

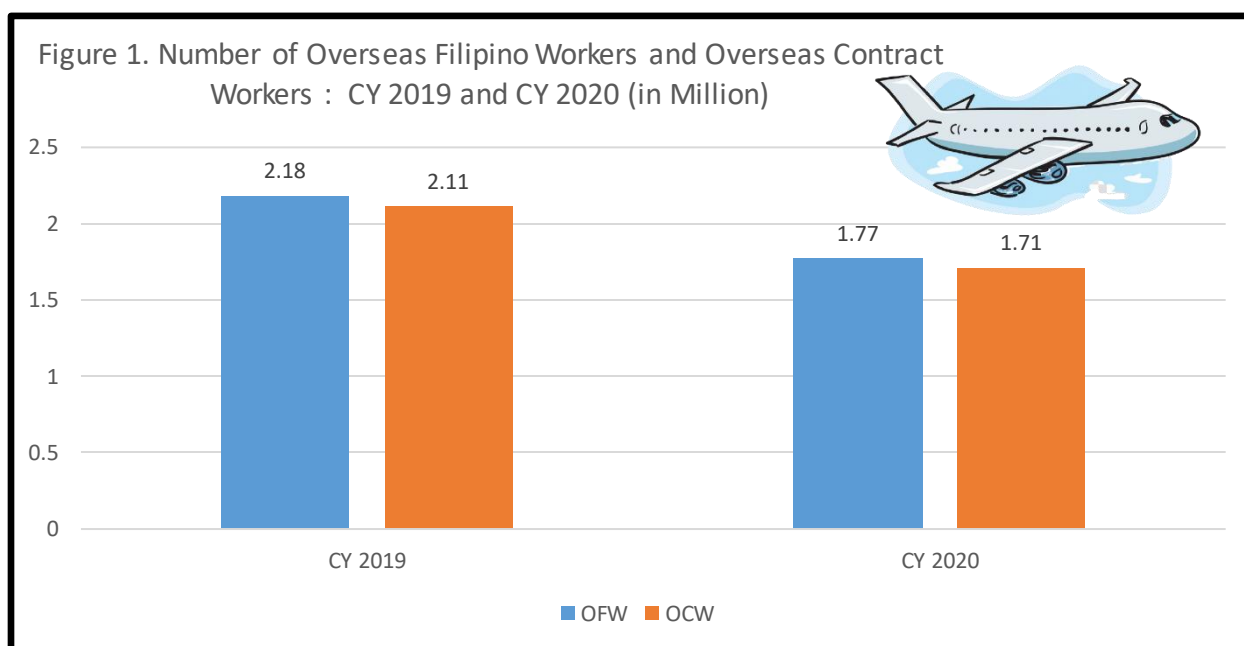


# SPECIAL RELEASE

## 2020 Overseas Filipino Workers

Date of Release: 18 May 2022  
Reference No. 2022-031

### 2020 Overseas Filipino Workers reach an estimate of 1.77 million



Note: Reference period is April to September 2019 and April to September 2020  
Estimates were based on the 2015 – based Population Projections  
Source: Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019 and 2020 Survey on Overseas Filipinos  
Picture: pngset.com

The number of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) decreased by 18.81 percent or 1.77 Million in 2020 from 2.18 million in 2019. Overseas Contract Workers (OCWs) or those with existing contracts comprised 96.40 percent or an approximate of 1.71 million of the total OFWs in the country. This also reduce the country's number of OCWs by 18.96 percent from 2019 in the same period April to September.

Other OFWs who worked abroad without visa or work permits such as tourist, visitor, students, medical, and other types of non-immigrant visas but were presently employed and working full time in other countries had 3.60 percent share in 2020 from 3.20 percent in 2019.

