

MALACAÑANG
Manila

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 56

CREATING THE PHILIPPINE SEAFARERS' ONE STOP PROCESSING CENTER

WHEREAS, it is the policy of the State to afford full protection to Filipino seafarers and their families, promote their interests, and safeguard their well-being;

WHEREAS, increasing competition among source countries of seafarers, the changing needs and demands of the industry, and advent of new shipping technologies require more responsive programs that will address the issues of competitiveness and the promotion of seafarers' rights;

WHEREAS, the Philippines is a party to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Convention on the Standards for Training, Certification and Waterkeeping (STCW '95) which prescribes minimum parameters for the training and certification of seafarers;

WHEREAS, a number of government agencies are mandated to address the needs and requirements of the seafarers to the end that more integrated and harmonized set of systems and procedures for implementation by these agencies would ensure a more timely and efficient delivery of services;

WHEREAS, Filipino seafarers have a right to quality and affordable education and training to prepare them for new and emerging challenges in the practice of their profession and skills;

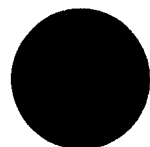
WHEREAS, the President of the Republic of the Philippines, in the exercise of her executive powers and in pursuance of her duties as administrative head of the government, may initiate or prescribe measures that relate to particular aspects of government operations; and

WHEREAS, Administrative Order No. 45, Series of 2002, designates the Office of the Vice-President to oversee and supervise agreed development programmes, including the Seafarers' Welfare Program.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO, President of the Philippines, by virtue of the power vested in me by law, do hereby order:



PGMA Hologram # 17810



SECTION 1. *Philippine Seafarers' One-Stop Center (PSOC)* – There is hereby created a Philippine Seafarers' One-Stop Center (PSOC), under the supervision of the Department of Labor and Employment, where relevant government agencies engaged in the promotion of the interests and well-being of Filipino seafarers shall be represented to efficiently respond to the needs of Filipino Seafarers. In the exigencies of the service and where physical representation of a government agency in the subject center may not be necessary, the services of these agencies should nonetheless be made available through electronic means or other alternative mechanisms that may be put on site.

The PSOC shall adopt and utilize appropriate mechanisms, facilities, equipment and information technology to enable and allow it to respond to the magnitude of Filipino seafarers' concerns and demands.

The head of the PSOC shall have experience and qualifications relevant to the maritime industry, and shall be designated by the Secretary of DOLE from among the career officials of the DOLE and/or its attached agencies, to oversee the operations of the Center and ensure the delivery of efficient and quality service for the seafarers and their families.

SEC 2. *Representatives of Relevant Government Agencies.* - The following government agencies shall establish public assistance kiosks in the PSOC and assign their respective personnel thereat toward integrating all documentation-related services of agencies concerned in one facility. The agencies that are mandated to provide services in the PSOC are as follows:

- (a) Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)
- (b) Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA)
- (c) Commission on Higher Education (CHED)
- (d) Professional Regulation Commission (PRC)
- (e) National Telecommunications Commission (NTC)
- (f) Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA)
- (g) Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA)
- (h) Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA)
- (i) Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA)
- (j) National Bureau of Investigation (NBI)
- (k) Social Security System (SSS)
- (l) Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PHILHEALTH)
- (m) National Statistics Office (NSO)
- (n) Such other government agencies that the Secretary of DOLE may deem necessary

SEC 3. *Powers and Functions.* - The DOLE, together with the agencies enumerated in Section 2 hereof, shall establish and operationalize the PSOC not later than three (3) months from the effectivity of this Administrative Order.



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The PSOC shall have the following functions:

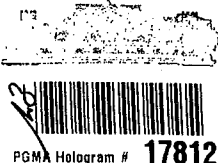
- (a) Operationalize and make available to the public, an integrated document processing center, which shall be physically located in one site towards reducing the time required on the part of the seafarers and the general public for official transactions;
- (b) Provide rationalized and streamlined systems and procedures governing the application for and acquisition of documents required by seafarers for their deployment overseas;
- (c) Automatic, whenever feasible, the process involved in the transaction and delivery of public services;
- (d) Implement pertinent government rules and regulations relative to the mandates of the agencies constituting the PSOC, and
- (e) Develop appropriate guidelines for the delivery of services at the PSOC.

The PSOC shall likewise ensure the following:

- (a) Simplification of systems and procedures and reduction of paper requirements to facilitate the deployment of seafarers;
- (b) Implementation of the full disclosure policy;
- (c) Adoption of a computerized and integrated system of registration of Filipino seafarers;
- (d) Elimination of unnecessary and duplicative requirements that go beyond the provisions of the STCW '95; and
- (e) Development and implementation of an effective information program, in coordination with manning or crewing agencies, and seafarers' organizations or unions, for the purpose of informing the seafarers of their rights, obligations, benefits and options attending to specific situations that they may face in the course of their employment.

SEC 4. Policy and Program Review to Promote Competitiveness. - The CHED, PRC, TESDA, MARINA and Maritime Training Council, and the PSOC shall undertake a periodic review of their policies, regulations and programs to ensure competitiveness and excellence among seafarers and shall submit a comprehensive report within six (6) months from effectivity of this Administrative Order and every year thereafter to the Office of the Vice President, containing information on measures undertaken and specific recommendations to address existing issues and concerns relevant to Filipino seafarers. Such review of policies, regulations, and programmes shall be undertaken in consultation with various stakeholders in the maritime industry.

SEC 5. Reportorial Requirement. - The PSOC, through the DOLE, shall submit a report to the Office of the Vice President, within six (6) months upon effectivity of this order on the extent and status of streamlining processes



pertinent to the operations of the PSOC and the specific mandates of its member agencies relevant to the promotion of Filipino seafarers' interests.

SEC 6. Funding Provisions. - Funding which shall in no case be less than twenty-five million pesos (P25,000,000.00), shall be provided to the DOLE for the operations of the PSOC during its initial year of operation, from available sources of funds from the Office of the President and the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation. The funding requirements of the PSOC thereafter shall be integrated in the General Appropriations Act.

SEC 7. Repealing Clause. - All administrative orders, proclamations, rules and regulations or parts thereof which are in conflict with this Administrative Order are hereby repealed and/or modified accordingly.

SEC 8. Effectivity. - This Administrative Order shall take effect immediately.

Done in the City of Manila, this 24th day of January, in the year of Our Lord, two thousand three.

By the President:


ALBERTO G. ROMULO
Executive Secretary



