

Concept Note

Mobility of health professionals between the Philippines and selected EU member states

Policy Dialogue

Tuesday, 23 July 2013
Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Makati City

1. Background

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is the United Nations' international organization responsible for drawing up and overseeing international labour standards. It is the only 'tripartite' United Nations agency that brings together representatives of governments, employers and workers to jointly shape policies and programs promoting Decent Work for All.

The ILO is the UN agency with a constitutional mandate to protect migrant workers. This mandate has been re-affirmed by the 1944 Declaration of Philadelphia and the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. The ILO has been dealing with labour migration issues since its inception in 1919. It has pioneered international Conventions to guide migration policy and protection of migrant workers¹. All major sectors of the ILO - standards, employment, social protection and social dialogue - work on labour migration within its overarching framework of Decent Work for All. The ILO adopts a rights-based approach to labour migration and promotes tripartite participation in migration policy.

In 2006, the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration was adopted by the ILO constituents. These non-binding principles and guidelines are a response to widespread demands for practical guidance and action with a view to maximizing the benefits of labour migration for all parties.

2. Sponsor and partnership

In 2011, the European Union has awarded the ILO funds to work on the issue of circular migration. The ILO *Decent Work Across Borders project: A Pilot project for Migrant Health Professionals and Skilled Workers* seeks to better understand schemes in line with circular migration of health professionals. This is done by engaging governments, trade unions, and employers organizations around 3 main objectives:

1. To strengthen mechanisms of policy dialogue among stakeholders
2. To strengthen employment services for healthcare professionals and skilled workers
3. To enhance labour market information system with regards to the migration of healthcare professionals and skilled workers

Through this project, the ILO seeks to facilitate an approach to migration that benefits the migrant workers, the source and destination countries within a rights-based framework for labour migration management. The project focuses its activities on three Asian countries with

¹ Convention No 97 – Migration for Employment Convention (1949); Convention No 143 – Migrant Workers Convention (1975)

significant outflows of health professionals and skilled workers for foreign employment, namely: the Philippines, India, and Viet Nam.

3. Rationale

International migration is an increasingly pressing issue in a globalized world. The movement of health professionals has increased significantly in the past decades. More so, the migration of health care workers between developing and developed countries has drawn a lot of attention mainly due to the economic and social effects it has been raising.

Whereas the demand for Filipino nurses to work overseas and migrate has encouraged thousands to pursue nursing, India and Viet Nam are now also looking into this strategy measuring the challenges and opportunities it offers. These countries are actively pursuing cooperative agreements on hiring of health care professionals to various destination countries, and in particular, European countries. Balancing the right to health, decent work and the right to freedom of movement is a constant preoccupation.

While migrant health care workers from developing countries are contributing to the health care sector of developed countries, the migration of professionals and skilled workers from developing countries is perceived to negatively affect the development potentials of the countries of origin. This phenomenon has been referred to as the “brain drain”. The international migration of health care professionals directly impacts the achievement of health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which relies upon strong and sufficiently staffed national health care systems. As a consequence, sending and receiving countries have shown interest in developing voluntary policies to facilitate the return of healthcare professionals to their source country with the aim to support their resuming active participation in the health workforce of their home country.

In this context, the ILO Decent Work Across Borders project has commissioned over the past months a series of research papers to better document the various dimensions of the mobility of health care professionals in the aim to bring policy makers and stakeholders together to discuss the best options to ensure that the migration of health professionals benefits all concerned.

The policy dialogue planned on **23 July 2013** will showcase four research papers and will allow relevant Philippines stakeholders to appreciate the various aspects of the migration of Filipinos health professionals to Europe. The discussion will refer to the following studies:

- The Effects of the Philippines Bilateral Arrangements with Selected Countries.
- Assessment of the Impact of Migration of Health Professionals on the Labour Market and Health Sector Performance in Destination Countries.
- Investigating the Working Conditions of Filipino and Indian-born Nurses in the United Kingdom.
- Assessment of existing Services for Skilled Migrant Workers: Philippine Project Site.

4. Objective

The objective of the policy dialogue is to validate and learn lessons from the policy researches commissioned by the ILO Decent Work Across Borders.

The participants will be requested to form an opinion on the relevance – in practical and policy terms – and implications of the research findings in order to inform the final version of the ILO DWAB’s collaborators.

5. Methodology

The policy dialogue will allow each researcher commissioned by the ILO DWAB project to present their researches, and introduce, according to them, the main policy implications to be extracted from their findings.

In order to sustain the exchanges and debates, the meeting will invite 2 to 3 people to react to the presentation of the findings.

The participants will also have the opportunity to react after each session.

A workshop/breakout session will allow participants to deepen their analysis of each session and zoom in on the possible recommendations to be presented back in plenary. Each group will allocate 1 hour and 30 minutes to discuss (~20 minutes to discuss each of the 4 presentations) within the group. A rapporteur will be pre-identified and will be responsible to report back the summary of the discussion in plenary.

The plenary session will allow the consolidation of outputs in order for government, recruitment agencies and trade unions/migrants organizations to react.

A report, highlighting the policy implications and recommendations from this discussion will be produced by ILO-DWAB

Each of the four researchers will be asked to submit an executive summary of their presentation and a power point presentation ahead of time. The executive summary will form part of the hand out to be distributed to the participant. Further, those will help the reactors to prepare their interventions ahead of time.