

# **UNITED FILIPINO MARINE RADIO OFFICERS ASSOCIATION**

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**UNIFILMAROA**

01 AUGUST 2000

**THE HON. PETER MORRIS  
CHAIRMAN  
INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON SHIPPING (ICONS)**

**THRU:**

**CAPT. GREGORIO S. OCA JR.**

**PRESIDENT / AMOSUP**

**ASSOCIATED MARINE OFFICERS' & SEAMEN'S UNION OF THE PHILIPPINES**

Dear Sir:

**Re: POSITION PAPER**

Our association is determined to support the tasks and objectives of the ICONS for the betterment of the International Maritime Industry. At present there are more than two hundred thousand Filipino Overseas Seafarers representing 20% of the total Seafarers Worldwide.

In the prevailing issues raised by the Commission Members, UNIFILMAROA presents its views on the foregoing topics;

## **A.) BLACKLISTING OF SEAFARERS**

This is an act committed by employers which we believed it is uncivilized, unchristian, dictatorial practice and first step to unfair labor practices. Our association would like to request the intervention of the ICONS to give the government an ultimatum to absolutely stop the unfair labor practice of blacklisting.

- 1.) In the case of grave offenses committed by the seafarers, namely; drug trafficking, smuggling, direct assault with deadly weapons are reasonably considered for blacklisting. However, not for life-term ban but to the maximum of five years. Violating the same offense can be a proper way of depriving the seafarers' right for re-employment.
- 3.) Any minor offenses can never be a legitimate ground for blacklisting, instead, erring seafarers shall face temporary suspension corresponding to the violation committed.

## WATCHLISTING

This is a common practice by the Crewing and Manning Agencies that the subject Seafarers should get a clearance before working on board ship.

- 1.) Watchlisting of complaining seafarers is a concrete manifestation of harassment and is repulsive enough.
- 2.) It shows that POEA is biased and only protecting the interest of the shipowners and manning agencies.
- 3.) It gives only the seafarers hard time to renew their passport and other documents required by the government and manning agencies.

## B-) UNFAIR LABOR PRACTICES

The new standard contract for our Filipino Seafarers on board ocean going vessel is a concrete evidence that the Philippine government has no genuine political will to stop unfair labor practice.

- 1.) The provision in the standard contract repeatedly state that "Compensation and Benefits from injuries, illness or death of seafarers must be WORK RELATED to make sure that the nail is well driven-in in favor of the employers, it is no longer sufficient that he submits himself to a thorough medical examination, as it has always been the case. Now, the seafarers must make a full disclosure of his medical history." The disclosure will not bar him from being employed but will prevent the Seafarers from health benefits. The new standard contract transferred "burden of proof" to the seafarers. Our association would like to register our objection to the new standard contract for our Filipino seafarers. We also believe that the changes from the previous draft are purely cosmetic. The pitfalls are all intact.
- 2.) Seafarers repatriated with offenses before their repatriation should be initially referred to the Philippine Consulate Office for preliminary inquiry about the veracity of the charges to the seafarers made by the Master. Many instances, repatriation was only the product of ship officers personal interest. Repatriation must be in the country with Philippine Embassy or Consular Office. It is only in this process the Seafarers and the Master can justify to the consular arbiter given authority to resolve either to push repatriation or retain the concerned seafarers on board based on the result of their investigation.

## B FRAUDULENT CERTIFICATES

- 1.) In 1997 the United Filipino Seafarers (UFS) and Conference of Maritime Manning Agents (COMMA) lashed the Maritime Training Centers for issuing seamanship competency certificates to students even if they failed to attend.
- 2.) That Marine Consultancy Services are hiring unemployed seafarers in Luneta to attend Maritime Courses for the seafarers who already finished in the Maritime curriculum.

- 3.) Our association would like to request the Maritime Training Council (MTC) to investigate and ask the help of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to find the veracity of the report that "Deck Officers practice of paying the NTC examiners to be able to pass the GOC examination.

#### D.) OTHERS

#### "THE SAD PLIGHT OF THE DISPLACED MARINE RADIO OFFICERS IN THE MARITIME INDUSTRY"

Thousands of Marine Radio Officers (MROs) who had spent many years on board ships with foreign flags are now in the midst of terrible employment uncertainty as GMDSS was fully implemented.

- 1.) Some are able to finish the Fast Track BSMT Course implemented by the Commission on Higher Education but it is unfortunate that the Shipping Agencies are ignoring to accommodate us for shipboard employment by reason of over age while it is evident that other countries are considerate in accepting as deck crew.
- 2.) With our present ages and shipboard experiences, we make our most sincere request to exempt us from six months Shipboard Training thereby allowing to take the third mate licensure board examination in the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC).
- 3.) Our association therefore, is appealing to the kindhearted members of the Commission (ICONS) to re-hire Bachelor of Science in Marine Transportation (BSMT) graduates Marine Radio Officers as ORDINARY OR ABLE-BODIED SEAMAN as a better and more economic alternative to hiring fresh and young graduates.
- 4.) For the displaced Radio Officers unable to avail the MRO-BSMT FAST TRACK PROGRAM due to age requirement disqualification should be provided with livelihood program.

The whole membership of the United Filipino Marine Radio Officers Association (UNIFILMAROA) expresses its gratitude for giving us the opportunity to convey our views with regards to the vital issues as mentioned above.

Furthermore, we greatly appreciate that ICONS will be able to extend positive assistance to the prevailing unfavorable economic status of every displaced Marine Radio Officer as we understand that your commission is very much concern for the upliftment of social and economic well -being of every seafarers throughout the world.

Very respectfully yours,

Mr. Paul. S. Esber

President