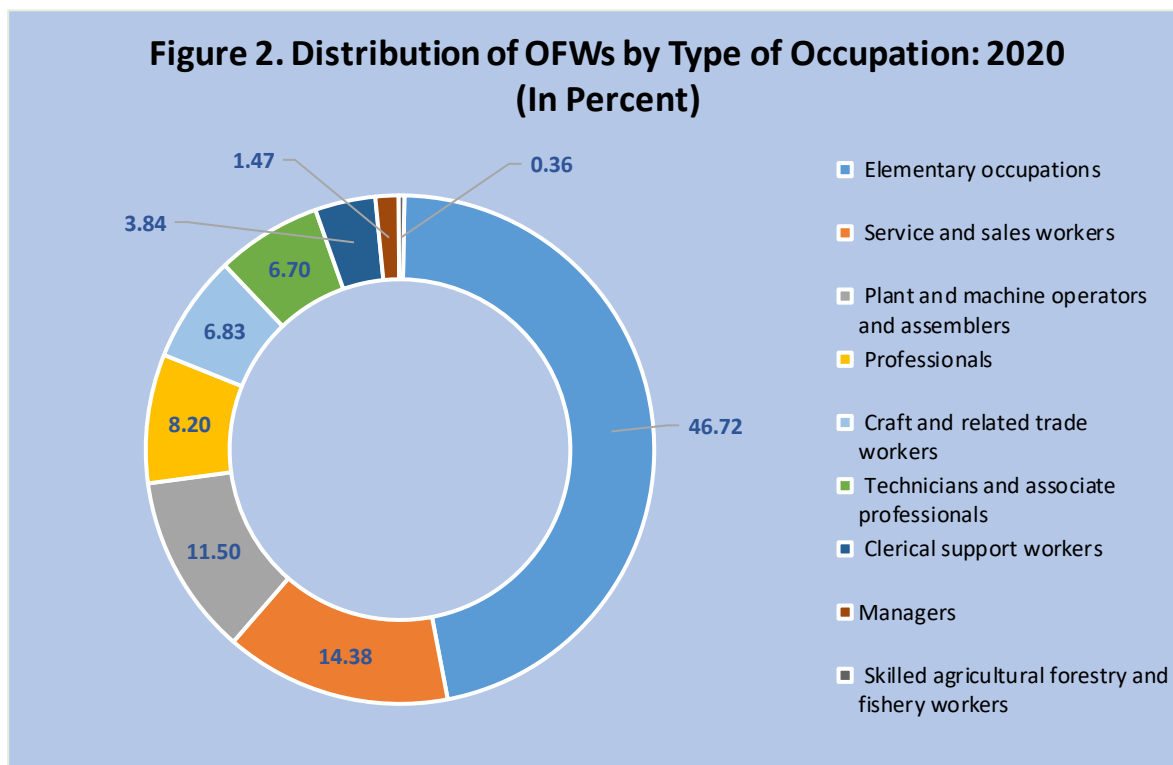


### Six out of Ten Overseas Filipino Workers are women

Women dominantly composed the Overseas Filipino Workers, accounting to an estimate of 59.60 percent or 1.06 million in 2020, and 4.2 percentage points higher than the estimated 55.40 percent in 2019.

### Elementary Occupations dominates the type of Occupation of the OFWs

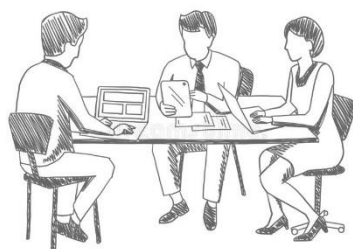
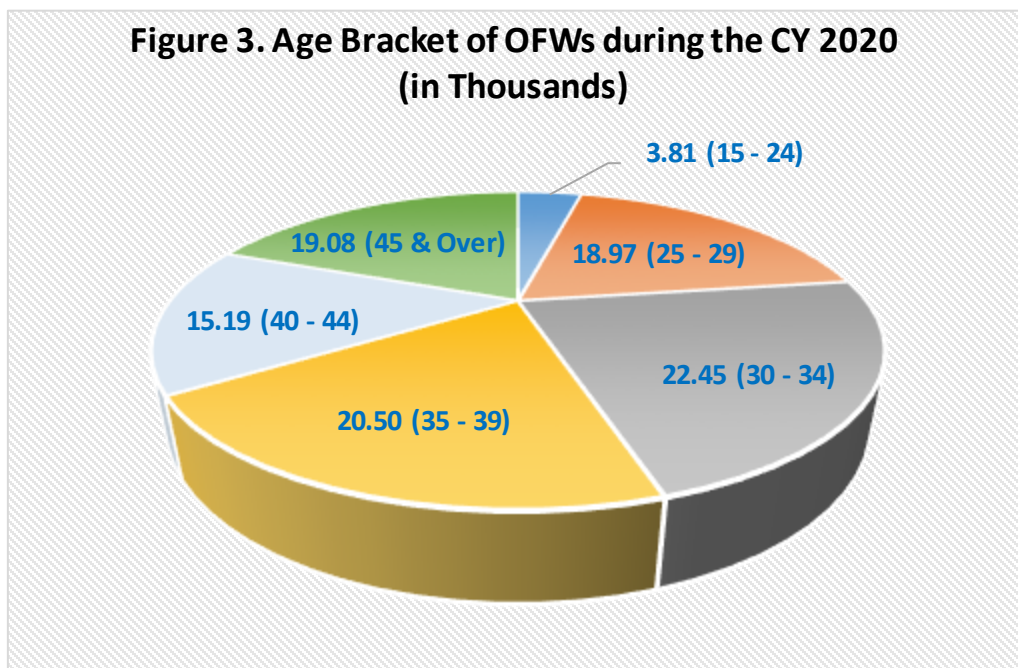
Five out of ten OFWs have elementary occupation. These include market vendors, street vendors, shoe cleaning, car washer, launderers and pressers, domestic helpers & cleaners, and wiper including window cleaners.



