

**The Fourth Onofre D. Corpuz Lecture Series  
THE ECONOMIC REINTEGRATION  
OF THE OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS**

18 July 2003

Leonides Virata Hall, Development Academy of the Philippines  
DAP Building, San Miguel Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City

**WELCOME REMARKS**

**Mr. Antonio Kalaw  
Senior Vice President  
Development Academy of the Philippines**

Representing DAP President Dr. Eduardo Gonzales

Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to the Onofre D. Corpuz Lecture Series on Public Sector Management. We have the honor to again have as our partners the Alumni Association of Public Managers, the Commission on Human Rights, the National Economic Development Agency and the United Nations Development Program.

The topic chosen for today is the Economic Reintegration of Overseas Filipino Workers. Since the 1970s our OFWs have evolved to become our country's "New Heroes" who play an important role in the global and local economies and will continue to do so in the future.

The 7 million OFWs deployed worldwide is a clear indication that they have become an economic sector in their own right. They were able to capture a unique market in the global economy and have become an asset to the Philippines as well as to the countries they have worked in.

The US\$ 8 billion in remittances for 2002 from OFWs clearly indicate that their contributions represent a significant part of our gross national product. But is that really what they want? Is it their choice or is their exodus to foreign land due to the fact that they have no other option? Should the country's development be based on economic value and remittances or on the overall development of its people? Do we have programs encouraging them to go back, stay on and restart a life together with their families?

Part of government's responsibility is not just to ensure that the rights of OFWs are protected overseas but more importantly it is our main task is to give them choices of either to continue their work abroad away from their families or to work here in the country and develop our own nation.

We should be able to formulate appropriate national development policies that aim at the constant improvement of the well being of the entire population on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in the development process and in the fair distribution of the resulting benefits, OFWs included.

Development is not about economic progress. Development is about people. The assurance of equality of opportunity for all in their access to basic resources, education, health services, food, housing, employment and the fair distribution of income . . . that is development.

Today, we hope to give light to this and other relevant issues and discuss the possibilities on how our OFWs can reintegrate back into the country's development process with an end view of giving OFWs options to choose their own path to development.

Thank you very much and welcome to OD Corpuz Lecture Series.

**Ms. Donna Mitzi Lagdameo**  
**Master of Ceremonies**

Thank you sir. Today we have the honor as our guest speaker, the Deputy Administrator of the Overseas Workers' Welfare Association, Atty. Delmer Cruz. He is currently an active practitioner in various related movements and groups and has been into labor law practice ever since he graduated. He is also in charge of the OWWA Medicare Program. To represent the Secretary of Labor and Employment, Hon. Patricia Sto. Tomas, please welcome Deputy Administrator Delmer Cruz.