

LETTER OF INSTRUCTIONS NO. 163, February 07, 1974

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TO: All Concerned

The Homecoming Program for Overseas Filipinos (Letter of Instruction No. 105, issued 31 July 1973), otherwise known as the Balikbayan program, has been an overwhelming success. While projected arrivals by February 28 was 30,000, the 35,000th Balikbayan participant has already actually arrived as of this date.

Numerous requests and petitions for the extension of the Balikbayan program have been received by the Office of the President and the Department of Tourism from individual Overseas Filipinos, from associations thereof, and from officials of the Philippine Foreign Service. They cite as reasons the non-coincidence of the original Homecoming Season (1 September 1973 to 28 February 1974) with the school vacation period overseas, and the lack of time of Overseas Filipinos to arrange for their vacations and leave of absences from their occupations due to the suddenness of the launching of the Balikbayan program.

A common reason, moreover, is that, with the stories about the new Philippines related by Balikbayan participants who have returned to their overseas residences, our countrymen who were unable to participate in Balikbayan are now more eager than ever to observe for themselves the New Society in action and to share the pride of the new Filipino in himself and in his reborn nation.

I am, therefore, extending the Homecoming Season or the Balikbayan program for another six (6) months effective 1 March 1974 to 31 August 1974 to enable more of our overseas countrymen and their families or their descendants to visit the motherland. Pursuant to this extension, the following instructions are hereby issued:

- Unless otherwise specified in this LOI, all provisions of LOI No. 105, issued 31 July 1973, shall remain in effect.
- Unless otherwise specified in this LOI, all orders and instructions issued by every Department, Bureau or entity of the Government in implementation of LOI No. 105 shall remain in effect.
- The Philippine Air Lines is directed to offer fare reductions up to a minimum of 50% for round-trip travel for Overseas Filipinos as defined under LOI No. 105 from all overseas points served by PAL to Manila and return. In addition, PAL will offer special fares Overseas Filipino students and Overseas Filipino family groups participating in Balikbayan. PAL will continue to offer 30% reduction in domestic air fares for Balikbayan participants. All incentives offered under this LOI are applicable to all Balikbayan participants regardless of the carrier they take in coming to the Philippines.
- The Philippine National Railways shall offer 30% reduction in fares to Balikbayan participant.
- The Department of Finance and/or its bureaus concerned shall draft and implement rules and regulations granting the following incentives in addition to the extension of the temporary Tax Holiday benefit under LOI No. 105:
- Exemptions from the payment of customs duties and taxes on personal effects brought home by Overseas

Filipinos who have become permanent residents of naturalized citizens of the other lands, and who have signified their desire to become permanent residents of the Philippines as proved by their presentation of the official approval of change of residence by the authorities concerned in their respective foreign host countries.

- Tax exemptions for Overseas Filipinos in the same above-mentioned categories, and subject to the same proof of change of residence, in the purchase of locally-manufactured vehicles, household appliances, professional instruments and other tools of trade, occupation or employment provided such purchases are made locally with the United State currency.

- The Philippine National Bank, through its overseas offices, shall offer credit incentives to Balikbayan participants in connection with their transportation and other expenses involved with their homecoming.

- The Department of Local Government and Community Development, in coordination with the Office of the President, the Department of Transportation and the Department of the Public Works, Transportation and Communications shall again draw up a program of rewarding the provincial, city, municipal and barrio governments which are able to invite the most number of Balikbayan participants during the period 1 March to 31 August 1974.

- Provincial, city, municipal and barrio governments, which can afford it, shall encourage, as part of training in civic involvement, schoolchildren to write Overseas Filipinos by underwriting the mailing expenses of the campaign.

- The Department of Trade as well as local governments shall more vigorously and more efficiently encourage the participation of the private commercial and business sector in the matter of offering hospitality discounts to Balikbayan shoppers not only as a goodwill gesture but also as a means of promoting Philippine product.

- To solve one of the problems encountered in the Balikbayan program, the Barangay system shall be made to operate so that local residents expecting the arrival of relatives or friend from overseas shall so inform their respective Local Hospitality Committees so that the proper reception shall be accorded the arrivals.

- The National Hospitality Committee, through the Local Hospitality Committees, shall develop as focal points for the extended period of the Balikbayan program the local town fiestas in the same manner as Christmas '73 was the focal point of the first phase of the Balikbayan program. However, all concerned are enjoined to comply with the spirit of General Order No. 15, issued on 5 October 1972, which calls on all citizens to avoid ostentatious display of wealth and extravagance including lavish town fiestas. As with Christmas '73, let us make our town fiestas the occasion for spiritual rebirth, for giving thanks to Our Lord and our patron saints for their continued blessings on ourselves, our communities and our effects for a better life.

Done in the City of Manila, this 7th day of February, in the year of Our Lord, nineteen hundred and seventy-four.

(Sgd.) FERDINAND E. MARCOS

President

Republic of the Philippines

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