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SENATE
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INTRODUCED BY SENATOR VILLAR

RESOLUTION
RECOMMENDING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO CONSIDER
ESTABLISHING FREE COMMUNICATION FACILITIES IN THE EMBASSIES AND
CONSULATES WHERE THE OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS ARE DEPLOYED
AND EMPLOYED TO ESTABLISH OPEN AND ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION
AND DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE OFWS AND MIGRANTS AND THEIR FAMILIES
IN THE COUNTRY

Whereas, in the 1999 data of the Commission on Population (POPCOM), it was noted that an average of 2,500 Filipinos leave the country every day to work abroad, considerably that there were already nearly 8 million Filipinos who had left the country to work in 182 countries, in addition to 3 million migrants who work illegally abroad;

Whereas, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), an attached agency of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) fulfills its two-fold mandate beneficial to the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) through the efficient delivery of welfare services and benefits as well as ensuring a sustainable fund build-up and capital viability, realized through the implementation of responsive programs and services that ultimately protect and promote the welfare of its member-OFWs¹;

Whereas, the OWWA Citizen's Charter recognizes the importance of open communication between the OFWs and their families, who are left in the country by implementing the *OWWA Tulay Project*, launched in partnership with Microsoft Corporation which aims to provide technical knowledge to the OFWs on disseminating information and harnessing communication technology training not only to broaden career opportunities involving communication but also to facilitate long-distance communication between the OFWs and their families;

Whereas, the provision of accessible communication facilities utilized by the migrant workers to connect to their families was a highlight project by the government in the year 2003 at par with the intensified Iraq war when the Tele-Ugnayan project was launched;

¹ OWWA Citizen's Charter,
<http://74.125.153.132/search?q=cache:JYFsc89gnoJ:www.owwa.gov.ph/uploads/2OWWACitizensCharter-2009-09-08-2009.pdf+owwa+communication+embassy&cd=4&hl=tl&ct=clnk&gl=ph&client=firefox-a>

Whereas, the OWWA, Philippine National Bank (PNB) and Globe Telecommunications worked closely to set-up and operate communication facilities to provide free phone calls between the OFWs based in the Middle East and their families who remain in the country;

Whereas, Tele-Ugnayan was primarily devised to make communication accessible at the brink of the tension brought by the Iraq War to ensure the safety of our migrants and maintain reliable contact to the OFWs deployed near Iraq;

Whereas, Globe Telecommunications offered cellular phones and computers with Internet capability for video-conferencing to provide easy, fast and free phone links between OFWs in the Gulf and their loved ones in the Philippines as cellular phone booths were stationed at OWWA offices in Pasay City and in 11 of its regional offices nationwide;

Whereas, a similar communication facility was instituted at the Presidential Action Center and was dubbed *Oplan: Kalinga Kamustahan Center sa Malacañang* also in 2003, whereby the same offers free two-minute calls anywhere in the Middle East;

Whereas, in a report by the DOLE, a total of 1,285 free telephone calls were made through the *Tele-Ugnayan Project* in its five days free-call service, while 921 free calls were accounted through *Oplan: Kalinga Kamustahan Center sa Malacañang*;


Whereas, there is a need to sustain an open, accessible and government-supported communication facility to enshrine the welfare of our OFWs;

Whereas, the government should develop a sustainable project, adopting the models employed in previously implemented call facilities to establish a stable program encouraging government-supported communication between the OFWs and their families in the Philippines, thereby considering the efficiency of creating partnerships with private entities to support the program;

Whereas, the government should consider opening communication lines and call facilities in the embassies and consulates of the countries where our OFWs are deployed to significantly benefit our “modern-day heroes” who bring pride and economic incentive to our nation; NOW THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, to recommend to the Department of Foreign Affairs to consider establishing communication facilities stationed in the embassies and consulates where the overseas Filipino workers are deployed to establish open and accessible communication and dialogue between the OFWs, migrants and their families in the country.

Adopted,


MANNY VILLAR
Senator