

Good News

Department of Labor and Employment

Bureau of Working Conditions

29 January 2018

Fishing for more Time or for more Information?

A joint activity of the Bureau of Working Conditions (BWC), Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries (PCAF) was held on 26 January 2018 at the Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) Conference Hall.



The primary objective of the activity held was to guide employers and employees alike on how to compute their respective premium contributions for SSS, Pag-IBIG and PhilHealth. Secondary to it is to keep them abreast of the actions taken by the Bureau in addressing the issues and concerns raised by the stakeholders and to keep them updated of the ongoing research being conducted by the National Wages and Productivity Commission (NWPC). Lastly, to further strengthen the relationship between all the stakeholders and the Department for a more harmonious implementation of Department Order No. 156, Series of 2016 (DO 156-16), an open forum for concerns on inspection was made part of the activity.



On his welcome remarks, Undersecretary Joel Maglunsod highlighted the Department's obligation to ensure that every worker, including fishers, receive just compensation and benefits and that their safety is given enough attention. At the end of the day, it is the Department's mandate to protect all workers regardless of the nature of their job or customs that they do practice.

"For the last fifty (50) years, *ang tawag sa atin ay* developing country. *Ayaw ba nating matawag na* developed country," question posed by Comodore Eduardo B. Gongona, Undersecretary for Fisheries, as opposition to the implementation to the Department Order was vehemently raised by the employer sector during the open forum. As the forum revolved mostly on the employer sector's desire to have DO 156-16 amended or abolished, Usec. Gongona jokingly added, "*kung ganyan lang ang nasa isip niyo, siguro may nag-ffinance sainyo para kumontra.*"

In the end, it will be the mandate of the Department and the provisions of the Labor Code which will prevail over commercial fishing vessels engaged in commercial fishing operation. Let us be reminded of Article 11 of the Civil Code of the Philippines which provides that if a custom is contrary to law, public order or public policy, the former will not prevail over the latter.

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