

POSITION PAPER OF THE BCOBAR FEDERATION ON BTA PARLIAMENT BILL NO. 36 - BANGSAMORO OVERSEAS WORKERS

Submitted to the BTA Committee on Labor and Employment, September 14, 2020

The BCOBAR Federation, in promoting and advancing the rights and welfare for the 8 million Bangsamoro people living in communities outside of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region, is hereby declaring support for the urgent passage of BTA Parliament Bill No. 36, on Bangsamoro Overseas Workers.

Just like in seeking the passage of BTA Parliament Bill No. 15 on BCOBAR Office, this Bill for the Bangsamoro Overseas Workers is a battlecry of the Bangsamoro people that are most vulnerable and distressed without the Bangsamoro Government providing them the laws that would cater them as they are prone to the life-and-death ventures outside their Bangsamoro homeland.

We believe that this BTA Parliament Bill No. 36 for the Overseas Bangsamoro Workers will not only secure our Overseas Bangsamoro Workers but also would open up the gateway in solving the tribulations besetting the Overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), particularly, in Muslim countries where fifty percent (50%) of their world population are concentrated.

Table 1. Percentage Distribution of OFWs by Place of Work

Muslim Countries	
Malaysia	2.1
Kuwait	6.2
Qatar	5.6
Saudi Arabia	22.4
United Arab Emirates	13.2
TOTAL:	49.5
Non-Muslim Countries	
Africa	1.0
Hong Kong	7.5
Japan	3.8
Taiwan	6.7
Other countries in East Asia including China, South Korea	3.7
Singapore	4.1
Other countries in Southeast and South Central Asia including Brunei	1.8
Western Asia including Bahrain, Israel, Lebanon, Jordan	4.0
Australia	2.1
Europe	7.7
North and South America	8.1
TOTAL:	50.5

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019 Survey on Overseas Filipinos

The BTA Parliament Bill No. 36 would also be an opportunity for the Philippine government to harness the Bangsamoro potentials in mitigating abuses and securing strong diplomatic and cultural fraternity with the Muslim countries' host to a million OFWs in distressful situation. No doubt the Bangsamoro government are readily able

to pool in the most effective and "well-connected" Bangsamoro professionals willing to work in foreign service for this cause. The faculty of the Bangsamoro facilitating mediation between the Philippine government and the royal leaders and emirates over OFWs in jails are tested and proven effective, as shown in the recent Emirati clemency of Bienvenido Espino, an OFW on death row where a Moro envoy have played a decisive role.

Data shows that in the Muslim countries where distressed OFWs are mostly concentrated there were only 7 Embassies and Consulates as against the 122 attending the other half of the OFW population in the world. This inequitable this distribution is further marred by inappropriate deployment of non-Muslim envoys and the seemingly "ignorant" view of the tradition and culture in the Muslim societies where a woman ambassador in UAE cannot hold a diplomatic elbow with Kings and Emirs.

Table 2, below, shows where the Bangsamoro professionals are needed to augment.

Philippines counts 88 Embassies and 126 Consulates spread all over the world or a total of 214 with only 7 deployed in Muslim countries, as cited in the Table 2.

Table 2. List of Embassies/Consulates and its Ambassador/Consul

EMBASSY/CONSULATE	AMBASSADOR/CONSUL
1. Embassy of the Philippines in Riyadh, KSA	Adnan V. Afonto
2. Philippine Consulate General in Jeddah, KSA	Ryan M. Gliha
3. Embassy of the Philippines in United Arab Emirates	Hjayceelyn M. Quintana
4. Consulate General of Philippines in Dubai, UAE	Raymund P. Cortes
5. Embassy of the Philippines in Kuwait City	Bayani V. Mangibin
6. Embassy of Philippines in Doha, Qatar	Alan L. Timbayan
7. Embassy of Philippines in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Charles C. Jose

Source: <https://www.embassy-worldwide.com/country/philippines>

The Islamic wisdom of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority passing the Parliament Bill No. 36 on Overseas Bangsamoro Workers, will Inshaallah, realize the President's belief and aspiration that the Filipino is no slave to anyone, anywhere and everywhere, asking for his counterparts to honor the dignity of OFWs and their rights be upheld and respected.

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CLARIFICATION ON BTA PARLIAMENT BILL NO. 36:

1. In Article 1 Section 4 (b) Overseas Bangsamoro Worker or OBW - Is the word OBW in contrast with the term OFW or Overseas Filipino Workers on OWWA Resolution No. 015 Series of 2016 IRR of RA 10801 otherwise known as the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration Act?

2. In OWWA Resolution 015 Series of 2016 - Rule II Sec 2 reads, "Nature of the OWWA - The OWWA is a national government agency vested with the special function of developing and implementing welfare programs and services that respond to the needs of its members-OFW." Rule II has clearly identified that only an OFW can benefit the services of OWWA, like the shelter provided to distressed member-OFWs, will the OBWs be also required to apply membership to the OWWA?

3. In Article IX (a.1) Bureau of Employment Promotion Welfare (BEPW), is this Bureau will replace POEA for the OBWs? Also in (a.2) Overseas Workers Welfare Bureau (OWWB), is this Bureau will replace OWWA for the OBWs?

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Australia	2.1
Europe	7.7
North and South America	8.1
TOTAL:	50.5

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019 Survey on Overseas Filipinos

Philippines counts 68 Embassies and 126 Consulates spread all over the world or a total of 129* with only 7 deployed in Muslim countries, as cited in the Table 2.

Table 2 List of Embassies/Consulates and its Ambassador/Consul

EMBASSY/CONSULATE	AMBASSADOR/CONSUL
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