
**THE APEC ARCHITECT PROJECT:
A Mechanism for Mobility of Architects in the APEC Region**
by
PROSPERIDAD C. LUIS, FUAP, APEC Architect

International Conference of Architects
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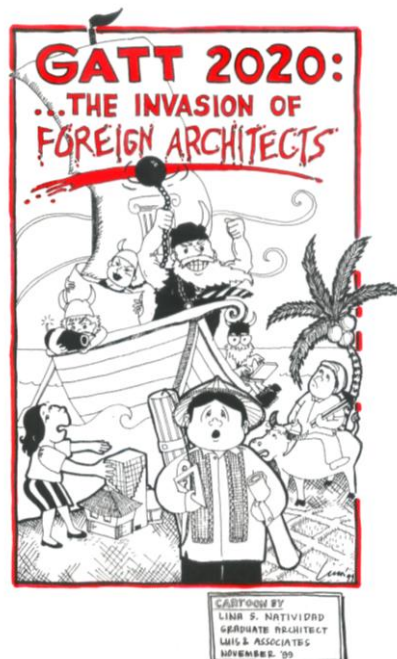
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INTRODUCTION

The Invasion of Foreign Architects

In preparing for this presentation, I stumbled upon a lecture I had delivered during the Continuing Professional Education Seminar of a District of the United Architects of the Philippines. The title I transmitted to the organizers of the Seminar was “GATS and the Globalization of Architectural Practice”.

To market the seminar, the District announced it in the newspapers and to my surprise, the title reported in the news article was not the one I submitted, but something else. When I saw it, I said to myself that the organizers of the Seminar knew how to market their forum with the use of controversial statements like: “GATT 2020: The Invasion of Foreign Architects”. A trainee in my office drew a cartoon to interpret this attention-getting title. The cartoon was quite imaginative, with foreign Vikings having somehow traversed the waters from North Atlantic to Asia Pacific and terrorizing the farmers and the architect in his embroidered barong tagalog on the shores of this small country of 7,000 islands.



This cartoon is a powerful expression of how many of us felt about globalization. GATS and the globalization of practice seem to be daunting prospects in this new age, GATS being associated with such words and terms as:

- Borderless economy
- Open doors
- Global village
- Total liberalization
- Free flow of trade in services
- Practice of a foreigner in a host country (the invasion!) which somehow worries us all.

The best way to combat a fear is to understand it. The best way to win a battle is know your enemy. So, let me begin so we can get to a decision.

THE VEHICLES OF GLOBALIZATION

General Agreement on Tariff and Trade

GATT or General Agreement on Tariff and Trade is a set of rules governing international trade. It is also a established institution where international trade negotiations take place and international trade disputes are arbitrated. It was established in 1947 on the concept of “trade not aid”.

This started when developing countries realized that they should not rely entirely for their development on assistance or aid given by the developed countries. Other forms of development assistance were explored and the aspect of trade became an obvious venue for such assistance in the form of, for example, opening up of markets of the developed countries to exports of developing countries.

The Philippines became a full member on January 1, 1980. After several more rounds of negotiations, GATT was signed by 114 countries, including the Philippines on January 1, 1995. GATT later transformed to a single, formal and permanent institution called World Trade Organization or WTO, with stronger powers to enforce GATT rules and provisions and to discipline members.

General Agreement on Trade in Services

GATS or the General Agreement on Trade in Services is a major agreement within GATT relevant to the service sector which includes professionals. It aims to expand trade in services under conditions of transparency and progressive liberalization. It also works towards international standards and criteria for recognition and common standards of practice.

At this time, if we are true to our commitment when we signed the GATT and GATS, we should have moved forward and had opened our doors wider since that time.

Mutual Recognition Agreement

MRA or Mutual Recognition Agreement is an agreement between two (bilateral) or more (multilateral) countries whereby each accepts in whole or in part:

- education
- experience
- licensing or certification obtained in either one of them.

There are guidelines for MRA approved by the WTO Council for Trade in Services. The first profession to have an MRA was Accountancy and the model it provided contains sections and provisions on:

- Who are the participants? Who would negotiate? Government? Professional Organizations?
- What are the conditions and equivalences in qualifications, registration procedures, licensing and mechanism for implementation

It is important to note that MRAs can be developed in phases, and that the professional organization is necessary for negotiations among countries. It is therefore a great responsibility of the United Architects of the Philippines to be an active participant in such negotiations.

During the 24th National Convention of the UAP in April of 1998, then UIA President Vassilis Sgoutas said in his Keynote Address entitled “Vision of Global Practice in Architecture”,

“For me, Asia has other connotation as well in connection with professional practice. Asia has always been at the forefront for setting ethical standards. After all, it was here in the Philippines that originated what was to become the UIA Code of Ethics. Ethics must surely be the starting point for any deliberation on professional practice.”

This statement of Vassilis Sgoutas is a tribute to the work of ARCASIA, the Council of 17 architectural institutes in the Asian Region. For it was in the Meeting of the ARCASIA Council in Manila in 1981 that the UIA Code of Ethics was crafted and adopted in the Manila Declaration of 1981 as the International Code of Ethics on Consulting Services. ARCASIA submitted this to UIA and it was adopted as the UIA International Code for Consulting Services.

