

Office of the President of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON FILIPINOS OVERSEAS

YEAR 2008 SUMMARY OF MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A. MIGRANT SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

Ensuring that all Filipinos migrating to other countries are adequately prepared to meet the practical and psychological challenges attendant to international migration

1. Pre-Departure Registration

CFO registers Filipino emigrants or permanent residents prior to their departure. Data gathered during the registration process serve as resource for policy formulation and program development.

In 2008, CFO registered 70,579 Filipino emigrants with an average of 192 emigrants a day. Of the total number, 53,950 (76.44%) registered at CFO Manila; 6,354 (9%) at CFO Cebu; 2,599 (3.68%) at CFO NAIA, and 7,676 (10.88%) at CFO-SMEF-COW. The top destination countries of emigrants are USA, Canada, Japan, Australia, Germany, New Zealand, Italy, United Kingdom, Spain and South Korea. The low registration of departing Filipinos overseas is primarily attributed to the retrogression in the issuance of visa especially for family based petitions and more intensive counseling interventions for Filipino spouses/fiance(e)s of foreign nationals.

2. Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar (PDOS)

CFO conducts PDOS to departing Filipino emigrants to facilitate their adjustment concerns in their destination countries. In these seminars, various topics are discussed such as travel regulations, immigration procedures, cultural differences, settlement concerns, employment and social security benefits, and rights and obligations of Filipino migrants overseas. Country-specific orientation seminars are conducted for emigrants bound for Australia, Canada, Germany, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Spain, Sweden, UK and the USA.

In 2008, CFO conducted PDOS to 24,912 Filipino emigrants. Of the total number, 22,970 (92.20%) were given PDOS at CFO Manila and 1,942 (7.8%) at CFO Cebu.

3. Peer Counseling

Peer counseling aims to respond to the needs of young Filipino emigrants aged 13-19 by providing them with information that will help facilitate their adjustment in their new environment and prepare them for possible pressures which could result from migration.

In 2008, CFO conducted peer counseling sessions to 9,068 Filipino youth emigrants. Of the total number, 8,330 (91.86%) were counseled at CFO Manila and 738 (8.14%) at CFO Cebu.

4. Guidance and Counseling Services

The guidance and counseling program aims to provide Filipino spouses and other partners of foreign nationals a venue to gain adequate information and advice on the realities of inter-marriage and migration, rights and obligations of Filipino migrants overseas, available support network for women migrants in distress, and socio-cultural realities overseas, among others. The guidance and counseling sessions are country-specific. The CFO guidance and counseling program was devolved to SMEF-COW effective April 4, 2005 in Quezon City, and May 2, 2005 in Cebu. In May 2, 2006, it was also devolved to the People's Reform Initiative for Social Mobilization, Inc. The CFO also continues to provide in-depth counseling for some of the counselees.

In 2008, CFO administered through its service providers, guidance and counseling sessions to 20,946 Filipino spouses and other partners of foreign nationals. Of the total number, 8,870 (42.35%) were counseled at SMEF-COW QC; 3,646 (17.40%) at SMEF-COW Cebu and 8,430 (40.25%) at PRISM.

5. CFO Watchlist and Multiple Sponsors Database

To supplement the guidance counseling program, CFO maintains a CFO Watchlist, which contains information on foreign nationals who had a history of domestic violence or involvement in trafficking, serial sponsorship, bigamy, adultery, child abuse, deception and fraud. Through this Watchlist, CFO counselors can extend appropriate counseling intervention to Filipino nationals they may sponsor for travel overseas. CFO also maintains a Multiple Sponsors Database which records the names of foreign nationals who have sponsored more than one Filipino spouse and other partners, but without any record of violation or abuse.

In 2008, CFO included names of two (2) foreign nationals in the CFO Watchlist. As of December 2008, there are 240 names of foreign nationals and 58 Filipino spouses and other partners in the CFO Watchlist (with derogatory records).

6. Public Assistance and Information Program

Through the conduct of this program, CFO provides assistance and information services to the general public through counseling, referral, consultation, development and distribution of information materials, and conduct of community education activities.

a. Assistance to Nationals (ATN) Services

CFO respond to or refer ATN cases related to domestic violence, verification of records, request for financial support from foreign spouse, violation of work contacts and inclusion in the Bureau of Immigration blacklist and CFO Watchlist, abandonment of foreign spouse, and suspected trafficking, among others, to appropriate government agencies. CFO also assist in and refer cases involving violations of R.A. 6955 (Mail Order Bride Law) and R.A. 9208 (Anti-Trafficking Law).

