



FAME



FILIPINO ASSOCIATION FOR MARINERS' EMPLOYMENT, INC.

FAME ADVISORY NO. 005-20

To : **ALL FAME MEMBERS**

From : The Secretariat

Subject : **PRESS RELEASE - MANAGEMENT AND LABOR COME TOGETHER TO SAVE SEAFARING INDUSTRY - TUCP LIVE PRESS CONFERENCE 13 Aug 2020**

Date : 14 August 2020

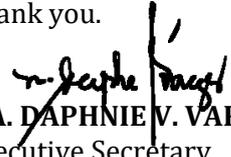
In reference to the TUCP-JMG Live Press Conference: Saving the Seafaring Industry Confirmation held yesterday 13 August 2020, we are pleased to furnish you with the Press Release of the TUCP for the said press conference as well as the statements and documents presented which are listed below:

Attachments:

1. 13Aug20 Programme - TUCP-JMG Joint Press Conference
2. 13 August 2020 - Rep. Raymond Mendoza Statement
3. 13 August 2020 - Mr. Michael Mendoza Statement
4. JMG Opening Statements Aug132020_TUCPPressCon
5. PH Seafaring Industry Situationer
6. ITF PH Affiliates Resolution to PRRD
7. ITF Proposal for Enhanced Operations to Support Philippine Seafarers
8. IndustryLettertoBelloDO211A_06June2020
9. 13 August 2020 – TUCP Press Release

For your information and reference.

Thank you.


MA. DAPHNIE V. VARGAS
Executive Secretary

46 YEARS OF WORKING TOGETHER WITH INDUSTRY FOR EXCELLENCE

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**TUCP-JMG JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE
SAVING THE SEAFARING INDUSTRY**

Thursday, 13 August 2020; 10:00 am

Agenda

I – Introduction

Introduction of Participants
Protocols Reminders
Brief Situationer on Seafaring Industry
Moderator

II – Panelists' Statements

ATTY. RAYMOND DEMOCRITO C. MENDOZA
Chairperson, House Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs
Representative, TUCP Partylist
President, Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP)

Mr. MICHAEL DEMOCRITO C. MENDOZA
National President, Associated Philippine Seafarers' Union (APSU)

Atty. NOLI PARTIDO
Legal Department Head
Associated Marine Officers and Seafarers' Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP)

Mr. ROY ALAMPAY
Filipino Association for Mariners' Employment
Co-Chairperson, Joint Manning Group (JMG)

Mr. ERICSON MARQUEZ
Co-Chairperson, JMG

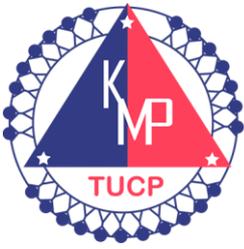
Mr. HAROLD FUENTES
Fisherman, GLOBALMARITIME CREW INC.

Mr. JESUS GABUNI
Fisherman, GLOBALMARITIME CREW INC.

III – Open Forum (Panelists and Resource Persons)

Resource Persons:
Mr. LUIS CORRAL
Vice President, TUCP
Secretary General, TUCP Partylist

Mr. JOE KATO
JMG



Trade Union Congress of the Philippines

Katipunang Manggagawang Pilipino

RDCM STATEMENT TUCP-JMG Joint Press Conference 13 August 2020

A good morning to you all.

The Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) raises the concerns of the seafaring industry and the risk of unemployment faced by 400,000 workers as the ongoing pandemic continues to threaten shipowners' preference for Filipino seafarers.

With unemployment at a record high 17.7 percent and the plunge of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 16.5 percent in the second quarter, the country is likely to experience one of the slowest economic recoveries compared to its ASEAN neighbors, should swift action not be taken to preserve the sources of money remittances sent by Filipinos overseas. Dollar remittances from seafarers are one of the few remaining bright spots in our economy. Let us save seafaring jobs, save lives of the seafarers' families, and help save the economy.

The situation has improved through implementing the Philippine Green Lane for Seafarers, ensuring speedy and safe travel, a controlled travel corridor, and managing the movement of seafarers to control the risk of spreading COVID-19 during crew change, but urgent action is necessary to address the bottlenecks in the deployment and repatriation of seafarers, as these increase the cost of hiring.

The Philippines currently has the most seafarers globally, making up 25% of the entire workforce, and in the High Level Tripartite Meeting through the House Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs, both the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) and the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) highlighted the need for cooperation between social partners and reiterated their commitment to work with the Government to produce solutions to address the potential collapse of the industry. This industry is key in revitalizing the Philippine economy, and there are no alternatives should these workers lose their jobs.

The Trade Union Congress of the Philippines continues to pursue additional Government interventions to restore the faith of the merchant ship industry in the capacity of the Philippines to expediate processing deployment and repatriation, and to address the experiences of seafarers as they face regulations in local government units further delaying the repatriation process.

First, increase the arrival and departure passenger cap at airports. The current cap is not sufficient to allow volume repatriation and deployment of seafarers, and the scarcity of flights to and from ports has posed a challenge to the seafaring industry. The Associated Philippine Seafarer Union (APSU) and the Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP) together with the ITF have reached out to airlines with global networks.

Their efforts have been rewarded with a response from Qatar Airways, signalling their intent to provide daily humanitarian flights to and from the Manila, Cebu City, and Clark international airports to Doha pending the approval of the Philippine Government.



Second, for the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) to take the lead role in clearing up and immediately solving bottlenecks in travel. The so-called greenlanes have been stopped up, unnecessarily stranding repatriated seafarers. These bottlenecks further obstruct and delay travel through LGU borders, thereby delaying deployment. Unless these bottlenecks are cleared and set aside, crew change cannot be undertaken in a timely and cost-effective fashion.

