



EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
Philippine Overseas Labor Office
Tokyo, Japan

MID-YEAR LABOR MARKET INFORMATION

as of June 2020

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marie Rose C. Escalada'.

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31 January 2021

I. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has re-shaped the migration cycle. It has an enormous impact on the mobility of migrant workers particularly due to the imposition of border restrictions and travel limitations all over the world. This has also impacted economic activities which resulted to company bankruptcies, temporary or permanent closure of businesses, retrenchment, non-renewal of workers' contracts, and freezing of overseas hiring plan, among others.

In Japan, to prevent the spread of novel corona virus, the government announced border enforcement measures to national from 73 countries including Philippines, which was expanded to 152 countries, effective 03 April 2020. The measure includes compulsory quarantine, suspension of visa validity and suspension of visa exemption.

And on 07 April 2020, the government declared a state of emergency in relation to the novel coronavirus disease to seven (7) prefectures namely: Saitama, Chiba, Tokyo, Kanagawa, Osaka, Hyogo, and Fukuoka. From 16 April, it has also decided that areas subject to measures under the state of emergency are extended to all prefectures. The government lifted the state of emergency on 25 May 2020.

These policies have tremendous ripple effect on the deployment of overseas Filipino workers in Japan and on the employment prospects of those who are in-country. OFWs who are scheduled to be deployed have to cancel and re-schedule their flights indefinitely. OFWs who are in Japan are coping with the pandemic both health and psychological well-being, and some from the temporary closure of the companies or performance venues. This includes shortened work hours and working from home arrangement which is a new experience for workers.

The June 2020 Statistics on Number of Filipinos Residents under the jurisdiction of POLO Tokyo released by Immigration Services Agency, Ministry of Justice last 23 December 2020 reveals the following; 56 percent of deployed OFWs are trainees under the Technical Intern Training Program (TITP) of Japan, 24% of the OFWs are professionals such as engineers, language teachers, marketing officers, superintendent, managers, etc.; and the remaining 20 percent of the OFWs are divided into skilled labors, registered nurses and caregivers, housekeepers under the National Strategic Special Zones, specified skilled workers, professors, instructors, researchers, overseas performing artists, and highly-skilled professionals.

The data further show that record of increase in the number of OFWs in the following categories are noted; professionals, trainees under the TITP, professors, instructors, medical services and nursing care. The increase despite the border enforcement measures might be that the supervising organizations or the employers' requests for approval of entry were granted following submission of plan for strict protocol of quarantine. Others such as medical and nursing care are on-site employment after passing the National Examinations for Caregivers and Nurses. On the other hand, deployment of overseas performing artists has been severely affected.

Despite the challenges faced by POLO Tokyo and the employers on the new normal, there is no adverse effect on the submission of employment documents as shown on the number of documents received and processed by the post from January-June 2020.