

Statement
of
HONORABLE ROSALINDA DIMAPILIS-BALDOZ
Secretary, Department of Labor and Employment
At the 103rd Session of the International Labor Conference

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FAIR MIGRATION: SETTING AN ILO AGENDA

Mr. President, I congratulate you for your esteemed leadership of the Conference.

The Philippines commends Mr. Guy Ryder for his Report and for being the first ILO Director-General to make migration a priority agenda. Following the adoption of the historic 2013 UN Declaration of the High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, the ILO, as Head of the 2014 Global Migration Group, is at the most strategic position to lead in pushing the post-2015 UN agenda.

The Philippines is one of a few countries that ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Migrants and their Families. The UN Committee on Migrant Workers recently affirmed our role as a model in migration management with commitment to protect migrant workers' rights, demonstrated by a strong legal, social, and institutional framework, broad domestic and foreign policy agenda, and leading role in advancing migrant workers' rights at the international, regional, and bilateral levels.

We just concluded our historic agreements on domestic workers with Saudi Arabia and Jordan, accompanied by Standard Employment Contracts providing payment of wages, working hours, rest days, and non-withholding of passports, consistent with ILO Convention on DomWork (C189).

We are a co-signatory to the ASEAN Declaration of Principles on the Protection of Migrant Workers and their Families, and we lead in the crafting of the Implementing Instrument. We chair the Abu Dhabi Dialogue and in November this year, ADD will consider the approval of two initial projects: comprehensive education for workers and employers, and skills development towards mutual recognition to enhance labor mobility and protection of migrant workers.

Mr. President, fair migration is safe migration. It is rights-based and ensures that migrants are safe and protected against illegal recruiters, traffickers, smugglers, and drug syndicates. We ratified UN and ILO instruments to prevent, suppress and punish perpetrators. We support the adoption of a Protocol or a Recommendation, or both, on the ILO Convention on Forced Labor (No. 29). Safe migration also requires preventive and remedial health programs prior, during, and after employment, in view of the rise of pandemic diseases and occurrence of industrial accidents affecting the health and safety of migrant workers.

Fair migration is ethical migration. It removes the heavy financial burden on migrants through exaction of exorbitant fees. Except in countries whose laws do not allow the charging of any fees to the workers, our law allows an equivalent of one month's salary as cost to the workers, except for domestic workers whose cost of deployment is free. A similar system in countries of destination to regulate and cut down recruitment cost is imperative for success.

We support the ILO initiative to develop a database on recruitment cost in low-skilled occupations in major migration countries, with the support of the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD). We commend the IOM's effort to develop a voluntary accreditation and monitoring process. Both complement our online systems to strengthen labor market information and promote transparency and accountability in migration governance.

Fair migration is secured migration. As countries face crisis that affect the security of migrants, a multilateral agreement under the UN for safe conduct pass during crisis to allow the fast and easy evacuation, relocation, and repatriation of migrants to their home countries for free, is compelling. The Philippines is a member of the US-led Working Group on Migrants in Countries in Crisis to promote secured migration.

Fair migration is decent work. The ILO must launch a vigorous campaign to promote the ratification of the core labor standards and migration- related conventions. We ratified these conventions, except the private employment agencies convention, which we will subject to extensive tripartite consultation with ILO support. It is timely for the ILO to conduct a general survey on these Conventions for broader and wider ratification.

In conclusion, Mr. President, the Philippines remains fully committed to safe, ethical and secured migration and decent work for all. Our goal of sustainable inclusive growth aims to create decent jobs and in the long term, render migration as a genuine option rather than a necessity. But once our workers decide to work overseas, our policy of protection under a fair migration governance becomes primordial.

Thank you, Mr. President. And God bless.