In 2008, CFO responded to 105 ATN cases. Of this number, 16 cases were resolved and the rest are on-going. CFO also handled 104 human

trafficking and other related cases that were later referred to the DFA/PECS, NBI-AHTRAD, PNP-CIDG, POEA, OWWA, and LGUs of Pangasinan and Misamis Oriental. CFO also provided assistance to 182 victims, of this number 93 were repatriated. Among the services provided were preparation of legal documents, provision of legal advice and court representatives, assistance in conduct of investigation, surveillanace and entrapment, filing of cases, financial support, temporary shelter, and repatriation.

b. Linkage with Overseas Filipino Community for Post Arrival Services

In order to facilitate the adjustment and integration of newly-arrived migrants in their host communities, CFO has partnered with 12 Filipino associations overseas in the US, Canada, Japan, Australia, Taiwan and South Korea in the conduct of post arrival orientation and other services. Through the service, newly arrived Filipinos in the host countries are linked with migrant resource centers, support groups, and Filipino associations in their areas of settlement. They are also advised on employment potentials and opportunities. Participation in post arrival services is voluntary.

c. Community Education Program (CEP)

The CEP seeks to assist prospective migrants in making informed decisions regarding working or settling abroad, as well as in generating community involvement on migration concerns. It also aims to raise public awareness about issues concerning migration, inter-marriages, and existing government policies and programs directed against illegal recruitment, documentation fraud and trafficking, among others.

In 2008, CFO conducted CEP in 27 provinces and six (6) cities in Metro Manila. CEP was conducted in the provinces of South Cotabato, Compostella Valley, Davao del Sur, Davao del Norte, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Batangas, Laguna, Oriental Mindoro, Romblon, Capiz, Negros Occidental, Camrines Sur, Sorsogon, Bukidnon, Misamis Oriental, Davao Oriental, Ifugao, Abra, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, Palawan, Mindoro Occidental, Leyte, Western Samar, and NCR.

B. FILIPINO EDUCATION AND HERITAGE

Promoting Filipino education programs overseas, and providing younger generations of overseas Filipinos with opportunities to learn Philippine history, culture, language and institutions.

1. *Lakbay-Aral sa Pilipinas* Program

The *Lakbay-Aral sa Pilipinas* program is a cultural immersion/ study tour program established in 1983. It offers an opportunity for Filipino youth overseas to learn more about their Filipino heritage and culture through an intensive two-week study visit of historical, cultural and natural sites in the Philippines.

For the first semester of 2008, CFO coordinated with Iligan Tourism Council and proposed a *Lakbay-Aral* itinerary for Mindanao tour. CFO has also sent invitations to forty-two (42) Philippine schools overseas to participate in the program. As of the third quarter of 2008, CFO finalized the itinerary for a group from San Francisco for the *Lakbay-Aral* 2009.

2. Teaching of Filipino Language

In support of the effort to educate Filipino youth overseas in the use of their mother language, CFO published the *Guide to Learning Filipino* (GLF) educators in teaching the Filipino language. An audio tape of Filipino songs supplements the book.

In 2008, CFO distributed 40 copies of the *Guide to Learning Filipino* to Filipino associations and individuals in the Philippines and abroad.

On December 7, 2006, CFO launched the Learn Filipino Program (LFP) which currently runs a basic module of internet-based teaching of Filipino language. Designed to target a wider audience of young overseas Filipinos throughout the world, the course allows enrollees to learn Filipino on-line at their own pace and at a very minimal cost.

As of December 2008, CFO registered 542 enrollees from 46 countries.

3. Philippine Schools Overseas (PSO)

CFO serves as Secretariat and member of the Inter-Agency Committee on PSO. It is tasked to coordinate policies and initiatives in the establishment, operation, and management of PSOs. The Inter-Agency Committee (IAC) ensures that PSOs provide expatriate Filipino youth with affordable quality education in the elementary and high school levels with a curriculum that would support their reintegration into the Philippine educational system and preserve their Filipino identity and character.

