



PRESS RELEASE

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International Nurses' Day EU and ILO Manila promote decent work agenda for Filipino health professionals

Thousands of Filipino health professionals migrate every year for work raising important questions related to the global shortage and inequitable distribution of health professionals in and between many countries.

MANILA - The International Labour Organization with a EUR 2 million grant from the European Union is working with professionals in the health-care field to improve the management of the migration flows for the thousands of Filipino nurses who migrate for work every year.

They are implementing a project – Decent Work Across Borders: A pilot project for migrant health professionals and skilled workers – which brings together government, workers, employers, professional organizations and recruitment agencies, to design schemes that will promote the safe, ethical and decent migration of health-care professionals.

The Philippines is one of the most important sources of foreign health workers for OECD and European countries. Around 12,000 nurses leave the Philippines annually to work abroad. In 2010, they represented about 15 per cent of all immigrant nurses in OECD countries.

However, there has been a decline in demand for Filipino nurses abroad in recent years – opening up opportunities for them to contribute to the health of Filipinos at home. The attainment of the health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) relies upon national health care systems that are built on sufficient, quality and competent health professionals benefiting decent work.

As other types of migrants, many health professionals are lured by the higher wages abroad but sometimes they find themselves in dire situation, paying exorbitant recruitment and accommodation fees, for instance, which can leave them struggling financially.

Migration of health professionals is at the junction of the right to mobility, right to access health and right to decent work.

page 1 of 2



A project implemented
By the International Labour
Organization

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This project is funded
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The European Commission is the EU's executive body.

“The European Union is made up of 27 member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders”.



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In this context, managing health professional migration is essential, “the ILO and our social partners strongly believe that migrants are less vulnerable when they are moving out of choice, and not out of necessity. The provisions on migration and development included in the Philippine Development Plan and the Philippine Labor and Employment Plan 2011-2016, are important means to promote inclusive and sustained growth through decent and productive work” says Mr Lawrence Jeff Johnson, Director of the International Labour Organization office, in Manila.

“Decent work conditions, including a safe migration journey, equal treatment, career progression possibilities and the right to organise, are essential conditions for health professionals to contribute to the development of their countries through remittances or the sharing of their knowledge and skills in the Philippines” adds Ms Catherine Vaillancourt-Laflamme, Chief Technical Advisor for the EU funded ILO-Decent Work Across Borders project.

“The EU counts ILO as a key international partner in putting into action a migrant-centered, human rights-based approach to labour migration and shares ILO’s commitment to pursue the Decent Work for All Agenda in the Philippines”, says EU Ambassador Guy Ledoux.

As part of its knowledge sharing remit, the project has teamed up with the Alliance of Young Nurse Leaders and Advocates in devising a photo competition, which allows young Filipino health workers to share their thoughts and experiences of migration.

In collaboration with the Philippines Nurses’ Association, the winners will be announced on 9 May – ahead of International Nurses Day on 12 May.

The top 21 entries for the photo competition will be available for public viewing between 6 and 10 May, at the foyer of the RCBC Plaza, in Makati.

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