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INTRODUCED BY SENATOR VILLAR

RESOLUTION

URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, EMPLOYMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE PLIGHT OF OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS IN TAIWAN VIS-À-VIS THE FUNCTIONS AND ASSISTANCE TO OFWS EXTENDED BY THE MANILA ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL OFFICE (MECO) TO BRING ABOUT A MEANINGFUL OFW-CENTERED PHILIPPINE DIPLOMACY

Whereas, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) reported that 4,197 Filipino workers in Taiwan employed in the electronics, metal works and semiconductor industries were retrenched by their employers as a direct effect of the global financial crisis;

Whereas, a report from the OFW Station Online confirmed that as of February 2009, a total of 5,774 overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) have been laid off from work, where 4,197 OFWs have already returned to the Philippines since October 2008;

Whereas, amid the pervasive impact of the global financial crisis especially to export-dependent countries such as Taiwan, measures to fasten the economy preventing it to reach a dire state shall be ensued, by which Taiwan's Council of Labor Affairs (CLA) issued an initial order requiring employers affected by the financial crunch to shell out a minimum salary of 17,280 Taiwanese dollars to foreign workers;

Whereas, however, Rodolfo Sabulao, Labor Affairs Attaché of the Manila Economic and Cultural Office (MECO) in Taiwan relayed that the CLA also advised Taiwanese companies to implement "flexible labor terms" which may entail reduced working hours and the adjustment of the salary of OFWs even below the minimum wage, provided that there has been a contract signed by the employer and the OFW;

Whereas, Migrante International expressed disappointment over the action of MECO, quoting Migrante chairperson Garry Martinez in a Philippine Daily Inquirer (PDI) statement on March 12, 2009 that MECO did not insist on the just implementation of international labor standards so as to prevent causing further destitution to our OFWs in Taiwan;

Whereas, Migrante and the Asia Pacific Migrants Mission also contested that the salary of our OFWs in Taiwan should not be compromised below the standard minimum wage;

Whereas, the Department of Labor and Employment (DoLE) and the MECO are reportedly setting up an "assistance teams" for OFWs in Taiwan to provide livelihood

ε orientation seminars, profiling, counseling, referral to employers and conduct reintegration programs for their benefit of the OFWs;

Whereas, there must be a comprehensive assessment of the status and plight of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in Taiwan as well as a review of the functions of the MECO to bring about a meaningful change in the protection of migrant workers in the said country; Now therefore be it

RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, to urge the Senate Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development, and other appropriate committees to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the plight of overseas Filipino workers in Taiwan vis-a-vis the functions and assistance to OFWs extended by the Manila Economic and Cultural Office (MECO) to bring about a meaningful OFW-centered Philippine diplomacy.

Adopted,



MANNY VILLAR