

PROVIDING A MORE EXPEDITIOUS SYSTEM AND SIMPLER FORMS FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT AND FACILITATION OF FOREIGN TOURIST TRAVEL TO THE PHILIPPINES

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 408, November 09, 1960

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By virtue of the powers vested in me by law, I, Carlos P. Garcia, President of the Philippines, do hereby order:

1. That with a view to establishing a competitive position for the Philippines in international tourism and for the purpose of encouraging and facilitating foreign travel to this country as a means of further enhancing our prestige abroad and strengthening our economy—

(a) All existing regulations as may be determined by the Board of Travel and Tourist Industry as hampering the expeditious facilitation of foreign tourist travel to the Philippines are hereby authorized to be suspended, except in such cases where because of conditions prevailing at the point of origin of travel, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs feels that suspension is not justified. The said Board is hereby authorized to implement this Order and it shall advise the Office of the President of the Philippines and all other offices concerned of every action taken in accordance herewith.

(b) The Secretary of Foreign Affairs shall prescribe a simple and concise form and an expeditious system of travel documentation of foreign tourists applying for admission to the Philippines, requiring only such absolutely essential information and data as will constitute a record of the identity of the applicants for visas and the purpose of their travel to the Philippines.

(c) The visa fee is hereby fixed at not more than ₱3.00 or its equivalent in acceptable foreign exchange as fixed by the Central Bank unless by agreement with a foreign government such fee is entirely dispensed with on a reciprocal basis. All other charges now required in connection with the documentation of foreign tourists coming to the Philippines are hereby suspended.

2. That in order to carry out the foregoing objectives—

(a) The Secretary of Foreign Affairs may negotiate and enter into agreements with foreign governments desiring to benefit from this Order so as to obtain reciprocal benefit for the Philippines.

(b) The Board of Travel and Tourist Industry shall devise an integrated form that meets substantially the basic requirements of the government offices and agencies concerned, on the basis of the internationally approved embarkation and disembarkation card, to the contents of which may be added such other essential data as may be required by offices other than the Bureau of Immigration that deal with foreign tourists, with a view to rendering it simple, concise, and easy to accomplish. This integrated form shall not be of more than one sheet. No traveler entering the Philippines or applicant for travel documentation shall be required to accomplish more than an original copy.

(c) Upon approval and adoption of the integrated form referred to hereinabove in paragraph b, all offices and agencies of the government shall suspend all their forms which they required foreign tourists to accomplish upon applying for admission to or upon entering the country.

(d) The personal presence of applicants for travel documentation shall not be required except when a preponderance of evidence in the hands of a documenting officer justifies the need for such personal appearance.

(e) All travel documentation applied for shall be completed and made available to the applicants as quickly as possible and in no case shall a decision to withhold the documentation applied for be delayed beyond six hours of receipt of an application.

(f) Except in cases specifically excluded by the Secretary of Foreign Affairs as provided in paragraph 1-a of this Order, and except also where there is reasonable evidence of danger of violation of existing regulations, bona fide foreign tourists, documented as such, shall not be required to file a customs declaration form and their luggage shall be exempt from customs examination if an oral examination proves satisfactory.

3. For purposes of this Order, a bona fide foreign tourist is deemed to be “any person without distinction as to race, sect, language, or religion who enters the territory of a Contracting State other than in which that person, normally resides . . . for legitimate non-immigrant purposes, such as touring, recreation, sports, health, family reasons, study religious pilgrimages, or business,” as defined in Article 1, section (b) of the U.N. Convention Concerning Customs Facilities for Touring of June 4, 1954, to which the Philippines is a signatory, and remains there for not less than twenty-four hours and not more than 59 days, as now fixed by existing laws.

4. This Order shall apply only to bona fide foreign tourists as above defined and not to citizens or residents of the country returning from foreign sojourns to whom all existing laws and regulations shall continue to apply as heretofore: Provided, however, That in order to encourage Filipinos residing abroad to visit the Philippines in 1961, which has been declared under Proclamation No. 715, dated October 27, 1960, as Jose Rizal Year with the slogan “Visit the Philippines—See the Orient,” such Filipinos as may come and remain during that year for not more than 59 days shall be accorded every privilege extended under this Order to bona fide foreign tourists and exempted from routine requirements to which they are ordinarily subjected.

5. Transit passengers holding valid visas to a destination beyond the Philippines shall not be required to apply for or hold Philippine transit visas and they shall be allowed to debark from the vessels bringing them to the Philippines and to re-embark on the same or any other vessels, provided they shall not stay in Philippine territory longer than seventy-two (72) hours. The Secretary of Foreign Affairs may, however, exclude from the application of this provision nationals of any country whose entry into Philippine territory is contrary to any existing policy or not deemed by him to be in the public interest. With this in view, the Immigration authorities on duty shall issue appropriate landing card permits which the passengers shall turn in upon departure.

6. Such transit passengers as may wish to remain longer as tourists shall apply to the Bureau of Immigration for an extension of stay not to exceed two weeks and same shall be granted upon receipt of application unless there is derogatory information on record against them and provided no evidence is produced to justify denial of their application.

7. The Board of Travel and Tourist Industry shall, from time to time, review existing travel regulations and institute such changes as may be deemed necessary and warranted under the provisions of this Order. In order to insure adequate consideration of all factors involved, the Board may create an Advisory Group, composed of not more than five (5) members of the National Facilitation Committee of the Philippines, designated for the purpose by its Chairman, to be regularly consulted regarding the proper facilitation of travel and any proposed changes in travel regulations.

This Order shall take effect immediately and the rules prescribed in accordance herewith shall become effective upon their promulgation by the Secretary of Foreign Affairs and the Board of Travel and Tourist Industry,

respectively.

Done in the City of Manila, this 9th day of November, in the year of Our Lord, nineteen hundred and sixty, and of the Independence of the Philippines, the fifteenth.

(SGD.) CARLOS P. GARCIA

President of the Philippines

By the President:

(SGD.) NATALIO P. CASTILLO

Executive Secretary

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