

ISA INTERNATIONAL GUEST LECTURE

# THE POLITICS OF MOBILITY

## NOTES FROM A NOT-SO-SMALL NON-ISLAND

**GODFREY BALDACCHINO***Professor of Sociology, University of Malta*

The globalisation wave and its accompanying euphoria have ground to a halt. The Single European Act and the deals of the World Trade Organisation of the late 20th-century represent, with the advantage of hindsight, the epitome of neo-liberalism and internationalization. Now, however, mobility politics are selective, driven by the pursuit of talent and investment. Meanwhile the world's community of states refuses to recognise the moral or legal category of „environmental refugees“, fearing a deluge of applicants claiming rights of asylum. The media mainly focuses on the „small four“ – the Maldives, Tuvalu, Marshalls and Kiribati – supported by a very vocal Alliance of Small Island States. But one large state – Bangladesh – is the most serious contender for a massive exodus triggered by climate change with as many as 100 million departing from its estuarine coastal plains. This presentation will explore the sharp contrast and contradictions of immigrant investor programmes and undocumented migrant strategies. These offer lessons on the differential discourse used and the presumed humanitarian and ethical underpinnings of social policy.



**Godfrey Baldacchino** (PhD, University of Warwick) is the Pro-Rector for International Development and Full Professor of Sociology in the Department of Sociology at the University of Malta. He is also the UNESCO Co-Chair in Island Studies & Sustainability at the University of Prince Edward Island, Canada, as well as the founding Executive Editor and Editor Emeritus of *Island Studies Journal* and the designated Executive Editor of *Small States & Territories*, an online journal starting in May, 2018. In 2014, he was elected President of the International Small Islands Studies Association (ISISA), and in June of 2015, he was elected Chair of the Scientific Board of RETI, the global excellence network of island universities.