



## LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH SERVICE

### QUICK NOTES

*Second Regular Session, 19<sup>th</sup> Congress*

#### **Public Hearing of the Committee on Foreign Relations**

**Chairperson: Sen. Imee R. Marcos**

**7 May 2024, Tuesday, 1:00 p.m., Senator Tolentino Room, Senate**

**Re the following agenda:**

- 1. S. No. 1907 - An Act Establishing Migrant Filipino Youth Desks in All Philippine Embassies, and for Other Purposes—Senator Villar (M);**
- 2. S. R. No. 315 - Resolution Urging the Executive Department, Through the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Finance, to Support the Proposal of the Africa Group at the United Nations to Begin Intergovernmental Discussions in New York at UN Headquarters on Ways to Strengthen the Inclusiveness and Effectiveness of International Tax Cooperation Through the Evaluation of Additional Options Including the Possibility of Developing an International Tax Cooperation Framework or Instrument that is Developed and Agreed Upon Through a United Nations Intergovernmental Process, Taking Into Full Consideration Existing International and Multilateral Arrangements—Senator Hontiveros;**
- 3. S. R. No. 534 - Resolution Urging the Executive Department to Ratify the International Labour Organization Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188)—Senator Villanueva;**
- 4. S. R. No. 539 - Resolution Urging the Philippine Government to Immediately Fulfill its Treaty Obligations Under the CEDAW and Provide Just and Meaningful Reparations to the "Comfort Women" and Their Families—Senator Hontiveros; and**
- 5. S. R. No. 969 - Resolution Directing the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations to Conduct an Inquiry, in Aid of Legislation, Into Strengthening Diplomatic Ties between the Philippines and Iraq with the end View of Refining Measures for the Protection and Welfare of Filipino Nationals in Iraq—Senator Padilla**

#### **Background**

1. Based on the 2018 National Migration Survey, approximately 55% of Filipinos aged 15 and above have relocated within or outside the country for three

months or more since birth. The Philippines lacks institutionalized programs addressing the social service needs of migrating youth, though the Philippine Youth Development Plan 2017-2022 emphasizes strengthening ties with overseas Filipino youth.

2. Tax systems globally harbor loopholes exploited by corporations and wealthy individuals for tax avoidance and evasion. Discussions at the UN General Assembly's Second Committee include proposals to upgrade the UN expert tax committee to an intergovernmental body and negotiate a UN Convention on International Tax Cooperation. The Philippines could participate more effectively in these discussions with an upgraded UN Expert Committee on Tax.
3. In 2021, the Philippine fishing industry employed 2.19 million workers, with half engaged in capture fishing. Despite their economic contribution, fishers lack government protection from exploitation and poor working conditions. Ratifying the International Labour Convention No. 188 would ensure protection for Filipino fishers and create better job opportunities.
4. On March 9, 2023, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women found the Philippines in violation of its obligations under the Convention for failing to seek redress for "Comfort Women" victims of Japanese wartime sexual violence. Immediate action is crucial as many survivors have passed on.
5. The Philippines and Iraq established diplomatic relations on January 12, 1975, maintaining embassies since 1980. They have developed friendly relations and signed agreements on various mutual interests including economic, cultural, and technical cooperation. A Memorandum of Agreement Relating to Mobilization of Manpower was signed on November 25, 1982, to enhance socio-economic development through worker protection and employment promotion.

## **Highlights**

1. The proposed measure seeks to establish Migrant Filipino Youth Desks in all Philippine embassies abroad. These desks will develop programs to protect and promote the safety, security, and welfare of the Migrant Filipino Youths.
2. This Resolution expresses the Philippines' support for the adoption of the proposal of the Africa Group at the UN to begin intergovernmental discussions at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, and to urgently and earnestly recommend to the Executive Department to vote in favor of the above proposal of the African Group at the United Nations.
3. This Resolution urges the Executive department, through the Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Migrant Workers, the Department of Foreign Affairs, and Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Fisheries and

Aquatic Resources, to hasten the ratification of the International Labour Organization Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188) by President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., to be concurred in by the Senate of the Philippines.

4. It is the intent of this resolution to urge the Philippine government to immediately fulfill its obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women and provide reparations to the "comfort women" and their families.
5. The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations is directed by this Resolution to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, into strengthening diplomatic ties between the Philippines and Iraq with the end view of refining measures for the protection and welfare of Filipino nationals in Iraq.

### **Possible Points for Discussion**

1. *Migrant Filipino Youth Desks* - What are the usual problems encountered by young people when migrating from one place to another? Why do Filipino youths migrate? How does migration affect young people? What are the positive or negative impacts of youth migration in host countries?
2. *Intergovernmental Discussions on the Convention on International Tax Cooperation* – What are the State Parties where "tax planning techniques" and schemes are applied to avoid and even evade taxes? What is the projected Philippine tax revenue under the Africa Group draft resolution for the next number of years? What are the possible additional options in developing an international tax cooperation framework?
3. *Ratification of International Labour Organization* – What are the common problems that the ILO encounter in terms of enforcement of its mandate? What State Parties usually commit labor exploitation, abuse, or maltreatment of OFWs employed in the fishing industry? What are the current forms of assistance that the Philippine government extend to maltreated OFWs?
4. *Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women* – Is the official position of the Philippine government that war reparations have been paid due to a 1956 treaty with Japan legally unassailable? Aside from legislative actions, are there other steps or remedies that are being considered or taken by the Philippine government to pursue the long-standing claims of "comfort women" and their families?
5. *Strengthening Diplomatic Ties between the Philippines and Iraq* – What are the concrete and realistic benefits that the Philippines expects to receive from the Republic of Iraq? What is the political and economic position of the Executive department on the proposal to strengthen the Philippines' diplomatic ties with Iraq?