

PHILIPPINES

10th GLOBAL FORUM ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT (GFMD)
Berlin, Germany
28-30 June 2017

Roundtable Session 2.2

Fostering the Development Impact of Returning Migrants

Mister Chairman,

The Philippines, with four (4) million temporary migrants in 221 countries and territories, shares the passion of our fellow delegates in discussing how we can foster the development impact of returning migrants

A Policy Toward Return Migration

Since the start, the Philippine full cycle migration policy has consistently focused on promoting circular migration to enable the permanent return and reintegration of Filipinos into their families, their communities and into the Philippine economy and society.

Strategic Reintegration Priorities

Guided by this policy directive of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, the Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022 further outlines more robust efforts for the reintegration of Overseas Filipino Workers. Our medium-term strategies include: (1) harnessing remittances or financial capitals as development tools by (a) assisting OFWs in achieving financial stability through training in investment and savings programs; (b) promoting sustainable livelihood and micro enterprise development; (c) leveraging remittances as a tool for economic development; and (d) promoting productive investment and entrepreneurship among overseas Filipinos and their families.

The second strategic reintegration priority is facilitating the channeling of migrant human capital for local development. Migrants gain

valuable work experience with new skills that the home country can use.

The government will focus on investing in infrastructure that will enable migrants to transfer the skills that they acquired abroad. In addition, reintegration programs will ensure re-tooling or retraining of migrants for their productive undertakings at home.

The third strategic reintegration strategy focuses on harnessing social capitals/development potential of networks across migrant communities. A more aggressive campaign to tap overseas Filipinos as sources of capital will be pursued.

Enhanced Reintegration Programs and Innovations

To implement the President's policy directives and the development agenda, the Philippine Reintegration Program has been redesigned with the primary objective of improving the quality of life of migrants, their families and communities in order to eventually minimize the necessity for migrants to work abroad again.

To achieve the main objective of the Reintegration Program, migrants' financial, human and social capital will be leveraged to uplift their lives and their families' well-being and cascade development into communities and the Philippine economy.

Other commitments for enhanced reintegration services include strengthening partnership with financial institutions or organizations handling reintegration programs, developing standard training modules on financial education and reintegration preparedness such as skills training and entrepreneurial development, and developing a program for onsite psychosocial counseling of OFWs in destinations lacking social welfare attaches.

Our Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) and the National Reintegration Center for OFWs have engaged in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for the project "Enhancing the Reintegration Program for Overseas Filipino Workers" (ERPO) with the intention of coming up with the inclusive national policy framework and masterplan for migrant reintegration in consultation with

stakeholders for possible adoption during the national reintegration summit to be held this month of June. The project envisions to scope how the reintegration service can be efficiently delivered under a comprehensive framework of migration and development, as well as migration crisis management.

Further, in support of evidence-based policy making, the Department has been also undertaking a research project toward identifying the typologies of returning migrants, the main objective of which is to put OFWs and their divergent aspirations and circumstances back at the heart of the government's reintegration program, with improved program design and planning and budgeting framework.

Engaging with destination countries

Fostering the development impact of returning migrants requires partnerships between origin and destination countries in full cycle migration. We therefore call on all migrant countries to continue pursuing bilateral or multilateral agreements for ethical recruitment, bilateral labor agreements on training and retraining and skills transfer, and social security agreements on social insurance and other retirement or old age benefit portability schemes.

Mister Chairman

The Philippine government has made significant strides in terms of improving its migration and development framework, particularly in integrating reverse migration or reintegration in the mainstream discussion in migration. We recognize, however, that much still needs to be done as a number of issues remain as government continue to explore migration for development options.

Thank you.