Service and sales workers composed of 14.38 percent of the total OFWs, and Plant and Machine Operators & Assemblers with 11.50 percent. The lowest was posted by skilled agricultural forestry and fishery workers with 0.36 percent.

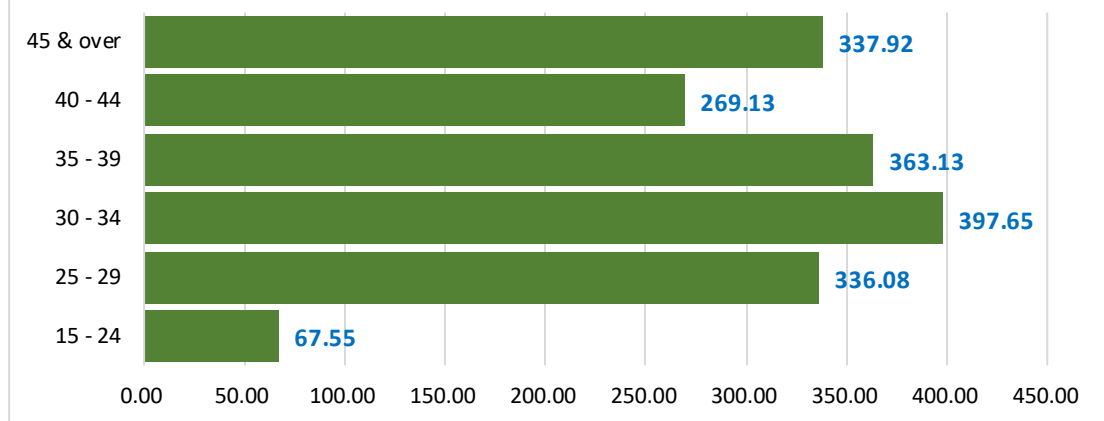
### Age 30 to 39 dominates the OFWs

Nearly half of the OFWs were at the bracket of age 30 – 39 or 42.95 percent. Followed by age 45 and over with 19.08 percent of the OFWs. The lowest were age 15 – 24 and 40 – 44 with 3.81 percent and 15.19 percent, respectively.



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 Source: Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019 and 2020 Survey on Overseas Filipinos  
 Picture: Dreamstime.com

