



M—the—W Migrant Watch

quarterly newsletter of the Philippine Migrants Rights Watch

Vol.7 No.3 • September 2008

www.pmrw.org

Manila, Philippines

Filipino Seafarers: Leading Global Maritime Service

This year's theme of the 13th National Seafarers' Day celebration on September 28, stands as a recognition of the world wide achievement of our Filipino seafarers and an invitation to take up the challenge for leadership in the maritime world services.

The recognition came in the form of a Thanksgiving Mass celebrated at the site of the monument to the seafarer along the Baywalk, Malate. The memorial of all seafarers victims of sea employment, fishing activities and even sea travelers, this year numbering over thousands of them due to onboard accidents and sickness, inclement weather and sea accidents, followed with the Rite of Remembrance in Manila Bay. In the afternoon, it was the turn of the civil recognition and joyous family entertainment.

The challenge for leadership and excellence was expressed by the several messages delivered by authorities in govern-

Savino Bernardo
AOS - Manila

ment and in the industry as well as by the winning oratorical and song-writing pieces.

Thanks to the prayers of many, rain did not interrupt the various activities throughout the day. Even the wind was kind to us as Mass was celebrated at the seafarer's monument at the Baywalk on Sunday morning at 7.00 am. The Memorial Service at sea for the deceased seafarers of the year was mostly inundated by a bright sun that gave us all an unexpected sun tan as we spent more than 2 hours on board the vessel made available by the courtesy and generosity of the Philippine Coast Guards. The afternoon activities at

_____ pag. 2



Filipino Seafarers ...

Quirino Grandstand were choreographed by an array of kites flying in front of us at Rizal Park.

We are grateful to the Auxiliary Bishop of Lingayen-Dagupan, Most Rev. Rene Mayugba, for leading us in the morning celebration. The children's choir of Jesus the Good Shepherd School, Imus, conducted by the Pastorelle Sisters, provided the liturgical singing at the Mass and on board the PCG vessel. Their beaming faces told us that it was a special day for them. But the most touching moment came with the throwing of a wreath at sea in remembrance of all the dear ones the sea had taken. Then those on board all threw a white rose to the waves, and some shed a tear as well.

The afternoon offered a grand celebrative experience at Quirino Grandstand. The opening Parade saw the participation of a rich cross-section of the maritime organizations. Thousands marched from T.M. Kalaw Street to the Grandstand at the marching step of the Philippine Navy, Coast Guards and other school bands. To see Quirino Grandstand filling up with

participants every year is indeed a great tribute to our Filipino seafarers. Then came the tribute to them of several speakers followed by the keynote speech of Hon. Maria Elena Bautista, DOTC Undersecretary, encouraging all cadets to a long and successful maritime career, reminding all of the challenges of today and tomorrow: the call from cadetship to officers.

The most awaited moment was the awarding to the Outstanding Seafarers of the Year: Capt. Victor S. Del Prado for Contribution to the Maritime Manpower; Mr. Carlos P. Franco for Contribution to the Maritime Industry; 2nd Mate Arnulfo P. Gomez for Community Service. Also awarded for Valor were Jose Mari Garbo, Rey Padin and companions for saving a number of passengers after the MV Princess of the Star tragedy and Officers and Crew of M/V Ioanis K for their successful search and rescue operation to passengers of a capsize Mindanao-bound ferry.

The awarding of these "models seafarers" is also a challenge to all to excel in service and profession.

The entertainment provided by SMART offered a fitting

and energizing conclusion to a very successful and happy celebration.

