



NEWS RELEASE
December 20, 2007

POEA book of income open to auditors

The POEA is not hiding its books from the Commission on Audit, Administrator Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz said yesterday referring to the banner story "Overcharging POEA fails to submit book - CoA" which was published in a news daily on December 19, 2007.

The lead statement of the story "*Its records are still being hidden from the official audit agency*" is false and misleading if not maliciously written to make it appear that the POEA is deliberately hiding its financial records from the Commission on Audit, Baldoz said.

Baldoz admitted that the POEA's accounting division suffers from lack of staff but she gave assurance that the trial balance and bank reconciliation statements questioned by the reporter will definitely be ready by year-end to comply with the COA requirements.

Baldoz also clarified that the US\$25 collected from the OFWs are for OWWA membership fee and in no way declared as income of the POEA.

"The POEA only collects from overseas workers the processing fee of P100 per returning workers or balik-manggagawa, and US\$100 as processing fee from name hires or those who got their contracts on their own. These fees go directly to the national coffers", Baldoz said.

According to Baldoz, the POEA uses Central Bank's current peso-dollar exchange rate in its collection of the US\$100 fee, and the latest was P42 to a dollar.

The OWWA uses the exchange rate of P51 to a dollar in collecting its membership fees from the workers.

Baldoz added that the POEA implements an integrated collection system using e-receipt to simplify and hasten the processing of OFW documents. The system includes the fees collected by OWWA and PhilHealth at the POEA premises.

"In the spirit of fairness and responsible journalism, we would like to appeal to other media practitioners to refrain from writing headlines, which may attract the eyes of readers but at the same time damage the credibility of the subject of the story," Baldoz added. ###