



HONG KONG TO INTRODUCE NEW BILL AGAINST ERRING EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES

The Hong Kong Labor Department will introduce a bill amending the existing legislations governing the operations of employment agencies in Hong Kong. Under the proposed amendment bill, which will be introduced in the second quarter of the year, an erring employment agency will face imprisonment of up to three (3) years and fine of HK\$350,000.

According to Hong Kong Labor and Welfare Secretary Stephen Shui, the amendment bill will provide a legal basis for the Code of Practice for Employment Agencies, which was promulgated on 13 January 2017. The following are the salient legislative requirements and minimum standards for employment agencies under the Code of Practice:

- Maintaining transparency in business operations
- Drawing up service agreements with job seekers and employers
- Providing payment receipts
- Promoting job seekers' and employers' awareness of their rights and obligations (including provision of sample wage receipt to facilitate Foreign Domestic Helpers and their employers for record-keeping or perusal as when necessary)
- Avoiding involvement in financial affairs of job seekers.

In a related development, Hong Kong lawmakers have pledged support to the proposals of the Progressive Labor Union of Domestic Workers in Hong Kong (PLUDW-HK) to enact laws that will impose stiffer fines on employment agencies that overcharge job-applicants. According to PLUDW-HK Chairperson Shiella Grace Estrada, the present maximum fine of HK\$50,000 on erring agencies should be increased between HK\$350,000 to HK\$500,000.

A study released in 2016 by NGO Justice Center found out that one out of six or 17% of migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong are in forced labor due to unscrupulous practices of recruitment agencies and the lack of adequate regulation and of stiffer penalties on employment agencies.

07 April 2017
Arnel/mktng

PHILIPPINE OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT ADMINISTRATION
Administrative Branch
Central Records Division

APR 07 2017

RECEIVED
BY: *gn* TIME: 2:00 pm

Marketing Branch
Philippine Overseas Employment Administration
www.poea.gov.ph

