



# Department of Migrant Workers

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City of Mandaluyong, 1550 National Capital Region

## Office of the Secretary

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### PRESS STATEMENT

#### SUMMARY OF PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MIGRANT WORKERS

The effectivity of Republic Act 11641 or the *Department of Migrant Workers Act* paved the way for the realization of the proposed programs and projects for the newly-constituted Department. The summary of the proposed programs and projects of the DMW is encapsulated below:

- Building of Regional OFW Hospitals
- Provision of Primary health care in Field Units ( Regional offices and MWOs)
- Accessibility of Overseas Filipino bank desks in high traffic field units
- Training of the Quick Response Teams to effectively respond to the needs of the OFWs
- Installation of payment centers in one-stop shop centers in the Regional Offices
- Review and determination of corrective steps (if needed) for Bilateral and Multilateral labor agreements
- Engagement of local businesses or foreign chambers of commerce for generation of job opportunities here and abroad, as well for targeted training of OFWs for global competitiveness
- Streamlining of the system for a unified data of the OFWs
- Training for Financial Management for OFWs and the families left behind
- Subsidized Rate for Philhealth and Insurance Policy
- Re-evaluation and expansion of the existing scholarship grants for the dependents of the OFWs
- Abolishment of the mandatory payment for Overseas Employment Certificates (OECs)
- Reintegration of OFWs through collaboration with different business sectors

## Expansion of Labor Markets for Filipino Migrant Workers

In order to expand our labor markets, the Secretary has to extensively travel to foreign countries to meet his foreign counterparts. Labor relations should be strengthened to ensure that job opportunities for the Filipino migrant workers are available. The challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic caused the repatriation of many OFWs; some are still unemployed and are currently experiencing difficulty in finding a job. Thus, job opportunities for them should be sought for the possible labor markets where their skills could be matched.

Relative to this, the data<sup>1</sup> by the Philippine Statistics Authority shows that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) covers a big chunk among the labor receiving countries for our OFWs. While opportunities in the Kingdom overflow for the Filipino workers and a number of companies heavily rely on our skilled manpower, there are a number of cases which involve their legal battles (*e.g. major and minor offenses*). To address these pending issues, the Secretary has to go to the Kingdom until the problems are addressed. Negotiations and diplomatic collaboration should be the top priorities to achieve a secure resolution as well as beneficial outcome of their cases.

In 2016, Secretary Abdullah Mama-o stayed in the Middle East for one month until the repatriation of the 11,000 stranded OFWs. He also tremendously worked for the grant of pardon for the fifty (51) Filipino convicts. To ensure their safety, Secretary Mama-o personally accompanied them to the airport until their return to the Philippines.

At the height of the civil war in the same region, Secretary Mama-o was sent by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte to negotiate the release of three (3) Filipino technicians in 2017. In 2019, he was also sent to personally receive the release of seven (7) Filipino sailors who were accused of alleged smuggling. Both of these events happened during the height of the civil war in a certain Arab country. **Currently, we still have a number of OFWs who are languishing in prisons and are waiting for the just and speedy resolution of their cases.**

Indubitably, **the DMW Secretary should not just stay at home or in the office.** The job entails not only the grant of endless media interviews but an urgent action towards the pressing obstacles faced by the Filipino migrant workers.

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<sup>1</sup> Retrieved from <https://psa.gov.ph/content/2020-overseas-filipino-workers-final-results>

## **Processing of Documents of the OFWs**

The Department fully supports Republic Act 11032 or the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018.

Since Secretary Mama-o gives no room for the delay on the facilitation of the documents of the OFWs and stakeholders, he issued DMW Advisory No. 11<sup>2</sup> on 02 June 2022 in order to streamline the processing of the said documentary requirements within three (3) working days.

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<sup>2</sup> Retrieved from <https://www.dmw.gov.ph/resources/dsms/DMW/Issuances/2022/DMW-ADVISORY-11-2022.pdf>