

Philippines issues new rules on overseas employment

New rules on overseas employment to provide improved protection for Overseas Filipino Workers

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- Published: 14:39 July 31, 2010

Manila: The Philippines government has revised its overseas employment rules to provide greater protection and better working conditions for its eight million Filipino expatriate workers.

Labour Secretary Rosalinda Baldoz said the revised law would take effect by mid-August. The amended law was designed to build stronger relations with countries where overseas Filipino workers were employed.

The revisions were also to address illegal practices by licensed, unlicensed or suspended recruitment agencies.

A government spokesman said the amended law would give a greater role to local government bodies such as towns and villages in helping to protect overseas Filipino workers. The regulations would also give greater powers to lawyers at the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency when making money claims and undergoing voluntary arbitration on the workers' behalf.

The changes also spell out the responsibility of the employer and the recruitment agency in repatriating the overseas Filipino workers. It requires that workers are given 48 hours' notice and 15 days to leave countries with exit visa requirements.

Underage workers are also addressed in the revised law, which contains provisions for their repatriation, and stipulates penalties and liabilities for recruiters who hire underage migrant workers.

Agency-hired workers, under the amended law, must now be provided with insurance for accidental or natural death, and permanent and total disability.

Agencies must also shoulder repatriation costs, subsistence allowance benefits, money claims, compassionate visits, and medical evaluation of the overseas workers.