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**SENATE**

**Ps. Res. No. 875**

RECEIVED BY

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**Introduced by Senator Manny Villar**

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**RESOLUTION**

**URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, EMPLOYMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY INTO THE UTILIZATION OF OWWA FUNDS PARTICULARLY THE US\$25.00 PER CONTRACT CONTRIBUTION OF MIGRANT WORKERS WITH THE END-IN-VIEW OF REVIEWING, FORMULATING AND ADOPTING A POLICY ON FUND STEWARDSHIP BY OWWA THAT IS TRANSPARENT, JUDICIOUS, ACCESSIBLE AND RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF OFWs**

**WHEREAS**, Article XIII Section 3 of the 1987 Constitution provides:

"The State shall afford full protection to labor, local and overseas, organized and unorganized, and promote full employment and equality of employment opportunities for all."

**WHEREAS**, recognizing the significant contribution of Filipino migrant workers to the national economy through their foreign exchange remittances (US\$12.30 billion for the period January-September alone), it is the mandate and duty of the State to provide adequate and timely social, economic and legal services to Filipino migrant workers;

**WHEREAS**, in view of the State policy of promoting the interest and welfare of Filipino migrant workers, Letter of Instructions (LOI) No. 537 was promulgated in May 1977 by then President Ferdinand E. Marcos that created the Welfare and Training Fund for Overseas Workers under the Department of Labor;

**WHEREAS**, LOI No. 537 was amended by virtue of Presidential Decree (PD) No. 1694 dated May 1980 and PD No. 1809 dated January 1981, thus created and operationalized the Welfare Fund for Overseas Workers (WFOW) which was later renamed the Overseas Workers and Welfare Administration or OWWA in January 1987 through Executive Order (EO) No. 126;

**WHEREAS**, to further enhance the functions of the OWWA including those agencies and offices involved in overseas employment, Republic Act No. 8042 otherwise known as the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 was enacted;

**WHEREAS**, the OWWA Omnibus Policies was instituted through Board Resolution No. 138 in 19 September 2003, and Article V Section 1 thereof serves as the legal basis for the OWWA'S collection of the mandatory US\$25

membership contribution or its equivalent from its members on a per contract basis;

**WHEREAS**, as clearly stated in Article VI Section 1 of the aforementioned Omnibus Policies, OWWA derives its funds from the mandatory US\$25 OFW contributions, profits from investments and interest income as well as income from other sources,

**WHEREAS**, Migrante International reported that out of the US\$25 contributions, only US\$1.25 goes to services for OFWs with the remainder utilized for allowances, rentals and transportation of OWWA officials;

**WHEREAS**, Migrante also reported that these contributions have already accumulated to P10 billion and reports as to its utilization and status is yet to be submitted by the OWWA;

**WHEREAS**, Article VIII Section 2 of the aforementioned Omnibus Policies enumerates the following benefits and services that OWWA members are entitled to receive from their US\$25 contribution: *(1) Insurance and Health-Care Benefits including Life Insurance, Disability and Dismemberment Benefits, total disability benefits and burial benefits; (2) Loan Guarantee Fund which include Pre-Departure and Family Assistance Loan; (3) Education and Training Benefits composed of Skills-for-Employment Scholarship Program, Education for Development Scholarship and Seafarers' Upgrading Program; (4) Social Services and family Welfare Assistance that include Repatriation and Reintegration Program and; (5) Workers Assistance and On-Site Services;*

**WHEREAS**, giving due consideration that there are already an estimated 1.2 million Filipinos working abroad of which around 250,000 are in the edge of being affected or displaced by the second semester of this year alone (according to the Department of Labor and Employment) due to global financial crisis, it is therefore imperative to revisit anew and review OWWA's policies particularly those that pertain to the services and benefits that every member-OFWs are entitled to receive;

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** to urge the Senate Committees on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development and other appropriate Senate Committees to conduct an inquiry into the utilization of OWWA funds particularly those contributed by the OFWs with the intent of reviewing, formulating and adopting a policy on fund stewardship by OWWA that is transparent, judicious, accessible and most responsive to the needs of our migrant workers.

Adopted,

  
**MANNY VILLAR**