A special thank and appreciation must be given to the Or-

ganizing Committee that worked so hard to make this year celebration another successful event.



the **Migrant Watch**

PMRW Secretariat: *Scalabrini Migration Center (SMC)*
4, 13th St., New Manila, Quezon City, Philippines
63-02-7243512 • 7214296 (fax) • migrantswatch@pmrw.org

Editor

Lisa Garcia (DAWN)

Editorial Board

Carmelita G. Nuqui (DAWN), Fabio Baggio, cs (SMC),

Writers

*Ellene Sana (CMA), Carmelita G. Nuqui (DAWN), Ma. Ediza Pumarada (SLA)
Savino Bernardi (AOS-Manila), Edwin Corros (CBCP-ECMI)*

A SPLASH OF PMRW Capacity Building 2008

By Dyz Pumarada, SLA

From August 21-22, member-organizations of the Philippine Migrants Rights Watch (PMRW) gathered at the Splash Mountain Resort in Laguna for its annual capacity building activity. This activity aims to develop camaraderie between and among the staff and members of the PMRW member-organizations. It is also a venue for exchange of information, skills and experiences to enhance capabilities in carrying out organizational tasks and mission towards the promotion and protection of migrants' rights and welfare.

This year's activity was attended by 32 participants from PMRW member-organizations, including five student interns from Taiwan, and two others from the USA and Austria who are doing some volunteer works at the Center for Migrants Advocacy (CMA) and Development Action for Women Network (DAWN), respectively.

The proverb "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" set the tone for this two-day activity for the PMRW members. The first day offered a much lighter schedule to allow the participants to unwind and loosen up. Relaxation activities such as swimming, film showing, and the witty showcase of talents in singing and dancing during the karaoke session in the evening, were enjoyed by all. A team-building workshop facilitated by the Evangelion Foundation



was also held on the first day. The team building exercises conducted were as fun and inspiring as the relaxation activities. Cooperation, solidarity and teamwork were the central theme of the starter workshop.

The second day started with a presentation of Fr. Fabio Baggio, Director of the Scalabrini Migration Center (SMC) on the topic *Migration and Development Nexus*, which set the tone of the whole day's discussion. Fr. Fabio provided a basic overview of the migration experiences in the Philippine context, and presented the challenges in the social, political and economic aspects. One important concern is the OFW remittances and its productive use, especially in the household level. This was the

course of discussion of the next session on financial literacy workshop that was facilitated by the Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People (ECMI). It was pointed out that basic skills on household financial budgeting and management; as well as discipline in savings for investments are necessary for a more productive life of migrant families which eventually will prevent the vicious cycle of migration.

The last discussion was on alternative migrant investments through social enterprise. It was facilitated by Ms Mai Anonuevo of Atikha. She presented some examples of migrant investments where OFW families can possibly invest their hard earned money. One of these is the

"Coco Natur" in the communities of San Pablo City that produces and markets a variety of coconut products. She likewise reiterated the need for networking and cooperation with other organizations and industries on the available migrant investment opportunities for the productive use of the OFW remittances.

Indeed, for the effective protection and promotion of rights and welfare of migrants and their families, cooperation, solidarity and teamwork are important elements between and among migrant organizations. And these were exactly the core values emphasized during the two-day Capacity Building Exercise organized by the PMRW.

Consultation on the 2008 GFMD for Metro Manila-Based CSOs

by **Ellene Sana - CMA**

Last August 27, 2008, close to 50 representatives of Metro Manila-based civil society organizations (CSOs) including the private sector got together at the San Carlos Seminary, EDSA, Makati City for the last of the CSO consultations for the CSO GFMD 2008. They were joined by observers from other CSOs, international and regional migration groups, and agencies of government.

The whole day event started with a morning plenary to revisit the first GFMD that took place in Brussels last year. It was followed by a brief orientation on the GFMD 2008 that will be hosted by the Philippine government from October 27-30 at the Philippine International Convention Center. A Metro Manila migration and development situationer was also presented.

After the plenary, the participants broke out into workshop groups to discuss the three major themes of the GFMD 2008. After lunch, another round of workshops was conducted, this time to work on the Philippine Agenda on Migration and Development. The nomination process to select the CSO representatives for Metro Manila was next in a plenary session. More than 30 CSO representatives vied for the 9 slots for Metro Manila. Voting was by secret ballot. After the elections, the final plenary was devoted to workshop reports.

