



### **RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF NORTHERN MARIANAS ISLANDS (CNMI)**

The Philippine Consulate General (PCG) in Agana, Guam reported the following developments in the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI) in relation to the deployment of Filipino workers in Saipan:

- The transition period for the implementation of US immigration law in the CNMI which began in 2009, is scheduled to end on 31 December 2014. On 08 May 2008, the Consolidated Natural Resources Act (CNRA) was signed into law. It established the “federalization” of, or the application of the US immigration law in the CNMI starting 2009. The CRNA amended the 1976 covenant between the US and the CNMI that had given the CNMI government the authority to administer its own immigration system. The transition period for the implementation of US immigration law in the CNMI began in 2009, and is scheduled to end on 31 December 2014;
- Under the CNRA a transitional work permit program in the CNMI for foreign workers was established. The program stressed that the number of work permits which is renewed annually must be reduced on a yearly basis and reach zero during the period of transition of 5 years ending on 31 December 2014, but subject to a possible extension.
- The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) allocated to grant up to 22,417 CW-1 work permits for 2011 and up to 22,416 CW-1 work permits in 2012. Unused permits will not carry over to the next year. Future permit allocations will be smaller than in the prior year and will be determined on annual basis.

- US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) reported that, from 07 October 2011 through 13 November 2012, approximately
  - 1,863 employers filed, 6,220 I-129 petitions sponsoring 12,562 CW-1 workers;
  - Total of 4,896 petitions were approved consisting of 8,733 sponsored workers; and
  - 418 petitions have been denied, consisting of 612 sponsored workers.
  
- The US Secretary of Interior submitted a “Report on the Alien Worker Population in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands” in April 2010. The report stated that 22,917 of the total 29,700 work permits for 2008 were issued to foreign workers, with the Philippines comprising 18,500 or 62% of the total workers’ population.

*Source: DFA-Office of American Affairs  
10 December 2012*