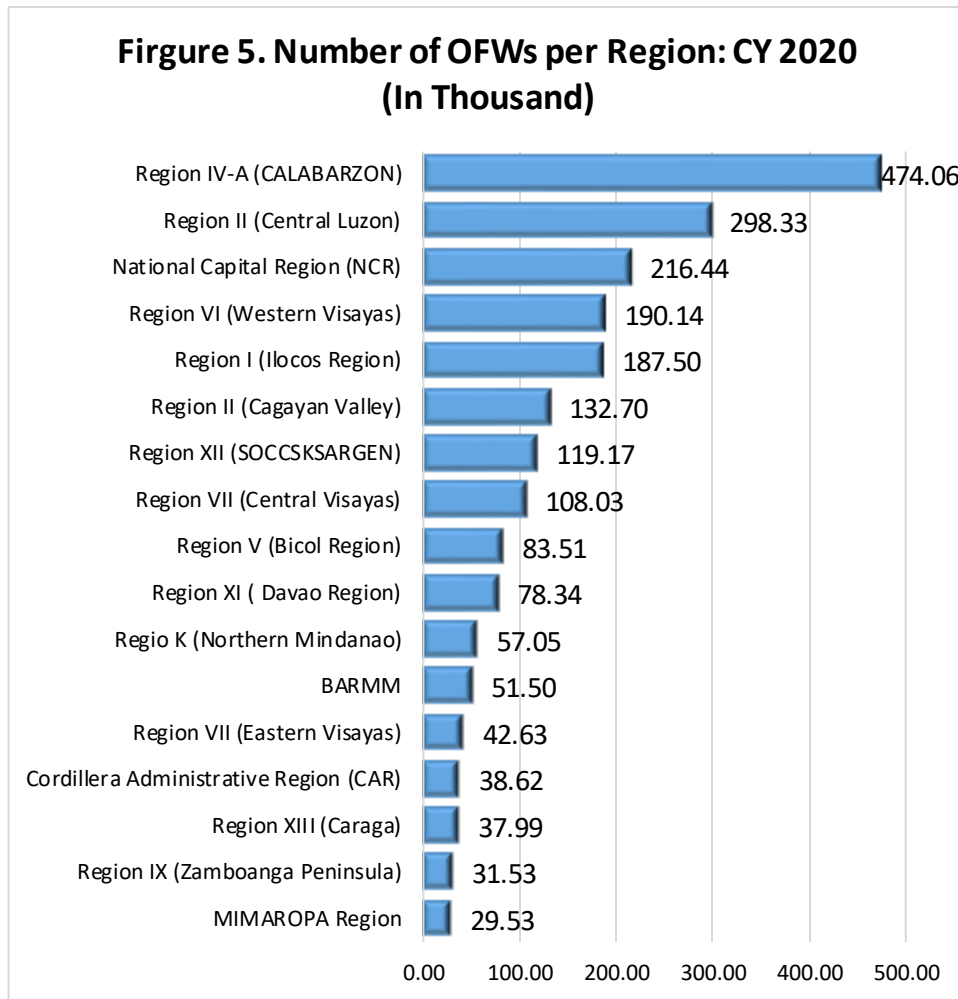
**Figure 4. Number of OFWs per Age Bracket during the CY 2020 (in thousand)**



Note: Reference period is April to September 2019 and April to September 2020  
 Estimates were based on the 2015 – based Population Projections  
 Source: Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019 and 2020 Survey on Overseas Filipinos  
 Picture: WDRfree.com