- June 12-14, 2002 - 1st Steering Committee Meeting
Sydney, Australia
- December 12-13, 2002 - 2nd Steering Committee Meeting
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- February 18-19, 2004 - 3rd Steering Committee Meeting
Taipei, Taiwan
- September 22-23, 2004 - 4th Steering “Committee Meeting
1st Provisional Council Meeting
Honolulu, Hawaii, USA
- May 30-June 1, 2005 - 2nd Provisional Council Meeting
1st Central Council Meeting
Tokyo, Japan
- May 23-24, 2006 - 2nd Central Council Meeting
Mexico City, Mexico
- August 7-8, 2008 - 3rd Central Council Meeting
Vancouver, Canada
- October 10, 2010 - 4th Central Council Meeting
Manila, Philippines

After the Inaugural Meeting, more economies joined in as the work progressed. There are now 14 participating economies, with the addition of Canada, Korea, Mexico, and Singapore to the inaugural group.

The participating economies agreed that the process they would adopt would have 2 features:

- That they would identify common elements of SUBSTANTIAL EQUIVALENCE in the areas of education; internship and practical training; registration and licensure; and practice and experience; and
- They would establish an APEC Architect Register and identify APEC Architects

Organizational Structure

The organizational structure for the APEC Architect Project is at two levels:

The Central Council is a body composed of representatives appointed by the local Monitoring Committees of the participating economies. It decides standards and criteria required for registration as an APEC Architect, and establishes operational procedures for management of the Register. It is the body that authorizes the local Monitoring Committees to administer the local section of the APEC Architect Register.

On the other hand, the Monitoring Committee is established at the local level and is in charge of operating the local section of the APEC Architect Register. It confirms compliance of candidates with criteria set by the Central Council and ensures continued maintenance of required standards.

The Monitoring Committee of the Philippines was established on January 28, 2004 when the United Architects of the Philippines, the Professional Regulation Commission, and the Commission on Higher Education - 1 private association and 2 government organizations respectively, signed a Memorandum of Agreement to administer, operate and maintain the APEC Architect Register in the Philippines.

Work in Progress

During each meeting or series of meetings, there was substantial accomplishment and advancement in the work of the Council.

- In Brisbane, the concept of the APEC Architect was accepted;
- In Sydney, Kuala Lumpur, Taipei and Honolulu, the organizational and operational matters were discussed.
- In Tokyo, the agreement of a simultaneous launching of the APEC Architect Register on September 19, 2005, the 4th anniversary of the Inaugural Meeting in Brisbane. Also here, the organization structure was strengthened with the formation of the Central Council, charged with the overall authority for the control and management of the APEC Architect Framework.
- In Mexico and Vancouver, the focus of discussions was the APEC Reciprocal Recognition Framework (RRF). In Mexico, the economies were listed on a horizontal matrix of three types of recognition arrangements (*please see matrix below: APEC Architect Reciprocal Recognition Framework (RRF) 2006*). In Vancouver, the matrix was changed into a vertical format that includes six types of arrangement (*please see matrix: APEC Architect Reciprocal Recognition Framework (RRF) 2008*).

**RRF: The APEC ARCHITECT
RECIPROCAL RECOGNITION FRAMEWORK**

The Reciprocal Recognition Framework identifies participating economies that have adopted the same registration / certification requirements for APEC Architects from foreign economies, thus establishing a reciprocal basis for the recognition of APEC Architects from those economies. In assessing APEC Architects from economies with more restrictive categories of requirements, how economies, host economies may impose similar requirements to those of the applicant’s economy.

The 2006 RRF lists three types of arrangement in a horizontal format: 1) Domain Specific Assessment, 2) Comprehensive Registration Examination, and 3) Host Economy Residence/Experience.

**THE APEC ARCHITECT
RECIPROCAL RECOGNITION FRAMEWORK (RRF)
2006**

<p>Domain Specific Assessment Understanding of legal and technical issues unique to the host economy</p>	<p>Comprehensive Registration Examination Examination of skills and knowledge required for the practice of architecture</p>	<p>Host Economy Residence/Experience At least one year of professional experience in host economy prior to registration examination</p>
<p>AUSTRALIA CHINESE TAIPEI JAPAN MEXICO NEW ZEALAND SINGAPORE UNITED STATES</p>		<p>HONG KONG CHINA</p>

We would note in the Matrix above that Canada, People’s Republic of China, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand do not yet provide for the independent practice of architects from other economies. It is understand that they are working towards liberalizing their current restrictions in the near future.

In the RRF of 2008, there are six arrangements listed vertically namely: 1) No recognition, 2) Local collaboration, 3) Host Economy Residence and Experience, 4) Comprehensive Registration Examination, 5) Domain Specific Assessment, and 6) Complete Mobility.

The Matrix shows the relative open-ness of doors of the member economies,

**THE APEC ARCHITECT
RECIPROCAL RECOGNITION FRAMEWORK (RRF)
2008**

<p>Complete Mobility No requirement other than APEC Architect status</p>
<p>Domain Specific Assessment Understanding of legal and technical issues unique to the host economy AUSTRALIA CHINESE TAIPEI, JAPAN, NEW ZEALAND, REPUBLIC OF MEXICO, SINGAPORE, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA</p>
<p>Comprehensive Registration Examination Examination of all skills and knowledge required for the practice of architecture</p>
<p>Host Economy Residence / Experience At least one year of professional experience in host economy prior to registration examination</p>
<p>Local Collaboration Association with an architect from the host economy CANADA, PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, MALAYSIA, PHILIPPINES, REPUBLIC OF KOREA, HONGKONG CHINA</p>
<p>No Recognition No recognition of APEC Architect status</p>

For the 4th Central Council Meeting in Manila, the upward progress made by economies by way of moving upward to the next level of open-ness will be discussed.

Some economies have forged MRAs with one another in various types of arrangement. And with the activity in this regard intensifying, it is hoped that those near the bottom of the ladder would also slowly, but progressively move upwards towards complete liberalization.