



NEWS RELEASE

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POEA not sending entertainers to Korea

Administrator Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz yesterday denied a published report that the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration is sending Filipino entertainers to Korea under the Employment Permit System (EPS) because of the restrictions on the entry of overseas performing artists (OPA) to Japan.

Baldoz said the South Korean government under EPS has assigned 10,000 slots for Filipino workers to work in their manufacturing, construction, agriculture/livestock, fisheries and services sectors in 2006 but not as entertainers.

“For its manufacturing industry, Korea allocated 9,100; for fisheries sector, 500; construction, 150; agriculture, 200; and 50 for its services sector. But for now, Korea is hiring factory workers only,” said Baldoz.

The administrator also said it is not true that more than half of the OPAs who worked in Japan are now in Korea to work in establishments near American military bases.

Baldoz said that on February 2003, the Korean Ministry of Justice decided to stop the issuance of E-6 visas, or entertainer’s visa, for dancers and singers intending to work in bars and night clubs, especially those operating near the American military facilities in Korea. The move was intended to significantly reduce, if not all together stop, the illegal trafficking of women into Korea for prostitution and for other similar illegal purposes.

Only entertainers bound for major and deluxe hotels and qualified art troupes will be granted the E-6 visa. Filipino singers who are holders of ARBs and musicians with contracts duly verified by the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) in Seoul and processed by the POEA will be among those who may be issued the visa.

As a corollary step, the POLO suspended effective March 5, 2003, the verification of documents necessary for the registration for establishments which have been denied sponsorship of visa of Korean principals and placement agencies recruiting Filipino entertainers.

In a related development, Baldoz said the POEA has re-opened the registration of applicants for EPS but to male applicants only with ages ranging from 18-38 years old. Applicants who are high school graduates or college undergraduates are required to have at least two years of work experience while college graduate applicants are required to have at least one-year experience. Registrants should not have any criminal record in the Philippines and Korea, no record of illegal stay there, not restricted from re-entering Korea, and must be physically and mentally fit to work.

Baldoz said the registration is for free and shall be conducted until September 15, 2006 at the POEA central office and its regional offices. The POEA regional offices are in San Fernando City in La Union, Baguio City, Clark Field Pampanga, Calamba City, Legaspi City, Cebu City, Iloilo City, Bacolod City, Tacloban City, Davao City, Cagayan De Oro City and Zamboanga City.

Registration will be on a first-come, first-served basis to ensure efficient handling and processing of applications. A quota of 500 a day is being implemented at the POEA central office.

The POEA said that the new registration system will be limited to applicants who are ready to take the Korean Language Test (KLT). The registration is valid for one-year, unless the applicant signifies his/her intention to have it revalidated. Failure to do so would automatically mean deletion of the applicant's name from the EPS-Korea Registry.

Applicants are not required to attend formal Korean language training but they must pass the Korean Language Test (KLT) within this year and the succeeding tests. Likewise, they should also pass the medical examination for them to be included in the HRD Korea Roster of applicants from where Korean employers select their workers.

For the next KLT, the Philippines was allocated a quota of 7,000 male and 500 female applicants to take the tests. The tests will be conducted in Manila, Cebu and Davao. The official registration period will be announced later. END