The following were elected as CSO representatives for Metro Manila:

1. Professor Mary Lou Alcid, Kanlungan Center Foundation
2. Fr. Savino Bernardi, Apostleship of the Sea-Manila
3. Cecilia Oebanda, Visayan Forum

4. Aida Santos, WEDPRO
5. Sr. Bernadette Guzman, Center for Overseas Workers
6. Maya Bans-Cortina, PhilComDev
7. Ildefonso Bagasao, Ercof
8. Roger Cordero, Merchant Marine Overseas Organization
9. Ellene Sana, Center for Migrant Advocacy.

The Metro Manila CSO GFMD consultation was organized jointly by the Ayala Foundation and INCITEGov, led by Mely Nicolas, convener of the CSO Consultations of the SubCommittee.

The Metro Manila consultation was the fourth and the last of the CSO GFMD Consultations for Philippine-based CSOs. Earlier, in June and July, CSO Consultations were conducted in Davao City, Cebu City and Tarlac City for Island-Based CSOs. From all 4 consultations, 24 CSO representatives were elected, 5 each from the Islands and 9 for Metro Manila. The remaining 6 slots to complete the 30 slots for Philippine-based CSOs will be decided upon by the Philippine Organizing Committee.

A national consultation with all 30 CSO representatives will be held on October 1-2 in Manila to consolidate all documents from the consultations and to strategize on their conduct of work during the CSO GFMD days on October 27-28. The Sub Committee with INCITEGov as Secretariat prepares the programme for the two-day event. The national consultation is supported by the CBCP ECMI and PMRW.



Jordan: Protecting Foreign Domestic Workers

EDITORIAL

by Carmelita G. Nuqui (DAWN)

From August 25-28, 2008, DAWN Executive Director and PMRW President Carmelita Nuqui participated in the roundtable meeting with multi-stakeholders on Foreign Domestic Workers' issues in Jordan and the Campaign Strategies Workshop held in Amman, Jordan.

The high-level roundtable forum, which was hosted by the ADALEH Center for Human Rights Studies and co-organized by UNIFEM and CARAM Asia called for greater cooperation between the Jordanian authorities, international agencies and civil society for the protection of foreign domestic workers. King Abdullah II of Jordan recently signed an amendment to its labor law, recognizing domestic work as work. This is a positive development and the forum participants urged the Jordanian government to encourage other countries to adopt similar measures for the protection of domestic workers.

Migrant representatives from Bahrain, Bangladesh, Burma, Hong Kong SAR, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, and Thailand, as well as representatives from the Jordanian government, Solidarity Center, and Caritas Lebanon also attended the said meeting.

During the forum on the situation of foreign domestic



workers, the representatives welcomed Jordan's recent move to amend the labor law to include the protection of all domestic workers but emphasized the need for implementation to begin as soon as possible. The forum participants likewise urged the Royal Jordanian government to encourage other countries in the region to adopt similar measures for the protection of domestic workers.

Meanwhile, the campaign strategies workshop organized by CARAM Asia that followed the forum takes forward the reflections and processes that were initiated when the campaign, "One Paid Day Off Weekly" was launched at the

third ASEAN Civil Society Conference (3rd ACSC) in Singapore. It called for the recognition of domestic work as work including domestic work in the national labor laws of countries. Such a call to action can only be achieved through the legal and social recognition of domestic work as work, subsequently realizing the human and labor rights of domestic workers.

The said campaign demands that:

- Governments enact laws and adopt other measures to ensure that the rights of domestic workers are protected legally, and to change the national labor laws to include the

protection of domestic workers' rights;

- The United Nations and International Labor Organization (ILO) develop new mechanisms for the protection and realization of domestic workers' rights;

- Member states ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; and

- Governments develop redress mechanisms for more effective accountability of non-State actors (employers, recruitment agencies, brokers)

Jordan: Protecting ...

for violations against domestic workers.

