

**PHILIPPINE STATEMENT**

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**Delivered by  
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Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Philippine delegation, I would like to express my warmest congratulations to you and the members of your Bureau on your well-deserved election. You can count on the commitment and cooperation of the Philippine delegation in working towards the successful completion of the tasks at hand in this session.

Mr. Chairman,

The migration phenomenon is changing the landscape of Philippine society and its positive and negative impacts warrant serious consideration.

While updated information on internal migration has been sourced with great difficulty and has made demographic evidence-based planning and policy-making wanting in many respects, available data reflect the trend towards urbanization. The 2000 census of population and housing showed that about forty-eight percent (48%) of Filipinos were living in the urban areas compared to thirty-seven percent (37%) more than two decades ago. The urban population grew rapidly at an annual rate of about five percent (5%) from 1960 to 1995, albeit showing a decline to approximately three percent (3%) annually from 1995 to 2000. It is estimated that by 2030, about eight (8) out of ten (10) Filipinos will be living in cities and urban agglomerations.

This rural-to-urban migration pattern remains the main migration stream in the country. There is also an evident rural-to-rural and urban-to-rural migration flows and counter-flows which have given rise to urban sprawls. Peripheral rural areas receive much of the spillovers of population from the highly urbanized cities. This is observable in Central Luzon and the Calabarzon regions where rural-urban or “rurban” communities accommodate relocating residents from Metro Manila.

The impact of internal migration on regional development has raised serious concerns. The massive movement of rural population to urban areas caught local government units unprepared for its negative effects. Some are experiencing the so-called “double impact” of migration and fertility. The increase in the labor force and the relatively higher income in the urban areas have been viewed as positive economic gains. Conversely, overcrowding, congestion, traffic, flooding, and environmental degradation are its adverse consequences.

Migration to hazardous and protected areas is also an emerging pattern in the country as manifested land conversions of agricultural areas into residential communities or commercial/recreational centers. Encroachments into resource-rich mountains, forests and rivers have often led to environmental disasters thus compounding the vulnerability of residents.

Mr. Chairman,

Mobility is also evident in the increasing outward migration of Filipinos to more than 200 destinations worldwide, and which totaled 10,455,788 as of the December 2011 stock estimates of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, which is roughly ten percent (10%) of the country’s total population:

47% or 4.86m = permanent migrants

43% or 4.51m = temporary migrants or contract workers

10% or 1.07m = irregular or undocumented migrants

The steady inflow of remittances from overseas Filipinos has helped the Philippine economy tremendously. This is widely acknowledged as a beneficial economic consequence of international migration. However, the social costs of migration have also become a development concern as Filipino migrants suffer the hardship of separation from families left behind, abuse and exploitation in countries of employment and residence. The issues surrounding the trafficking of persons – especially women, children, including organ trafficking, and the problems arising from marriage migration, the undocumented and the stateless children -- have called for stricter legislation, monitoring and the strengthening of our regulatory framework.

Under the transformational leadership of President Benigno S. Aquino III, he has personally declared his policy commitment on migration and development in his 16-point social contract with the Filipino people:

*"... Working abroad should not be a necessity but a choice. And our policies have always been guided by our desire to give Filipinos that choice. Our countrymen should not have to leave the country to lead comfortable lives...This is precisely why our reform efforts are focused on attracting more*

*investments, creating more jobs and giving our countrymen reason to believe that a good life awaits them here at home..."*

Cognizant of the diverse support requirements of the Filipino global community, the Commission on Filipinos Overseas in partnership with the Central Bank of the Philippines and multi-stakeholders, has established a Remittance for Development Council (REDC), a recommendatory body advocating for the channeling of remittances for development, the lowering of remittance costs and the promotion of financial literacy trainings for migrants and their families.

Mr. Chairman,

We are fully aware of the implications of internal and international migration, and particularly, the importance of promoting and protecting the rights and welfare of migrants and their families, their hometown communities of origin and eventual destination upon return and reintegration into the Philippines. Our laws respect the right of citizens to search for better opportunities and exercise their options and choice of residence and employment.

While we acknowledge the critical role of government in providing the requisite information and guidance in their pursuit of self-development in the Philippines or abroad, we assume the responsibility to harness the positive gains of migration while mitigating its negative consequences.

