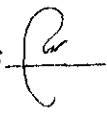


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SENATE
P.S. Res. No. **403**

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced By Senator Loren Legarda

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, EMPLOYMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE EFFORTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (DFA) IN COORDINATION WITH THE OVERSEAS WORKERS WELFARE ADMINISTRATION (OWWA) AND OTHER LABOR RELATED AGENCIES OF THE GOVERNMENT, AS WELL AS ON THE ADEQUACY OF FUNDS, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF ASSESSING THE PREPAREDNESS OF PHILIPPINE POSTS ABROAD IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS, THEREBY ENSURING THE SAFETY OF THE OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS (OFWs) AND OTHER FILIPINOS RESIDING ABROAD

WHEREAS, R.A. No. 8042, otherwise known as the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 was enacted on June 7, 1995, subsequently amended on July 27, 2009 by Republic Act No. 10022, the purpose of which was to further improve the standard of protection and promotion of the welfare of migrant workers, their families and overseas Filipinos in distress, and for other purposes;

WHEREAS, Section 5 of Rule XIII of the Omnibus Rules and Regulations Implementing R.A. No. 8042 provides the rules in emergency repatriation where the OWWA, in coordination with the DFA, and in appropriate situations, with international agencies, shall undertake the repatriation of workers in cases of war, epidemic, disasters or calamities, natural or man-made, and other similar events without prejudice to reimbursement by the responsible principal or agency within sixty (60) days from notice;

WHEREAS, Section 8 of Rule XIII of the above-mentioned implementing rules also provides the provision for Emergency Repatriation Fund when repatriation becomes immediate and necessary, the OWWA shall advance the needed costs from the Emergency Repatriation Fund without prejudice to reimbursement by the deploying agency and/or principal, or the worker in appropriate cases. Simultaneously, the Philippine Overseas Employment Association (POEA) shall ask the concerned agency to work towards reimbursement of costs advanced by the OWWA. In cases where the cost of repatriation shall exceed One Hundred Million (P100,000,000.00) Pesos, the OWWA shall make representation with the Office of the President for immediate funding in excess of said amount;

WHEREAS, recent incidents in different parts of the globe have brought impending danger to our overseas Filipinos, threatening their safety and welfare;

WHEREAS, the political turmoil and social unrest in different parts of the Middle East and Africa, particularly in Egypt and Libya, have reportedly compromised the safety of thousands of OFWs due to the eruption of violence and cross-fire between loyal supporters of embattled regimes and those who want them toppled;

WHEREAS, media reports have revealed that the anxiety of relatives of the OFWs cannot be appeased due to the reported busy phone lines of the DFA and the logistical confusion as regards the arrival of aircrafts to repatriate the OFWs stranded in Libya and other parts of the Middle East and Africa;

WHEREAS, in Christchurch, New Zealand, many of our countrymen have been reported as missing and others trapped inside collapsed buildings since February 22, 2011 after a 6.3 magnitude earthquake hit the territory;

WHEREAS, diplomatic posts abroad must give constant assessments of the existing situations in their respective territorial assignments and must regularly give updates through different media to appease the anxiety of the relatives of our overseas Filipinos;

WHEREAS, an inter-agency coordination must be enforced in order to improve the preparedness of diplomatic posts abroad for immediate action, including emergency repatriation, in urgent serious circumstances;

WHEREAS, discussion is needed on how the economic managers plan to cope with distressed and emergency situations taking into consideration the emergency fund as provided by law;

WHEREAS, the safety of said OFWs in Libya and an estimated 1.5 million more OFWs scattered throughout 197 countries around the world is of paramount importance, considering these OFWs as modern day heroes of the nation due to their significant contribution in saving the Philippine economy;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, to direct the Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resource Development, to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the efforts of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) in coordination with the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) and other labor related agencies of the government, as well as on the adequacy of funds, with the end in view of assessing the preparedness of Philippine posts abroad in emergency situations, thereby ensuring the safety of the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and other Filipinos residing abroad.

Approved,



LOREN LEGARDA

Senator