The workshop concluded with the celebration of the International Solidarity Day with Foreign Domestic Workers (FDWs) on August 28, where domestic workers from Indonesia, Hong Kong SAR, Singapore and the Philippines shared their experiences, advocacies and the campaign workshop demands on the governments in a press conference.

On August 27, 2008, a very timely visit was made to the Philippine Embassy and the Philippine Overseas Labor office (POLO) in Jordan. A meeting with Ambassador Julius D. Torres on the situation of our Filipino domestic workers in Jordan and at the Embassy/POLO and the ANC May 2008 documentary, "Runways, Human Trafficking in Jordan" were discussed. The Ambassador shared the recent visit of Jordanian government and recruiters/employers group to the Philippines to discuss with the Philippine government a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

According to Ambassador Torres, in spite of the ban, more than 3,000 domestic workers came to Jordan from January-June 2008 and that 3-5 women run to the Embassy/POLO everyday. Given this situation, and in consideration of the many documented and reported cases of human trafficking in Jordan, there is an urgent need for the government to review its deployment policy to Jordan.

A brief visit and meeting with more than twenty women and two babies at the Embassy basement and about a hundred at the POLO/Center was made together with Ambassador Torres. Some sugges-

tions given during the visit/meeting, based on the sharing made by the women regarding their situations, are as follows:

1. Close coordination between the POLO and the Embassy staff/officials regarding tasks/responsibilities; One Country-Team Approach (R.A. 8042)
2. Monitor schedules of court hearings/meetings with employers (at least two women said, they were not brought to the Court for their scheduled hearings; and two others said, that their employers didn't come during scheduled meetings)
3. Provide the women counseling, therapeutic, skills training and other activities at the Overseas Filipinos Resource Center (R.A. 8042)
4. More trainings for Embassy/POLO staff in handling distressed women
5. Facilitate flight bookings of the women whose cases are already finished
6. Improve the sanitation/cleanliness of the place.

PMRW Meets the Media

Ellene A. Sana - CMA

Cognizant of the important and crucial role of media in public advocacy and information dissemination, the PMRW organized a morning tete-a-tete with selected members of the media last September 2, 2008 at the Scalabrini Migration Center, PMRW's Secretariat office. It was also PMRW's way of formally introducing the network and its member organizations to the media.

Friends from online, television, radio and print media graced the occasion.

PMRW president Mel Nuqui warmly started the program with a brief round of introductions of the participants from the PMRW and the media.

She then invited everyone to go over the documents that were distributed for the occasion which contained the current policy concerns of PMRW vis-a-vis government, namely: the situation of distressed migrants, mainly women migrants, in Jordan and the response of the Philippine embassy to the situation; the proposed mandatory psychiatric testing for prospective household service workers; the proposal to put up an OFW Hospital; and, the proposal to further liberalize the labor migration industry. PMRW members took turns in elaborating briefly the issues at hand. Resolutions of the Consultative Council on Overseas Filipino Workers (CCOFW) on these issues were also presented to manifest that PMRW's concerns and critical stance on the issues are shared by other NGOs.

The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment to share information on a more regular basis, with PMRW vowing to become more pro-active in reaching out to the media to update them on pressing advocacy issues.



The “Asia Consultation” of ICMC

Edwin Corros - CBCP-ECMI

In cooperation with the CBCP’s Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People (ECMI) and the Philippine Migrants Right Watch (PMRW), the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) organized a consultation meeting on migration issues and concerns in Asia at Bahay Pari located in the San Carlos Seminary Complex in Guadalupe, Makati City last August 28 – 29, 2008. The high level Conference convened about 40 delegates from 18 countries in the region, composed mainly by bishops and representatives from their respective commission for migrants of their bishops’ conference.

The consultation was led by ICMC’s Secretary General Johan Ketelers from Geneva and its President, John Klink. Bishops and directors of their migrants’ commissions from 18 conferences representing Bangladesh, Cambodia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Timor Leste and Vietnam were present. Joining the consultation was the Secretary General of the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences (FABC) Philippine Archbishop Orlando Quevedo of Cotabato, who attended the first day of the conference while his executive secretary, De La Salle Brother Anthony Rogers, stayed during the course of the entire consulta-



tion. PMRW was represented by its Vice President, Fr. Fabio Baggio, who delivered the welcome remarks.

