



NEWS RELEASE

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POEA not taking over the recruitment of Filipino overseas workers

Administrator Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz said the government, particularly the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) has no desire of taking away from private recruitment agencies the function of recruitment and deployment of Filipino workers overseas.

Baldoz said that contrary to published reports, the POEA will limit its recruitment to service the manpower requirements of foreign government clients only and the recruitment of hundreds of thousands of Filipino workers will continue to be serviced by the private recruitment agencies licensed by POEA.

Some members of the recruitment industry have accused the government of taking away from the private sector the task of deploying overseas Filipino workers.

“The policy is for the government not to compete directly with the private sector which is expected to deliver the target of one million decent overseas jobs a year”, Baldoz said.

Baldoz clarified that the POEA is not expected to handle recruitment on a large scale except for its small share of the deployment volume representing the limited hiring of its small group of clients and special hiring programs covered by bilateral agreements like Taiwan and Korea.

She however warned that POEA shall remain vigilant in actively managing the overseas employment program and will always be ready to intervene if malpractices of recruitment agencies remain unabated to the prejudice of rights and interests of the workers.

Baldoz said the deployment of POEA through its Government Placement Branch barely reaches 3 percent of the total one million deployment.

Baldoz explained that the decision of the Korean government to implement the Employment Permit System (EPS) only through a public organization in specific sending countries was an aftermath of the malpractices of some recruitment agencies and brokers. Other than the Philippines, the EPS is also implemented in Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Mongolia and Sri Lanka.

As the counterpart agency of Korea's Ministry of Labor, the Department of Labor and Employment designated the POEA to act as a sending agency under a memorandum of understanding signed by both countries.

According to Baldoz, the POEA has the capacity to handle the EPS program and has since deployed some 20,000 Filipino workers since its pilot testing in August 2004.

Baldoz said the EPS has built-in protection mechanisms by way of laws governing the employment of foreign workers in Korea. The Filipino workers are covered by a grievance mechanism implemented by the Korean Ministry of Labor. On-site problems are attended to by the Philippine Overseas Labor Office at the Philippine Embassy in Seoul.

Baldoz added that the Memorandum of Agreement with United Arab Emirates was signed by the Secretary of Labor and Employment to provide better protection to our Filipino workers and in no way prohibits the recruitment by licensed recruitment agencies for the UAE labor market. Similarly, all markets in all different provinces of Canada subject of bilateral negotiations for the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding like that of Saskatchewan province, shall remain in the hands of private recruitment agencies.

The bigger challenge according to Baldoz is for the recruitment agencies especially those so-called associations and federations, to police their own ranks by weeding out those who are engaged in unscrupulous and exploitative recruitment practices. ###