Third, to negotiate the processing of arrival visas or the waiver of visa requirements for greenlaned seafarers transiting through SCHENGEN visa countries, as the additional delays in processing documentary requirements does not allow for free movement across borders.

Fourth, ensure that both the Overseas Workers Affairs Administration (OWWA) and Philhealth have a sufficient supplemental budget to cover the costs for board and lodging, and testing, so that these costs are not passed on to the seafarers, the shipping lines, and the manning groups.

These obstacles facing the seafaring industry gravely jeopardize the preference of international shipping lines to hire Filipino crew, as increased costs and delays make us internationally uncompetitive. Consequently, cargo ship owners increasingly choose to hire their crew from other countries.

We in the seafaring industry, would like to show our support for the enactment of policies to address the bottlenecks and delays experienced by seafarers. Through these proposed measures, we are hopeful that the Philippine Government will act swiftly in order to protect and secure the niche of our Filipino Seafarers as the preferred crew of most international shipping lines.

Daghang salamat po!

MDCM STATEMENT:
TUCP-JMG Joint Press Conference

13 August 2020

Good afternoon.

We are here today because we want to save the jobs of 400,000 Filipino seafarers and therefore ensure that the lives of their families are not put at risk. As we speak, for the next six months, 180,000 seafarers on board are in danger of not being able to be repatriated back home on time. And 180,000 Filipino seafarers who have contracts are in danger of losing their jobs because of delays.

We therefore call for Government to step up and issue the following policies.

First, revoke DOLE Department Order 211-A which does not provide that Government will provide for the board and lodging of seafarers. This is unfair and discriminatory, as the only coverage provided by Government is for landbased OFWs. Seafarers deserve the same treatment because of their enormous financial contribution to the economy, and because they are also OWWA members.

Second, there must be a larger amount set aside in the Bayanihan to Recover as One Act for repatriation costs, for board and lodging and testing, and also for facilitating the processing of travel for seafarers who have live contracts to board ships.

Third, that the current cap on the number of passengers for departures and arrivals in NAIA, Mactan, and Clark airport be quadrupled. We are running out of time in terms of bringing overworked, stressed workers back home to their families, and also to ensure the timely boarding of those replacing them on their ships.

Fourth, currently, with 40 ships entering Manila harbor daily and with 30,000 seafarers being disembarked monthly with another 30,000 having to embark, it is necessary to open additional ports where crew change can take place. It cannot be just in Manila. We therefore call on MARINA to open the ports of Subic and Bataan, and that the workers be bussed to Manila to ease bottlenecks.

Fifth, it has come to our attention that the Philippine Red Cross has run out of test kits for seafarers. There should be additional test kits provided and the costs for these should be absorbed by PhilHealth.

Sixth, we appeal to the Department of Foreign Affairs to reach out to their foreign counterparts to relax the visa requirements for seafarers. We call for SCHENGEN visas to be issued once the seafarer arrives at the destination country, as the difficulty of securing these visas with consular offices closed and travel restrictions complicating things further increases delays.

Seventh, we appeal to the Philippine Coast Guard to lend their water assets to transport crew that are disembarking and crew that are onboarding from Manila harbor. Currently, each barge that is privately hired by the local manning agencies are only able to transport ten crew at a time, and there are 40 ships daily coming in to the port, causing significant delay for the departure of ships that are boarding their new crew.

Finally, the 6 Billion social reintegration fund should be complimented with sufficient technical support from the Department of Agriculture and Department of Trade and Industry, and the training assistance should be experiential based and not theoretical to ensure successful businesses. In the past, such grants were just given and the businesses that were put up failed.

All of us here today recognize that dialogue among social partners must be given more importance during the pandemic. Social dialogue must be strengthened on all levels to ensure coherence on the ground. By coming together today, we ensure that we build better.

With this, we hope that the Government will heed our call asking for the recognition and support for the Philippine seafaring industry and the protection of Filipino Seafarers. We need the industry now more than ever, as we look forward to recovering from the economic impact of the global pandemic. Thru policies designed to alleviate the pressures experienced by workers in the industry, lets clear a way for them to lead us back.

Let us save jobs, and save lives.

Maraming salamat po.

Joint Manning Group (JMG) OPENING STATEMENT

1. JMG is the umbrella group of five (5) major associations in the Manila, Philippines, engaged in the recruitment of Filipino seafarers for employment onboard overseas merchant vessels both Philippine registered and foreign registered vessels.
2. There are more than 250 Licensed Manning Agencies (LMA's) who are members of the said 5 major associations (Filipino Association for Mariners Employment (FAME), Philippine-Japanese Maritime Consultative Council (PJMCC), Filipino Shipowners Association (FSA), International Managers Association of the Philippines (INTERMAP), Philippine Association of Manning Agencies & Ship Managers (PAMAS) .
3. JMG accounts for over 75% (more or less) of the total Filipino seafarers deployed for overseas employment. The Philippines deploy more than 400,000 Filipino seafarers every year.
4. JMG represents the interest of the Employers in the Maritime Industry Tripartite Council (MITC). Other stakeholders in the MITC is the Government (POEA-DOLE, MARINA, OWWA and other government agencies), and the Seafarers' Group (AMOSUP, ALU-TUCP, MATEO, UFS and others).
5. In this Forum, organized by TUCP, the JMG is in the same page with TUCP and AMOSUP in presenting to the Philippine government and authorities the current "plight of the Filipino Seafarers" in the midst of the Covid-19 global pandemic, covering the following areas of concern:
 - Replacement and Repatriation of Filipino seafarers who are serving onboard over and beyond their normal term of contracts, brought about by closures of foreign borders, limited or insufficiency of commercial flights to/from foreign crew change hubs, compliance with ever changing protocols imposed by authorities for movement of personnel (including seafarers) to mitigate the spread of Covid-19 virus
 - JMG is one with the seafarers group in making an appeal to the Philippine Government/Authorities for assistance to cover the additional cost brought about by Covid-19 pandemic, such as administering Covid-19 test (RT-PCR), cost of isolation before returning seafarers can finally return to their places of domicile/families.

