

Comments on JPEPA
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1. The Philippines is at the losing end of JPEPA.

The Philippine government will forego tariff revenues between P3-P9B per year. Philippine industries (garments, electronics, appliances, etc.) are also expected to lose due to the tariff-free imports from Japan. We also expect to be the dumping ground of toxic waste from Japan.

On the other hand, all the identified benefits for the Philippines that are supposed to result from JPEPA are mere government projections. Certainly, government can do more than that. The losses to be sustained by the Philippines are real losses. On the other hand, the projected benefits remain in the realm of the imagination.

To paraphrase Jerry Maquire, we should ask government first: SHOW US the MONEY.

2. JPEPA is disadvantageous to the Philippines as far as OFWs are concerned.

(a) The system under JPEPA is very difficult to comply for would-be migrant workers;
(b) It is also no different from the trainee system being implemented by Japan that will result in discrimination and exploitation of migrant workers.

3. The JPEPA falls short of the legal standards for the promotion of migrant workers rights that are embodied in the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and Section 4 of Republic Act No. 8042 which contains the criteria to which countries the Philippines should deploy workers.

4. JPEPA does not promote the Filipinos' rights to development. Overseas migration/employment must be a matter of informed free choice. This can only be achieved if the right of the Filipino people to development (within the Philippines) is being addressed side by side with the protection and promotion of the rights and welfare of migrant workers and their families.

The promotion of overseas employment without the corresponding protection of migrant workers' rights based on international law and standards and without the corresponding promotion of the Filipino people's right to self-development will not work for the benefit of the Filipino people. Certainly, brain drain, especially in the health sector, is disadvantageous to the Philippines if the right to development is not addressed.

Within this context, JPEPA as it is, will not contribute to the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers nor promote the Filipino people's right to development.

JUNK JPEPA!