



PRESS RELEASE

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Filipinos still the preferred choice in 2007

Filipino skilled workers and professionals will continue to be in demand in 2007 as traditional employers in the Middle East, Asia, the Americas and Europe like Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan and Singapore pursue development projects and at the same time, experience skills shortages due to ageing population and low birth rates. Developed economies in America and Europe like Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Spain, Cyprus, Norway as well as the island states in the Caribbean and Guam will likewise provide new opportunities for skilled workers and professionals.

Based on the data of newly registered principals as of December 19, 2006, the number of principals in emerging markets such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Cyprus, Guam, Nigeria and traditional markets like Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Libya and Qatar increased significantly compared to the 2005 level.

Demand for skilled workers and professionals such as trades and related workers, professionals, technicians and associate professionals, and plant and machine operators and assemblers and managerial positions comprised half of the approved job orders for 2006. Among these are:

- doctors, nurses, midwives, pharmacists, physical/occupational therapists, and caregivers
- teachers in elementary and secondary education, especially in math and science, English, special education, human resource positions, trainers, assistant executives
- engineering and construction - architects, draftsman, project engineers, test engineer, civil/mechanical/electrical/electronic engineers, engineering assistant, welders, pipe fitters, electricians, painters, mechanics, fabricators, riggers, etc.
- banking and finance professionals: accountants, financial analysts
- ICT professionals - system engineers, software engineers, programmers, technical support engineers, network support, multimedia designers, junior and senior customer IT support representatives, customer IT support representatives (on site), and AIX system administrators.
- truck drivers, construction and trades workers (welders, auto mechanics, linesmen industrial mechanics, auto mechanics, painters/denters,

- fabricators,, carpenters, framers, masons and other construction workers; butchers, meat packers,
- hotel and restaurant and retail workers

While there is a high demand for skilled workers and professionals, the private recruitment agencies have cited some difficulty in meeting the demand for certain types of skills mainly due to scarcity of qualified workers to meet the stringent qualification standards/competency requirements set by employers, specifically in oil and gas companies in the Middle East. Among these are nurses in specialized areas, math and science teachers, engineers (planning, process, scaffolding, painting/insulation), pipefitters, instrument fitters, welders, electricians, managerial, supervisory and senior positions in the oil, gas and petrochemical industry.

Given the above scenario and in order to maximize the job opportunities in the overseas labor markets, it is critical that the Philippines, as a labor supplying state, assure its continuous foothold in the global market by ensuring a consistent supply of highly qualified technical workers for the global labor market. The POEA urges TESDA, along with CHED and PRC, to come out with aggressive government and private sector partnership agreement and increase investments in human resource development (e.g. setting up of training schools, scholarship grants and funding support for specialized training). This strong partnership between the government and private sector in education and training seeks to address the concern of producing the right quantity and quality of workers.

Along this line, landbased employers are encouraged to follow the lead and initiatives of the maritime sector in the setting up of education and training schools to meet the demand (in terms of quantity and quality of skills) and address skill shortages, address issues of brain drain and shared human resource challenge between the rich and developing countries.

Filipino workers have proven themselves to be highly competent workers and professional. The foreign employers can take advantage of all the available avenues to develop Filipino skilled workers and professionals. With the combined efforts of the government, the private sector and other stakeholders, meeting the challenge for a stable supply of Filipino workers to meet overseas demand in the years ahead can be addressed effectively. ###