In 2008, CFO provided administrative and technical support to 44 PSOs in 9 countries requesting for permits to operate, special order and other pertinent documents related to PSO management and operations.

CFO also coordinated the conduct of college entrance examinations for senior students of PSOs in four (4) universities in the Philippines, namely University of the Philippines, De La Salle University-Dasmariñas, University of Sto. Tomas, and Mapua Institute of Technology.

The 7th PSO Conference was held in Dubai, UAE in May 2008, organized by the CFO. The conference, attended by 46 representatives from 22 schools, aimed at refocusing the roles of the governing council and further discussed education development programs anchored on the national competency-based teachers' standards.

The PSO website was launched on 2 August 2008. The website is one of the major outputs of the PSO conference in order to strengthen collaboration and networking among PSOs. The CFO also launched a literary contest on 5 August 2008 in time for the Celebration of the *Buwan ng Wika*. 136 entries in essay and poetry writing categories were submitted from Qatar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and United Arab Emirates. The contest aims to

harness the potentials of the educators and the school community in raising the standards of Philippine education.

4. Study Visit / Fact-Finding Mission

Cultural immersion studies allow CFO personnel to experience first hand the culture and way of life in other countries to enhance the pre-departure services for Filipino emigrants and concretize solutions for human trafficking related cases. In 2008, CFO officers conducted study visits in the following countries.

- **Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates**

A study travel to Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates was conducted on 19-25 January 2008 to look into the conditions of OFWs and the incidence of trafficking in the said countries. Among the issues raised were the concerns of run-away domestic workers because of maltreatment, condition of stateless children, increase of Filipino workers holding visit visas, and the increase in the number of workers in Dubai who are former entertainers in Japan.

- **Malaysia**

A fact-finding mission was conducted by CFO officers from 6-14 March 2008 in the cities of Kota Kinabalu, Labuan and Sandakan in Malaysia where high incidences of human trafficking against Filipinos happen. The study aims to determine trafficking schemes, routes and other problems that Filipino victims encounter in the area, and review the effectiveness of Philippine government's initiative in addressing the problem.

Among the issues raised during the meeting with the representatives of the Philippine Embassy and Filipino communities were problems on irregular migration, the absence of Philippine honorary consulate in Sabah, inadequate information on the part of the OFWs about human trafficking issues, uncooperative trafficking victims who want to be rescued, and the perennial problem of "backdoor exits" from Zamboanga.

- **Singapore**

A research mission was conducted by CFO officers from 30 March to 5 April 2008. The team met with Philippine Embassy officials and representatives of various Filipino organizations to discuss the trends and schemes used in various case of human trafficking, as well as the concerns of domestic workers, who comprise a large number of Filipino workers in Singapore. An interview of some of the residents housed at the Filipino Workers Resource Center was arranged by the Embassy which gave the team a clear perspective of migration realities encountered by OFWs.

Among the issues and concerns raised during the meetings and interviews were the need to strengthen bilateral cooperation / forge agreements on procedures between the two countries aimed at eliminating trafficking and providing assistance to the victims.

- **Qatar**

The CFO Chairman proceeded to Qatar on 19-20 July 2008 to identify issues and concerns of overseas Filipino workers, particularly women, and victims of illegal recruitment and trafficking. Some reports indicate that Filipinos who were initially recruited for jobs for the United Arab Emirates end up being trafficked in Qatar. The CFO Chairman also met with Filipino community organizations for possible referrals and provision of immediate assistance and shelter while repatriation processes are being arranged for the trafficking victims.

- **Hongkong and Macau**

The last fact-finding mission for 2008 was conducted by CFO officers from 13-19 December 2008. The team met with the representatives of the Philippine Embassy in Hong Kong and Philippine Consulate in Macau to discuss the rising incidence of trafficking particularly cases of labor and sexual exploitation of Filipinos. Also, the team was able to establish network with several religious organizations in Hong Kong and Macau for referrals of trafficking victims in need of temporary shelter.

C. FILIPINO UNITY AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Fostering better cohesion and purpose among the various overseas Filipino organizations for the promotion of their own interests within a broader community of Filipinos.

