

[**MEMORANDUM ORDER NO. 244, March 22, 2007**]

WHEREAS, Article 12 of the Presidential Decree No. 442 states that it is the policy of the State to protect every citizen desiring to work locally or abroad by securing for him the best possible terms and conditions of employment.

WHEREAS, there is a sustained increasing demand for Filipino seafarers for deployment abroad as a result of the acknowledgement by foreign employers of the competency and dedication of Filipino seafarers to their work.

WHEREAS, in order to ensure the continued viability and quality of Filipino seafarers being deployed locally and abroad and to encourage direct foreign investments in our local maritime industry there is a strong need to update the present laws in response to changing needs of the local maritime industry to make it globally competitive taking into account the trends, standards and practices in international maritime. Our present maritime laws likewise needs to be updated and harmonized to address the festering problem of red tape in the hiring and deployment of seafarers and provide better employment opportunities and protection to seafarers.

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

Section 1. Lead Agency. The Department of Transportation and Communication through the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) is hereby directed to formulate and craft a proposed law that shall address the needs and problems confronting the local maritime industry.

Section 2. Agency Support. The MARINA shall coordinate with the following agencies; DOLE, DTI, DFA, DOH, DOF, DOE, CHED, through the cooperation of the private maritime sector, other interested maritime and seaman's group and the international shipping community.

Section 3. Coverage. The proposed law should include improving and streamlining government rules and procedures on the hiring and deployment of seafarers and other related workers of the maritime industry with the end objectives or eradicating red tape and ensuring that only qualified workers are hired and employed locally or abroad. The proposed bill should likewise encourage direct foreign investments in the maritime industry by coming up with a rationalized rules and regulations on foreign investments and providing a schedule of incentives. In this regard, the DOTC may coordinate and consult with the different government agencies in the preparation of the proposed law.

Section 4. Report. The DOTC shall submit its report and proposal to the Office of the President not later than three months from the issuance of this Order.