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Measuring international migration in the Philippines *

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MEASURING INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION IN THE PHILIPPINES*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Philippine Statistical System (PSS) has long recognized the need for measuring international migration in the country. Information on the movements of the population into and out of the country are vital not only in projecting population but are significant in developing policies and programs of its populace. In the Philippines, more emphasis is placed in the "pursuit of an independent foreign policy and while considering national sovereignty, territorial integrity, national interest and the right to self determination paramount in its relations with other states, the State at all times shall uphold the dignity of its citizens, whether in country or overseas, in general and Filipino migrant workers, in particular."

This paper touches on the regulatory policies and administrative procedures, including the concepts and definitions, affecting the movement in and out of the country of Filipinos and other nationals, as well as efforts done by the PSS and other instrumentalities in trying to measure international migration and a brief discussion on the problems and issues confronting the various systems.

II. POLICIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) is the main agency in the Philippines tasked with foreign relations along the core areas of foreign policy as follows: the enhancement of national security, promotion of economic diplomacy, protecting Overseas Filipino Workers and Filipino nationals abroad and the projection of a good image of the country abroad.

1. Issuance of a Philippine Visa

A Philippine Visa is an endorsement made on a travel document by a consular officer of the DFA at a Philippine Embassy or Consulate abroad denoting that the visa application has been properly examined and that the bearer is permitted to proceed to the Philippines and request permission from the Philippine Immigration authorities at the ports of entries to enter the country. The visa thus issued is not a guarantee that the holder will be automatically admitted into the country, because the admission of foreign nationals into the Philippines is a function of the immigration authorities at the port of entry.

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2. Guidelines on the entry of temporary visitors to the Philippines

Nationals from countries listed in Annex 1 who are traveling to the Philippines for business and tourism purposes are allowed to enter the Philippines without visas for a stay not exceeding twenty-one (21) days, provided they hold valid tickets for their return journey to port of origin or next port of destination and their passports valid for a period of at least six (6) months beyond the contemplated period of stay. However, Immigration Officers at ports of entry may exercise their discretion to admit holders of passports valid for at least sixty (60) days beyond the intended period of stay. Holders of Brazil passports and holders of Israel passports are allowed to enter the Philippines without a visa for a stay not exceeding fifty-nine (59) days, while the following are allowed to enter the Philippines without a visa for a stay not exceeding seven (7) days: (1) Holders of Hong Kong Special Administrative (SAR) passports; (2) Holders of British National Overseas (BNO) passports; (3) Holders of Portuguese Passports issued in Macao; (4) Holders of Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR) passports.

3. Visa requirements

3.1 Visa requirements for foreign tourist (temporary visitor)

A "foreign tourist" is defined as a person without distinction as to race, gender, language or religion, who is proceeding to the Philippines for a legitimate, nonimmigrant purpose such as sightseeing, sports, health, family reasons, training or study (excluding enrolment in schools for the purpose of obtaining a title or degree), religious pilgrimage, business, cultural and scientific purposes.

Application for a temporary visitor's visa must be made in person. In case of a minor under eighteen years of age, the application may be made for him by a person who, in the opinion of the consular officer, is responsible for his/her welfare. The following are the minimum requirements for applying for a temporary visitor's visa:

- a) Passport/Travel Document valid for at least six (6) months beyond the intended period of stay in the Philippines;
- b) Duly accomplished visa application forms;
- c) Passport photos (2 pieces);
- *d) Proof of bona fide status as tourist or businessman;*
- e) Confirmed tickets for return or onward journey to the next port of destination; and
- f) Payment of visa fees

3.2 Other Visa/Entry require ments for foreign nationals:

• Minor children below 15 yrs. old traveling to the Philippines unaccompanied by or not joining a parent in the Philippines

A Waiver of Exclusion Ground (WEG) Under Section 29(a)(12) of the Philippine Immigration Act of 1940, as amended is required for children below 15 yrs. old who are traveling to the Philippines unaccompanied by or not joining his/her parent/s in the Philippines. The WEG Order will be issued by the Bureau of Immigration (BI) at the port of entry upon submission by the WEG applicant of the following requirements:

- a) Affidavit of consent by either parent or legally appointed guardian of the child, naming therein the person who will be accompanying the child to the Philippines and with whom the child will stay while in the country. The said Affidavit must be duly notarized by a local notary public or the consular officer at the Philippine Embassy or Consulate in the applicant's country of residence;
- b) Clear photocopy of the data page of the child's passport;
- c) Clear photocopy of the data page of the passport of the accompanying adult or guardian; and
- d) Payment of immigration fees (currently, P3,120 per child).

