOs for fear of incentivising the arrival of more refugees. The camps are seriously underfunded and donors are withdrawing.

The Anglican Church in Asia has long been active in supporting migrant workers and advocating for fuller respect of their rights. In 1981 the Mission for Filipino Migrant Workers (now Mission for Migrant Workers) was adapted by St. John's Cathedral in Hong Kong. It provides pastoral care, paralegal assistance and advocacy for migrants. This form of direct services eventually expanded to cover several migrant and refugee-receiving countries in Asia and the Pacific through the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants established in 1983.

2.2. AFRICA

With over 13 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in 19 countries, Africa is the region most affected by internal displacement. Over 50% of the world's IDPs live in Africa and there are estimated to be around 3.25 million refugees. Eastern Africa and Western Africa have generally had higher numbers of international migrants than other regions of the continent. Much African migration is forced, with conflict and violence spurring population movements.

As in Asia, an increasing number of migrants in Africa are women. In addition an increasing number are self-employed entrepreneurs in the informal sector.

Africa is, at the moment, the only continent to have a legally binding regional refugee treaty. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, adopted in 1969, expanded the definition of a refugee found in the 1951 Geneva Convention, to include “any person compelled to leave his or her country owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his or her country of origin or nationality”.

There are many examples of Anglican initiatives supporting migrants in Africa. The Rev’d Dr Nicholas Sagovsky, Canon Theologian of Westminster Abbey, highlighted a few in *People on the Move*². In the Diocese of Northern Uganda, the church works with displaced people to improve their living conditions, make information available about the situation in the camps and act as an advocate for their right to a decent life. In Burundi, the Mothers’ Union is helping repatriated families physically, emotionally and spiritually - providing them with basic supplies and equipment as they start to rebuild their lives, organising skills training and running peace and reconciliation programmes.

Churches in many other countries, such as Zambia, also have a long tradition of hosting refugees fleeing civil and political strife. Kenya, where the Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa (CAPA) has its offices, hosts many thousands of refugees from neighbouring Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia. Since the outbreak of the East African food crisis earlier this year, the situation has become even more critical around refugee camps such as Dadaab. Here, half a million refugees struggle to access basic services in an environment of insecurity. Women are very vulnerable to sexual abuse and rape. At the same time, local people – themselves poor – are growing increasingly resentful of services provided to refugees. The risk of conflict is increasing.

2.3. THE PACIFIC

Because opportunities for economic growth are very limited in the small island states in the Pacific, there is a lot of pressure for people to migrate internationally – for instance to New Zealand. People also migrate within their own countries, from remote islands and isolated rural areas to more accessible coastal and urban locations. Recently, there has been a drift towards more climate change refugees: people fleeing islands that are made uninhabitable through changes in the environment. This represents a major crisis for some of the island communities, and there are concerns that it will increase unless urgent action is taken. Many of the largest migration streams have been from Polynesia, notably Samoa and Tonga.

As many of the islands in the Pacific are so small, migration often has a profound effect on the communities that remain. In remote areas, it has complicated and hindered the delivery of basic services such as health and education. On the other hand, it is normally for the benefit of the family that Pacific islanders migrate. The decision to leave is rarely taken individually; it is taken within the family unit and is partly aimed at improving the living standards of those who remain at home.

A recent development in the Anglican Communion’s ministry among migrants and refugees in the Pacific is the formation of the Anglican Church of Australia’s refugee and migrant working group. The group is compiling an experts’ database on refugee work, collates information from dioceses to provide an overview, and is exploring the possibility of developing a course on cross cultural ministry. It also promotes Refugee and Migrant Sunday. Organisations like Anglicare also have a long history of providing services to migrants and refugees.

2.4. LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Many Latin American and Caribbean migrants leave for economic reasons in the hope of a more prosperous future. Most go north to the United States and Canada. Some also go to Spain and Portugal, as these shared languages are legacies of the colonial era. Others migrate within their countries, moving into cities like Mexico City and Buenos Aires, which have grown to become some of the biggest in the world. Very few Latin Americans migrate to other countries within the region.

² Rev’d Dr Nicholas Sagovsky (2009) *People on the Move*, Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, Number 111.

Huge inflows of migrants from rural to urban areas within Latin America have presented a serious challenge to local authorities, which often do not have the services necessary to cater for the arrival of so many domestic migrants. Disordered and unplanned urbanization of the *barriadas*, *favelas*, and irregular settlements over many decades has contributed to some serious social problems, including the breakdown of law and order, traffic, pollution, overcrowding, and water shortages. Latin American churches have a history of working with migrant communities in their midst, especially in urban settlements. In the City of God, Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil run initiatives to engage youth in efforts to improve urban spaces. Meanwhile, Anglican ministries in countries that receive Latin American migrants, such as Episcopal Migration Ministries in the USA, welcome and settle newcomers into their communities.

As with Africa, Latin America has also built upon the 1951 Geneva Convention at regional level. In 1984, Latin American governments adopted the Cartagena Declaration. Like the OAU Convention, it expanded the 1951 Refugee Convention definition so that it included people fleeing their country “because their lives, safety or freedom have been threatened by generalized violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order”. Although the Declaration is not legally binding, most Latin American states apply the definition as a matter of practice.

3. MOVING FORWARD

The challenge for us is to consider how we can support Anglican churches in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Pacific in their ministries with migrant and refugee communities. Particularly, we hope to support those who find themselves in the most vulnerable positions – people displaced involuntarily through war and disaster, people trafficked across borders into slavery, exploitation and danger and stateless people.

3.1. ADVOCACY

Because the most vulnerable groups of migrants and refugees are among the least able to advocate for change, the church can and does help to make their voices heard around the world by giving them a platform to join with others and speak out. It may be that the Anglican Alliance can work through and with its regional and local partners to deliver an advocacy campaign highlighting a particular issue, such as human trafficking. Or, it could be that we run an informational campaign defending the human dignity of migrants and telling of the positive contributions they make to their communities.

3.2. RELIEF

Refugees and internally displaced people who migrate in large numbers often end up in camps, and need humanitarian assistance to meet their survival needs. It is important for us to consider how our work on migrants and refugees fits within the relief pillar of our work.

How can the Anglican Alliance support people in refugee camps, in places like Dadaab (Kenya) and on the Thai/Myanmar border?

3.3. A POSSIBLE FOCUS ON ANTI-TRAFFICKING WORK?

As well as advocating for legislative protection for trafficked people and campaigning for improvements in their welfare, it may be that the Anglican Alliance can work with and through its partners to counter trafficking at local level. One of the Anglican Alliance’s core functions is to help draw connections between different churches and agencies working in similar thematic areas, and perhaps there is some work that can be done to facilitate close contact and dialogue between churches engaged in anti-trafficking work along key migratory routes. It may be that we could create a toolkit for people, or provide materials for vigilance work so that local churches can identify and assist trafficked people in their communities.

- What issues affecting vulnerable migrants and refugees would you like to tackle through advocacy?
- How might we work with migrants, churches and agencies to deliver an advocacy campaign?
- How could we work with local churches and partners to support anti-trafficking work in the community?