### **Age 30 – 34 compose of 397.65 Thousand OFWs**

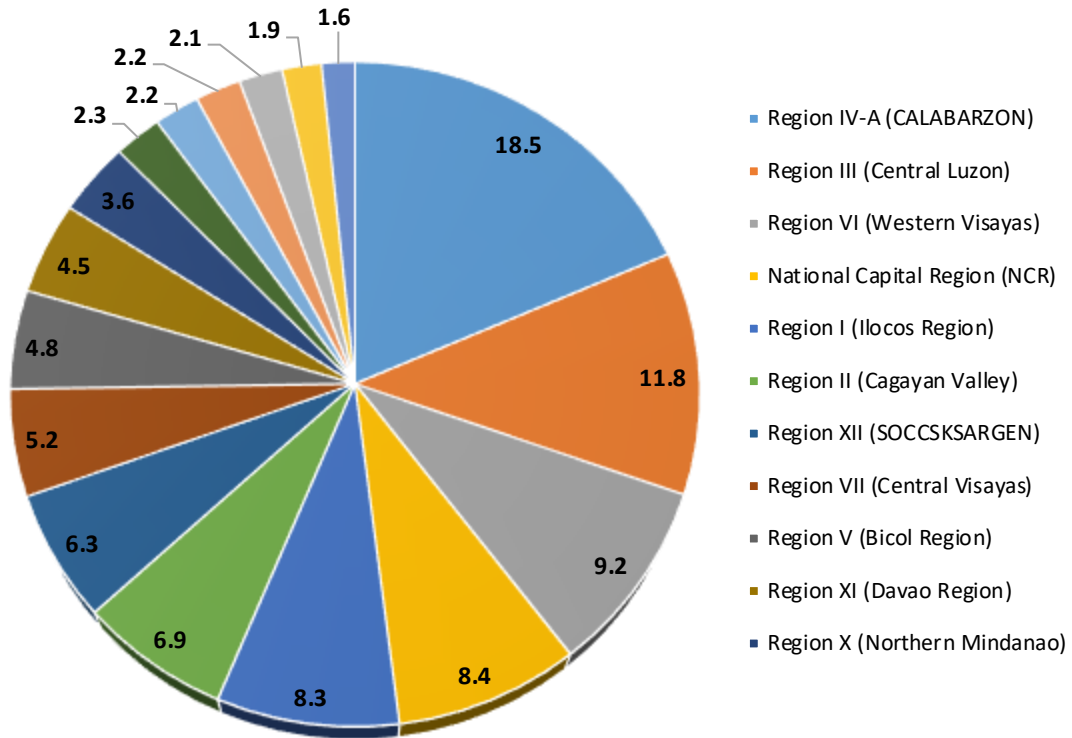
A number of OFWs composed the age bracket of 30 – 34 with 397.65 thousand, followed by 35 – 39 age range with 363.13 thousand. It has been noted that age 45 & over and 25 – 29 are marked at 337.92 thousand and 336.08 thousand, respectively. The lowest of which was observed at 15 – 24 age bracket with 67.55 Thousand.



### **Ilocos Region ranks no. 5 in the number of OFWs in the Philippines**

Out of the 17 Regions in the Philippines, Ilocos Region ranked fifth in the number of OFWs in the Philippines in 2020 with 187.50 thousand. The highest was Region IV-A (CALABARZON) with 474.06 thousand followed by Region III (Central Luzon) with 298.33 thousand. Meanwhile, NCR and Region VI (Western Visayas) recorded 216.44 thousand and 190.14 thousand OFWs, respectively.

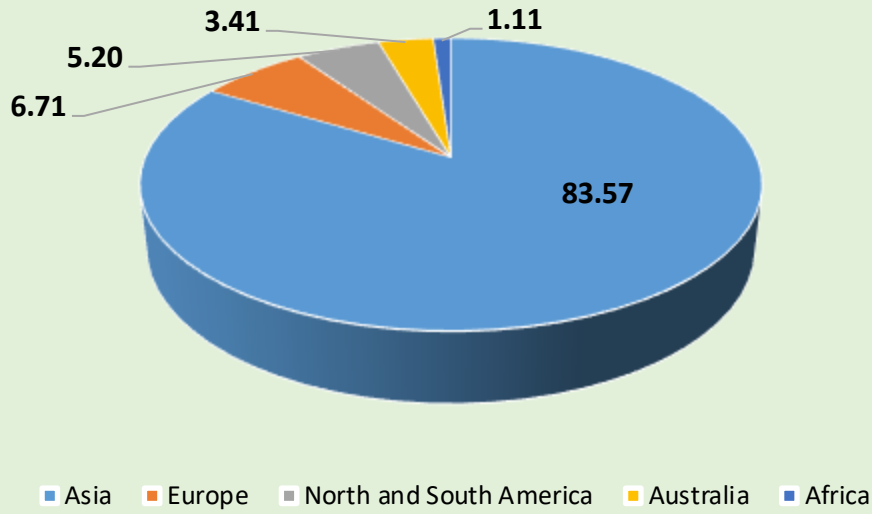
**Figure 6. Percent Distribution of Overseas Filipino Workers by Region, Philippines: 2020**



### Majority of the OFWs are assigned in Asia

Majority of the OFWs or 83.57 percent of OFWs were assigned in Asia, particularly in East Asia (Hong Kong, Japan and Taiwan), South East and South Central Asia (Malaysia, Singapore Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, and Thailand), and Western Asia (Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain, Israel, Lebanon, and Jordan). Meanwhile, the lowest number of OFWs were noted in Africa and Austria with 1.11 percent and 3.41 percent, respectively.