• Foreign nationals on board privately-owned yachts or sailboats

A temporary visitor's visa is required for foreign nationals who are traveling to the Philippines on board privately- owned yachts and sailboats. When applying for the visa, the applicants will be required to provide the following particulars of the yacht/sailboat and its crewmembers:

- *a) Crew list;*
- b) Nationality/Citizenship;
- c) Passport details of the crew;
- d) Vessel to be used for entry: type, name, registration, call sign, and other particulars;
- e) Estimated date of entry into the Philippine territory;
- f) Port/Area of entry (Philippine waters);
- g) Estimated period of stay in the Philippines;
- h) Character reference/shipping agent in the Philippines (if any); and
- i) Purpose of visit

Upon entry into the Philippines, the crew of the yacht and sailboats are required to register immediately with the nearest Coast Guard Station and submit the yacht/sailboats to Customs, Immigration and Quarantine inspections.

• Foreign newsmen, journalists and cinema/television groups

Foreign newsmen and journalists visiting the Philippines in pursuit of their profession are required to apply for a temporary visitor's visa. The following are additional requirements for visa application of foreign newsmen, journalist, cinema/television groups:

- a) Curriculum vitae of newsmen/journalists;
- b) Short list of work credits;
- c) Copy of one sample article written by the applicant;
- d) Background of media organization, including target market/audience, circulation, format; and
- e) Administrative arrangements for the work in the Philippines, as follows navigation:
 - 1) List of members of the reportorial team, nationality and passport details;
 - 2) Planned itinerary and activities, with storyline for any films to be made;
 - 3) List of equipment to be brought by each team member, with certification from the media organization that said equipment will be re-exported at the end of the trip to the Philippines;
 - 4) Flight details (arrival and departure); and

5) For each team member, one (1) photograph, size 1"x1", to be submitted to the International Press Center (IPC) for the issuance of accreditation card. Upon arrival in the Philippines, the newsmen/journalists will have to report to the IPC for accreditation.

• Foreign nationals who wish to take up a short-term non-degree course

Foreign students who wish to take up a short-term non-degree course like language and computer courses must apply for a temporary visitor's visa. Upon arrival in the Philippines and acceptance by the school/institution authorized by the Bureau of Immigration to accept foreign students, he/she should apply for a Special Study Permit at the Bureau's Student Desk, together with the following documents:

- a) Letter request;
- b) Certificate of Acceptance from the school accredited by the Bureau of Immigration to accept foreign students;
- c) Photocopy of passport reflecting the applicant's authorized period of stay;
- d) Affidavit of Support and Proof of Financial Capacity; and
- e) Birth Certificate.

4. Extension of authorized period of s tay in the Philippines

In case of a temporary visitor's visa holder whose stay in the Philippines will exceed the authorized period of stay, he/she will have to report to the Bureau of Immigration, secure an extension of stay and pay the corresponding immigration fees. Information on fees for extension of stay and other immigration fees are available at the Bureau of Immigration website.

III. LEGAL CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

1. Nonimmigrants

Section 9 of Commonwealth Act No. 613, "An Act to Control and Regulate the Immigration of Aliens into the Philippines", provides the following definition and categories of "Non Immigrants":

Aliens (The term "alien" means any person not a citizen of the Philippines.) departing from any place outside the Philippines, who are otherwise admissible and who qualify within one of the following categories, may be admitted as non immigrants:

- a) A temporary visitor coming for business or for pleasure or for reasons of health;
- b) A person in transit to a destination outside the Philippines;
- c) A seaman serving as such on a vessel arriving at a port of the Philippines and seeking to enter temporarily and solely in the pursuit of his calling as a seaman;
- d) Alien businessman. An alien entitled to enter the Philippines under and in pursuance of the provisions of a treaty of commerce and navigation:
 - 1) Solely to carry on substantial trade principally between the Philippines and the foreign state of which he is a national;

- 2) Solely to develop and direct the operations of an enterprise in which, in accordance with the Constitution and the laws of the Philippines, he has invested, or of an enterprise in which he is actively in the process of investing, a substantial amount of capital; and his wife, and his unmarried children under twenty-one years of age, if accompanying or following to join him, subject to the condition that citizens of the Philippines are accorded like privileges in the foreign state of which such alien is a national
- e) An accredited official of a foreign government recognized by the Government of the Philippines, his family, attendants, servants, and employees;
- f) Higher than high school. A student, having means sufficient for his education and support in the Philippines, who is at least eighteen years of age and who seeks to enter the Philippines temporarily and solely for the purpose of taking up a course of study higher than high school at a university, seminary, academy, college or school approved for such alien students by the Commissioner of Immigration;
- g) Prearranged employment. An alien coming to prearranged employment for whom the issuance of a visa has been authorized in accordance with section twenty of this Act, and his wife, and his unmarried children under twenty-one years of age, if accompanying him or if following to join him within a period of six months from the date of his admission into the Philippines as a nonimmigrant under this paragraph.

