

**The 2005 National Manpower Summit;  
Toward Generating the Right Workers  
Response from Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP)**

(Greetings)

We have seen the outline of the results from consultation-workshops held in the different sectors: 1) Cyber-services; 2) Mining; 3) Health Services; 4) Hotel and Restaurant; 5) Agri-business; 6) Medical Tourism; 7) Creative Industries; 8) Aviation; and, 9) Overseas Employment.

We took a quick look at the overview of the sectors, labor market opportunities, labor market challenges, and the action agenda..

... And we are driven to appreciate the seriousness of the participants in the sectoral discussions – to have produced those results.

I think this is the first (successful) attempt to identify these parameters for so many sectors in a more organized way. Of course, many of these problems, issues and prescriptions have been around for many years and have been correctly identified in the past.

We would like to stress only a few points in the results which labor feels very strongly about.

In agriculture, the prices paid farmers for agricultural products should be rationalized. The current prices are not enough for farmers and producers to exert more efforts at bigger and better production.

We believe that the problems on encouraging night shift work (working at unholy hours), the large turnover rates (or attrition), or the exodus of professionals overseas -- should be left to market forces. Our view is that either the sectors concerned come up with better incentives (higher pay, higher rates, better work and life conditions, or whatever), or these sectors should learn to work with the less and less qualified workers available.

A moratorium on foreign recruitment would be viewed by workers as oppressive, given prevailing domestic wage and benefit rates in relation to the needs of workers and their families. Better incentives for workers to stay home and for enterprises to train more should be considered.

Long term career options and prospects for advancement in certain sectors, particularly in contact services, hardly exist. More contact centers would require more trainers and supervisors, true, but only a miniscule portion of the numbers of workers desiring advancement. For most workers, the viable options are advancement outside the sector or advancement outside the country.

The issues of supply of quality workers, the need for competent trainers/teachers/institutions, the imperatives of adopting standards/global standards, and the implications of overseas demand/brain drain, among other things – are common in the sectors.

How do we proceed from the identification of skills needed to their production? World-class teachers, curriculum, and learning institutions are required to produce these skills at international standards. How do we go about achieving all these?

To improve the jobs and skills matching exercise at the domestic and international levels, the PESOs, particularly in the poorer areas of the country, should be funded and strengthened.

The consultations also showed us the complexity of the problems and issues and the very many things that need to be done. A logical next step would be setting Priorities for action -- among the many things listed -- for an orderly and effective resolution of these problems and issues in the sectors.

TUCP would like to see a multipartite group monitor implementation and follow-up action on the recommendations from this Summit. This group could track what things are being done and what more needs to be done in relation to the Objectives.

An alternative monitoring scheme would be Industry or Sectoral Boards, which could also coordinate vocational-technical training for their respective sectors.

The results of the discussions could be strengthened in the area of ensuring decent work for workers in the sectors. I have always wondered why workers believe that decent work is never done, why wages and benefits are deficient, regardless of the state of the enterprise, industry, or sector.

TUCP will participate in ensuring faithful implementation of the policy, strategy, and action recommendations produced by this Summit. TUCP pledges vigilance in ensuring that decent and productive employment will be promoted with these policies, strategies and actions.