

Good News

Department of Labor and Employment

Bureau of Working Conditions

30 April 2018

Towards Better Protection for Fishers



“It is effective and has never been suspended.” This is the confirmation made by Senior LEO Queen Therese Espinas of the Bureau of Working Conditions (BWC) relative to the status of the Rules and Regulations Governing the Working and Living Conditions of Fishers On Board Fishing Vessels Engaged in Commercial Fishing Operation (DO 156-16).

In a meeting by invitation of the Manila Dialogue, BWC’s representative confirmed that DO 156-16 was put on hold due to the oppositions made by the employers’ sector. The points of opposition expressed by them are, to wit: non-ratification of the Philippines to ILO Convention C188; imposition of minimum wage; and very high standard for Occupational Safety and Health requirements.

Senior LEO Espinas reiterated that the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), by virtue of the Labor Code, have the authority to issue regulation governing the fishing industry regardless of Philippines’ ratification to the ILO Convention C188.

She likewise stated that the DOLE remain firm on its obligation to the fishing industry in ensuring compliance with general labor standards and occupational safety and health standards through conduct of inspection.

Pursuant to the memorandum signed by the Secretary of Labor and Employment Silvestre H. Bello III, regional offices are directed to conduct inspection of fishing vessels engaged in commercial fishing in their respective area of jurisdiction. The guidelines in the conduct of said inspection will be made in accordance with the Revised Rules on the Administration and

Enforcement of Labor Laws Pursuant to Article 128 of the Labor Code, as Renumbered (DO 183-17).

As a way forward in making awareness and emphasizing the issues in the fishing industry, Deputy Head of Mission Jaco Beerends said: “People need to be aware of what they are entitled to and what they have to comply with. People have to be responsible in employing people not only in a humanitarian way but also in the legal view...We do need to engage to create this awareness.”

The Manila Dialogue on Human Trafficking is a platform of exchange and coordination among Philippine government agencies, non-government organizations, international missions and institutions from the private sector. The objective of it is to strengthen international cooperation in the combat against human trafficking.

The lead agencies of the Manila Dialogue are the Inter-Agency Council against Human Trafficking (IACAT) and the Netherlands Embassy in the Philippines and composed of Technical Working Groups (TWG), to wit: fishers and seafarers, domestic workers and online exploitation of children.

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