



National Alliance for Filipino Concerns

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Filipino Migrants' Agenda for Empowerment, Sustainability, and Peace Prepared by NAFCON USA, June 2016



NAFCON General Assembly in Long Beach, California, in October 2014

The National Alliance for Filipino Concerns (NAFCON) USA formally congratulates Philippine President-Elect Rodrigo Duterte on his recent victory in the May 2016 Philippine elections. With vigilant groups like NAFCON closely watching every step of the process, no amount of corruption, cheating or electoral fraud by the Philippine political elite or wealthy oligarchs can ever again stop the Filipino people from exercising their democratic rights to choose their own leaders and government. Filipino Americans look forward to a new day for the Philippines, hopefully starting with the administration of Rodrigo Duterte, where there can be positive changes and new opportunities for everyday Filipinos to thrive and improve their quality of life. Filipino American groups like NAFCON understand that it is not only the role of one new President to change Philippine society; it is also the role of every Filipino, no matter where they are, to work for peace, justice, and equity at home and abroad.

Formed in 2003, NAFCON is a multi-issue alliance that serves to protect the rights and welfare of Filipinos in America, the Philippines, and around the world by fighting for social and economic justice, freedom and democracy. For nearly 13 years, [NAFCON has successfully waged numerous campaigns](#) for the Philippines to be a true democracy, sovereign and free from

foreign influence, for an accountable government, and for justice for victims of exploitation, trafficking, neglect, and human rights violations.

The Filipino people elected Duterte because of his track record of pro-people policies and actions during his time as the Mayor of Davao. Some of those actions include protecting the environment from large scale mining and logging, advancing indigenous peoples' rights to life and ancestral land, and engaging in diplomatic relations with sovereignty movements and movements for self-determination, like CPP-NDF, MILF, and MNLF. NAFCON will continue to advocate so that President Duterte can continue implementing pro-people policies with the support of the majority of Filipinos, who are fed up with the corrupt and elite rule of landlord and corporate families in the Philippines. Based on over a decade of impactful work with tens of thousands of Filipinos and supporters of the Filipino community across the U.S., NAFCON offers this document, "Filipino Migrants' Agenda for Empowerment, Sustainability, and Peace" as our platform of the main issues and priorities that many Filipino immigrants, migrants, workers and families in America are tackling and which need the attention of the new administration and its consular offices abroad.

Support Filipino Workers and Their Families in the Philippines and Abroad:

Despite the importance of overseas Filipinos' remittances to the Philippine economy and the exorbitant fees they pay to work abroad, overseas Filipinos who face abuse and exploitation cannot access sufficient, timely legal and social services from their government. The Philippine government should protect the rights of its citizens abroad by combatting and repealing anti-migrant laws and policies, and enacting a genuine and pro-migrant Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) Charter that would expand benefits and services for migrant workers and families. Philippine Consulate/Embassy posts (particularly labor attaches, OWWA reps and other migration-related positions) should be assigned to pro-migrant advocates and these assignments should be done in consultation with local organizations of Filipino migrants to ensure that migrants' welfare is of the utmost priority for those serving in these overseas posts.

Eliminate Human Trafficking and the Labor Export Policy:

With 6,000+ Filipinos forced to leave the Philippines every day due to joblessness, landlessness, and government corruption in their home country, the next administration should establish a sustainable job generation and reintegration program based on national industrialization. It should stop all forms of illegal recruitment and human trafficking, and pursue justice and indemnification for victims of human and labor rights violations, especially women and minors.

Eradicate Government Corruption and the Pork Barrel System:

In the wake of the Pork Barrel scandal, it is essential that the new administration vigilantly bring to light the serious epidemic of graft and corruption in Philippine government at all levels, including the misuse of funds intended for overseas Filipino workers. It should convict political officials and co-conspirators for plundering the Filipino people and perpetuating their poverty.

Provide Effective Education and Health Services:

Scrap the K-12 system that forces families into deeper debt to pay for the increased cost of education. Due to the lack of job development and national industrialization in the Philippines, current technical courses only train Filipinos to take employment abroad. The new administration should steer away from the privatization of social services, so that the needs of the poor majority of the people with regard to education and health services will be addressed.

Implement Genuine Agrarian Reform:

Rather than maintaining the current agricultural economy dependent on export, the new administration should protect Filipino peasants and farmers from being forced off the land they till, which provides livelihood for themselves and their families.

Pursue Justice for Victims of Environmental Calamities:

Given the government's historical insufficient and inhumane response to Typhoon Haiyan and other calamities, the new administration must provide immediate relief and long-term rehabilitation to communities impacted by environmental disaster. It should hold corrupt government officials accountable for failing to provide timely financial and material aid (including money and goods donated from around the world) to victims.

Protect the Environment and End Exploitation of Our Natural Resources:

The destruction of the environment and climate change have been exacerbated by the greed of foreign and local businesses that extract the trillions of dollars' worth of natural resources in the Philippines. The new administration must stand against the incursion of multinational mining corporations and the foreign ownership of national industries. Scrapping the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 would be a positive first step.

Hold the Aquino Administration Accountable for the Kidapawan Massacre, Mamasapano Carnage, and other Crimes Against the People:

Under the Aquino Administration and its policies which favored neoliberal economic policies and U.S. military interests over national sovereignty, communities in the Philippines, especially indigenous communities, have become increasingly militarized. The new administration must hold government entities and personnel accountable for crimes against the Filipino people.

Stand Against State-Sponsored Human Rights Violations and Impunity:

Filipino citizens have been criminalized, harassed and even murdered for exercising their democratic rights. There must be government accountability and justice for the Filipino people, and an end to the culture of impunity with which the military and paramilitary forces operate.

Resume the Peace Process:

Peace negotiations have been delayed and unilaterally terminated by previous administrations, preventing the genuine resolution of the ongoing civil war in the

Philippines. We [applaud the efforts of the incoming administration](#) to begin preliminary discussions with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) that lay the groundwork for renewed peace negotiations between the GPH and NDFP. The new administration must resume the peace process and ensure that international human rights laws and previous agreements signed by both parties are observed and implemented. We support the release of political prisoners by the Duterte administration as a gesture of goodwill and stand against wrongful convictions under prior regimes.

Uphold the Rights of National Minorities:

Local and foreign corporations, supported by Philippine domestic policies, have depleted the natural resources and destroyed the culture of the indigenous peoples and the Bangsamoro people. The new administration must stand true to its promise to defend them against big mining companies and paramilitary forces, support their safe return to the communities they were forced to evacuate from, and ultimately respect their rights to their ancestral land and for self-determination.

Stand for National Sovereignty:

We support the new administration's pronouncement to uphold an independent foreign policy meant "not to please anybody but the Filipino interest." A good start would be to terminate the Visiting Forces Agreement and the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement which have given the U.S. military access to our land, water, people and resources, resulting in the deaths of Filipinos like Jennifer Laude. We also welcome the diplomacy President-Elect Duterte vowed to utilize to resolve the West Philippine Sea conflict with China.

The National Alliance for Filipino Concerns (NAFCON) is hopeful that the Philippine government under President-Elect Duterte can move forward a Progressive and Pro-people agenda that allows for genuine socio-economic and political reforms benefitting the majority of the Filipino people. Filipino American communities and NAFCON will continue to be at the forefront of protecting the rights and welfare of Filipinos in the Philippines, the United States and around the world, by engaging the Philippine government and holding it accountable to our platform of progressive measures for Filipino migrants around the world. In the end, the Filipino people will continue to push for genuine social change, peace, justice and progress in their homeland, wherever we may be.