1. *Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino (LINKAPIL) Program*

Recognizing the vast potentials of Filipinos overseas as partners in nation-building, CFO developed the LINKAPIL or Link for Philippine Development Program as a mechanism for transferring financial, material, and technical assistance from Filipinos overseas to beneficiaries in the Philippines. This assistance may be in the form of medical missions and volunteer programs, funding support to livelihood projects, scholarship grants, construction of deep-well projects, and the provision of relief and rehabilitation items/equipment.

In 2008, CFO processed, monitored and distributed 247 material and financial donations, approximately worth P144.345 million from overseas donor organizations/ individuals to 185,535 beneficiaries from 45 provinces and cities, namely Agusan del Norte, Aklan, Albay, Bataan, Batangas, Benguet, Bohol, Bulacan, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Capiz, Catanduanes, Cavite, Cebu, Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur, Eastern Samar, Guimaras, Ilocos Sur, Iloilo, Isabela, Laguna, Lanao del Norte, Leyte, Masbate, Misamis Oriental, Mountain Province, NCR, Negros Occidental, Northern Samar, Nueva Ecija, Occidental Mindoro, Palawan, Pampanga, Pangasinan, Quezon, Rizal, Romblon, Siquijor, Sorsogon, South Cotabato, Southern Leyte, Surigao del Norte, Tarlac, Zambales and Zamboanga del Sur.

The donations coursed through the LINKAPIL can be categorized as follows:

- Health related and medical missions (P126,729,875.48)
- Education and scholarship program (P1,248,340.29)

- Infrastructure projects (P2,149,494.65)
- Livelihood projects (P163,000.00)
- Skills transfer and training projects (P13,459,340.97)
- Others (P595,792.87)

Among the notable projects under the LINKAPIL are the following:

- Conduct of 15 medical missions to 48,490 beneficiaries and donated medical equipment worth P153,800.00. Provided supplemental feeding to 548 malnourished children in Negros Occidental, Albay, and various provinces in Mindanao.
- Grant of scholarship assistance to 18 students through the Adopt-a-Scholar and donated 62,938 books to different schools in Luzon and Visayas.
- Construction of twelve (12) classrooms in Catanduanes, Isabela, Albay, Sorsogon and Camarines Sur.
- Construction of a communal water system and two (2) water well projects in Lower Paknaan and Madaue City, Cebu worth P58,560.00

CFO also assisted Filipino organizations overseas on their projects and activities geared towards promoting Philippine national development. Among these organizations are:

- Feed the Hungry, Inc.
- Kalihi Union Church
- Risen Savior Mission
- Auxiliary to the Philippine Medical Association of Michigan
- Far Eastern and American Association of Great Lakes
- Gesmundo Foundation, Inc.
- Mission of Mercy of Metro Washington, DC
- Foundation for Aid to the Philippines, Inc.
- Philippine Medical Association in Chicago
- Philippine American Medical Mission of Michigan
- Hacket Hemwell Foundation
- Alpha Phi Omega Midwest Chicago Alumni Association
- Philippine Minnesotan Medical Association
- Third World Eye Care Society, Inc.
- Pagbilao Medical Association in America
- San Esteban Aloha Mission
- Quezonian Foundation / Lucena Association of the Midwest
- Mission of Mercy of Metro Washington, D.C.
- World Medical Relief, Inc.

2. Exchange Visitor Program (EVP)

Established in 1956, the EVP promotes inter-country exchange of knowledge and expertise between the U.S. and the Philippines to strengthen educational, scientific, and technological capabilities of both countries. The EVP Committee was reconstituted by former President Fidel V. Ramos in January 1996 to enhance Philippine participation in the EVP. CFO provides technical and secretariat support to the EVP Committee.

In 2008, CFO issued 290 NTC endorsements. The NTC is issued by the Department of Health confirming that there is a need for medical practitioners in the specialty of a particular EVP doctor-participant and

verifying that said participant has filed a written assurance with the Philippine government that he will return to the country after the completion of his training in the US.

