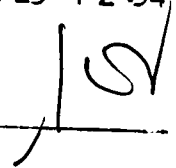


NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE )  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
*Second Regular Session* )

23 AUG 23 P2 54

RECEIVED BY: 

**SENATE**

**P.S. Res. No. 757**

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Introduced by **SENATORS CYNTHIA A. VILLAR AND MARK A. VILLAR**

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**RESOLUTION**  
**EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND SYMPATHY AND SINCERE CONDOLENCES OF**  
**THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES ON THE DEATH OF SECRETARY SUSAN**  
**"TOOTS" OPLE, SECRETARY OF DEPARTMENT OF MIGRANT WORKERS**

**WHEREAS**, the Philippine Senate has, on numerous occasions, paid its respects to exceptional Filipinos for their enduring legacy and contributions to the nation;

**WHEREAS**, on August 22, 2023, Secretary Susan "Toots" Ople, the Secretary of the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW), passed away at the age of 61 after a four-year courageous battle with cancer;

**WHEREAS**, Sec. Toots Ople, born on February 9, 1962, was the youngest daughter of Hon. Blas Ople and Susana Ople; her father, Blas Ople, was a prominent figure in Philippine politics, serving as a Senator and as the Labor Secretary for 19 years during the administration of Ferdinand Marcos Sr., and widely celebrated as the Father of the Labor Code of the Philippines, leaving an enduring legacy that continues to shape labor policies and workers' rights in the country;

**WHEREAS**, Sec. Toots Ople completed her secondary education at St. Theresa's College, Quezon City, earned her Bachelor's Degree in Communication Arts from the University of Sto. Tomas, and her Post-Graduate Degree in Public Administration from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, where she was also recognized as an Edward Mason Fellow;

**WHEREAS**, Secretary Toots Ople holds the distinction of serving as the first ever Secretary of the Department of Migrant Workers, having been appointed by President Ferdinand "Bongbong" R. Marcos Jr. upon his assumption into office in June 2022, and which appointment was confirmed by the Commission on Appointments in November 2022;

**WHEREAS**, prior to her appointment as DMW Secretary, Sec. Toots Ople led the Blas F. Ople Policy Center and Training Institute, dedicated to the protection of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) by actively combating human trafficking and illegal recruitment, providing training and resources, and championing policies that safeguard workers' rights and dignity; the center, named after her father and a living legacy to his work, continues to reflect the enduring commitment to labor rights in the Philippines;

**WHEREAS**, WHEREAS, Sec. Toots Ople's career was deeply shaped by her father's unwavering commitment to labor rights and workers' welfare; she began as a Media Relations Officer at the Office of Sen. Ernesto Herrera, a renowned Champion of the Working Class, from 1987 to 1991, and subsequently served as the Chief of Staff and Media Relations Officer at the Office of Sen. Blas F. Ople from 1992 to 2001, then served as a Chief of Staff at the Department of Foreign Affairs from 2001 to 2003, and then moved to her esteemed position as Undersecretary of the Department of Labor and Employment from 2004 to 2006;

**WHEREAS**, Sec. Toots Ople, in addition to being a passionate advocate for workers' rights, is also a seasoned writer, who contributed as a columnist to the Business Mirror with her column "Scribbles," and previously crafted columns in esteemed publications such as the Manila Chronicle, Panorama Magazine, Arab News, and The Manila Times, as well as composed insightful articles for Rappler.com and the CNN Project Freedom initiative;

**WHEREAS**, as an accomplished writer, Secretary Toots contributed to several publications and authored two notable books, namely: "Hugs, Not Drugs – A Drug Abuse Prevention Manual"; and "Paalis Ka Na Pala – A Guide for First-Time OFWs;"<sup>1</sup>

**WHEREAS**, Secretary Toots was the first Filipino Trustee of the United Nations (UN) Voluntary Trust Fund to Assist Victims of Human Trafficking;<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [https://books.google.com.ph/books/about/Paalis\\_ka\\_na\\_pala.html?id=53LtAAAAMAAJ&redir\\_esc=y](https://books.google.com.ph/books/about/Paalis_ka_na_pala.html?id=53LtAAAAMAAJ&redir_esc=y)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.goodnewspilipinas.com/ofw-advocate-susan-ople-appointed-to-united-nations-board-of-trustees/>

**WHEREAS,** Secretary Toots has been honored with various awards, namely: the Anvil of Appreciation Award from the Public Relations Society of the Philippines; the Bravo Award for Social Services from the Zonta Club of Makati; the Manuel L. Quezon Gawad Parangal Award from the Quezon City Government; the Dangal ng Lipi Award from the Provincial Government of Bulacan; the Resolution In Recognition of Ms. Ople's Anti-Trafficking Fight from the Philippine Senate; the Trafficking in Persons Award from the US State Department; the CEO EXCEL Award from the International Association of Business Communications; the Harvard Alumni Achievement Award from the Kennedy School of Government; and the Josephine Vernon Award for Excellence in Communications from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government;

**WHEREAS,** Sec. Toots Ople's life work has been to tirelessly advocate for the welfare of migrant workers, championing solutions to their challenges and collaborating with various stakeholders to craft regulations that safeguard their rights and well-being; her steadfast dedication has significantly empowered Filipino migrant workers, enhancing their access to decent employment, social services, and legal assistance;

**WHEREAS,** Secretary Ople's legacy will forever be remembered for shaping policies promoting the welfare of migrant workers and their families;

**WHEREAS,** her passing creates a void in migrant worker advocacy, as her wisdom, leadership, and passion were invaluable to the nation;

**WHEREAS,** her life and work will continue to inspire generations of public servants, urging dedication to the service of the Filipino people;

**WHEREAS,** as an esteemed member of the Nacionalista Party (NP), her passing is mourned by her fellow partymates;

**WHEREAS,** the loss of Secretary Toots Ople is profoundly felt not only by her grieving family but also by the entire nation; the Senate of the Philippines joins her family in mourning the demise of the beloved Secretary of the Department of Migrant Workers. Now, therefore, be it

**Resolved by the Senate of the Philippines,** to express, as hereby expressed, its profound sympathy and sincere condolences on the passing of Secretary Susan "Toots" Ople, the Secretary of the Department of Migrant Workers;

**Further Resolved**, that a copy of this Resolution be provided to the bereaved family of Secretary Toots Ople.

*Adopted,*

  
**CYNTHIA A. VILLAR**

  
**MARK A. VILLAR**