



International Labour Organization  
Organisation internationale du Travail  
Organización Internacional del Trabajo

**ILO-Korea Study Tour on Migration to the Philippines**  
**Opening Message by Ms Linda Wirth**  
**Director, ILO-Manila**

**Crowne Plaza Hotel, Ortigas Center**  
**1 March 2010**

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The delegations from Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka,  
Indonesia and Timor-Leste;  
POEA Deputy Director Hans Leo Cacdac;  
Thetis Mangahas and my colleagues in the ILO;  
Mr. Tomas Achacoso;  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Good Morning!

It is with great pleasure to be with you today and welcome all of you to Manila. I hope you had a pleasant trip and have fully rested last night for a full-week ahead of you.

Summer in the Philippines has started this early with the whole country experiencing hot temperature reaching 34 degrees Celsius in Metro Manila. This is due to the El Nino phenomenon, a long and continued dry spell, resulting in many agricultural lands drying up and water reservoirs being down to critical levels. Adding to the summer heat is the election fever where national and local positions are at stake including the election of a new Philippine President. But this is also a period most Filipinos look forward to holidays as the school calendar draws near to a close, signaling the summer season – a period to enjoy the pristine beaches of the Philippines and local festivities. Some of you may wish to stay on for a couple of days and experience the wonders of the Philippines' 7,100 islands.

Many women and men around the world are in the move, with a large portion from the Asian region moving within and across the region. These migratory movements are driven mainly and largely by a desire to find new and better opportunities for themselves and their families, benefiting both the countries of origin and destination in many respects. These movements will stay and continue. The push and pull factors – such as aging population in developed countries against the young and growing population in developing countries; the demand for skilled labour and other employment opportunities abroad against the inadequate economic options in countries of origin - combined with low cost communication and transport services, have increased the demand for migration. Despite these factors though, it has been reported that the share of international migrants has remained remarkably stable at 3% over the past 50 years.



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However, there remain certain issues and barriers that affect human mobility in general. We have seen barriers to these flows which became more pronounced with the global economic downturn. The changing discourse on migration, the on-going reforms in migration policies in many destination countries, the pressing issues surrounding skilled and low-skilled migration, the brain drain and brain gain equation, among others have been seen to affect policies on mobility of migrants in countries of destination and origin. Adding to the complexity is the continuing and unattended to cases of abusive recruitment practices and exploitation of migrants including trafficking in persons, particularly of women migrants.

For the ILO, labour migration is approached within the context of decent work and through ensuring coherence in labour migration, employment and other national development policies in a way that is more beneficial to all migrant workers and members of their families and to origin and destination countries as well. The ILO has been addressing this issue in relation to the various stages of migration – from recruitment to admission, and to the return and reintegration of migrants – by advocating with and helping member States to take positive steps toward better migration management or governance and by reducing vulnerabilities of migrants and would-be migrants and increasing opportunities for personal growth and development in countries of origin as well as in destination countries. Central to these efforts is the overarching consideration for the treatment and protection of the rights of migrant workers throughout the migration process. All these are articulated in the ILO's Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration which will be part of your discussions today.

As you may know, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has devoted for the first time in 2009 its Human Development Report to the topic of migration – a recognition of the link between human mobility and development. The UNDP report explores how better policies towards human mobility can enhance human development. The report proposes to address human mobility issues mainly by lowering the barriers to movement and improving the treatment of those moving.

On the local scene, the Philippines has made significant advances in establishing migration systems and structures which many countries look up to as a model on migration management. It is for this reason that the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific has brought this learning programme – Managing Labour Migration for Decent Work in Asia – to the Philippines. With the objective of broadening understanding on migration policy and management particularly in the Asian region, the Philippine case will be used as a “live case example” toward developing policy changes and effecting lasting reforms in many countries in this part of the continent.

This 5-day learning programme will one way or another touch upon, among other issues, tensions between countries of origin and destination – and by and large, from the perspectives of origin countries. Let us however always keep in mind that we, above all, are talking about humans, our men and women migrant workers. It is my fervent hope and I am equally positive about it, that you all would be able to reach your objectives in coming over to Manila. I am hopeful that whatever you will learn from this will translate into better policies and systems for your own country's migrant workers.

I hope that you will still find time to discover Manila. The hotel is close to shopping centers and dining pleasures and accessible by MRT and other public transport systems.

I will be remiss if I forget to thank the organizations and people who without them this activity would not have been possible: the Government of Korea through the ILO-Korea Partnership Programme for financial support; the Human Resources Development Service of Korea; and the Philippine Department of Labor and Employment and its agencies, especially the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration. Ms. Thetis Mangahas of the ILO Regional Office, and under whose guidance, the ILO staff in Bangkok and Manila were able to bring you together to Manila. Of course, the experts from the Philippine Government and the private sector who will share with you their expertise from day 1 to day 5. On behalf of the ILO, thank you to all of you.

Thank you and Mabuhay!