Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 1152

Introduced by
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Representative, TUCP Partylist

A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR IMMEDIATE RATIFICATION BY THE
PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONVENTION NO.
188, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS WORK IN FISHING CONVENTION, 2007 (NO.188)

WHEREAS, the plight of Filipino seafarers as fishing crew in foreign commercial fishing vessels
have long been ignored and unaddressed, and the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to fore the
abuses, exploitation, unsafe and slave-like work conditions that they have to endure onboard and
in international waters, while performing critical tasks of providing us, not only of the much
needed foreign remittances, but important source of food and nourishment;

WHEREAS, occupations in commercial fishing vessels is considered to be one of the world’s
hazardous occupations, and for the Philippines, which has not ratified Work in Fishing
Convention, 2007, (No.188), the deployment of Filipino seafarers as fishing crew can be likened
to jettisoning them overboard without any means of safeguards for safety and survival despite their
being essential workers in ensuring food security and foreign remittances to the economy; we
have seen this in several cases of abandonment in the high seas brought before the House
Committee on Overseas Workers’ Affairs (HCOWA);

WHEREAS, Work in Fishing Convention, 2007, (No.188), which was adopted by the General
Conference of the International Labor Organization on 14 June 2007 and enter into force on 16
November 2017, ensures improved occupational safety and health and medical care at sea and that
sick or injured fishers receive care ashore; receive sufficient rest for their health and safety; have
the protection of a written work agreement; have the same social security protection as other
workers; and sets in place mechanism to ensure compliance with and enforcement of its provisions
by member-States who have ratified the Convention;

WHEREAS, ILO Work in Fishing Convention, 2007, (No.188), labor standards protect workers
on board all commercial fishing vessels and provide flexibility for the largest and smallest boats;

WHEREAS, the fishery industry provides jobs to some 35 Million workers worldwide, 27 Million
workers are in capture fisheries and about hundreds of millions of jobs are indirectly dependent on
the industry. In the Philippines, some 4,225,000 were employed in the fisheries industry or 12.5%
of the total 33.8 Million employed workers in April 2020, not to mention the thousands of Filipino seafarers in foreign commercial fishing vessels;

WHEREAS, as of August 2020, ILO Convention No. 188 has been ratified by eighteen (18) countries, and the Philippines despite the continuing risk of a “red card” (fish ban) from the European Union (EU) markets for illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, remains on the sidelines oblivious of the exploitation of Filipino seafarers in foreign fishing vessels. A Philippine ratification will not only ensure protection to Filipino seafarers onboard foreign fishing vessels but also provides assurance to markets of our tuna and its by-products of observance of the IUU regulations;

WHEREAS, the ILO Work in Fishing Convention No. 188 compliments a previous ILO Convention that the Philippines has already ratified, ILO Convention No. 185 (Seafarers’ Identity Documents Convention), ensuring the special protection of seafarers and the facilitation of their entry into territories for the purposes of shore leave, transit, transfer or repatriation;

WHEREAS, laws and regulations protecting Filipino seafarers in foreign commercial fishing vessels are often non-existent, hence, the ratification of ILO Convention No. 188 will set into motion laws and regulatory mechanisms that will ensure protection to millions of our workers in the fishing industry as well as the status of the Philippine fishing industry and its markets;

WHEREAS, the ratification requirement of consultations with the stakeholders by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the Department of Agriculture’s Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR) and other concerned government agencies have been going on and off since 2015, including the required gap analysis, hence, the ratification by the Philippine Government of ILO Convention No. 188, now needs the approval and signature of the President of the Philippines and endorsement for confirmation or concurrence by the Philippine Senate.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, that the House of Representatives urges the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Agriculture’s Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR) and other concerned government agencies to fast track the Philippine ratification process of ILO Work in Fishing Convention, 2007, (No.188), or ILO Convention No. 188, for approval and signature of President Rodrigo R. Duterte and confirmation by the Senate of the Philippines, in the interest of thousands of Filipino seafarers in foreign commercial fishing vessels, including the exporting fisheries sector of the country.

Adopted,

RAYMOND DEMOCRITO C. MENDOZA
Representative, TUCP Partylist

1 PHILIPPINE STATISTICS AUTHORITY (April 2020), Employed Persons by Sector, Subsector, and Hours Worked, Philippines, April 2019 and April 2020.
2 Countries that ratified ILO Convention No. 188 are: Angola, Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Congo, Denmark, Estonia, France, Lithuania, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Senegal, South Africa, Thailand, and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
3 The Philippines was issued YELLOW CARD in 2014 but managed to get it rescinded in April 2015. The European Commission (EC) issued the IUU fishing regulation in 2010 which identifies marine fisheries products by their exporting state or the flag under which shipping vessels operate. It holds those countries accountable for IUU activities within their jurisdictions and regularly issues a list of IUU vessels based on information provided by Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs). A country found committing IUU is first issued a YELLOW CARD, if the country improves on its practices, it will be rescinded, but if it does not improve, it will be issued a RED CARD, a ban.