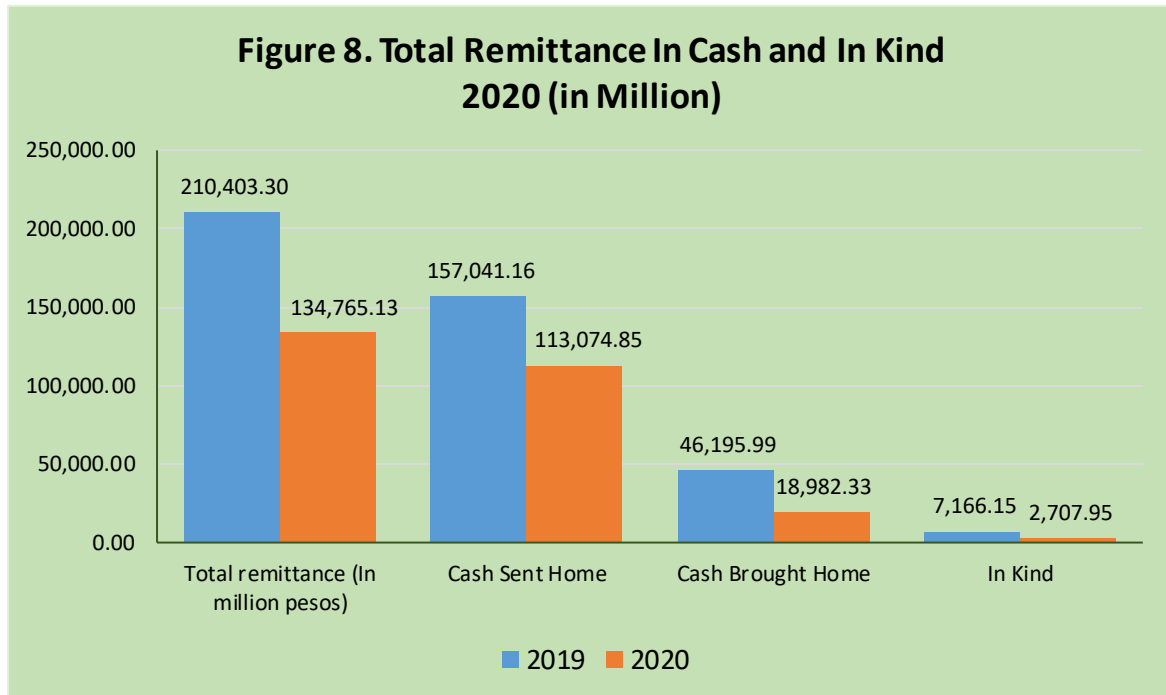
**Figure 7. Distribution of Overseas Filipino Worker by Place of Work: CY 2020 (in Percent)**



Note: Reference period is April to September 2019 and April to September 2020  
 Estimates were based on the 2015 – based Population Projections  
 Source: Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019 and 2020 Survey on Overseas Filipinos  
 Picture: GISGeography

## Total remittance reduce to 134, 765.13 Million from 210, 403.30 Million

The total remittance was reduced to 134,765.13 million in 2020 from 210, 403.30 in 2019. All remittances in the form of cash sent home, cash brought home and in kind were reduced due to the effect of the Covid-19 Pandemic and the reduction of employment abroad.





# TECHNICAL NOTES

## CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

### A. BACKGROUND

The Survey on Overseas Filipinos (SOF) is a nationwide survey designed to gather information on Filipino citizens abroad, including overseas workers, who left the country for employment during the five years preceding the survey, that is, from October 2015 to September 2020. Data on their remittances, for example, were gathered using the past six months as reference period. The SOF is conducted every year as a rider survey to the October round of the Labor Force Survey (LFS).

The data collection of the characteristics of overseas workers started in 1982 using a one-page rider questionnaire in the Integrated Survey of Households (ISH) and continued until 1986.

In 1987, during the revision of the LFS questionnaire (ISH Form 2), a column indicator for Overseas Contract Workers (OCWs) was added to get the estimate of the number of OCWs. With the increasing demand for information on overseas workers, the Survey on Overseas Workers (SOW) was resumed in 1991. The previous questionnaire was revised to generate more comprehensive data.

Data on international migration were gathered in the 1988 National Demographic Survey (NDS). With the expanded coverage of the 1993 NDS on health and immunization, the section on international migration was deleted from the NDS, but it was recommended for inclusion in SOW starting 1992. In 1993, the SOW was renamed to SOF.