An alien who is admitted as a nonimmigrant cannot remain in the Philippines permanently. To obtain permanent admission, a non immigrant alien must depart voluntarily to some foreign country and procure from the appropriate Philippine consul the proper visa and thereafter undergo examination by the officers of the Bureau of Immigration at a Philippine port of entry for determination of his admissibility in accordance with the requirements.

1.1 Documentation of Nonimmigrants

As provided by the same Commonwealth Act, nonimmigrants must present for admission into the Philippines unexpired passports or official documents in the nature of passports issued by the governments of the countries to which they owe allegiance or other travel documents showing their origin and identity as prescribed by regulations, and valid passport visas granted by diplomatic or consular officers.

2. Immigrants

The term **immigrant** means any alien departing from any place outside the Philippines destined for the Philippines, other than the non-immigrant. As set forth in Section 13 of the same Commonwealth Act, admittance into the Philippines of immigrants, termed "quota immigrants", not in excess of fifty (50) of any one nationality or without nationality for any one calendar year, are provided, except that the following immigrants, termed "non-quota immigrants," may be admitted without regard to such numerical limitations.

The corresponding DFA Philippine Consular representatives abroad are mandated to investigate and certify the eligibility of a quota immigrant previous to his admission into the Philippines. Qualified and desirable aliens who are in the Philippines under temporary stay may be admitted within the quota, subject to the provisions of paragraph (g) on pre employment, above:

- a) The wife or the husband or the unmarried child under twenty-one years of age of a Philippine citizen, if accompanying or following to join such citizen;
- b) A child of alien parents born during the temporary visit abroad of the mother, the mother having been previously lawfully admitted into the Philippines for permanent residence, if the child is accompanying or coming to join a parent and applies for admission within five years from the date of its birth;
- c) A child born subsequent to the issuance of the immigration visa of the accompanying parent, the visa not having expired;
- d) A woman who was a citizen of the Philippines and who lost her citizenship because of her marriage to an alien or by reason of the loss of Philippine citizenship by her husband, and her unmarried child under twenty- one years of age, if accompanying or following to join her;
- e) A person previously lawfully admitted into the Philippines for permanent residence, who is returning from a temporary visit abroad to an unrelinquished residence in the Philippines;
- f) A natural-born citizen of the Philippines, who has been naturalized in a foreign country, and is returning to the Philippines for permanent residence, including his spouse and minor unmarried children, shall be considered a non-quota immigrant for purposes of entering the Philippines.

2.1 Documentation of Immigrants

Immigrants must present for admission into the Philippines unexpired passports or official documents in the nature of passports issued by the governments of the countries to which they owe allegiance or other travel documents showing their origin and identity as prescribed by regulations, and valid immigration visas issued by consular officers.

2.2 Reentry permits for Immigrants

As provided under Section 22, any lawful resident alien about to depart temporarily from the Philippines who desires a reentry permit may apply to the Commissioner of Immigration for such permit. If the Commissioner finds that the applicant has been lawfully admitted into the Philippines for permanent residence, he shall issue the permit which shall be valid for a period not exceeding one year except that upon application for extension and good cause therefore being shown by the applicant, it may be extended by the Commissioner for additional periods not exceeding one year each. The Commissioner shall prescribe the form of permit. Applications for the issuance or extension of permits shall be made under oath and in such form and manner as the Commissioner shall by regulations prescribe. The permit, upon approval of the Commissioner of Immigration, may be made good for several trips within the period of one year. The fees required for the purpose are stipulated in Section 42 of the Act for every trip he makes.

3. Emigration clearance certificates

Any alien about to depart from the Philippines temporarily or for permanent residence abroad shall, before leaving the country, apply to the Commissioner of Immigration for a clearance certificate. If the Commissioner finds that the applicant has no pending obligation with the Government, its instrumentalities, agencies and subdivisions, and that there is no pending, criminal, civil or administrative action which, by law requires his presence, in the Philippines, the Commissioner issues the certificate upon surrender of the alien of all other certificates previously

issued to him by the Bureau of Immigration showing his admission and/or residence in the Philippines.

IV. REPORTING AND MEASUREMENT OF OVERSEAS FILIPINOS (EMIGRANTS)

1. Reporting procedures by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA)

The DFA Foreign Service Circular No. 08-03 issued in 2003 provided the following guidelines in reporting emigrants. For the purpose of refining the national estimates of the stock of overseas Filipinos (OFs), since 2003, all DFA posts have been requested to submit their respective estimates of OFs in their respective jurisdictions as of the end of every semester (June 30 and December 31) respectively, copy furnished the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO). For standardized reporting, stock estimates of overseas Filipinos refer to the aggregate of all Philippine born Filipinos residing or working overseas at a given time, consisting of (a) permanent, (b) temporary, and (c) irregular migrants defined as follows:

- a) Permanent migrants Filipino immigrants and legal permanent residents abroad, including recognized spouses of foreign nationals. Permanent migrants maybe Filipinos who are Filipino citizens/holders of Philippine passports, or naturalized citizens of their host country.
- b) **Temporary migrants** Overseas Filipinos whose stay overseas, while regular and properly documented, is temporary owing to the employment-related nature of their status in the host country. Temporary migrants include (land-based and sea-based) contract workers, intra-company transferees, students, trainees, entrepreneurs, businessmen, traders and others whose stay abroad is six months or more, and their accompanying dependents.
- c) **Irregular migrants** Those who are not properly documented, or who are without valid residence or work permits, or who may be overstaying tourists in a foreign country, provided that those falling under this category shall have been in such status six months or more.

In gathering all these information, the DFA Posts have been requested to tap the assistance abroad of Filipino associations, non-government organizations and research institutions, among others. The **issues** involved in this undertaking are as follows: (1) different sources of information and how they are gathered, (2) majority of the Philippine Posts do not report or do not have data on the number of undocumented Filipinos.

2. Registration of Filipino emigrants through the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO)

The Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) was created by the government on June 1980 through the enactment of Batas Pambansa (Republic Act) 79 to promote the well-being and interests of Filipinos Overseas. The Commission's main functions, among others, include: (1) providing advice and assistance to the President and the Congress of the Philippines in the formulation of policies concerning and affecting Filipinos overseas; and (2) providing liaison services to Filipinos overseas with appropriate government and private agencies in the transaction of business and similar ventures in the Philippines.

The clientele and main beneficiaries of the CFO's programs are:

- a) Filipino permanent migrants or permanent residents abroad,
- b) Filipinos overseas who have become citizens of other countries,
- c) Filipino spouses, and fiancées of foreign nationals, leaving the country,
- d) Descendants of Filipinos overseas, as defined in RA 79,
- e) Filipino youths overseas, and
- f) Exchange visitor program participants.

Filipino emigrants or those leaving the country to settle permanently abroad are required to register with the CFO (registration form shown as Annex 2). Part of its registration requirements is attendance in the Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar to prepare them for settlement overseas. The registration of Filipino emigrants, which started in 1981, has since served as a good information resource on Filipino emigrants, for policy formulation and program development of the Commission.

The CFO, as an attached agency of the DFA, acts as secretariat of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Shared Government Information System on Migration (SGISM) in line with Section 20, Establishment of a Shared Government Information System for Migration, of Republic Act No. 8042- "Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995", estimates of the number of overseas Filipinos are compiled on an annual basis by the Commission sourced from:

- a) emigrant registration system of CFO (as discussed above);
- b) statistics on departing overseas Filipino workers from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (discussed in the next section);
- c) reports from Philippine embassies and consulates based on: number of passports issued, reports on inter-marriages, assistance to nationals-cases, and headcount;
- d) statistics on tourist arrivals from the Department of Tourism (see next section);
- e) reports from Filipino associations and organizations overseas;
- f) reports from foreign embassies and consulates; and
- g) census of foreign governments on their immigrant population.

Overseas Filipinos are categorized as (1) permanent, (2) temporary, and (3) irregulars following the concepts used by the DFA as discussed above.

Some **issues and concerns** in the generation of statistics on overseas Filipinos by the CFO are as follows: (1) double counting, (2) no comprehensive and accurate data on returning Filipinos, (3) no comprehensive data on second and third generation overseas Filipinos, (4) no comprehensive data on those who acquired foreign citizenships.

3. Measuring Overseas Filipinos through a Household Survey by the National Statistics Office (NSO)

From 1982 to 1986, data on overseas Filipinos were collected by the National Statistics Office (NSO), but these were limited to overseas contract workers only. This was done using a one-page questionnaire as a rider to the Integrated Survey of Households (ISH). Starting 1987, the data were gathered using the questionnaire of the Labor Force Survey (LFS), a module of the ISH. However, only the number of overseas contract workers can be estimated from the said form.

In view of the increasing demand for information on overseas workers, the Survey on Overseas Workers was conducted in October 1991 using a revised questionnaire to generate more comprehensive data. In 1993, the survey was renamed Survey on Overseas Filipinos (SOF) to

cover not only overseas workers but also other migrant workers going out of the country. Starting the July 2003 round of the LFS, the generation of labor and employment statistics has adopted the 2003 Master Sample Design with an increase in sample size from 41,000 to 51,000 sample households. The 2006 SOF is in progress.

The SOF aims to provide data on overseas Filipinos particularly the overseas contract workers and their contribution to the economy. Specifically, the survey has the following objectives: (1) to obtain national estimates on the number of overseas Filipinos including overseas workers and their socio-economic characteristics; and (2) to provide estimates on the amount of cash and inkind transfers received by their families and the mode of remittance used.