The primary objective of the consultation was for the Asian Bishops’ Conferences and their Commissions on migration to examine migration issues and actions from a regional perspective. The participants explored convergences, common orientations and possible response mechanisms within the region. The Consultation further allowed ICMC to strengthen its membership network in Asia. Among the specific migration topics discussed by participants were national migration issues; labour migration, international marriages and their need for protection; human trafficking; and, the well being of migrants and their families. The discussions on these issues were held in prepara-

tion of the Catholic Church for its own active participation to the forthcoming Second Global Forum on Migration and Development which will take place in Manila on October 27 to 30 this year. The Church has been actively involved in various levels in helping people on the move in various parts of the world.

For two days, the delegates to this consultation were presented various migration themes. They were given the background of the different issues where states, societies, and economies in different regions of the world are getting integrated and interdependent. The impacts of globalization which also created uneven and huge disparities in the standards of living and the level of human security, particularly in Asia, were also discussed. A consequence of this uneven economic

growth and distribution has been the increase in the scale and scope of cross border migration. Moreover, with their ethnic, cultural, racial, religious, political and economic mixture, the composition and structures of migration vary within Asian countries, often demanding country specific solutions. Asian migration likewise generates high social costs such as family disruption, racial discrimination, problems of reintegration and resettlement and abuses such as trafficking of children and women for prostitution and forced labor. The movement of women trafficked or otherwise to rich countries of Asia from the poor countries in the region for marriages that are often dubious and leading to domestic violence is common. With such enor-

The Asia Consultation...

mous issues to discuss in one evening at the conference, the participants were made to group themselves according to the issues that concern their countries most in order to discuss possible partnerships in finding appropriate solutions to the specific problem of migration experienced in their own countries.

At the end of a two-day meeting in Makati City, most of the delegates to the Consultation agreed to set up an Asian network that would tackle the issues and concerns of migrants and their families. They acknowledged the need to set up for an Asia-wide network for a more effective Church response to issues surrounding migrants and refugees. Except for the delegates from Myanmar and Vietnam, everyone agreed that people sent by their local bishops to the meeting would constitute ICMC-Asia. "ICMC will deal with them directly as representatives of their bishops' conferences and other Church juridical bodies in the region", explained Bishop Precioso

Cantillas of Maasin, chair of the Philippine bishops' commission on migration, which hosted the meeting. He was supported by Johan Ketelers and ICMC President John Klink.

Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, said that the exchanges during the consultation highlighted the various concerns and experiences of Asian migrants from different perspectives.

"On the whole, migration is a challenge, a permanent challenge to the "Catholicity" of Christ's Church in our Asian continent. The fact of migration deepens the identity of the Catholic Church as a "communion in diversity" on intercultural, inter-faith and inter-religious communion, the special place of migrant peoples for the encounter with the "other" in the spirit of hospitality and dialogue," said Archbishop Lagdameo in his closing remarks.

Archbishop Lagdameo also proposed to the participants that the church in Asia, because of the communal aspects



ICMC's Secretary General, Johan Ketelers delivering his opening remarks.

of some problems of migrants, should consider organizing common approaches in solving their common problems. He also said that linkages between the ICMC and the Asian churches should be continued, supported and developed.

A reception for the delegates to the Consultation was also held on the last day of the

event at the lobby of Bahay Pari. It was attended by some diplomats from a few Asian countries, as well as reporters from the media. Among those who came to the reception was the Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, H. E. Edward Joseph Adams, who arrived the earliest.

the **Migrant Watch**

PMRW Secretariat: *Scalabrini Migration Center (SMC)*

No. 4, 13th St., New Manila, Quezon City, Philippines

Tel. (63-2) 7243512 • Fax (63-2) 7214296

www.pmrw.org • migrantswatch@pmrw.org

