



## PAMBANSANG SAMAHAN NG MGA NARS NG PILIPINAS, INC.

(PHILIPPINE NURSES ASSOCIATION, INC.)  
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### PHILIPPINE NURSES ASSOCIATION POSITION STATEMENT ON THE JPEPA

The Filipino nurses constitute the biggest foreign-educated nurses in the United States. There is also a growing number of nurses in Europe and Middle East. They are dubbed to be the best nurse in the world. Global respect for the quality of caring and the competencies of the Filipino nurses have undoubtedly evolved from the Filipino nurses produced by the Philippine Nursing Education, regulated by the Philippine Board of Nursing, and provided experience and training by the Philippine Nursing Practice. The Philippine government shall jointly maintains the pride, dignity and professionalism of Filipino nurses.

The Filipino nurses politely decline the offer of Japan as it is currently embodied in the JPEPA. Nurses strongly feel that the bilateral agreement shortchanges the professional qualifications of Filipino nurses and exposes to potential abuse and discrimination those who may be unwittingly enticed to seek Japanese employment under its bilateral channel.

#### **Even Japanese Nurses are Aware that Reforms are needed in the Local Japanese Nurses Condition!**

Filipino Nurses are calling for the rejection of the JPEPA with keen regard and utmost consideration to the official position of the Japanese Nursing Association (JNA) that reforms and improvement in the working conditions salaries and benefits of local Japanese nurses should first be instituted before the entry of Filipino nurses. They should institute to improve the working conditions of local Japanese nurses first before they can ensure that Filipino nurses will have favorable working conditions in Japan.

#### **Discrimination:**

Under the bilateral agreement, the odds are unfairly stacked against us. It could be said that with the JPEPA Japan slightly opened the gate to the yard, but double-bolted the door to the house.

Under the present inequitable terms of the JPEPA, a qualified Filipino nurse will not be accorded the equal status of a full-fledged Japanese nurse practicing in Japan.

Indonesian Nurses, who studied nursing in three years only without licensure examinations and two years experience, are currently accorded better placement and career opportunities by Japan than Filipino nurses who had four years of nursing education, passed the licensure examination and had 3 years working experience.

#### ***Not Nursing Practice but Training***

Even with a bachelor's degree earned from four years of higher education in the Philippines, proof of competence by virtue of having passed the Philippine Licensure Examination and three solid years of work experience, the Filipino nurse will go to Japan not to fully practice the nursing profession but to become a **trainee**. Under the JPEPA, the Filipino nurse must train under the supervision of a Japanese nurse for up to three years. If unable to pass the nursing licensure examination in Japanese, the Filipino nurse would have to be deported.

*Not salaried but given allowance...*

*Neither employees nor workers...*

*Hence, not protected!*

As trainees who have not yet passed the Japanese Licensure Examination, the Filipino nurses risk receiving mere **trainee allowance** (*not salary for a professional practice of nursing*). They also risk having virtually zero employment right in Japan as they are considered neither employees nor workers under Japan's Immigration Control Act. Specific provisions committing Japan to international core labor standards and the protection of the rights of migrant health workers are also absent in the agreement.

Also, Japan's failure to ratify ILO Convention no. 111, otherwise known as the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, is an indication that the Japanese government is not keen on addressing the persistent problem of discrimination on the basis of race, gender, language and social status in Japan.

### ***Better opportunities in other countries***

Thus exposed to generally unfavorable working conditions in Japan, the Filipino nurse would be spending three years of his or her life hoping for real work when he or she could have a rewarding professional career in other countries abroad with better remuneration than what Japan currently offers even to its local Japanese nurses.

### ***Unrealistic Demand for Filipinos to Speak Nihongo, a suspicious agenda of cheap labor***

Filipino nurses acknowledge that communication skills form an integral part of health care service delivery and that a working facility with the Japanese language is a valid requirement for nursing practice in Japan. **But the language skills required by the JPEPA are so high as to constitute an almost impregnable barrier to our entry.** Filipino nurses, given the unnecessarily stringent requirements, will most likely end up providing **cheap labor and quality nursing care** as nursing trainees in Japanese health care facilities.

### **Philippine Situation not worst than Japan Situation**

If only Filipino nurses are aware of the plight of the Japanese nurses, they will realize that we have a similar situation here in the Philippines. Even with the promulgation of RA 7305 or the Magna Carta of Public Health Workers, the greater benefits and increased remuneration for nurses mandated by that law are ignored by the Philippine government. This is a major factor to the many reasons why Filipino nurses decide to look for foreign employment. As the Philippine situation is not ideal for Filipino nurses, the JPEPA offers a blurred opportunity that discriminates the Filipino nurses, and in effect attract Filipino nurses to serve Japanese (instead of Filipinos) for a future that after all does not belong to them. Nurses should rather see the value of staying in the Philippines to serve the Filipinos (and given professional accord and protection by the government) that being "exported," discriminated and without clear career path and security.

### **A Nurse is Not a Commodity!**

The economic values of JPEPA should exclude the nurses for the issue is beyond just the influx of economic variables but the **dignity of professionals** that Philippines have been proud of in the global market. A Filipino professional nurse, reduced to a trainee, paid allowance, and given neither protection nor assurance of tenure and career path in Japan, may indeed bring in economic productivity but shall certainly hurt the self-esteem and the rightful pride of being a professional nurse in particular and of being Filipino in general.

"Beggars can't be choosers." True! But Filipino nurses are not begging for job in Japan for the rest of the world has been wanting the service of Filipino nurses.



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