- Opening up of other Ports (other than Manila) in the Philippines (particularly the Ports in Bataan, Batangas & Subic and when domestic commercial air operation is resumed and becomes normal, the major ports in the South like Cebu, Davao, Cagayan de Oro) for the purposes of crew change.

It's important that the Philippines as a whole will be able to show to the international maritime community that all sectors, specially the government, is extending to its seafarers in particular and to the maritime industry, in general, the full support and assistance needed overcome the challenges brought about by Covid-19 global pandemic and to keep the world economy moving, as 95% of the world's commerce in terms of volume is carried on board merchant ships....

Maraming Salamat Po !!!

MR. ROY ALAMPAY, Chairman
Aug. 13, 2020 – TUCP Press Conference

THE PHILIPPINE SEAFARING INDUSTRY



PHILIPPINE SEAFARING INDUSTRY

- In the past 50 years, the Philippines has become a major provider of maritime experts.
- The Philippines is one of the top suppliers of seafarers since 1987.
- We are second only to China in terms of number of seafarers followed by India, Indonesia, and Russia.

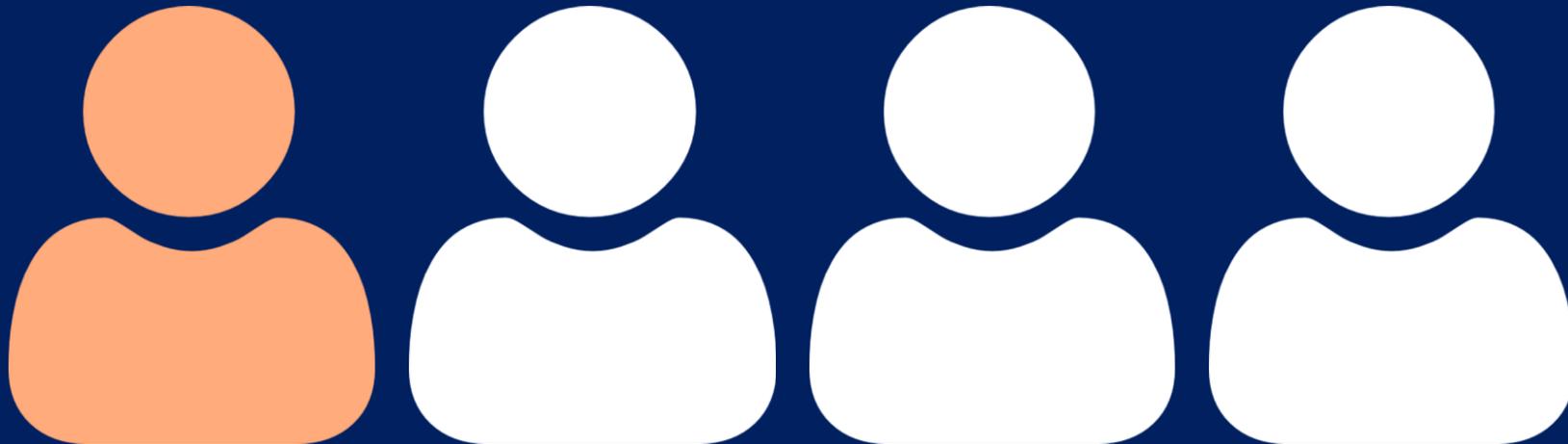


THE PHILIPPINE SEAFARING INDUSTRY

An estimated 25 percent of all Seafarers are Filipinos.

Out of 1,647,500 recorded seafarers,

460,000 are Filipinos.



ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION

‘Maritime to triple contribution to economy’



