

**[ REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7157, September 19, 1991 ]**

**AN ACT REVISING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 708, AS AMENDED**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:*

SECTION 1. *Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Philippine Foreign Service Act of 1991."

SEC. 2. *Table of Contents.* - The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

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**Title I  
GENERAL PROVISIONS**

SEC. 3. *Declaration of Policy.* - The State shall pursue an independent foreign policy. In its relations with other states, the paramount consideration shall be national sovereignty, territorial integrity, national interest, and the right to self-determination.

SEC. 4. *Objective.* - The main objective of this Act is to reorganize and strengthen the Philippine Foreign Service in order to:

1. Upgrade the qualifications of the Career Foreign Service Corps and thereby enable its officers and employees to serve effectively the interests of the Republic of the Philippines abroad;
2. Strengthen the capability of the Career Foreign Service Corps to conduct studies, analyses and evaluation of events, both domestic and international, that will serve as guidelines for achieving an independent foreign policy for the country;

3. Ensure broad representation of the Philippine society in the foreign service and, further, to ensure equal opportunities in the enlistment and recruitment of officers and employees taking into account the ethnic composition of the country;
4. Institute improvements in the selection and training of personnel so that only competent persons of good moral character are recruited in the Service;
5. Provide that promotions in the Service shall be on the basis of merit;
6. Guarantee permanence or security of tenure of the career personnel of the Service during good behavior and satisfactory performance of duty;
7. Provide suitable salaries, allowances and benefits that will attract personnel from all walks of Philippine life and to appoint persons to the highest positions in the Service solely on the basis of merit and demonstrated capability in the promotion of national interests;
8. Provide a comprehensive and flexible framework administration of the foreign service consistent with modern practices in this field; and
9. Consolidate into one act all provisions of the law relating to the administration of the foreign service.

In pursuance of the foregoing objective, the principle of nondiscrimination with respect to sex, creed, language, ethnic identity and religion shall be strictly enforced.

SEC. 5. *Definition of Terms.* - When used in this Act, the term:

- a. "Government" means the Government of the Philippines;
- b. "Constitution" means the 1987 Constitution of the Philippines;
- c. "President" means the President of the Philippines;
- d. "Department" means the Department of Foreign Affairs;
- e. "Institute" means the Foreign Service Institute;
- f. "Secretary" means the Secretary of Foreign Affairs;
- g. "Undersecretary" means the Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs;
- h. "Government agency" means any executive branch of the Philippine Government, or any corporation owned or controlled by the Government of the Philippines;
- i. "Service" means the Foreign Service of the Philippines which includes all officers and employees of the Department of Foreign Affairs in the home office and/or foreign service;
- j. "Home office" means the Department of Foreign Affairs and its offices in the Philippines;
- k. "Post" means all Philippine embassies, missions, consulates general and other foreign service establishments maintained by the Department of Foreign Affairs;
- l. "Chief of mission" means the head of an embassy or other diplomatic missions of the Philippines, or any person appointed by the President to such position, whether serving in the home office or foreign service; and
- m. "Principal officer" means the head of a consulate or consulate general of the Philippines.

SEC. 6. *Undersecretaries.* - Upon recommendation of the Secretary, the President shall appoint three (3) undersecretaries to advise and assist the Secretary in the formulation and implementation of the Department objectives and policies, and to coordinate and oversee the operational activities of the Department of Foreign Affairs.