



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

HTF 07/2008A/01

**PHILIPPINES APPROACHES TO PROTECTING
MIGRANT WORKERS LIVING WITH HIV**

Submitted by: The Philippines

**APEC SEMINAR ON SOCIAL POLICIES FOR MIGRANTS TO
PREVENT THE TRANSMISSION OF HIV/AIDS**

**Ha Noi, Viet Nam
18 – 19 September 2008**

PHILIPPINE APPROACH TO PROTECTING MIGRANT

WORKERS LIVING WITH HIV

APEC SEMINAR ON SOCIAL POLICIES FOR
MIGRANTS TO
PREVENT THE TRANSMISSION OF AIDS
Hanoi, 18-19 September 2008

By:

Grace Relucio Princesa

Executive Director
Office of the United Nations and other
International Organizations
Department of Foreign Affairs
Philippines

1

BACKGROUND OF RP MIGRATION

- 191 million migrants who live and/or work outside their countries of origin in 2005
- One out of every 33 persons worldwide is an international migrant
- Philippines accounts for 9% of all migrants worldwide, leading other source countries such as India, Mexico and China
- According to the Commission on Filipino Overseas (CFO)
- 8.2 million Filipinos overseas in 2006
- 3.86 million were temporary workers
- 3.5 million were permanent workers
- Around 870,000 were irregular

2

Migration and Labor Mobility: An Overview of the Philippine Situation

- First wave: 1900-1940s (plantations in Hawaii and US shipping firms)
- Second wave: 1960s to 1970s (domestic workers and nurses in Western Europe; Filipino engineers working in the Middle East particularly in Iran and Iraq)
- Third Wave: 1970s to 21st century
- 1970s – temporary measure to meet unemployment and shortage of foreign currency reserves; demand for workers in the Middle East for construction and infrastructure projects resulting from the oil boom
- 1990s – overseas labor migration becoming more organized (setting of annual deployment targets); feminized

3

Magnitude and Characteristics

- Total volume of documented OFW contracts for 2006 is 1,221,417
- 71% were land-based while 29% were sea-based
- Total deployed were 1,062,567 (87%)
- 788,070 land-based workers (74%) and 274,497 sea-based workers (26%) were successfully deployed
- About 28% of the world's seafaring fleet are supplied by the Philippines [both ratings (60%) and officers combined)
- Of these 2.8% are women while 97.2% are men

4

Economic Benefits of Migration

- A total of US\$ 14,449,928,000 billion were remitted by overseas Filipinos in 2007 representing about 5% of the GDP
- US\$ 2,236,363,000 billion (15%) came from seafarers; while US\$ 12,213,565,000 billion (85%) came from lang-based workers
- 60% of the remittances came from the North America (US and Canada)
- About 15% of the Philippine households receive income from abroad

5

HIV and AIDS Situation

- Close to 33.2 million people are living with HIV across the world at the end of 2007
- In South and South-East Asia, 4 million people are infected with HIV
- The Philippines has an HIV prevalence rate of .01 % since 1984 (low prevalence)
- Approximately 7,490 people infected with HIV as of December 2007 (according to the NEC)

6

HIV Situation in the Philippines

- From January 1984 to January 2008: 3,101 HIV-positive cases recorded in the National HIV Registry
- The average number of cases reported each month has risen by almost 50% in the past two years
- The main mode of transmission in the registry cases is through sex (88%)
- Based on passive surveillance, OFWs constitute 35% of the cases in the Registry
- Of OFW occupations listed in the Registry, seafarers comprise 33% of the infected OFWs

7

Migration and HIV

- Migration, *per se*, is not a risk factor for HIV. The conditions in the migration process render migrant workers vulnerable
- This interconnection between migration or population mobility and HIV vulnerability needs to be examined carefully because of the potential to confound the impact of the spread of HIV worldwide

8

Conditions in the Migration Cycle

- Pre-departure (pre-disposing factors)
- Low knowledge about HIV and AIDS
- Gender norms related to masculinity and femininity
- Attitudes towards condom use
- Economic costs of migration
- Process of migration (regular, irregular, documented)
- Mandatory HIV testing

9

Conditions in the Migration Cycle

- Onsite
- Loneliness, homesickness
- Working conditions
- Peer pressure and lack of social shackles
- Lack of access to health information and services
- Specific vulnerabilities of women migrants
- Economic factors
- Legal status

10

Conditions in the Migration Cycle

- Reintegration
- Lack of reinforcing information on HIV
- Engagement in relationships other than their regular partners
- Vulnerability of spouses and partners
- Attitudes towards VCT (Voluntary Counselling and Testing)

