

[EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 597, January 12, 2007]

**EXTENDING FURTHER THE DURATION OF OPERATIONS OF THE
PRESIDENTIAL MIDDLE EAST PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE
(PMEPC) TO JUNE 30, 2007**

WHEREAS, the term of the Presidential Middle East Preparedness Committee (PMEPC) expired on December 31, 2006 pursuant to Executive Order (EO) No. 549 dated July 18, 2006;

WHEREAS, tension in the Middle East continues to exist particularly in Iraq and also in its neighboring countries, including Lebanon, Syria, and Israel, which poses serious threats to the security of overseas Filipino workers in these areas;

WHEREAS, there is an urgent need for the PMEPC to continue to assess and monitor developments and update contingency measures to ensure the safety of Filipinos in the Middle East, notably in such countries above mentioned, and to uphold the current ban on the deployment of Filipino workers to Iraq;

WHEREAS, the PMEPC is also tasked to provide continuing assistance to the Department of Foreign Affairs, as well as to other government agencies concerned with OFW safety, security, and protection, in the formulation and implementation of policies, plans, and modes of coordination in such areas as East Timor and the Korean Peninsula;

WHEREAS, under Section 31, Chapter 10, Title III, Book III of the Administrative Code of 1987, the President has the continuing authority to reorganize the functions of the Office of the President.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO, President of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by law, do hereby order the extension of the duration of the PMEPC to June 30, 2007, or unless otherwise directed by the President.

SECTION 1. Function. – The PMEPC shall continue to exercise its functions and responsibilities as provided under Executive Order No. 159 dated December 23, 2002, in relation to Executive Order No. 194 and Executive Order No. 195, both dated April 14, 2003, until June 30, 2007.

SECTION 2. Composition. – The membership of the Committee, as enumerated under Section 3 of Executive Order No. 159, as amended by Executive Order No. 549, is further expanded to include one representative from the Bureau of Immigration.

SECTION 3. Funding. – The Committee shall be provided an additional funding allocation of FIVE MILLION PESOS (Php5,000,000.00) for its administrative and operational expenses to be provided by the Office of the President. Additional financial requirements that may be needed by the Committee shall be sourced out