

MAR11-2010-020216

Abstract for an Invited Paper  
for the MAR11 Meeting of  
the American Physical Society

**Migration of scientists and the International Centre for Theoretical Physics – a Personal and Professional Perspective**

KATEPALLI R. SREENIVASAN, New York University

Scientists migrate for a variety of reasons: political problems with their governments, lack of professional opportunities in their countries, the lure of better lives, financial security for them and their families, better education for their off-springs, and so forth. Migration usually occurs from poor and oppressed countries—the two categories are not one and the same—to the rich and the open. It has created, over time, a dilemma for the poor countries: in the midst of all their other problems, how to justify spending on higher education and research when that investment often results in the most enterprising of its citizens to leave their countries behind? (When migration has reversed direction occasionally, it is because of certain necessities of the scientists to be back in their countries or for opportunities that some individuals see for wielding greater scientific power.) The ideal of keeping the best scientists in their own countries, still ensuring that they remain scientifically productive and inspiring to the youth, is what provided the motivation for the creation of the International Centre for Theoretical Physics in Trieste, Italy, where I served as Director for some seven years. In this talk, I will present the story behind the formation of the Centre in 1964, explain its rationale, and analyze its evolution over time to accommodate the changing scene in world; I will discuss how some things have remained the same even as more of them have changed over time. Finally, I will remark on the broad needs of developing countries even though such needs are often very specific to a country.