



Introduced by SENATOR FERDINAND R. MARCOS, JR. RECEIVED BY: 

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, THE STATE OF THE EMERGENCY REPATRIATION FUND UNDER THE ADMINISTRATION, CONTROL AND SUPERVISION OF THE OVERSEAS WORKERS WELFARE ADMINISTRATION (OWWA), TO EVALUATE ITS UTILIZATION AND DISBURSEMENT, AND ASSESS ITS EFFECTIVENESS IN ADDRESSING THE PROMPT NEEDS OF DISTRESSED OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS (OFWS) WORLDWIDE

Whereas, there are an estimated 8.6 million Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) (2009 Stock Estimate of Filipinos Overseas, Commission on Filipino Overseas), regarded as "modern Filipino heroes," working in different countries, mostly in the Middle East, whose remittances, estimated at \$20 Billion a year, greatly sustained the Philippine economy during the recent world and regional financial crises, aside from providing a better life for their families;

Whereas, the growth of OFWs has prompted the government to enact laws, implement programs, and issue policies, among others, aimed at protecting Filipinos working abroad against physical, mental, psychological, and emotional abuses, and other forms cruelties and discriminations at the hands of their foreign employers;

Whereas, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), has implemented the "Saudization" policy that initiated a campaign against illegal migrant workers and led more than 1,000 undocumented OFWs to camp around and in the premises of the Philippine Consulate in Jeddah and set up a temporary shelter called "Tent City" to avoid arrest and appealed to the Philippine government for immediate repatriation;

Whereas, while the OFWs couldn't be repatriated apparently because of the lack of fund of the government to purchase plane tickets, plus the tedious processing of travel documents like exit visas and *Iqamas*, Akbayan Partylist Rep. Walden Bello, on June 18, 2013, disclosed a "sex-for-flight" scheme allegedly perpetrated by embassy and labor officials in KSA, Jordan, Kuwait, and Syria who promised plane tickets back to the Philippines in exchange of sexual favors;

Whereas, Second paragraph of Section 15, of Republic Act No. 8042, otherwise known as the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipino Act of 1995, as amended, provides that, "The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), in coordination with appropriate 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. However, in cases where the principal or recruitment agency cannot be identified, all costs attendant to repatriation shall be borne by the OWWA."

Whereas, the same section further provides: "For this purposes, there is hereby created and established an emergency repatriation fund under the administration control and supervision of the OWWA, initially to consist of one hundred million pesos (P100,000,000.00), inclusive of outstanding balances."

Whereas, there is an urgent need to look into the state of the Emergency Repatriation Fund and to monitor its disbursement in order to effectively subsidize and provide assistance to our OFWs, particularly those who are facing enormous crisis in foreign lands who should be repatriated and rescued from the snares of despair.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, to direct the appropriate Senate Committee to investigate, in aid of legislation, the state of the Emergency Repatriation Fund under the administration, control and supervision of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), and to evaluate its utilization and disbursement, and assess its effectiveness in addressing the prompt needs of distressed Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) worldwide.

Adopted,


FERDINAND R. MARCOS, JR.