CFO also issued 193 NOS endorsements. The NOS is issued by the Philippine government declaring that it has no objection on the application of a particular EVP participant to waive the two-year home residency requirement of the EVP. Moreover, 128 transfer-of-skills projects have been implemented as alternative arrangement in lieu of the two-year residency requirement, to 3,915 teachers and other professionals. Among the projects implemented, the following subjects are included:

- Special Education
- Mathematics and its fields (Geometry, Algebra, Statistics, Trigonometry, Calculus, etc.)
- English (including strategies in reading and language)
- Science and its various fields (Biology, Physics, Chemistry and General Science, etc.)
- Conduct of research
- Use of new equipment such as graphing calculators, interactive modules and writing pads

The EVP Committee also issued Res. 01-2007 reinstating the alternative arrangement in lieu of the two-year home-country physical presence requirement and Res. 02-2007 pertaining to the guidelines for the utilization of processing fees collected from the EVP participants.

CFO also reviewed and monitored transfer-of-skills projects implemented by EVP participants, serving as an alternative arrangement in lieu of the two-year residency requirement. The projects are mostly seminar workshops developing leadership competencies, instructional leadership and teaching technology, technology as a tool in teaching Mathematics, research-based strategy instruction, among others.

CFO conducted 95 PDOS sessions to 884 EVP participants. The PDOS gives an overview of the program, its objectives, background and legal bases. It also discusses the different categories of exchange visitors and their corresponding training periods, as well as their obligations as participants of the program.

3. Development and Publication of Information Materials

In 2008, CFO published, printed and distributed the following information materials to Philippine embassies and consulates, Filipino associations overseas, local government officials and other individuals:

- One (1) issue of *Filipino Ties*. The *Filipino Ties* is the official newsletter of the CFO
- 400 pcs. of *Lakbay-Aral* brochures
- 40 pcs. of *Teaching of Filipino Language* books
- 500 copies of posters on the Guide in Assessing Services for Victims of Human Trafficking
- 5,000 copies of posters on anti-human trafficking
- 30,000 copies of SOS SMS Brochure
- 15,000 stickers on Stop Human Trafficking

- 20,000 copies of the Complaint Standard Reporting Format
- 3,000 pcs. of *A Guide for Filipinos Migrating to the United States*
- 500 copies of the *Investment and Business Guide for Overseas Filipinos* (CD format)

4. Presidential Awards for Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas

The Presidential Awards, established through Executive Order No. 498 in 1991, is a biennial award conferred to distinguished Filipino individuals and organizations in recognition of their contribution to national development efforts, or their outstanding achievements in their field. The award is also conferred to foreign individuals and organizations that provide assistance to the country or advance the cause of Filipino communities overseas.

In 10 December 2008, Her Excellency, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo honored 31 distinguished Filipino and foreign individuals and organizations overseas in for their efforts in assisting in national development efforts, for advancing the cause of Filipino communities abroad, and for excelling in their fields of expertise or profession. The awardees came from Australia, Canada, France, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, United Kingdom, and United States of America. They were selected from a total of 122 nominations from 29 countries through 39 Philippine Embassies and Consulates. The Awarding Ceremony was held at the Rizal Hall of Malacañan Palace. Since its inception, the awards have so far been conferred to 283 Filipinos and foreign individuals and private organizations overseas.

Four recipients of the 2008 Presidential Awards namely, Carlos Esguerra, Amy Besa, Eleanor Ho, and the Filipino Korean Spouses Association through its President, Fe Gimarino Kim, conducted transfer of skills and knowledge thru lectures, workshops and consultations with the government, NGOs and various schools in the Philippines.

D. POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND DATA BANKING

Providing a continuing study and review of the economic, social, legal, and administrative environment that have a bearing on the status of overseas Filipinos.

1. Policy Review and Formulation

An important mandate of CFO is the provision of advice and assistance to the executive and legislative branches of government on matters pertaining to political, economic, and social concerns, rights and obligations of overseas Filipinos.

a. Policy Development and Data Banking

In 2008, CFO proposed the following bills relevant to the welfare of overseas Filipinos and human trafficking:

- Exemptions on Donations from Expanded-Value Added Tax
- Amendments to the Overseas Absentee Voting Act of 2003

- Instituting Mechanisms for the Creation of Temporary Shelter Program for Trafficked Persons
- Mandating Pre-Marriage Counseling Program for Filipino Fiancé(e)s and Other Partners of Foreign Nations

b. Researches/ Studies

In 2008, CFO prepared the following three (3) concept papers/ researches pertinent to overseas Filipinos:

- Specialized Pre-Employment and Pre-Departure Orientation Program for Migrating Filipino Nurses
- The 2008 Philippine Nursing Competitiveness Conference
- Respiratory Therapy Bill