The survey covers the following:

- a) Filipino overseas contract workers (OCWs) who are presently and temporarily out of the country to fulfill an overseas work contract for a specified length of time or who are presently at home on vacation but still have existing contracts to work abroad. They maybe land based or sea-based.
- b) Other Filipino workers abroad with a valid working visa or work permits. They also include crew-members of airplanes, such as pilots, stewards, stewardesses, etc.
- c) Filipinos abroad who are holders of other types of non-immigrant visa but are presently employed and working full time.

The major data items collected are as follows:

- a) Number of overseas Filipinos and their respective demographic characteristics such as relationship to household head, sex and age as of last birthday;
- b) Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the overseas Filipino during last departure such as marital status, highest grade completed, usual occupation, reason for leaving the country, intended place of work and length of stay abroad;
- c) Information on the type of work done abroad, length of time stayed abroad and date of return trip to the country including amount of money brought home; and
- d) Cash and in-kind remittance during the past six (6) months by mode of remittance and amount (imputed value in case of in-kind remittance).

One of the main **concerns** of the SOF is that the sampling design currently used may not be the best for the survey.

4. Measuring Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) through administrative reporting system of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA)

POEA-OWWA Shared OFW Database - In line with Section 20, "Establishment of a Shared Government Information System for Migration", of Republic Act No. 8042 (cited above), the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) in cooperation with the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), developed the shared database on OFWs in 2003, using the OFW Information Sheet contained in Annex 3. Contents of the information sheet are as follows: (1) personal information of the OFW such as: name, address, birthday, civil status, sex, education, dependents, and beneficiaries; (2) contract information of the OFW to include: employer name and address, position, salary, contract duration, and recruitment agency; (3) deployment date of the OFW. Clearance certificates are issued by the POEA for documented OFWs and these are presented at the airport immigration authorities during departure.

Concepts and Definitions utilized by the shared database are as follows:

- a) Migrant Worker or OFW a person who is to be engaged, or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a state of which he/she is not a legal resident.
- b) Documented OFW a migrant worker with a valid visa or work permit whose employment contract has been processed by POEA.
- c) Undocumented OFW a migrant worker with insufficient employment documents, whose employment contract has not been processed by POEA.
- d) Name-hire an OFW who was able to secure an overseas employment without the assistance or participation of any recruitment agency.
- e) Worker-on-leave an OFW who is on vacation and is returning to the same employer.
- f) Seafarer any person who is employed or engaged in any capacity on board a seagoing ship navigating the foreign seas other than a government ship used for military or noncommercial purposes.

The system covers only flows of documented OFWs. Another **issue/problem** of the shared database is the existence of data gaps due to some missing information, e.g. personal information such as age, education, etc. which are not encoded during the processing of the documents. While information from undocumented OFWs are gathered/registered at the job-site, this remains underreported and incomplete.

5. Statistics generated by the Travel and Tourism Statistical System (TTSS) of the Department of Tourism (DOT)

The Office of Tourism Development Planning of the DOT is mandated to formulate policies, plans, programs and projects for the development of the tourism industry. In line with this, the Office also compiles and maintains a computer-based data bank on the tourism industry, analyzes and makes available for publication the statistics generated. The following concepts and definitions are utilized by the system:

- a) Tourism The activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes.
- b) Visitor Any person traveling to a place other than that of his usual environment for less than a specified duration and the purpose of whose trip is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited.
- c) Overseas Filipinos Are Filipino nationals residing permanently abroad and holders of Philippine passports who are visiting the Philippines for a period not exceeding one year.
- d) Outbound Philippine Residents involve departures of Filipinos who are permanent residents of the Philippines as well as aliens and naturalized citizens of the Philippines with permanent residence in the country.

The system generates statistics on the profile and characteristics of outbound Philippine residents, former Filipinos and overseas Filipinos. Data are obtained from two sources: (1) Sea Manifests gathered by the DOT from Manila South Harbor, Cebu, Subic, Zamboanga and Batangas; (2) Bureau of Immigration (BI) **Arrival/Departure** (A/D) cards (Annex 4). The A/D Card Processing Center (ADCPC) located in NAIA (Ninoy Aquino International Airport) is responsible for the gathering, collection, encoding, data validation and downloading of initial

files in NAIA, Cebu, Laoag, Davao, Subic and Clark. The downloaded data are further processed by DOT's TTSS.