By The Manila Times • December 25, 2018

Like 0



Pinoy sailors send home record \$6.1B in 2018

MARCH 3, 2019

RAPPLER.COM

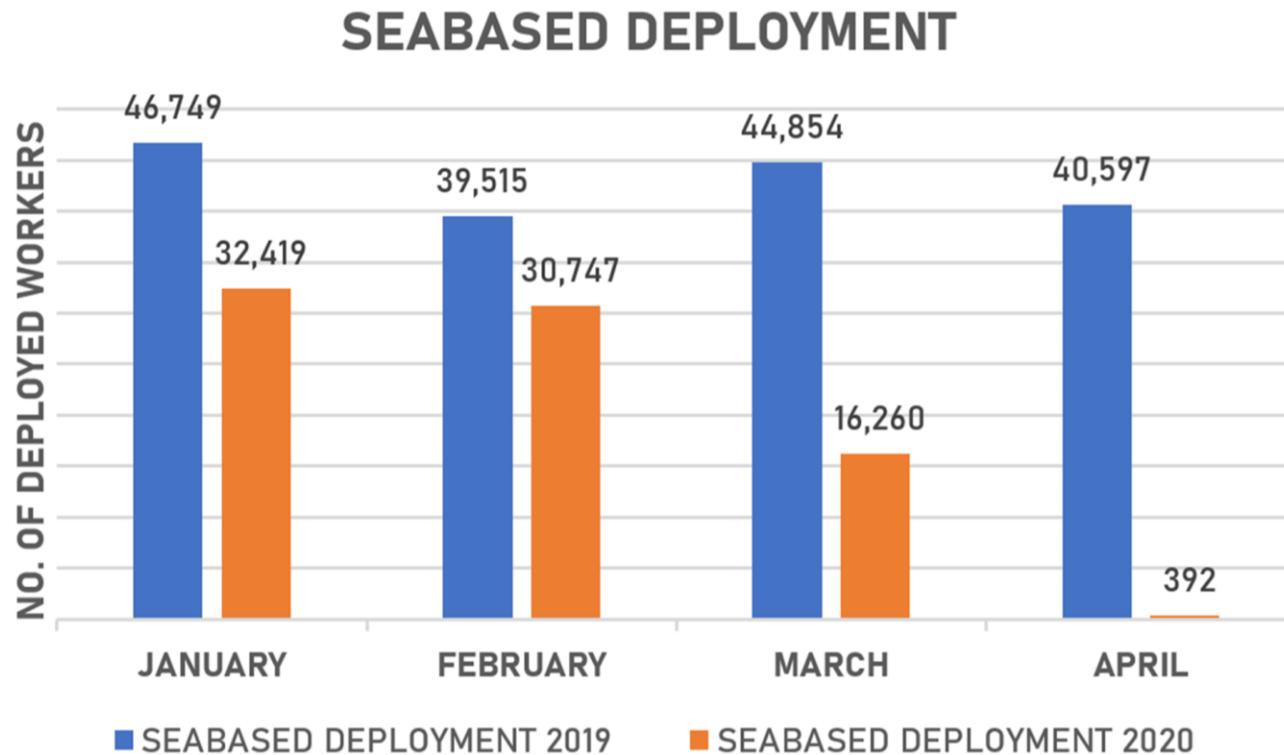
- In 2017, seafarers contributed \$5.87 billion in remittances
- In 2018, the number jumped to \$6.14 billion, accounting for 19% of all OFW remittances.
 - Equivalent to 9.7% of PH GDP and 8.1% of GNI
- In December 2018, MARINA projected an exponential growth in the industry's economic contributions with the implementation of the maritime industry development plan (MIDP)

IMPACT OF PANDEMIC TO SEAFARING INDUSTRY

The industry has not been immune to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Issues such as crew change protocols, repatriation of stranded seafarers, and footing of quarantine costs.



DEPLOYMENT OF PH SEAFARERS



As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, strict lockdown and quarantine protocols were enforced. As a result, the deployment of sea based overseas Filipino workers has drastically decreased. Deployment of seafarers last April 2020 dropped by 99%.

CREW CHANGE PROTOCOLS

- An estimated 180,000 Filipino seafarers remain stranded onboard ships, with 180,000 seafarers waiting to replace them. There is an estimated 30,000 Filipino seafarers supposed to disembark ships every month.
- Strict lockdown procedures has prevented the change of crew members. Only about 25 percent of normal crew changes have taken place since March 2020.
- Seafarers stranded onboard ships were forced to sign contract extensions and work during the duration of the lockdown.
 - Maritime Labour Convention 2006 dictates that tours of duty cannot be extended and need to be kept to a duration of less than 12 months. Contracts usually run between 4-10 months.
 - With extended contracts, physical and mental fatigue pose risks to themselves and their fellow crew members.
- Many seafarers who cannot board ships due to strict protocols are left unemployed as they cannot get onboard.



REPATRIATION OF PH SEAFARERS

National

Of 14 stranded Filipino seafarers in Brazil, one has died, 2 are recovering, and 11 have been repatriated

Published July 30, 2020, 6:22 PM
by [Roy Mabasa](#)

537 Filipino seafarers repatriated to Manila amid COVID-19

In response to the crew change issue that has arise due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Philippine Embassy managed to repatriate a total of 537 stranded Filipino seafarers.

SEAFARERS | 09/07/20

111 stranded Filipino seafarers from China repatriated — DFA

INQUIRER.net / 03:41 PM July 24, 2020

Filipino Seafarers medical repatriation amidst COVID-19 restrictions an impossible task?

By [maritimecyprus](#) - 24/06/2020

798 0

- Seafarers who manage to disembark ships face the new challenge of going back home to the Philippines.
 - International flights to and from the Philippines were cancelled for the first two months of quarantine.
 - **Limited number of available passenger flights** for distressed OFWs and stranded foreign nationals
 - PH airports also limit a cap on the number of arrivals it can accommodate on a daily basis (**3000 individuals per day**).
 - DFA is only allowed to initiate chartered flights on Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.

QUARANTINE PROCEDURES AND COSTS



- Repatriated Filipino Seafarers undergo a mandatory 3–5 day quarantine or until their COVID-19 test results are released before they are issued clearances by DOH and BOQ and return to their respective provinces. However, many repatriates have been forced to stay at quarantine facilities for extended periods of time.
 - Some repatriates have stayed **quarantined more than 40 days**, almost three times the prescribed quarantine period.
 - Swab test results, which are supposed to be available after just 5 days, take weeks to be released.
 - **Some repatriates pay for their own quarantine**, in some cases it comes with assurance coming from their employer that they will be reimbursed afterwards.
 - After quarantine, they face the challenge of going back home to their respective provinces without public mass transport.

QUARANTINE PROCEDURES AND COSTS

Manning agencies to shoulder lodging of quarantined seafarers

By Ferdinand Patinio

 May 28, 2020, 4:01 pm

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Philippines: Manning Agencies Oppose Controversial Order By DOLE

By [MI News Network](#) | In: [Shipping News](#) | Last Updated on June 13, 2020

DOLE compels recruitment, manning agencies to foot returning OFWs' board and lodging bill

 By [Samuel P. Medenilla](#) May 29, 2020

- DOLE Department Order 211-A

- The controversial order by DOLE states that **ship owners/manning agencies must cover boarding and lodging of repatriated seafarers during the period of their quarantine** which is estimated to be \$700 per seafarer.
- Local manning agencies are of the opinion that the Philippine government should be the one who should shoulder the costs like every other country. And **that they have already spent \$2.8 billion for lodging and quarantine expense.**
- If the order is enacted shipping companies might be compelled to replace Filipinos with seafarers from other countries.