11

Migration and HIV: An Emerging Link

- Understanding micro-individual factors that lead to risky sexual behavior (Unprotected sex, multiple sexual partnerships; sex with commercial sex workers)
- Understanding HIV vulnerability of OFWs resulting from macro-societal factors (social and cultural norms; economic factors; political context)
- Response must address both structural and individual dimensions of HIV risks and vulnerabilities of migrant workers

12

THE COUNTRY RESPONSE: Government Initiatives

- 1. Policy and Legislation on Migration and HIV and AIDS
- A. Republic Act (RA) 8504 – The Philippines AIDS Prevention and Control Act of 1998
- Article 1, Section 7 reads, `` *All Overseas Filipino Workers, diplomatic, military, trade, and labor officials and personnel to be assigned overseas shall undergo or attend a seminar on the cause, prevention, and consequences of HIV/AIDS before certification for overseas assignment.* ``

13

- B. Republic Act (RA) 8402 – Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipino Act of 1995
- Uphold the dignity of citizens whether in the country or overseas
- Afford full protection to labor, local and overseas, organized and unorganized
- Promote full and equality of employment and opportunities
- Provide adequate and timely social, economic and legal services to Filipino migrant workers

14

- 2. International Conventions and Declarations
- A. International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (Convention 90). Sets standards related to the protection and promotion of the human rights of migrant workers and their families
- B. International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention Concerning Migration in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers (No. 143)
- C. ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers calls on sending and receiving states to protect the fundamental human rights, promote the welfare and uphold human dignity of migrant workers

15

Government Bodies

- A. Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE):
Employment facilitation and employment enhancement
 - i. Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) – regulatory body on overseas labor migration (in-charge of PEOS)
 - ii. Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration (OWWA) – manages the welfare fund for OFWs; mandated to administer to the welfare needs of OFWs (in-charge of PDOS)
 - iii. National Center for Reintegration – mandated to implement and undertake a reintegration programme.

16

Other Units/Attached agencies to the DOLE

- iv. Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) – administration and enforcement of duly adopted policies and programs of the Department on international labor affairs
- v. Maritime Training Council
- vi. National Maritime Polytechnic
- vii. MARINA
- viii. International Labor Studies

17

- B. Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) – Protect the rights and promote the welfare of Filipinos overseas and to mobilize them as partners in national development
 - i. Foreign Service Institute (FSI) – Integrated HIV and AIDS in the curriculum of its Pre-departure Orientation Seminar (PDOS) for all departing Foreign Service personnel
 - ii. Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs (OUMWA) – mandated to respond to needs of Overseas Filipinos especially those undocumented through its ATN programme.
 - iii. United Nations and International Relations (UNIO) – represents the Philippines in the UN and other international bodies and conferences (International Task Team on HIV-related travel restrictions)

18

C. Other Government Agencies

- i. Philippine National AIDS Council (PNAC)
- ii. Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)
- iii. Social Security System (SSS)
- iv. PhilHealth

19

The Country Response: Initiatives of NGO and Civic Groups

NGOs and civil society organizations are in the forefront of the HIV and AIDS response in the country, including migration and HIV.

- A total of 167 groups throughout the country found to be involved in HIV and AIDS work
- 37 groups are involved in HIV and migration work
- OFWs and spouses living with HIV are also involved in the response
- GFATM Rounds 3 and 5 enabled the involvement of groups in different so-called risk zones (11 and 15 sites)

20

The Country Response: Initiatives of NGO and Civic Groups

Types of responses

- Policy advocacy
- Action Research
- Capacity Building of stakeholders
- Empowerment of OFWs/spouses living with HIV
- Education on migration and HIV (Community-based; institution-based, e.g. PDOS)
- Care and Support for OFWs living with HIV
- Regional involvement

21

Other Initiatives/Stakeholders

- Research-Various Institutions
- Manning Agency Initiatives (HIV education)
- Onsite programs (PSAP, SHIP)
- Joint UN Programme on Migration and HIV (JPHIM) spearheaded by UNFPA and UNDP in partnership with DOH and DOLE
- Regional Initiatives (CARAM-Asia, UNRTF, CSEARHAP)

22

The Philippine Response

- Pioneering
- Good practice in the region
- Early response
- Significant role of NGOs and CBOs
- Multi-sectoral partnerships (Line agencies, LGUs, NGOs, etc.)
- Involvement of migrants/spouses living with HIV

23

Thank you. Salamat.
Mabuhay!

24