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# Immigration's benefits noted

## **U.N.: Migrants do not cost jobs or reduce wages**

REUTERS

UNITED NATIONS - Despite widespread unease over immigration in the industrialized world, migrants do not significantly drive down wages or employment rates in the countries they move to, the United Nations reported Monday.

And they contribute economically by feeding demand for goods and services in their adopted lands.

Immigrants "add to gross national product and generally contribute more to government coffers than they take out," according to the World Economic and Social Survey for 2004.

"We cannot ignore the real policy difficulties posed by migration, but neither should we lose sight of its immense potential to benefit migrants, the countries they leave and those to which they migrate," U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan said in a preface to the report by the U.N. Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

"And we must ensure that in our approach to this issue, we uphold the values of tolerance and respect for human rights," Annan said.

The new U.N. study calls on countries that are popular immigrant destinations to consider public relations campaigns to ease opposition, in light of their benefits to host countries.

It also urges governments to adopt laws to ensure immigrants' safety in the workplace, protect their human rights and improve their access to education and job training.

Destination governments might also want to consider supporting education and job training programs in the countries their migrants come from, given the economic benefits of their migrant labor, the report says.

## **Immigration neglected**

While governments have worked hard in the past 50 years to tear down barriers to world commerce and promote free trade, immigration is a significant exception, the U.N. survey found.

"The current international movement of people is largely shaped by restrictive migration laws and policies," said Jose Antonio Ocampo, U.N. undersecretary-general for economic and social affairs.

The number of people living outside their country of birth continued to increase in the 1990s, the survey found, hitting 175 million people by 2000.

Migration to the wealthiest nations rose 3 percent over the decade while remaining flat in developing nations. As a result, while one in every 35 people on Earth is a migrant, the figure stands at about one in 12 in developed countries.

While wealthier nations benefit overall from immigration, developing countries lose out as their most promising inhabitants are often among those who leave, the report said.

The average individual emigrating from a country in Latin America or Asia has more than twice the years of

schooling of the average resident. From Africa, emigrants have three times the schooling of the average resident, the report said.

The departure of such highly educated individuals leads to a loss of innovation, creativity and tax revenues, it said.

On the other hand, emigrants send large sums of money back home to the families and friends they left behind. Studies show that 70 percent of foreign direct investment in China is placed by Chinese who left their homeland behind.

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