The scope and coverage of the TTSS is clearly detailed below:

Included in Visitor Count

Tourists

Excursionists

Cruise passengers

Overseas Filipinos

Included in Outbound Philippine Resident

Count

Overseas Filipino workers Foreign residents/expatriates

Filipino residents

Not Included in Visitor Count

Transit/Change plane

Aliens with pre-arranged employment in

Philippines Immigrants

Overseas Filipino workers Returning residents

Not Included in Outbound Philippine

Resident Count

Visitors/tourists to the Philippines

Overseas Filipinos

The TTSS outputs include the following:

- a) Statistics on visitor arrivals by: country of residence, demographic profile, travel characteristics, mode of travel, port of entry and nationality.
- b) Statistics on the actual volume of Overseas Filipino permanent residents abroad.
- c) Statistics on former Filipino citizens by country of residence.
- d) Statistics on outbound Philippine residents by: port of disembarkation, demographic profile, travel characteristics, nationality, mode of travel and port of entry.

Some **issues and concerns** of the TTSS include:

- a) availability of funds,
- b) annual bidding process,
- c) retrieval of A/D cards and sea manifests.

V. INITIATIVES IN MEASURING INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

1. Past coordination efforts

1.1 Inter-Agency Technical Working Group on International Migration Statistics

Recognizing the need to consider international migration in the estimation of future trends of population composition, as early as 1987, the Technical Working Group on International Migration Statistics (TWG-IMS) under the then NSCB Inter-Agency Committee on Population and Housing Statistics, conducted a study to ascertain various mechanisms for a systematic retrieval and collection of statistics on emigration and immigration. In the study, the TWG-IM tested three different methods of collecting international migration, namely: (1) use of existing administrative reporting system; (2) conduct of statistical inquiry; and (3) matching of A/D cards records to determine the actual length of stay abroad. On the first method, the administrative forms and tabulations of the BI, POEA, DFA and the CFO, which have data on departures and

arrivals, were examined. It was found that the source documents in the said agencies were incomplete, difficult to retrieve from the storage area or not filed in sequential manner. Matching of the records had to be done manually, which made the process even more difficult. This method was able to generate statistics on the purpose of travel and other variables such as age, sex, occupation and final destination but failed to provide good estimates of international migration. The second method involved the conduct of a special survey of arriving and/or departing passengers at the Manila International Airport, using systematic sampling. For this purpose, the A/D card was modified to include additional information needed. This method was able to generate statistics on the type of visa, age, sex, occupation, destination, and the length of stay abroad. In contrast to the first method, the survey appeared to be effective in terms of yielding information on the expected length of stay abroad. However, it proved to be difficult to implement because the passenger had to be briefly stopped at the airport to obtain the desired information. Under the third method, the records of departing Filipino passengers for the month of July 1985 were matched with the records of arriving passengers from July 1985 to July 1986. The unmatched passengers were assumed to have stayed abroad for over a year. This procedure yielded complete and relatively accurate measures of the actual length of stay abroad. However, there were several problems encountered, such as the laborious matching process. The passport number, which was used as control during the matching process, proved to be an unstable variable as the passport number of an individual could change with the application of a new passport. Due to the problems attendant to the various methods cited, recommendations were made to strengthen capacities of the agencies involved.

1.2 <u>Institutionalizing the Generation of Statistics on Filipino Nationals Abroad (NSCB Resolution No. 5, Series of 1991)</u>

In response to the need for accurate data on the number of Filipinos overseas and at the height of the Gulf War, the NSCB Executive Board issued Resolution No. 5, Institutionalizing the Generation of Statistics on Filipino Nationals Abroad, and resolved that a more systematic collection of data on Filipino nationals abroad be undertaken by the DFA, Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP)(Central Bank) and NSCB, under the following terms and conditions:

a) Definitions:

- 1) Filipino nationals refers to Filipino citizens, including their dependents who are abroad, whether they possess legal or illegal status,
- 2) Filipino overseas contract workers refers to Filipino workers outside the Philippines, including those employed on board vessels plying international waters covered by a valid contract.

b) Delineation of responsibilities:

- 1) FA shall be responsible for the generation of annual benchmark estimates of current stock of Filipino nationals by country of destination;
- 2) DOJ shall be responsible for the quarterly estimates of the volume of turnover of departures and arrivals of Filipino nationals by country of destination or origin, which can be derived from the A/D cards issued by the BI at every point of entry/exit;
- 3) DOLE shall be responsible for the monthly provision of statistics on the number of OFWs:
- 4) BSP shall be responsible for the monthly monitoring/gathering of statistics on the foreign exchange remittances of OFWs through the banking system; and

5) NSCB shall coordinate with all the concerned agencies to ensure timely generation of the above cited data. To implement this, the NSCB revitalized the TWG on International Migration Statistics.

