

**International Conference on OFW Savings, Remittances and Economic Potential:
A Challenge to Governance, Partnership and Development
28-29 October 2003, Bohol, Philippines**

BOHOL STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES AND ACTION AGENDA

Calling into mind the 1st and 2nd Asian Regional Consultations on Reintegration/ Migrant Savings for Alternative Investment in December 1998 (Manila) and August 2000 (Taiwan); the 1st National Conference of Migrant Entrepreneurs in May 2000 (Bohol); the 1st National Conference on Reintegration in April 2002 leading to the creation of the Philippine Council on OFW Reintegration (PHILCORE); the economic agenda of the Athens Conference in 1997; and the initiatives of NGOs in the Philippines and OFW organizations in other parts of the world over the past 10 years in launching and developing reintegration and economic empowerment programs;

Invoking the principles of the foregoing efforts, building on these experiences, and recognizing the challenges and convergences, we, the 120 participants of the *“First International Conference on OFW Savings, Remittances and Economic Potential: A Challenge to Governance, Partnership and Development,”* representing OFW organizations and organizations of their families, seafarers, non-governmental organizations, church-based organizations, local government units, national government agencies, the academe, and international partner NGOs, hereby declare the following:

Statement of Principles

We **reiterate** the upholding and respect of the human rights and dignity of all migrants and their families based on the principles of non-discrimination and the political, civil, economic, cultural and social rights as enshrined in the *“International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families,”* which entered into force on 1 July 2003;

We **draw attention** to the situations of vulnerability in which migrant workers find themselves in, particularly women migrant domestic and entertainment workers, and undocumented migrants; and the abuses, exploitation and discrimination perpetrated on their persons;

We are **concerned** about the negative impact of migration, such as the disintegration of families, depletion of social capital (e.g. brain drain), deterioration of health and education services, and other social costs that families and the nation continue to bear;

We **recognize** that migration has become an integral part of the ongoing process of globalization, and that the increasing integration of the international labor market and economy has led to greater mobility of peoples, including an estimated 175 million international migrants, half of whom are women;

We **note** that the current global migrant remittance flows already amount to US\$80 billion annually, 10 per cent of which is accounted for by the over seven million Filipinos

overseas, making the Philippines the third highest remittance-receiving country in the world;

We **acknowledge** the positive contributions of migrants to the host and home countries; and their strategic role as agents of social and economic transformation;

We **believe** that in order to mobilize the tremendous potential of the overseas Filipino workers, their savings and investments in national economic development, there is a need to embark on a comprehensive, gender-fair and sustainable national program on OFW savings, remittance and reintegration geared towards economic development;

We **recognize** existing and emerging initiatives among migrant worker organizations and members of their families in savings mobilization and development investments that are community-based and people-propelled;

We **recognize** the multiplicity of stakeholders involved in this process; thus, we exhort all stakeholders to actively collaborate in addressing existing gaps in optimizing the savings and investments of OFWs;

We **affirm** the central role of the government in creating a policy environment that will encourage migrant workers to save and invest, and in providing incentives and opportunities in support thereof;

We **emphasize** the importance of education and information campaigns that promote savings awareness, values formation, and gender sensitivity among the OFWs, their families, and the community; such education efforts should be at all stages of the migration cycle, beginning from the decision to migrate, at pre-departure, and until return and reintegration;

We **call** on the various stakeholders to help identify and promote good practices in savings mobilization, reintegration, investment and economic development, and encourage them to replicate these;

We **invite** other sectors who share in this vision to join in partnership towards a comprehensive savings mobilization and reintegration program for OFWs and their families;

Therefore, in the spirit of volunteerism, patriotism and nation-building, we commit ourselves to the following **Strategic Agenda for Action**:

1. For OFWs and their families:

- to organize themselves for self-empowerment;
- to take a central and active role in mobilizing savings and building investments back in the Philippines, that are geared towards reintegration and economic development; and

- to advocate for promotion of their rights and welfare, representation in policy-making, and support/assistance for their needs and concerns, especially in savings, investments, reintegration and economic development.