END



SOURCES

- <https://rappler.com/nation/filipino-seafarers-send-home-record-remittances-2018>
- <https://www.ics-shipping.org/shipping-facts/shipping-and-world-trade/global-supply-and-demand-for-seafarers>
- <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2019/06/07/marina-seafarers-remittances-to-rise-30/>
- <https://www.manilatimes.net/2018/12/25/business/maritime-business/maritime-to-triple-contribution-to-economy/487351/>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/joint-statement-of-the-international-maritime-virtual-summit-on-crew-changes>
- <https://www.marineinsight.com/shipping-news/philippines-manning-agencies-oppose-controversial-order-by-dole/>
- <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1104171>
- <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/07/15/business/maritime-business/ph-crew-change-woes-still-unresolved/742038/>
- <https://www.marineinsight.com/shipping-news/coronavirus-80000-filipino-seafarers-with-lapsed-contracts-stranded-at-sea/>
- <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/05/20/business/maritime-business/who-is-in-charge/725960/>



RESOLUTION OF THE PHILIPPINE LABOR AFFILIATES OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS' FEDERATION (ITF), APPEALING TO HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE TO HELP SAVE THE PHILIPPINE SEAFARING INDUSTRY AND HELP SAVE THE JOBS OF OUR SEAFARERS, BY ISSUING THE NEEDED DIRECTIVES TO THE INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE AS WELL AS ALL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES DIRECTLY INVOLVED, IN ENSURING THAT NECESSARY CREW CHANGE PROTOCOLS ARE IN PLACE TO ENABLE OUR SEAFARERS TO BOARD THEIR SHIPS ON TIME

WHEREAS, the COVID19 pandemic has brought about unprecedented impact to the world trade and global economy and in order to mitigate the spread of the disease, travel restrictions, closing of borders, aircrafts and ships were denied entry into some ports and airports, were imposed by many countries;

WHEREAS, more than 80% of the world trade volume relies and dependent on maritime transport, and seafarers are among the indispensable and vital link to keep the global supply chain moving;

WHEREAS, on March 16, 2020, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte declared a national emergency in the Philippines because of the COVID-19 pandemic;

WHEREAS, tens of thousands of OFWs have since been repatriated because of the pandemic, including seafarers;

WHEREAS, this unforeseen catastrophe has seen repatriated OFWs stranded for weeks and even months after mandatory quarantine, unable to return to their hometowns. This was followed by a Joint Statement of the Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the Director General of the International Labor Organization May 22, 2020 "seeking to ensure that seafarers, marine personnel, fishing vessel personnel, offshore agency sector personnel, aviation personnel, service provider personnel at airports and ports are designated as "key workers", regardless of nationality, to exempt them from travel restrictions, to ensure their access to emergency treatment and if necessary, to facilitate emergency repatriation". It further declared that "crew changes cannot be postponed indefinitely"

WHEREAS, there is now the serious matter of around 200,000 seafarers worldwide, majority being Filipinos, who have undergone extensions of their original contracts since the pandemic began, are now suffering from over-fatigue, compromising both their health and as well as the safety of the ships as there is now an inability of ships to effect timely and prudent crew changes;

WHEREAS, recognizing this grave situation, the General Secretary of the International Maritime Organization issued Circular Letters No.4204/Add.6 27 March 2020 and No.4204/Add.14 5 May 2020 which called on governments to recognize seafarers as "key workers" and also to establish crew change protocols in order to release tired crew from the ships and replace them with new ones;

WHEREAS, said recognition of seafarers as “key workers” should ideally have the effect of granting professional seafarers and marine personnel with the necessary and appropriate exemptions from national travel or movement restrictions in order to facilitate their joining or leaving ships.

WHEREAS, on May 13, 2020, the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) and the Joint Negotiating Group (JNG), as representatives of Seafarers’ Unions and Seafarers Employers worldwide, issued a Joint Statement welcoming IMO Circular Letter No.4204/Add.14 of 5 May 2020, highlighting the seriousness of the crew change situation, calling on States to act promptly, and set a deadline of June 15 for the transition to new crew change protocols;

WHEREAS, in recognition of the IMO recommendation, the MARINA issued Board Resolution 2020-04-04 last 23 April 2020 recommending that seafarers be recognized as key workers and pledging to establish crew change protocols in pursuance of said recognition;

WHEREAS, on 13 May 2020 the IATF-EID issued a Resolution recognizing the plight of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) – seafarers included – by directing all government agencies to fast-track the processing of their employment documents and facilitate their deployment during this health crisis;

WHEREAS, on May 29, 2020, the MARINA reported to the House Committee on OFW Affairs that the country had established crew change protocols pursuant to MARINA Board Resolution No. 2020-04-04 of 23 April 2020.

remittances, amounting to US\$ 7.5 billion annually, and now need the support of the Philippine government during this very difficult time;

WHEREAS, there is a need for government to immediately act on the serious problem of crew change in the Philippines for Filipino seafarers as well as seafarers of whatever nationality transiting through the Philippines to board their ships;

NOW THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED, THAT THE UNDERSIGNED AS MARITIME TRADE UNIONS RESPECTFULLY:

APPEAL to President Rodrigo Roa Duterte to issue a Directive to the Inter-agency Task Force (IATF) and all government agencies that are directly involved, to ensure the implementation the country's crew change protocols in an expeditious manner, providing special arrangements to signing on seafarers as "key workers" especially on the aspects of transportation, movement restrictions, and securing of government certifications, and with a view to observe the international deadline of June 15, 2020;

IMPLORE President Rodrigo Roa Duterte to direct all Local Government Units to provide expeditious arrangements for signing on seafarers, consistent with the crew change protocols, considering that time is a very crucial element in crew change;

REQUEST President Rodrigo Roa Duterte to ensure that safe and secure crew change is available to seafarers of all nationalities in the Philippine territorial jurisdiction as Filipino seafarers enjoy the benefit of crew change facilitation in foreign countries and we are duty bound to provide the same under the principle of reciprocity;

FINALLY, CALL UPON President Rodrigo Roa Duterte to give this appeal the highest importance to help save our jobs, to keep our families from falling into greater insecurity, to enable us to contribute meaningfully to the revitalization of our economy, and to defend the preferred niche of Filipinos in the international seafaring industry.

SIGNED:

ASSOCIATED LABOR UNIONS
(ALU)


GERARD R. SENO

ASSOCIATED MARINE OFFICERS' AND
SEAMEN'S UNION OF THE PHILIPPINES
(AMOSUP)


DR. CONRADO F. OCA

ASSOCIATED PHILIPPINE SEAFARER'S
UNION (APSU-TUCP)


MICHAEL C. MENDOZA

PORT WORKERS' UNION OF THE
PHILIPPINES (PWUP)


ROBERTO OCA III



H.E. Rodrigo Roa Duterte
President

Republic of the Philippines

Via Mr Silvestre H. Bello III
Secretary of Labor
Department of Labor and Employment

Via email: secshb3@dole.gov.ph; osec@dole.gov.ph

Our ref: OGS/SMC/hs

23 July 2020

Your Excellency President Duterte,

RE: FILIPINO SEAFARERS – FACILITATION OF CREW CHANGE

We are writing to thank you on behalf of the world's seafarers and to express our sincere gratitude to you, Congressman Mendoza, Secretary Arthur Tugade and the agencies of the Government of the Philippines for attending the meetings on crew change hosted by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on 17 July 2020.

The meeting, attended by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), the international Joint Negotiating Group (JNG) of shipowners, the Associated Marine Officers & Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP), Associated Philippine Seafarers' Union (APSU), the Filipino Shipowners' Association and the Filipino Association for Mariners' Employment, provided an exceptional platform to fully appreciate the measures your Government has put in place to support Filipino seafarers.

We positively welcomed the presentation on the steps the Government of the Philippines has adopted to ensure the free and safe circulation of seafarers to and from ships. These impressive efforts are a demonstration and a clear message to the global community on the leadership the Philippines has assumed towards keeping seafarers safe and, consequently, maintaining sustainable supply chains and the uninterrupted flow of goods.

While many governments did not go beyond supportive statements to acknowledging the fundamental role played by ships and seafarers, your Government has deployed practical implementation of protocols to provide for the flow of travelling seafarers and overseas workers - as well as measures to protect them and the communities they travel through.

Your commitment demonstrates that with appropriate direction from central government, and coordination and professionalism of devolved agencies, it is possible to establish effective processes - an example we expect other governments to follow to apply best practices and resolve the issue. The backlog on crew changes created by the crisis during the past few months requires unprecedented efforts and strong pragmatism.

During our meeting last week, all parties recognised the efforts made by the Government of the Philippines, including the additional financial burden of establishing measures to speed up testing, provide quarantine and temporary accommodation facilities as well as support for the travel from the country's entry point to the seafarers' residence. We have also committed to work with your Government to further explore solutions.

We genuinely believe that cooperation between the various social partners is the only way to highlight the importance of allowing for safe crew changes - and to convince governments to treat seafarers as key workers, giving them the entitlement to move freely across borders.

In recent conversations, we have identified a number of steps to expedite or waiver processes to ensure that we can repatriate seafarers and bring relieved ones to the ships. However, the most difficult challenge currently facing the world's seafarers, and particularly Filipino seafarers, is the scarcity of flights to and from ports. With this in mind, as part of our engagement with social partners representing the civil aviation industry, we reached out to airlines with global networks and are pleased to advise that Qatar Airways has signalled the intention to deploy a regular number of daily flights in and out of Manila, Cebu City and Clark international airports to Doha, provided that the Government of the Philippines agrees with the initiative.

The interim establishment of humanitarian shuttle flights to and from these airports would substantially increase capacity to allow for crew changes. Qatar Airways could provide the appropriate number of daily flights, as many as three per day, and ensure that we can tackle the backlog in a realistic time frame. However, this arrangement would be outside of the usual bilateral framework and would require the express approval of your Government.

The ITF, together with the shipowners, would collaborate with the Government of the Philippines, in case this proposal is agreeable, to ensure that:

1. the testing procedures are in place with sufficient tests and facilities;
2. the appropriate ground transportation environment is established for seafarers to be moved safely from their homes to testing facilities and then to the airports.

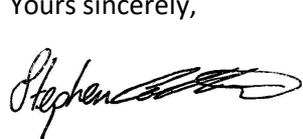
We understand that the two points above raise a number of logistical and economic challenges and would like to work with your government officials to deploy an interim procedure that would allow us the opportunity to constructively resolve this challenging situation. We would also welcome a discussion about the current cap imposed on incoming passengers to the Manila airport and the possibility of establishing necessary air corridors to allow for dedicated repatriation and deployment flights.

We kindly urge your government to consider the above proposal to expedite decision-making and encourage us to work with your colleagues in the government to resolve a situation that is reaching a critical stage, with human and financial consequences both for the seafarers, the shipping industry and the economy of the Philippines.