1.3 Pilot Study on the A/D Card System: Towards the Institutionalization of an Information System on International Migration Statistics Project

Following the issuance of NSCB Resolution No. 5 (above), and with funding assistance from the NSCB Grants-in-Aid Program, the Demographic Research and Development Foundation, Inc, in collaboration with the TWG-IMS, conducted in 1993 the above project to look into the possibility of developing a system for generating estimates of international migration using the A/D cards of the BI. The study's short-term objective was to analyze information from the A/D cards filled out by every Filipino who either leaves or enters the country as temporary or permanent international migrant. This entailed an intricate and extensive computerization of such information that employed ingenuity in matching arrivals and departures of Filipinos using the passport number as the matching criterion. This was achieved by a carefully programmed and time-intensive systems design using appropriate computer software that isolated departures with matching arrivals, i.e., referred to as closed departures or temporary international migration; from those departures without matching arrivals, i.e., referred to as open-ended departures or permanent international migration. For purposes of the study, the BI made available to the research team separate raw data files for departures (158,480 records) and arrivals (212,067 records). Although extremely limited in time duration to a narrow window of one-month's departures and arrivals, this pioneering effort succeeded at generating basic age-sex profile of Filipino nationals abroad at the reported destinations all over the world.

A careful evaluation of the BI database where the A/D card information are processed and stored underscored the inadequacy of the computerized information system at the time to meet the demands for international migration statistics. Other recommendations of the study included advocacy on the importance of the A/D card system and its computerization; and the strengthening of the capacity of the information systems unit's main recommendation that the study be replicated on a broader time frame and on a wide array of matching criteria besides the passport number.

2. Current Initiatives in the Philippine Statistical System

2.1 <u>Inter-Agency Committee on Shared Government Information System for Migration (IACSGISM)</u>

Section 20 of the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 provided for the establishment of an inter-agency committee, composed of the DFA and its attached agency, the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, DOLE, POEA, OWWA, DOT, DOJ, BI, National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), and the NSO to implement a shared government information system for migration. The NSCB later joined the Committee as member, upon invitation by the DFA. Initially, the Committee was tasked to make available to itself the information contained in existing databases/files. The second phase should have involved linking of computer facilities in order to allow free-flow data exchanges and sharing among concerned agencies. The Committee was also tasked to identify existing databases, which shall be declassified and shared among member agencies. The shared databases were expected to include, but not limited to, the following information:

- a) master lists of departing/arriving Filipinos;
- b) inventory of pending legal cases involving Filipino migrant workers and other Filipino nationals, including those serving prison terms;
- c) statistical profile on Filipino migrant workers/overseas Filipinos/tourists;
- d) blacklisted foreigners/undesirable aliens;
- e) basic data on legal systems, immigration policies, marriage laws and civil and criminal codes in receiving countries particularly those with the large numbers of Filipinos;
- f) a tracking system of past and present gender-disaggregated cases involving male and female migrant workers; and
- g) listing of overseas posts which may render assistance to overseas Filipinos in general, and migrant workers in particular.

However, the IAC was last convened in 2002. One of the major issues that confronted this undertaking was the lack of funds in implementing an integrated system. Although to date, small meetings are being called by the DFA with participation of the CFO, the different agencies included in the IACSGISM are doing their data compilation systems separately, as discussed in previous sections of this paper.

2.2 Inter-Agency Committee on Overseas Employment and Tourism Statistics

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) or Philippine Central Bank, being the official compiler of the Balance of Payments (BOP) initiated a comprehensive review of the existing data on external transactions with the aim of achieving conformity with international standards. Towards this end, the BSP formed in July 1999, an Inter-Agency Committee on Overseas Employment and Tourism Statistics (IACOETS), with NSCB acting as the committee chairman. The goal is to rationalize data collection and harmonize measurement methodologies concerning Overseas Filipino Workers' (OFW) income and international travel variables. Outputs of this committee include a matrix of current practices on concepts and definitions, including existing estimation methodologies being used by each member agency in coming out with data on OFWs; data on average salaries of OFWs classified by skill and by country of deployment; determination of the "residency" of OFWs based on the BOP and the System of National Accounts (SNA) frameworks and operationalization of definition given the prevailing local conditions; and establishing a common methodology in estimating economic contributions of OFWs. The outputs of the IACOETS were used as inputs in the assessment work of the NSCB Task Force on OFS (see below), which was created in 2004.

2.3 NSCB Task Force on Overseas Filipino Statistics (TFOFS)

The TFOFS is composed of the following agencies: BI, CFO, DFA, DOT, NSO, OWWA, POEA, BSP, NSCB, National Economic and Development Authority and the Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics of the DOLE. Among others, the terms of reference of the TF are as follows: (1) review and evaluate the data generation activities of all concerned agencies for monitoring the stock and flow of overseas Filipinos; (2) review the concepts and definitions used by these agencies in their data generation activities, vis-à-vis standard definitions; (3) formulate recommendations on appropriate concepts and definitions and the estimation and utilization of data on the stock and flow of overseas Filipinos.

2.3.1 Assessment of the existing data generation systems including issues and concerns of the various agencies are as discussed in the sections above.

