

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE BILL NO. 1498



INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE JAIME C. LOPEZ

EXPLANATORY NOTE

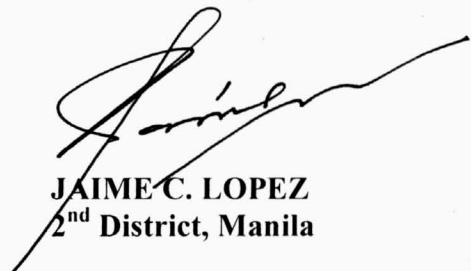
In a nutshell, the development plan adopted by the Philippine government envisions a newly industrialized economy by the turn of the century. With this in mind, we must realize however that economic growth and development in the country cannot be sustained if we do not first improve the quality of life for every Filipino. This is what President Fidel V. Ramos contemplates when in one occasion he said "To achieve growth in the country at the expense of human development is to miss the point of economic development. Our people continue to be our most productive and competitive resource. That is why the plan invest heavily in their training and welfare. We need improvement on a larger scale. It can happen if every Filipino will feel strongly – or be obsessed – about the fact that we as a people have what it takes to be world-class in terms of resources, talent and productivity. In other words, our economy will have to be globally competitive and our workers and products up to global standards of excellence."

Millions of Filipino working, studying and residing abroad have been exposed to advance knowledge and high-technology environment. Their potential and competence have been accelerated and deepened by experience and actual practice in countries where they have access to more literature, equipment of higher technological specifications and more rewarding opportunities for recognition. These overseas compatriots, through their exposure to foreign societies and modern technology represent an immense reservoir of new technology, capital, expertise, experiences and other resources which can be readily tapped for national development purposes.

Aside from their innate talent and ability, overseas Filipino professionals know how to take advantage of every single opportunity to harness their skills by acquiring more knowledge and modern technology. More often than not, in vigorously setting higher goals and standards for themselves, they have become more competitive in their respective fields of endeavor and have been at par in excellence with other citizens of the world. With their ability to render work with efficiency, loyalty and expertise, they have been recognized for their potential and competence which earned them the established reputation of world-class Filipinos.

The proposed bill aims to tap the expertise of these overseas Filipino professionals to help accelerate economic development of the country in order to meet the goals for the next millennium. It provides for the methodologies by which these overseas Filipinos may concretely assist in Philippine development processes, notably in the areas of transfer and exchange of technology. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that their burning desire to come back to their land of birth is coupled with their ardent desire to contribute their share in the development and progress of our country. Hence, by allowing them to practice in the Philippines, we give them an opportunity to render service to their motherland where their skills and expertise will be most needed and welcomed.

It is in the context of preparing the country to meet the new realities and challenges of the 21st century that due consideration and passage of this bill is earnestly urged.



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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE TRANSFER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND
THE PRACTICE OF PROFESSIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES BY OVERSEAS
FILIPINO PROFESSIONALS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines
Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Policy Declaration - Science and technology is essential in national development and progress. In pursuance of this objective, the Government shall enlist the participation of Filipino overseas, particularly high-level scientists and professionals in various technical fields, and shall provide proper incentives and programs so as to secure their services in priority incentives and program so as to secure their services in priority development areas of the public and private sectors, with the view of promoting information exchange and contributing to the modernization and industrialization of the country.

SECTION 2. Incentives - Given the significance of upgrading technologies and the productivity of the people in pursuit of national economic development, the Government shall develop and provide adequate incentives to Filipino expatriates whose expertise and training can play a vital role in the industrialization efforts of the country.

SECTION 3. Implementation - The Department of Science and Technology and the Department of Foreign Affairs shall develop and implement appropriate measures to ensure attainment of this Act, to include the Balik Scientist Program under Executive Order No. 130, as certified by the Department of Science and Technology.

SECTION 4. Practice of Overseas Professionals in the Philippines - The Professional Regulation Commission may, upon recommendation of the concerned Professional Regulatory Board, authorize the registration without examination, and the issuance of a certificate of registration and a professional license to any Filipino whether or not he has lost his citizenship when he was overseas, who has been in the practice of his profession in a foreign country or state, subject to the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 5. Qualifications - For the registration without examination and the issuance of a certificate of registration and a professional license under this Act, the applicant must submit proofs that:

- (a). He is a natural-born Filipino, as shown by his birth certificate as a Filipino or other documentation as may be required, whether or not he has lost his Philippine citizenship when he went overseas;
- (b). He is at least twenty-seven (27) years of age;
- (c). He is registered and holder of a valid certificate of registration and/or valid professional license to practice his profession issued by the government body concerned in a foreign country or state whose requirements for registration or licensing are substantially the same as those required and contemplated by the Philippines laws;
- (d). He has been in the practice of his profession in the country or state mentioned in paragraph (c) of this Section for at least five (5) years immediately preceding his application; and
- (e). He is a person of good moral character, and he has not been convicted of any crime involving moral turpitude; nor sanctioned administratively by any government instrumentality including the body that regulates the practice of his profession.

SECTION 6. Requirements - The applicant shall file an application under oath stating his personal circumstances, his intention to practice in the Philippines and the Office address that he will be using, and his undertaking to abide by all regulations pertaining to the practice of the profession in the Philippines.

SECTION 7. Implementation Guidelines - All concerned Department and agencies, particularly the Department of Science and Technology, Department of Foreign Affairs, Professional Regulation Commission, shall within ninety (90) days upon this Act's approval, promulgate the necessary guidelines to put into effect the purposes and provisions of this Act.

SECTION 8. Repealing Clause - All laws which are inconsistent and contrary to the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed.

SECTION 9. Effectivity - This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved.