

**MALACAÑANG
MANILA**

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

EXECUTIVE ORDER 231

**CREATING THE PRESIDENTIAL FACT-FINDING AND POLICY ADVISORY
COMMISSION ON THE PROTECTION OF OVERSEAS FILIPINOS**

WHEREAS, recent events have evoked the nation's serious concern for and recognition of overseas Filipinos;

WHEREAS, it is the policy of the Philippine government to be firmly committed to the protection of overseas Filipinos;

WHEREAS, certain claims and assertions as well as accusations have been made against some officials of the Philippine Government in connection with its efforts to protect overseas Filipinos;

WHEREAS, there is a need to determine with utmost certainty the circumstances surrounding recent events involving the policies and actions of government in relation to the protection of overseas Filipinos; and

WHEREAS, much can be learned from instances in which such policies and actions of government have succeeded and from those which did not lead to the desired results.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, FIDEL V. RAMOS, President of the Republic of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by law, do hereby order:

Section 1. *The Presidential Commission.* — There is hereby created a Presidential Fact-Finding and Policy Advisory Commission on the Protection of Overseas Filipinos, hereinafter referred to as the Commission. The Commission shall immediately begin its work once it is constituted and shall accomplish its objectives within three (3) months thereof, after which, unless otherwise ordered by the President, the Commission shall be dissolved.

Section 2. *Composition.* — The Commission shall be composed of a Chairman and six (6) members to be appointed by the President, as follows:

2.1. A retired justice of the Supreme Court as Chairman;

- 2.2 Two (2) members to represent overseas contract workers and organized labor, respectively;
- 2.3 One (1) member to represent employers;
- 2.4 One (1) member to represent the Department of Social Welfare and Development;
- 2.5 One (1) member to represent the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women; and
- 2.6 One (1) member to represent the public-at-large.

SECTION 3. *Objectives.* — The Commission shall have the following objectives:

- 3.1 Determine particular and general facts and circumstances involving the policies and actions of the Philippine Government and its agents or officials in relation to the protection of overseas Filipinos, particularly cases involving the criminal conviction of overseas Filipinos, including the case of Mrs. Flor Contemplacion; and
- 3.2 Make recommendations with a view to improving the protection afforded by the Philippine Government to overseas Filipinos, consonant with international conventions and standards.

Section 4. *Mandate.* — The Commission, taking into consideration its objectives, shall have the following mandate:

- 4.1 Inquire into, examine and probe individual cases involving the protection of overseas Filipinos;
- 4.2 Seek the views and opinions of and coordinate with the different sectors of Philippine society, including people's organizations, cooperatives, media, and other non-government organizations;
- 4.3 Identify instances which may require the filing of administrative and other charges against Philippine Government officials and private individuals, and recommend the filing of such criminal or administrative charges as the case may be;
- 4.4 Formulate recommendations, to include legislative measures, for the improvement of the protection of overseas Filipinos by the Philippine Government; and
- 4.5 Submit a report on the Mrs. Flor Contemplacion case to the President within fifteen (15) days from the constitution of the Commission.

Section 5. *Powers and Functions.* — The Commission, in view of its objectives and in the discharge of its mandate, is hereby empowered to:

- 5.1 Call on any department, instrumentality or agency of the government for assistance and cooperation;
- 5.2 In accordance with existing laws, regulations and procedures, issue compulsory processes to private individuals, groups or organizations as well as government officials;
- 5.3 Through appropriate diplomatic channels and with due regard to diplomatic considerations, request for the cooperation of foreign governments; and
- 5.4 Promulgate its own administrative and procedural rules and regulations to govern its actions and operations.

Section 6. *Secretariat.* — The Commission shall be assisted by a Secretariat that shall provide administrative and office support to the Commission to be composed of persons appointed by the Chairman.

Section 7. *Technical Panel.* — There is hereby constituted a Technical Panel composed of recognized and responsible experts to be appointed by the Chairman in the fields of law, labor, social welfare, and other relevant fields to provide technical assistance and advice to the Commission. In order to provide an effective line of communication and coordination with the appropriate departments, agencies and instrumentalities of the Philippine Government, officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Labor and Employment, Justice, Social Welfare and Development, Health, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration and the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration may be invited to serve as members of the Technical Panel.

Section 8. *Office.* — In coordination with agencies of the Philippine Government, including government-owned or controlled corporation, the Commission shall be provided with appropriate office space.

Section 9. *Funding.* — Without prejudice to the provision of additional funds, the initial amount of Five Million Pesos (₱5,000,000) from the President's Contingent Fund is hereby provided for the operations of the Commission.

Section 10. *Effectivity*. — This Executive Order shall take effect immediately.

DONE in the City of Manila, this 20th day of March in the year of Our Lord, Nineteen Hundred and Ninety-Five.

(Sgd.) FIDEL V. RAMOS

By the President:

(Sgd.) LEONARDO A. QUISUMBING
Senior Deputy Executive Secretary