The CFO, through the Task Force Against Human Trafficking, prepared the following concept papers and resolutions:

- Opposing the Liberalization and Acceleration of the Processing and Deployment of Overseas Filipino Contract Workers
- Resolution Opposing the Creation of a Migrant Workers' Hospital
- Project Proposal on the Installation of Computers to Selected LGU-PNP offices for the use of PHILIST

c. Policy inputs to the Executive and Legislative Branches of the Government

In 2008, CFO prepared and provided policy inputs and position paper for the executive and legislative branches of the government on the following agenda:

- 3rd RP-KSA Joint Commission Meeting
- RP-Bahrain Memorandum of Agreement on health services
- Human Resource for Health Technical Working Group on Exit
- Symposium on "Managing Temporary Migration: Lessons from the Philippine Model" in Washington D.C. on 7 October 2008.
- Conference on Circular Migration - a 'New Guest Worker Policy' or Development Cooperation in Berlin, Germany on 2 December 2008.
- Proposed Operational Framework on International Migration.
- Agency proposal for the Philippine delegation to the 2nd Global Forum in Migration and Development (GFMD)
- CFO's abstract for the Filipino as Global Language Conference in Hawaii in March 2008
- Migrant Workers Hospital Act of 2007
- Respiratory Therapy Bill which provides for the creation of the Board of Examiners for Respiratory Therapists and a licensure examination, registration and licensure of respiratory therapy practitioners.

d. Technical and Secretariat Support to Inter-Agency Activities

CFO continued to strengthen its linkages with relevant agencies in the Philippines and host countries to enhance programs and services for Filipino migrants, and to ensure accessibility in addressing specific needs and interests.

In 2008, CFO provided technical assistance and secretariat support to the following inter-agency committees:

- Human Resource for Health Network (with DOH)
- 13th National Seafarer's Day Committee (with AOS) - Chair, Outstanding Seafarers of the Year Award
- Stock Estimation of the Filipinos Overseas (with NSCB)
- Anti-Trafficking initiatives with the USAID/Solidarity Center/ TUCP Anti-Trafficking Project
- Inter-Agency Committee on PSO
- Inter-Agency Committee on EVP
- National Anti-Poverty Commission Cabinet Group
- Inter-Agency Committee on the Celebration of the Month of Overseas Filipinos

e. Conferences/ Fora

In 2008, CFO organized the following conferences / fora:

- ***The First Philippine Nursing Competitiveness Conference.*** held on 26 September 2008 gathered more than 200 nursing industry stakeholders. The Conference opened into discussion and explored the possibility of influencing the healthcare policy environment to maintain and further promote Filipino nurses' global competitiveness. ***The First Philippine Nursing Competitiveness Pre- and Post-Conference Workshop*** laid down short and long term initiatives for nursing industry and professional development.
- The ***Post- GFMD Forum***, in line with the 2008 Month of Overseas Filipinos Celebration, provided a venue for those who were not able to participate or attend the GFMD, listen to reports of both government and civil society sectors, and participate in future programs of action as a result of GFMD.
- The ***Cineforum Series***, in line with the 2008 Month of Overseas Filipinos Celebration, was held from November to December which aimed at screening films and documentaries on migration and its attendant issues. It seeks to assist prospective migrants in making informed decisions regarding settlement abroad, as well as generate community involvement in migration concerns. Participating institutions were Scalabrini Center for People on the Move, University of Nueva Caceres, Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Batangas State University, University of San Carlos and Cebu Normal University.

CFO was invited to serve as speakers and facilitators in several conferences and fora relevant to international migration. Among these are the following:

- Conference on Migration organized Mr. Joseph Stiglitz and the Task Force on International Migration of the Initiative for Policy Dialogue in New York City, USA.
- Symposia on Migration in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

CFO hosted orientation programs for the following seven (7) foreign delegations on study tour:

- Japanese – Filipino Children and Filipino Global Associates College Foundation
- US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (US-ICE)
- US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
- Canadian Embassy Officers
- Japanese College University Students
- Department of Immigration and Citizenship Australia (DIAC)
- Geongsang-do, South Korea local government officials

f. Task-Force NCLEX

E.O. 550 created the Presidential Task Force on NCLEX to address concerns arising from the possible conduct of NCLEX in the Philippines. The Task Force responded to three cases raised by NSCBN on intellectual property and candidate identification. It also conducted dialogue with the Philippine Nurses Association of America for the development of PDOS module for emigrant nurses and made representations with NSCBN for the possibility of expanding licensure to nurse aides and practical nurses.