Mr. Chairman,

Under Philippine Local Government Code of 1991, local government units are tasked to provide services and conduct programs on population and migration, to better manage the development problems arising therefrom.

Further, Republic Act 7279 -- the "Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992" requires local governments to monitor trends in the movement of people, identify measures to balance urban capabilities and population, create livelihood opportunities, and ultimately contribute to national growth. These models are anchored on policies that would ensure (a) a productive population; (b) responsive service delivery; (c) revenue generation; (d) optimized investment opportunities; (e) environmental sustainability; and (f) continuous productivity. Cooperation among cities and adjacent municipalities have improved governance and management of urbanization.

The government is presently implementing an integrated long-term approach to poverty alleviation through the conditional cash transfer program of the country. The direct and indirect determinants of poverty, including population issues, are addressed with particular emphasis on family planning and responsible parenthood.

Beneficiaries from the rural areas and the urban poor are targeted to help them face life's challenges such that migrating becomes just another option.

Local chief executives and legislators are recognizing the need to resolve emergent issues resulting from migration and fertility, the importance of investing in people and strengthening the policy environment through the enactment of ordinances on reproductive health. Accurate information and services are available to women, individuals and couples. A landmark legislation passed in 2012 is R.A. 10354 – “The Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Law” popularly known as the “RH Bill.”

Another concern is the continuous threat of environmental degradation resulting from air pollution and unmanaged solid waste. Thus, the integrated implementation of population, health and environment interventions is ongoing in select urban localities.

Mr. Chairman,

Our efforts to address the issues related to international migration are equally significant but they still require much-needed strategies for stricter enforcement at national and international levels. We have crafted important laws that safeguard the welfare of our migrants: a) R.A. 8042 – The Migrant Workers And Other Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 as amended by R.A. 10022 in 2010 which tightens the conditions for their deployment; b) R.A. 9208 -- The Anti-Trafficking In Persons Act of 2003 which was recently amended as R.A. 10364 -- The Expanded Anti Trafficking In Persons Act of 2012 to introduce more stringent provisions; c) R.A. 9710 -- The Magna Carta of Women of 2009 which mandates government to ensure the protection and promotion of migrant women's rights and welfare; d) R.A. 10361 -- The Kasambahay Act of 2012 also known as “The Domestic Workers’ Act Instituting Policies for the Protection and Welfare of Domestic Workers,” which is in line with the 2012 ILO Convention on decent work for domestic workers. These legislations are buttressed by bilateral agreements with our migrants’ receiving countries.

The establishment of migration management mechanisms in government such as the Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs at the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), the Philippine Overseas Labor and Employment Administration (POEA) and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) at the Department of Labor, and the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) under the Office of the President, together with Philippine diplomatic posts in host countries – all serve to reassure that the welfare and interests of overseas Filipinos, whether they are permanent, temporary or irregular migrants, are duly protected.

Aside from these coordinative structures, we have programs and services to handle pre-departure orientation, counseling and on-site resettlement concerns in partnership with relevant organizations; legal and repatriation assistance funds; return and reintegration programs for distressed migrants as well as retirees; financial literacy and entrepreneurship trainings for migrants and their families; inter-agency data gathering and program impact assessments; and we utilize digital technology where possible. These are being implemented jointly by the government and non-government organizations and academe in the Philippines and overseas.

On the macro-level, we have integrated into the Philippine Development Plan for 2011-16, seventy (70) statements on vital issues and policy recommendations relative to migration and development. During the forthcoming 2013 mid-term review, the country's planning body headed by the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) is committed to mainstream migration and development in the planning and decision-making processes at the national and sub-national levels.

Mr. Chairman,

While the Philippines is doing its share to address the issues resulting from migration worldwide, we recognize the challenges we face to be able to ultimately translate the gains from these interventions into meaningful development for the people. As a nation, we continue to do our share in achieving our commitments to the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (1994), the International Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (1990), the Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015) and related commitments that will ensure inclusive human, social and economic development for all sectors.

We join the rest of the world in renewing the call for more coherent, holistic and effective interventions in leveraging migration's positive aspects while mitigating its dire consequences. We commit to support the international community's unified action in addressing population and development concerns particularly in the developing countries. As we prepare for the 2013 High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development this October we call on the international community to integrate migration and development in the discussions and formulation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.