Through years of professionalism, commitment and determination, Filipino seafarers have earned a stellar reputation in the industry, something the Philippines should be proud of, as we are. We take this opportunity to, again, express our gratitude on behalf of the seafarers and trust that the Government of the Philippines will continue to play its crucial role to ensure that Filipino seafarers remain the industry's first choice on board commercial ships.

We would like to propose the holding of a follow up meeting to discuss the details of the above proposal and practical steps for implementation in a mutually convenient time. Please let us know in case you need further information and thank you for the attention given to this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Stephen Cotton
General Secretary, ITF



Conrad Oca
1st Vice Chair, ITF
Seafarers' Section
President, Associated
Marine Officers' and
Seamen's Union of the
Philippines (AMOSUP)



Michael Mendoza
President, Associated
Philippine Seafarer
Union (APSU)



Fathi Atti
Senior Vice President
Aeropolitical and
Corporate Affairs
Qatar Airways



06 June 2020

HONORABLE SILVESTRE BELLO III
Secretary
Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)
DOLE Building
Intramuros, Manila

Dear Secretary Bello,

We, the undersigned organizations representing the stakeholders of the Philippine Seafaring and Manning Industry would like to express and reiterate in the strongest terms our deep concern on the impact and consequences of the DOLE Department Order No. 211-A dated May 27, 2020 (hereafter, "DO 211-A") on the future employment prospects of our Filipino seafarers.

We object to the DO 211-A provision that imposes upon the LMAs and the Shipowners/Principals the sole obligation to pay all board and lodging expenses of seafarers who are held in quarantine after their repatriation back to the Philippines. These additional quarantine costs will translate to an estimated US\$700 incremental cost per repatriated crew¹. With about 35,000 Filipino seafarers expected to return to the Philippines every month as global borders open up and commercial flights start operating, the additional cost to the LMAs and Shipowners/Principals will be staggering.

The LMAs and the Shipowners/Principals, with the strong support of the seafarers' Unions, hold the position that the Philippine Government, and not any private groups or sectors, should shoulder these costs, similar to what other countries are doing in this time of unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic.

There are about 600,000 Filipino seafarers employed by foreign Shipowners with about seventy-six percent (76%) of them working onboard as ratings and cruise non-navigating personnel, positions that are easily replaceable by other nationalities. We are concerned that if the implementation of DO 211-A will not be stopped, our Principals might be compelled to look for replacements in other source countries such as Eastern Europe, Vietnam, Myanmar, Indonesia, India, and China where repatriation quarantine costs are shouldered by their government and not passed on to the Shipowners/Principals.

Losing even just thirty percent (30%) of these ratings and cruise personnel to other nationalities will translate to about 140,000 jobless Filipino seafarers, a man-made yet avoidable calamity that will have a devastating impact on our economy, on allied businesses depending on manning activities such as training centers, medical clinics, banks, licensed manning agencies, and even government agencies such as SSS, Philhealth, PAG-IBIG and OWWA which are all dependent on contributions from its

¹ computed with the assumption that the testing system and quarantine protocols will be efficient and will not take more than ten (10) working days upon arrival of the repatriated seafarer

members. More importantly, what will happen to the 700,000 Filipino families relying on these jobless seafarers?

Equally important, the Philippines will lose the respect of the foreign Shipowners/Principals who are much concerned why our Government imposed on them DO 211-A which stand on weak legal grounds if not outright confiscatory:

- a) SEC. 19 of the POEA Standard Employment Contract provides that the seafarer's contract terminates upon the seafarer's arrival at the point of hire, i.e. Philippine international seaport or airport and not arrival at their place of domicile. Verily, the shipowners' contractual obligation towards the seafarers end upon the latter's repatriation back to the point of hire. Thus, imposing on them the obligation to pay for quarantine-related expenses is without any contractual basis.
- b) DOLE misapplied the Maritime Labor Convention and misinterpreted the ILO Information Note dated April 7, 2020 when those were cited as basis for DO 211-A.
 - (i) Standard A4.2.1/1(a) of the Maritime Labor Convention on Shipowners Liability only speaks of the liability to cover cost for sickness and/or injury of seafarers *occurring between date of commencing duty and the date upon which they are deemed duly repatriated*. It does not cover quarantine costs of *asymptomatic seafarers after repatriation*, i.e. after a seafarer arrives at our international airport or seaport;
 - (ii) Similarly, the ILO Information Note, which serves as a mere guideline for the shipowner to shoulder the quarantine costs of the seafarers, covers only the *period of repatriation* and therefore does not extend beyond the time after our seafarer arrives in the country;
 - (iii) Finally, the last part of Clause 40 of the ILO Information Note states that the guideline applies "*unless the expense is assumed by public authorities in accordance with the applicable national legislation.*"

Meanwhile, Section 4(h) of the *Bayanihan to Heal as One Act* (Republic Act No. 11469), which is a national legislation passed to address the COVID-19 pandemic, authorizes the President or his representative to give *appropriate compensation* to all establishments used as quarantine facilities during the pandemic.

The fact is that the LMAs have already advanced an estimated P2.8B for accommodation and quarantine expenses during the 2-month ECQ period. The burden of these advances were placed upon the LMAs as a result of the suspension of domestic flights, the delayed PCR test results, and the lack of mercy flights notwithstanding our pleas for help, which have just been made available through the intercession of President Rodrigo Duterte. We cannot absorb these costs and feel that they should be reimbursed to the LMAs.