### B. OBJECTIVES OF THE SURVEY

The SOF aims to provide data on overseas Filipinos particularly the overseas contract workers and their contribution to the economy. Specifically, the survey has the following objectives:

- to obtain national estimates on the number of overseas Filipinos including overseas workers and their socio-economic characteristics; and
- to provide estimates on the amount of cash and in-kind transfers received by the families and the modes of remittances.

## C. AUTHORITY OF THE SURVEY

The authority and mandate of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) to the 2019 Survey on Overseas Filipinos emanates from Republic Act (RA) No. 10625.

As provided in Article 5, Rule 4 of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of RA 10625, otherwise known as the Philippine Statistical Act of 2013, the PSA is primarily responsible for all national censuses and surveys, sectoral statistics, consolidation of selected administrative recording systems and compilation of national accounts.

### ***D1. Overseas Filipinos***

For purposes of this survey, the following are considered as overseas Filipinos as long as their departure occurred within the given five-year period:

1. Filipino OCWs who are presently and temporarily out of the country to fulfill an overseas work contract for a specific length of time, or who are presently at home on vacation but still has an existing contract to work abroad. They may either be land-based or sea-based.

a. *Land-based workers* – these are OCWs who are hired either by direct hiring of an employer abroad, or through the assistance of Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), or through a private and licensed recruitment agency. They may have returned to the Philippines for a vacation (annual or emergency leave), or have transferred to other employers, or were rehired by their former employer.

b. *Sea-based workers* – these are OCWs who worked or are working in any kind of international fishing/passenger/cargo vessels. Included also are OCWs who worked or are working for a shipping company abroad.

2. Other Filipino workers abroad with a valid working visa or work permit. Included also are crew members of airplanes such as pilots, stewards, stewardesses and others whose employers are foreign nationals.

3. Filipino workers other than those who work on contractual basis. These include Filipinos who went out of the country through backdoor means and worked there during the reference period.

4. Filipinos whose place of employment is outside the Philippines but whose employer is the Philippine government.

5. Filipinos who are sent abroad by the Philippine government or by private institutions for training, scholarship or any other similar purpose, even if they are known to be working abroad.

6. Filipinos working in other countries who are hired as consultants/ advisors of international organizations such as the United Nations, International Monetary Fund and others.

7. Filipino immigrants and residents in other countries.

8. Filipinos abroad who are holders of other types of non-immigrant visa such as visa for tourist/visitor, student, medical treatment and others.

## ***D2. Overseas Filipino Workers***

OFWs include OCWs who were presently and temporarily out of the country during the reference period to fulfill an overseas contract for a specific length of time, or who were presently at home on vacation during the reference period but still had an existing contract to work abroad. Also included were other Filipino workers abroad with valid working visas or work permits. Those who had no working visa or work permit (tourists, visitors, students, those seeking medical treatment, and other types of non-immigrants) but were presently employed and working full time in other countries were also classified as OFWs.

## **E. LIMITATIONS OF THE SURVEY**

The SOF has the following limitations:

1. Ideally, information about overseas Filipinos should be obtained directly from them. However, since this is not always possible, the information has to come from their relatives or any member of the household who knows the person who left for abroad. The OFWs included in this report are those whose families still reside in the country as of the time of survey visit.

2. The OFWs covered in this report were those working abroad during the period 01 April to 30 September 2020. The workers, who were at home on vacation from their jobs abroad who left earlier than April 1 of the reference year, were also included in this report as long as they worked during the specified reference period.

3. The SOF did not ask for the total salary received by the OFWs. Hence, the remittances presented in the results may just be a part of the total salary received by the OFWs.

4. Starting April 2016 round of the Labor Force Survey (LFS), the 2013 Master Sample (MS) design has been adopted. The number of sample household is around 45,000. The SOF, being a rider to the LFS, has adopted the 2013 MS starting October 2016. Careful evaluation must be

made in comparing the results of the 2019 SOF with other SOF results prior to the implementation of the 2013 MS.

5. The 2012 Philippine Standard Occupational Standard (PSOC) was adopted starting October 2016. The 1992 PSOC had been used prior to October 2016.

  
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JYY/TBO/DAPR