



### MACAU'S CRACKDOWN ON ERRING FOREIGN WORKERS TO AFFECT SOME FILIPINOS

In line with its policy to reduce migrant labor, Macau has recently enacted the following laws, which imposed stringent penalties on erring foreign workers:

- **Administrative Regulation 17/2004**. The new labor law, which became effective on 15 June 2004, specifically deals with the imposition of stiff fines and the deportation of illegal foreign workers in Macau. Under the law, non-residents working without valid work permits will be fined up to 20,000 patacas and will be banned to work in Macau for two years while their employers will be fined up to 50,000 patacas and will be held criminally liable.

Under the same law, non-resident workers with valid work permits, otherwise referred to as "blue-card holders" are prohibited from taking part-time jobs. Should they violate this prohibition, a fine of 20,000 patacas and a two-year ban to work in Macau will be meted on them, whereas their employers - both the legitimate and illegitimate one(s) - would be fined 40,000 patacas each. The new law is expected to adversely affect many Filipino domestic helpers, who comprise the bulk of Filipinos with valid work permits.

- **Law No. 6/2004**. The new immigration law, which became effective on 01 September 2004, specifically deals with the penalties imposed on illegal immigrants. Overstayers and those foreign workers whose authorization to stay has been revoked but who refuse to leave Macau are now considered illegal immigrants under this law. The penalties stipulated under this law involve imprisonment of not more than 60 days, deportation, and a 1 year to 3 year ban to enter Macau. The length of the ban will depend on the extent of the period of overstay and whether the overstayers surrendered voluntarily or were apprehended by the authorities.

The new law, according to the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) in Macau, is likely to affect overstaying Filipinos numbering between 3,000 and 5,000 - most of which are working illegally in households, small restaurants, cleaning companies, and car wash shops. Comprising this class of overstaying Filipinos are the former blue cardholders, family members of blue cardholders whose applications for attachment have been denied, overstaying tourists, and victims of illegal recruitment who have opted to stay.