2. For migrant NGOs, faith-based institutions and civil society organizations:

- to assist in organizing, awareness-raising, capability-building, and value formation of OFWs and their families, especially towards savings, investment, and economic development;
- to work closely with OFWs to sustain advocacy on policies to protect and empower OFWs and their families;
- for NGOs to network with OFWs and NGOs in the Philippines and overseas towards joint initiatives on savings, investment and economic development; and
- to facilitate dialogues and linkages between OFW groups and the government.

3. For national and local government institutions and embassies/missions abroad:

- to adopt and institutionalize, in consultation with OFWs and other stakeholders, a comprehensive national program on OFW savings, reintegration and economic development;
- to provide an enabling environment for OFWs and stakeholders to build savings and economic development initiatives;
- to upscale, replicate, and mainstream viable projects or initiatives on savings, social investment and economic development;
- for all relevant line agencies and embassies to provide coordinated, integrated, and efficient policies and procedures in assisting OFWs in all phases of migration consistent with international human rights standards; and
- to collaborate with OFWs and NGOs to mobilize migrants' savings and investments for development.

4. Other stakeholders:

- For academe to conduct research, promote product development and technology transfer and training for OFWs;
- for the business sector to assist in technology and knowledge transfer, e.g. by partnering with OFW enterprises;
- for media to help in the dissemination of facts and information on savings, investments, and economic initiatives of OFWs and their families;
- for donor agencies and multilateral development banks to recognize the high social value of these initiatives; ensure full participation of OFWs, their families and support networks; and provide additional resources; and,
- for financial institutions to reduce remittance and financial charges on migrants, give fair access to quality financial services, and provide credit at preferential terms, and without discrimination.

Adopted at the “International Conference on OFW Savings, Remittance and Economic Potential,” 28-29 October 2003, Bohol, Philippines.

Hong Kong:

Filipino Association for Mutual Development (FAMDEV)
FFRSG
Dayuhan Manggagawa Savings Association (DAMA SA Hong Kong)
Tagum Entrepreneurs and Savings Association Hong Kong (TESA)
Diocesan Pastoral Center for Filipinos-Friday Savings Group
UGMAD

Japan:

Gabay ng Buhay

Taiwan:

Hope Workers Center - Reintegration Program for Filipinos

South Korea:

Galilea Migrant Workers Pastoral Center

Philippines:

Unlad Kabayan Migrant Services Foundation
Gabay ng Kabuhayan
MMDA
United Filipino Seafarers (UFS)
MARINO
KAKAMMPI
Kanlungan Center
CBCP-ECMI (EDP)
MINSAC
BK Philippines
DAWN
U-SWAPI
Center for Overseas Workers (COW)
God's Youngster Learning Center
Zenith Multi-purpose Cooperative
Farm Machinery Services
OFWs and Families of Iligan City Multi-Purpose Coop.
Iligan Migrants and Families Association
Local investors from General Santos City and San Isidro, Davao
Romar and Rovic Plasticwares and Glasswares
BBHK School, Office Supplies and Bookstore
DAMA-Philippines
Best Choice-Jandug Food Products
Matin-ao Rice Center
Kalumonan Development Center, Inc.
Overseas Pinoy Development and Investment Group
Muslim Kristian Vendors Association
Darlene and Dexy Store/UDAMIFAMCO
Kauswagan sa Kinabuhing Kinampay Confectioners Group
Sasso Growers Group

Sasso Growers Group (Jagna)
Jagna Overseas Multipurpose Cooperative (JOMCO)
Valencia Seafarers Multi-purpose Cooperative
Bohol Investment Promotion Center (BIPC)
Bohol Employment and Placement Office (BEPO)
Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)
DTI Region 7
Department of Science and Technology - Bohol
Department of Labor and Employment - Bohol
Municipal Mayor's Office
Provincial Agriculture Office Province of Bohol
Kaibigan

Europe:

Commission for Filipino Migrant Workers (The Netherlands)

Regional / International groups:

Asian Migrant Centre (AMC)
Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA)
Migrants' Rights International (MRI)