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<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Diaz, Rony V.</td>
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POLICY APPROACHES TO LABOR MIGRATION

Executive Director RONY V. DIAZ

CONGRESSIONAL COMMISSION ON LABOR

A PRESENTATION TO THE REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON MEDIA AND LABOR MIGRATION

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OUTLINE

I. OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT INDICATORS
   a. Land-based and Sea-based
   b. Remittances

II. POLICY STATEMENT ON OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT

III. POLICY APPROACHES
   a. Government programs
   b. Private sector initiatives
   c. Role of Media
I. OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT INDICATORS

TABLE 1. DEPLOYED LAND-BASED CONTRACT WORKERS, PHILIPPINES, 1985-2000

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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>337,754</td>
<td>385,117</td>
<td>468,591</td>
<td>530,877</td>
<td>481,349</td>
<td>480,161</td>
<td>640,331</td>
<td>181,060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>1,977</td>
<td>1,958</td>
<td>1,273</td>
<td>2,425</td>
<td>3,615</td>
<td>2,489</td>
<td>4,936</td>
<td>1,468</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>52,838</td>
<td>92,648</td>
<td>90,768</td>
<td>168,205</td>
<td>166,774</td>
<td>202,224</td>
<td>299,521</td>
<td>84,256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>4,067</td>
<td>7,614</td>
<td>6,853</td>
<td>13,423</td>
<td>10,279</td>
<td>11,291</td>
<td>30,707</td>
<td>11,077</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>253,867</td>
<td>267,035</td>
<td>218,110</td>
<td>302,975</td>
<td>234,310</td>
<td>191,738</td>
<td>287,076</td>
<td>79,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>953</td>
<td>1,397</td>
<td>942</td>
<td>1,507</td>
<td>1,398</td>
<td>1,684</td>
<td>2,424</td>
<td>864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
<td>3,744</td>
<td>7,902</td>
<td>9,557</td>
<td>12,228</td>
<td>13,469</td>
<td>5,801</td>
<td>9,045</td>
<td>2,303</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trust Territories</td>
<td>3,048</td>
<td>6,563</td>
<td>7,380</td>
<td>8,890</td>
<td>7,039</td>
<td>4,561</td>
<td>6,622</td>
<td>2,022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elsewhere</td>
<td>13,260</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>133,708</td>
<td>21,224</td>
<td>44,465</td>
<td>60,373</td>
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Source: POEA

*First Quarter

Until 1995, the Middle East was the major destination of OFW's with Asia following closely. But during 1997 up to the present Asia had become the predominant destination of OFW's.
Over the years the overseas employment has been increasing. It was a temporary measure of the government to relieve unemployment and at the same time earn foreign exchange. Annual land-based and sea-based deployment reached from 36,035 in 1975 to 76,498 workers in 1999.

Of the total deployed in 1999, 560,695 or 73% are land-based workers, while the remaining 205,803 represent the sea-based workers.
Remittances by OFW’s have been increasing as well, from US$ 791,902 million in 1987 and US$ 4,877,513 billion in 1995, to US$ 6,794,550 billion as of October 1999 for both the land-based and sea-based workers. In 1999, land-based OFW’s posted a total amount of US$ 5,948,341 billion remittances compared to US$ 846,209 million for sea-based workers. A big bulk of the total remittances came from the U.S. which accounted for US$ 4.356 billion or roughly about 74% of the total remittances, followed by Asia, Europe and Middle East with US$ 508,357 million, US$ 361,386 million and US$ 212,916 million respectively.

OFW’s have contributed substantially to the country’s GNP and to foreign exchange earnings. Remittance to GNP ratio was 7.1% and remittances to export earnings ratio was 16.7% in 1998. But because of some informal channels for remittances, it has been argued that the amounts of total remittances are undervalued and is subject to double posting.
BASIC POLICY FOR OVERSEAS WORKERS

- THE NEW OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT PERSPECTIVE CONSIDERS THAT OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT IS NOT A STRATEGY FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT BUT ONE OF THE MANY VIABLE CHOICES/OPTIONS GIVEN TO FILIPINO WORKERS TO EASE UNEMPLOYMENT

Foreign labor markets have offered increasingly varied employment opportunities to Filipinos that pay more, provide skill training and generally offer better terms of employment. The OFW's and their families have benefited substantially from the increased income that has allowed them to raise their living standards and invest in their future through investment in the education of their children and in other forms of capital like houses, land and vehicles. The OFW’s remittances have also contributed to the nation’s economic growth. The remittances have significantly increased foreign exchange earnings that were largely used for acquisition of capital and other producer goods. A portion of foreign earnings was saved and so increased the country’s saving rate. Foreign employment has also reduced the unemployment problem.

As the nation’s pursues higher growth of income and employment, the government will encourage foreign employment to the extent that it enhances the welfare of the OFWs and their families. It will pursue policies and strategies that will maximize the gains going to families during inter-linked strategies, first in the search for new market, second in appropriate manpower development and third, in the protection of OFW’s through recruitment and at the workplace.
POLICY APPROACHES

WE NEED TO FORMULATE POLICIES THAT WILL RESPOND NOT JUST TO THE REALITIES OF TODAY BUT MUST ALSO BE RESPONSIVE TO THE REALITIES OF THE FUTURE AND TO THE NEEDS OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET

A. Government Programs

1. Programs that will enable our country to make available highly qualified workers, from the professionals and the highly trained technical workers down to the non-skilled workers
2. Active marketing program that will respond swiftly but with high degree of flexibility to the continuous changes in labor requirements of host countries and identification of new markets
3. Effective monitoring of placements and immigration of OFW’S to reduce the risk of fraudulent placements, physical abuse and contract violations at the workplace
4. Formulate protective policies for vulnerable work
5. Bilateral and multilateral labor agreements not only for labor creation but also for welfare promotion
6. Reintegration/ employment creation programs for displaced and returning OFW’S
7. Strengthen government agencies (DOLE- OWWA, POEA, DFA, etc.) And effective implementation of current programs and policies

B. Private Sector Initiatives

1. Strengthen private sector participation in placement and recruitment of workers

C. Role Of Media

1. Dissemination of correct information about foreign labor markets
2. Objective analysis of labor conditions and standards abroad