MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 2021-019

FOR: ECONOMIC ZONE DEVELOPERS/ENTERPRISES
    ECONOMIC ZONE ADMINISTRATORS/MANAGERS/OICs

FROM: BGEN CHARITO B. PLAZA MNSA, PhD
      DIRECTOR GENERAL

DATE: 17 March 2021

SUBJECT: TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF TRAVEL INTO THE
          PHILIPPINES OF FOREIGN NATIONALS

Pursuant to Memorandum Circular No. 5 dated 16 March 2021 from the IATF –
National Task Force Against COVID 19 (see attached), entry of foreign nationals,
among others, will be temporarily suspended beginning 20 March 2021 until 19
April 2021.

We wish to inform you that PEZA will continue to receive and process
applications/requests for Travel Ban Exemptions for Endorsement to and further
evaluation/appropriate action of the Department of Foreign Affairs — Office of the
Consular Affairs (DFA-OCA).

We shall keep you updated of any development.

For the information and guidance of all concerned.
A. On 15 March 2021, the Philippines recorded 5,464 new COVID positive cases, which is the highest report of positive cases in the last 6 months.

B. This significant rise in cases since the start of the year is highly likely to be attributed to increased transmission due to non-compliance to the minimum public health standards, especially during gatherings, increased mobility of people, delays in detection and isolation of patients, and the entry of SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern having potential increased transmissibility.

C. According to the press release of the Department of Health (DOH) dated last 13 March 2021, the sustained biosurveillance efforts of the University of the Philippines - Philippine Genome Center (UP-PGC), the UP National Institutes of Health (UP-NIH), and the DOH, have confirmed additional cases of the variants of concern. There were 59 new cases positive for the B.1.1.7 variant (UK variant), 32 additional cases positive for the B.1.351 variant (South Africa variant), and one (1) case positive for the P.1 variant (Brazilian variant).

1. Among the additional fifty-nine (59) B.1.1.7 variant cases, 30 are local cases, 18 are Returning Overseas Filipinos (ROF)s, and 11 are currently being verified whether local or imported. This brought the total number of B.1.1.7 cases in the country to 177.

2. Among the thirty-two (32) B.1.351 variant cases, 21 are local cases, 1 is an ROF, and 10 are still being verified as to their location, bringing the total number of B.1.351 cases in the country to 90.

3. The one (1) case found with the P.1 variant is a Returning Overseas Filipino (ROF) from Brazil.

B. In light of efforts to prevent the entry of SARS-CoV-2 variants from other countries and the further rise of cases, all concerned agencies are hereby directed to limit the number of inbound international passenger arrivals to only One Thousand Five Hundred (1,500) a day and to temporarily suspend the entry of Foreign Nationals and Returning Overseas Filipinos who are non-OFWs beginning 0001H of 28th March 2021 until 19th April 2021, except the following:

1. Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs)
2. Philippine Nationals living abroad who are not OFWs and are employed in critical sectors or positions,
3. Students registered with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) or accredited by the Philippines Accreditation Council for Higher Education (PAsHE), and their accompanying dependents
4. Filipino Nationals travelling for official purposes and who are not OFWs
5. Diplomats, consular officials, international organizations, and their accompanying dependents
1. Holders of 9(c) visas;
2. Medical repatriation and their escort's duly endorsed by the Department of Foreign Affairs-Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs (DOFA-UMWA) or the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA);
3. Distressed OFWs duly endorsed by the Department of Foreign Affairs-Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs (DOFA-UMWA);
4. Emergency, humanitarian, and other analogous cases approved by the NTF COVID-19.

E. This directive shall be given the appropriate and widest publicity by all concerned agencies.

FOR GUIDANCE AND APPROPRIATE ACTION.