

MOF INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON MIGRATION IN HONG KONG

Admiralty Conference Center, Admiralty Center Tower 1, Harcourt Road, Hong Kong

November 19, 2017

Human trafficking is a major issue affecting OFWs in Hong Kong, after the Philippine Overseas Labor Office Hong Kong uncovered foreign illegal recruiters enticing household service workers to work on bogus jobs in Russia and Turkey.

It is one of the issues discussed during the International Forum on Migration conducted by the IAC-MOF led by Philippine Migrants Rights Watch and Commission on Filipinos Overseas in partnership with the Philippine Consulate General and POLO Hong Kong. The event was attended by about 250 OFWs who were thankful of the wealth of information they received on the Philippine government's reintegration programs and services for OFs and OFWs.



Highlights of the Forum



DCG Roderico Atienza of the Philippine Consulate General gave the opening remarks. He highlighted the recent signing of the ASEAN accord on the protection of migrant workers.



Carmelita Nuqui of PMRW gave opening message, history of MOF and the creation of IAC, and line up of MOF activities organized by the IAC for November-December 2017.



Mark Espina of NRCO discussed the reintegration programs and services of NRCO - Small Business Management Training & Financial Awareness Seminar, Livelihood Development Assistance Program, Balik Pinay! Balik Hanapbuhay!, Sa 'Pinas, Ikaw Ang Ma'am/Sir, NRCO – ISP Business Plan Competition for Seafarers.



Frencel Tingga of CFO discussed the initiatives of the Philippine government to combat human trafficking and the 1343 ActionLine, and other reintegration-related projects of the CFO – the BaLinkBayan web-based portal for diaspora engagement, OF-RED Project and the PESO Sense Financial Literacy Program. He also discussed business and investment opportunities for OFs, and success stories of OFs.



Raymond Francis Ramos of Pag-IBIG Hong Kong Branch discussed the Pag-Ibig Overseas Program and the benefits that may be availed by members such as housing loan, multi-purpose loan. He also encouraged OFWs to invest in their Modified Pag-IBIG 2 Fund.



Lucille Blesilda Simbol of SSS-Hong Kong Branch discussed the SSS OF Program and the retirement benefits OFs could get, including its Flexifund Savings Program



Video-showing of Bayani Ba Ang Nanay Ko left almost all in the audience in tears as most of the participants are mothers and have experience the social cost of migration of being away from their children, family and loved ones.



Video –showing of DOLE’s Coming Home featured former OFWs who have successfully reintegrated back to the Philippines and currently engaged in their own business and enterprise.



Sunday Beauty Queen (SBQ) lead actress Daddy Leo Selomenio shared her inspiring story as an OFW. She used to be ashamed to tell her friends and family that she works as a domestic worker having earned a college degree. Because of her dedication and perseverance, she became a community leader of the biggest Filipino organization in Hong Kong – the Global Alliance Hong Kong. SBQ has raised the level of public

awareness about what OFWs like her have to put up with just to improve the lives of their families back home.

Issues Raised During the Open Forum



- Possibility of OWWA to fund skills upgrading of domestic workers who want to get driving license
- Requirements in availing OWWA scholarship program for children of OFWs
- Clarification on Sa 'Pinas, Ikaw Ang Ma'am/Sir – special lane for household service workers who want to return to teaching back in the Philippines
- The possibility of developing a reintegration program for nurses similar to Sa 'Pinas, Ikaw Ang Ma'am/Sir
- Request for legal assistance re problem on companies which did not remit SSS contribution of employee
- Clarification on why the loan program of SSS is low compared to Pag-IBIG
- Clarification on the required months of contribution to be qualified to get lifetime SSS pension
- Possibility of the creation of CFO Satellite Offices in Baguio or Ilocos
- Employment opportunities for former civil service workers who want to work again in the government
- Availing of maternity benefits from the government



Cultural dance number performed by OFWs to entertain participants.



Labat Jalilo dela Torre gave the closing remarks. He warned the OFWs to be wary of the rising illegal recruitment and human trafficking cases suffered by Filipina domestic workers recruited to work in Russia and Cyprus. Some of the victims were given inappropriate types of visa, and many ended as irregular workers in destination countries. This was confirmed by the Philippine Embassy in Russia.



Maybelle Frianeza of POLO-Hong Kong hosted the event.

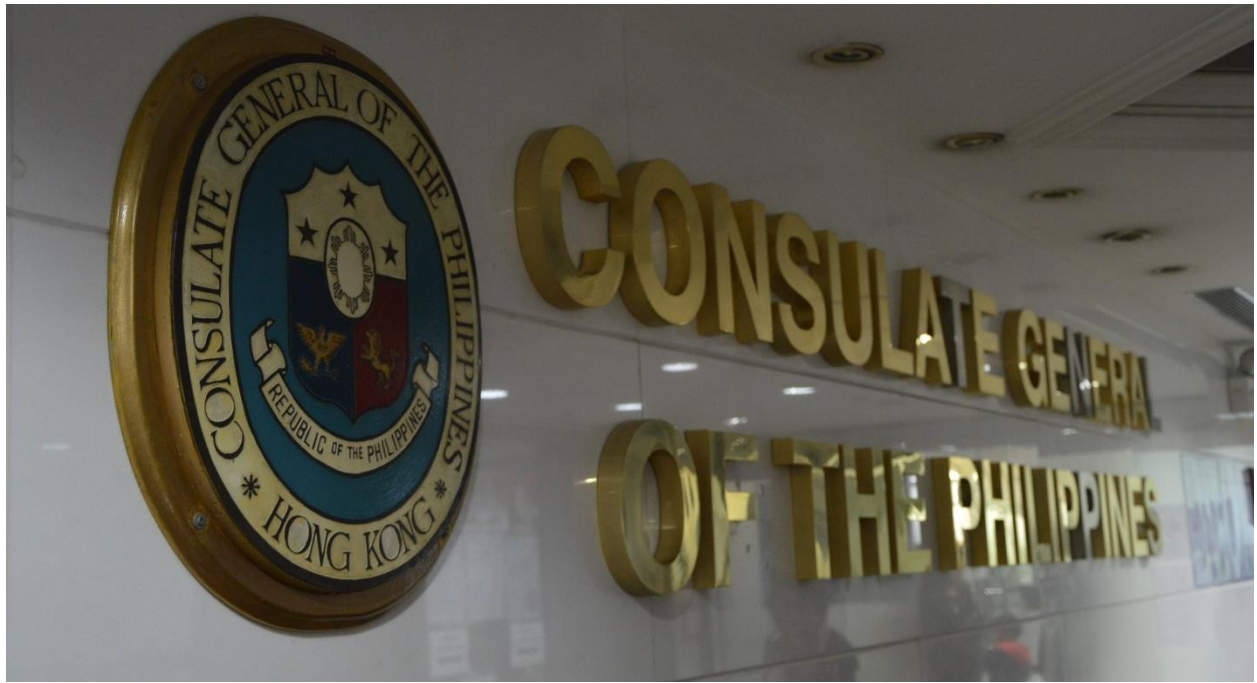
Courtesy Visit to POLO and PCG Hong Kong

The IAC-MOF team also paid a courtesy visit to POLO and Philippine Consulate General, Hong Kong.



OFWs getting their OECs

Courtesy Visit to PCG Hong Kong



Courtesy meeting with Vice Consul Fatima Quintin