

DSWD, DMW-OWWA join hands to assist distressed Filipino workers from Saudi Arabia



Social Welfare and Development Secretary Rex Gatchalian and Migrant Workers Secretary Susan Ople shake hands after signing the memorandum of agreement providing Php 10,000 cash aid to distressed Overseas Filipino Workers from Saudi Arabia on March 11 at the Department of Migrant Workers' office.

Witnessing the sealing of partnership of the two agencies are DSWD Undersecretary Jerico Javier (right) and Overseas Workers Welfare Administrator Arnell Ignacio (left).

Following the directive of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), together with the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) and its attached agency, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to mobilize their resources in assisting distressed Filipino workers from Saudi Arabia.

In the MOA signed today, March 11, by DSWD Secretary Rex Gatchalian and DMW Secretary and Chairperson of OWWA Board of Trustees Susan Ople, both agencies have signified their commitments to share funding for the provision of Php 10,000 worth of humanitarian aid to the distressed Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs).

This joint undertaking aims to assist distressed and repatriated OFWs, who have been seeking unpaid wages from several construction firms and companies in Saudi Arabia that declared bankruptcy from 2015 to 2019.

“Bahagi ng development ay ang pag-aruga, pagkalinga sa mga migrant worker natin lalong lalo na ang mga pamilya nila dito sa Pilipinas na naiwan. Bahagi iyan ng mandato ng Ahensya at

sisigurhunin naming makikipagtulungan kami sa DMW para ma-fulfill namin ang mandato na iyan... katabi nila kami sa pag-aruga sa mga migrant worker natin” (Part of the development is to ensure the welfare of our migrant workers, especially their families here in the Philippines. This is part of the agency’s mandate and we will work with the DMW to fulfill that. We are working with them to support our migrant workers), DSWD Secretary Gatchalian said.

“The President directed the DMW to extend its programs to OFW families, especially children. He also mentioned helping the claimants while talks are underway with the Saudi government regarding the workers’ unpaid back wages. We are grateful to have the DSWD as our partner on both fronts,” DMW Secretary Ople added.

Based on the signed MOA, the DSWD will transfer Php 50 million in funds, under its Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) program, to the DMW-OWWA to implement the project.

The agency will also provide technical assistance to the OWWA to ensure the smooth implementation of the humanitarian aid intended for the displaced OFWs.

Meanwhile, the distribution of financial assistance will be facilitated by the DMW-OWWA through an electronic or digital portal where the OFW claimants can register and have a reference number to be presented in claiming the cash aid.

“It is a great honor to be part of a great and formidable team to work for the [welfare of] OFWs,” OWWA Administrator Arnell Ignacio said.

The DSWD and DMW-OWWA are hopeful that through this convergence effort, distressed OFWs will be properly assisted, as envisioned by President Marcos. ###