

PHILIPPINES

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ROUNDTABLE 2. 1:

Moving Beyond Emergencies – Creating Development Solutions to the Mutual Benefit of Host and Origin Communities and Displaced Persons

Greetings fellow migration and development advocates, policymakers, and colleagues.

Undeniably, migrants suffer in today's myriad of protracted conflicts and uncertainties through geopolitical tensions, economic instabilities, calamities, natural disaster, and health-related crisis. Because of this, ensuring the safety and welfare of migrants, particularly the overseas Filipinos, has been a paramount concern of the Philippine government.

Our approach is proactive. First, we focus on improving their skills to help them land quality employment, free from vulnerabilities. Then, we intensify the scope of social protection programs, covering disability, death and burial benefits, education, livelihood, and emergency relief assistance. Finally, we closely monitor political and socioeconomic situations in destination countries and draw up crisis contingency plans as necessary.

We view migration and development as a cycle, and for that matter, one key assumption is that overseas Filipino workers may eventually come back home to their families. Even before they leave, we prepare them for all possible situations, such as repatriation in times of emergency, sudden unemployment, or voluntary return. These include government interventions in all stages of the migration cycle: from the pre-departure, on-site, and then, the return phase. Reintegration entails a multidimensional approach that enables the returnee to participate in the social, cultural, economic and political life of his or her home country.

To specify some of the actions of the Philippine government, we implement various programs which aims to intensify reintegration awareness, counselling, and onsite support to our overseas Filipinos. This is done with the help of concerned stakeholders, such as non-government organizations, families of migrants, the private sector, and the international community. Regular trainings in enterprise and technical skills development are made available to migrate to equip them for business or employment opportunity back home. But in case of unavoidable repatriation, the Philippine government readily provides financial and legal assistance for affected

overseas Filipinos in order to cushion the impact of sudden unemployment or return and assist them in their economic and social adjustment within their respective communities.

The Philippines has been very active in its migration and development initiatives, but we are still faced with a lot of challenges especially in the aspect of reintegration. May our discussion be helpful to our respective countries, as we all move forward in empowering of our people towards inclusive and sustainable development. Thank you very much.