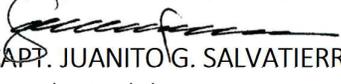
The sea-based manning industry and the thousands of Filipino seafarers have contributed close to USD7 Billion in annual foreign exchange earnings/remittances to the Philippine Economy during the past 50 years. It has also uplifted the economic status of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of our citizens who depend on the steady income of the Filipino seafarers employed mostly by foreign Shipowners/Principals.

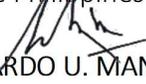
To help the Filipino seafarers stay afloat, we appeal for your reconsideration and STOP the implementation of DO 211-A. Furthermore, we reiterate our request for DOLE to allocate P6.52B (and ask for supplemental budget from Congress) to cover the P2.8B reimbursement to the LMAs and the estimated P3.72B quarantine cost of repatriating seafarers for the next three months.

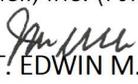
Respectfully yours,

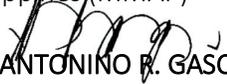

DARIO R. ALAMPAY, JR.
Chairman, Joint Manning Group (JMG)
President, Filipino Shipowners' Association (FSA)


ATTY. RODELLO B. ORTIZ
President, Filipino Association for Mariners' Employment, Inc. (FAME)


CAPT. JUANITO G. SALVATIERRA, JR.
President, Philippine Association of Manning Agencies and Ship Managers, Inc. (PAMAS)
President, International Maritime Association of the Philippines (INTERMAP)


EDUARDO U. MANESE
President, Philippine Japan Manning Consultative Council, Inc. (PJMCC)


CAPT. EDWIN M. ITABLE
President, Master and Mates Association of the Philippines (MMAAP)


C/E ANTONINO R. GASCON, JR.
President, Filipino Assembly of Marine Engineers, Inc. President, Society of Filipino Ship Captains, Inc. (FILSCAPTS)

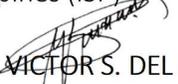

DR. CONRADO F. OCA
President, Associated Marine Officers & Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP)


MR. MICHAEL C. MENDOZA
President, Philippine Seafarers Union (PSU)

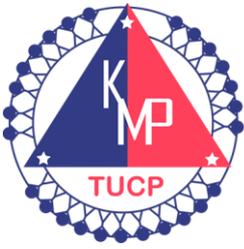

ATTY. MANUEL T. COLLADO
President, Mariners' & Allied Transport Employees Union (MATEU)


ENGR. NELSON P. RAMIREZ
President, United Filipino Seafarers (UFS)


CAPT. GAUDENCIO C. MORALES
President, Integrated Seafarers of the Philippines (ISP)


CAPT. VICTOR S. DEL PRADO
President, Society of Filipino Ship Captains, Inc. (FILSCAPTS)

CC: **ADMIN. HANS LEO CACDAC**, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA)
ADMIN. BERNARD OLALIA, Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA)



Trade Union Congress of the Philippines

Katipunang Manggagawang Pilipino

Press Release

13 August 2020

MANAGEMENT AND LABOR COME TOGETHER TO SAVE SEAFARING INDUSTRY

In a joint press conference held on August 13, the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), together with the Associated Philippine Seafarers' Union (APSU), the Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP), the Joint Manning Group (JMG), and workers from the fishing industry raised awareness on the issues facing seafarers and the threat of 460,000 workers losing their jobs, and the country taking on a loss of over USD 6.1 Billion dollars in annual contributions.

"The Philippine Seafaring Industry, which accounts for 25 percent of all seafarers in the entire world, is one of the few remaining economic drivers and dollar earners of our country," said House Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs Chairperson Raymond Democrito Mendoza. "The HCOWA and TUCP fully supports sustaining the seafaring industry and preventing its collapse, we are number one in the industry and let us keep it that way."

The President of the Associated Philippine Seafarers' Union, Mr. Michael Democrito Mendoza, called on the Government to issue eight (8) policies that would address the issues in implementing crew change, and the repatriation and deployment of seafarers.

These were:

1. Revocation of DOLE Department Order 211-A;
2. Setting aside a large amount of the Bayanihan to Recover as One Act for repatriation costs;
3. Increasing the current passenger cap of 3,000 for departures and arrivals in our airports;
4. Open additional ports where crew change can take place;
5. Provide additional test kits for seafarers, with the cost to be covered by PhilHealth;
6. For the Department of Foreign Affairs to arrange for the relaxation of visa requirements for seafarers;
7. The utilization of the water assets of the Philippine Coast Guard to transport disembarking and embarking crew in the harbor; and
8. For the 6 Billion social reintegration fund to be paired with technical support to ensure the successful business ventures of seafarers and OFWs.

During the open forum, Congressman Mendoza said that he is shepherding the passage of the Magna Carta for seafarers, and is filing a house resolution calling on Congress to ratify ILO Convention 188, on Work in the Fishing Industry. In addition, he had reached out to the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) to assist these



workers in going after their local manning agency to collect their unpaid wages and benefits, in response to the narratives of Mr. Harold Fuentes and Mr. Jesus Galboni, both from the 96-worker fisherman crew who have yet to receive their salaries from their agency, Global Maritime Crew, Inc.

The partylist representative is also facilitating the assistance of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) to assist these 96 fishermen, as OWWA had previously assisted 111 other fishermen coming from the same local manning agency, and he is calling on the Department of Foreign Affairs to repatriate the Filipino fishermen who have been abandoned by their agencies in foreign countries.

Under the Maritime Labor Convention 2006, fishing vessels are not included in the scope and coverage, leaving workers in the industry vulnerable to abuses at the hands of the shipowners and the local manning agency.

Aside from our fishermen aboard international craft, the Philippines has an active and vibrant local commercial fishing industry which will benefit from the ratification of this convention. These are the tuna fishing industry in General Santos, the sardines industry in Zamboanga, and the galunggong industry in Navotas-Malabon.

-30-

For clarifications:

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