

NEWS RELEASE

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POEA Governing Board approves reforms on deployment of domestic helpers

The POEA Governing Board recently approved a series of resolutions defining policy reforms that seek to improve the lot of household workers. The new policies which took effect December 16, 2006, include upgrading of skills of the workers, orientation course on country-specific culture and language, protective mechanisms at the job sites, obliging employers to shoulder the cost of deploying the domestic helper, and increasing the minimum salary to a level commensurate to their acquired competencies.

In upgrading the capabilities of the worker, all applicants for domestic helper shall undergo skills assessment by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). TESDA-certified workers will be issued Certificate of Competency. Domestic helpers with years experience as household workers abroad can directly go through TESDA skills assessment system.

The worker will also undergo a country-specific language and culture training to be sponsored by the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) free of charge to the worker.

The POEA Governing Board also approved the minimum wage of US\$400, doubling the prevailing wage rate of US\$200 especially in the Middle East countries.

The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration shall not process contracts of employment of domestic helpers without the TESDA-issued COC and the OWWA-issued certificate of completion of the orientation of country-specific language and culture.

The “no-placement-fee” policy for host countries where laws and regulation requires the employer to pay the cost of hiring will be strictly applied to recruitment and placement of domestic helpers. Any violation by the recruitment agency will result to the cancellation of license. With highly trained household workers, recruiters in the Philippines can demand higher service fees from employers, which include the placement fee that is usually asked from the worker.

Also under the new policy, the Philippine Overseas Labor Offices (POLO) will be strict in their pre-qualification system to determine the employer’s fitness to hire domestic workers, including personal interview of the employer. The POLO and the POEA shall blacklist employers who have committed cases of abuse and maltreatment against Filipino workers and cases of contractual breaches especially non-payment or underpayment of salaries. ###