In 2008, CFO organized the First Philippine Nursing Competitiveness Conference and Post-Conference Workshop which opened into discussion the issues and concerns faced by the Philippine nursing industry stakeholders. The Task Force also prepared the pre-final draft of the Specialized Pre-Employment and Pre-Departure Orientation Programs for Migrating Filipino Nurses and met with the officials of the Embassy of the United States of America in Manila regarding the retrogression on the issuance of visas.

g. Task-Force Against Human Trafficking

E.O. 548 which created the Task Force Against Illegal Recruitment (TFAIR) was amended by E.O. 548-A in February 2007 to transfer the supervision of TFAIR from CFO to POEA and establish the Presidential Task Force against Human Trafficking (TFHT) under the administration of CFO. Its main thrust is to recommend to Inter-Agency Committee Against Trafficking (IACAT) policies, programs and services to enhance government initiatives against trafficking in persons. The Task-Force is also authorized to conduct surveillance and entrapment operations, in consultation and coordination with IACAT, of persons and entities suspected to be engaged in activities related to trafficking.

Among the accomplishments of the TFHT in 2008 are the following:

- CFO handled a total of 104 trafficking and related cases involving 182 victims who were referred to the DFA/PECs, NBI-AHTRAD, PNP-CIDG, POEA, OWWA and LGUs of Pangasinan and Misamis Oriental. The victims were from Singapore, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Japan, China, South Korea, Bahrain, Kuwait, Syria, Macau, Hong Kong and nine (9) cases of local trafficking. Of the 104 victims, 93 were repatriated.

- CFO, in partnership with the Department of Interior and Local Government, the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Local Government Units concerned, conducted a two (2) day Advocacy Training for Youth on Anti-Trafficking of Women and Children for Labor and Sexual Exploitation in the cities Davao, Baguio and Legaspi. The trainings gathered 149 youth leaders from 26 provinces. Topics include discussions on RA 9208, UN Conention on the Rights of the Child, Gender Sensitivity, among others.
- Conducted trainings on the implementation of the Philippine Information System on Trafficking (PHILIST) in the provinces Cebu, Davao, Pampanga, Cagayan de Oro, Bukidnon, Lanao del Norte and Albay. The PHILIST is a database program that compiles, generate, monitor and keep track of all reported incidents of trafficking in person. The program intends to provide consolidated information regarding trafficking incidents and cases collected by various agencies and sectors. In 2008, CFO encoded 381 trafficking cases. Of this number 189 from CFO, 23 from PNP, 111 from TUCP and 32 from DSWD.
- Maintenance of the TFHT website. Updated information in the conduct of trainings, seminars and studies relevant to the programs and services of the Task Force. Posted 165 news articles related to human trafficking.
- Establishment of a network with the UP-PGH Women's Desk for the medical examination of the victims.

2. Data Banking and Computerization

a. Databases and Information Systems

In 2008, through its in-house capability, CFO developed eight (8) information and database systems that facilitate the effective delivery of its services and programs, and technical support to the administrative division. These are:

- Overseas based Filipino Emigrants Registration Emigrants
- Filipinos Marrying Foreign Nationals Registration System
- Communications and Services Tracking System
- Trafficking Information System
- EVP Information System
- LINKAPIL Information System
- Filipino Overseas Information System
- Bills Indexing and Monitoring
- Filipino Associations and Organizations Database

b. Statistical Reports

CFO transmits a monthly master list of Filipino emigrants to Philippine embassies and consulates. CFO also prepares the annual stock estimate of Filipinos overseas, which contains specific estimates of permanent, temporary and irregular Filipino migrants in major destination countries and territories.

In 2008, CFO generated at least 141 statistical reports and other data/information on registered Filipino emigrants and spouses and other partners of foreign nationals, and stock estimate of Filipinos overseas. The reports were provided to Philippine embassies and consulates, as well as requesting government agencies, private organizations, NGOs and individuals.