- 2.3.2 **Proposed operational framework** One of the outputs of the TF is a proposed operational framework for overseas Filipinos as shown in Chart 1. The framework situates the OFWs among the overseas Filipinos (OFs) in general. The OFs are further classified into permanent and temporary OFs. The temporary OFs consist of four subcategories, namely: the documented OFWs, visitors, undocumented Filipinos and others consisting of students and dependents of OFWs, etc.
- 2.3.3 **Proposed standard concepts and definitions** Overseas Filipinos and the various categories under the proposed framework are as defined below:
- Overseas Filipinos (OFs) Overseas Filipinos are Filipino nationals abroad. These shall include the following:
 - a) migrant workers
 - b) permanent residents or immigrants
 - c) former Filipino citizens
 - d) holders of non-immigrant visas like tourists/visitors, students, medical patients, those on official mission, and others
 - e) descendants of Filipino nationals overseas
- **Permanent OFs** shall mean Filipinos who are permanent residents abroad, including Filipino immigrants who are either already citizens of foreign countries or are still Filipino citizens awaiting naturalization, recognition, or admission.
- **Temporary OFs** shall mean Filipinos whose stay overseas is employment-related and are expected to return at the end of their work contracts, holders of non-immigrant visas like tourists/visitors, students, medical patients, those on official mission, and others.
- **OFWs** Refers to persons who are to be engaged or are engaged in a remunerated activity in a state of which they are not legal residents.
- **Documented OFWs** a migrant worker with valid visa or work permit whose employment contract has been processed by POEA.
- **Residents** OFWs employed for less than one year including seafarers regardless of the length of employment.
- Non Residents OFWs employed for one year or more.
- **Visitors** Filipinos traveling abroad whose purpose is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited for a period not exceeding one year.
- Others Those on official mission (working in embassies, consulates, international organizations), scholars/trainees/students.
- **Undocumented Filipinos** Refers to Filipinos abroad who fall under any of the following categories:
 - a) Those who acquired their passports through fraud or misrepresentation

- b) Those who possess expired visas or permits to stay
- c) Those who have no travel documents whatsoever
- d) Those who have valid but inappropriate visas
- Undocumented OFWs Refers to OFWs who fall under any of the following categories:
 - a) Those who acquired their passports through fraud or misrepresentation
 - b) Those who possess expired visas or permits to stay
 - c) Those who have no travel documents whatsoever
 - d) Those who have valid but inappropriate visas

VI. FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Much remains to be done. Recommendations suggested at the Task Force on Overseas Filipino Statistics include the following:

- a) Optimal utilization of the A/D card of the Bureau of Immigration to enhance collection of data on departing and returning Filipinos;
- b) Use of census on families of overseas Filipinos;
- c) Enhance the collection of data of Philippine Embassies and Consulates;
- d) Adopt a specific and common procedure and mechanism in gathering statistics on OFs (particularly on the number of irregular migrants);
- e) Adoption of common definition of terms and international standards;
- f) Analysis and interpretation of statistical data and flow;
- g) Harmonization of reporting systems of DFA and the CFO;
- h) Revisit the design of the NSO Survey on Overseas Filipinos;
- i) Address the identified data gaps of the POEA and the OWWA;
- j) Reactivate the IACSGISM; and
- k) Revision of the A/D card to reflect information on length of stay and purpose of travel as shown in Annexes 5-A and 5-B.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: CFO Registration Form Annex 2: POEA Information Sheet

Annex 3: A/D Card

Annex 4a: Proposed Embarkation Card Annex 4b: Proposed Disembarkation Card



COMMISSION ON FILIPINOS OVERSEAS

INFORMATION SHEET FOR FILIPINO EMIGRANTS

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Please CHECK (</) appropriate box(es).

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Revised as of April 2005

(internet copy) -www.efa.gov.ph

THIS FORM IS NOT FOR SALE.

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Verifier	

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify under penalty of law to the truth and correctness of the statement and that this form was accomplished by me personally or under my personal direction.

SIGNATURE ABOVE PRINTED NAME

Revised as of April 2005

(internet copy) www.cfa.gov.ph

THIS FORM IS NOT FOR SALE

Annex 2: POEA Information Sheet

ISO Form Code FM-POEA-03-LB-15 Copy 1 - POEA

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & EMPLOYMENT
PHILIPPINE OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT ADMINISTRATION
OVERSEAS WORKERS WELFARE ADMINISTRATION

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Annex 3: Annex 3: A/D Card

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Annex 4a: Proposed Embarkation Card

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NOTE: Proposed changes are printed in bold. The Arrival/Departure Record is a detachable form to be retained by the de parting passenger and attached.

Annex 4b: Proposed Disembarkation Card

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NOTE: Proposed changes are printed in bold. The Arrival/Departure Record is a detachable form to be retained by the departing passenger and attached.