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Introduced By Senator Loren Legarda

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**RESOLUTION**

**DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON MOUNTING CONCERNS OVER THE PREVALENCE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING OF FILIPINOS, TO DETERMINE WHETHER REMEDIAL MEASURES MUST BE INTRODUCED TO ENSURE THAT REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9208 OR THE ANTI-TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS ACT OF 2003 EFFECTIVELY COMBATS TRAFFICKING IN ITS EVOLVING FORMS, AND RECOMMEND APPROPRIATE ACTION**

*WHEREAS*, Article II Section 11 of the Constitution declares that the State values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights;

*WHEREAS*, in 2000, the United Nations adopted the *Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* or the Palermo Convention, and on 28 May 2002, the Philippines ratified the first protocol to the Convention or the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children;

*WHEREAS*, the Protocol requires ratifying States such as the Philippines to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, protect and assist victims of trafficking and promote cooperation among States Parties;

*WHEREAS*, pursuant to these bodies of law, Republic Act No. 9208 (RA 9208), otherwise known as the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003, was enacted to ensure that the highest priority shall be given to measures that will promote human dignity, protect the people from any threat of violence and exploitation, eliminate human trafficking, and mitigate pressures for involuntary migration and servitude of persons;

*WHEREAS*, RA 9208, echoing pronouncements of the United Nations, defines human trafficking as "the recruitment, transport, harboring, or sale of persons, within or across national borders, for the purpose of exploiting their labor";

*WHEREAS*, Section 20 of the same Act establishes the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) designated to monitor and oversee the strict implementation of RA 9208, composed of the following agencies: the Department of Justice, National Bureau of Investigation, Philippine National Police, Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs of the Department of Foreign Affairs, and Department of Social Welfare and Development;

*WHEREAS*, despite the passage of RA 9208 and the creation of IACAT tasked to share a databank on trafficked persons and jointly implement measures to prevent trafficking, the Philippines remains identified in the international community as among those countries with a high incidence of human rights violations through trafficking, and classified by the 4th Annual Trafficking in Persons Report of the Department of State of the United States of America as under the Tier 2 watch list;

*WHEREAS*, while the Philippine economy is heavily dependent on the estimated nine million Filipino migrant workers, thousands of them are victims of trafficking, lured by promises of a better life in the urban centers and abroad;

*WHEREAS*, in 2009 alone, law enforcement agencies referred 228 alleged trafficking cases to the Department of Justice, of which prosecutors initiated prosecutions in 206 cases;

*WHEREAS*, since the passage of RA 9208, only 18 convictions for human trafficking have been decreed by domestic courts, but there has never been any conviction arising from labor trafficking;

*WHEREAS*, trafficked persons are forced into prostitution, domestic servitude, bonded sweatshop labor and other work akin to enslavement, and even to be unwilling organ donors;

*WHEREAS*, traffickers operate in underground networks and clandestinely organize their operations via different ports and land routes in the Philippines, which serve as the springboard for international trafficking;

*WHEREAS*, to swiftly and effectively address the problem, there must be targeted and wide-scale actions taken to engage the most critical actors, such as the agencies of government that regulate migration, international transport, and peace and order, and private companies engaged in the transport of persons;

*WHEREAS*, it is equally important to involve local government units and source communities in the prevention of trafficking, by raising awareness in the communities to create a local policy environment that addresses especially the vulnerabilities of the usual victims of trafficking such as children and women;

*NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED*, as it is hereby resolved, to direct the Committee on Foreign Relations to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on mounting concerns over the prevalence of human trafficking of Filipinos, to determine whether remedial measures must be introduced to ensure that Republic Act No. 9208 or the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 effectively combats trafficking in its evolving forms, and recommend appropriate action.

Adopted,

  
**LOREN LEGARDA**  
Senator