

News Release
August 8, 2016

POEA Board exempts qualified *Balik-Manggagawa* from OEC requirement

Labor and Employment Secretary Silvestre Bello III yesterday announced that the Governing Board of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, of which he is the Chairperson, has issued Governing Board Resolution No. 12, Series of 2016, exempting a group of overseas Filipino workers from the overseas employment certificate (OEC) requirement on an experimental basis starting 15 September 2016.

Aside from Secretary Bello, POEA Administrator and Governing Board Vice-Chair Hans Leo J. Cacdac, and members Felix M. Oca, Estrelita S. Hizon, Alexander E. Asuncion, and Milagros Isabel A. Cristobal, signed the Resolution.

Bello said the POEA Board issued the Resolution following the directive of President Duterte to streamline processes in the deployment of OFWs, to afford them facility and ease in transactions before government offices.

The Secretary said those exempted on a pilot basis are returning workers who are: (1) returning to the same employer and job site, and listed in the POEA database of OFWs; or (2) hired through POEA's Government Placement Branch.

Bello said the POEA is already implementing the Balik-Manggagawa Online Processing System which has eliminated the long lines at its offices, but emphasized a further need and growing demand to enhance the system for workers returning to the same employer and job site.

POEA Governing Board Resolution No. 12, series of 2016, states that an OFW Balik-Manggagawa or returning worker returning to the same employer or job site shall, prior to departure, shall register at bmonline.ph, and provide personal and employment particulars to validate if the worker is indeed exempted from obtaining the OEC.

The worker's updated profile will be forwarded to the Bureau of Immigration, to serve as basis for clearance to exit the country without payment of processing fees.

Bello said workers who are not exempted from getting the OEC during the time of registration will have to set an appointment with any POEA office or processing center.

A worker who proceeds to the airport without prior registration with the BM Online System will be referred by the Bureau of Immigration to the POEA's Labor Assistance Counter (LAC) for evaluation, to determine if the worker may be cleared for departure or be subjected to further completion of travel documents.

One month after the pilot or experimental period, POEA Administrator Cacdac shall report to Secretary Bello and the POEA Governing Board about implementation of the stated Balik-Manggagawa OEC exemptions. /END