

Good News
Department of Labor and Employment
Bureau of Working Conditions
28 February 2019

TWG FOR TELECOMMUTING CONDUCTED 2 CONSULTATION MEETINGS IN FEBRUARY

Pursuant to the passage of Republic Act No. 11165¹ entitled *An Act Institutionalizing Telecommuting as an Alternative Work Arrangement for Employees in the Private Sector*, Administrative Order No. 11-A, Series of 2019 (AO 11A-19) was issued constituting a technical work group (TWG) to formulate the rules and regulations implementing the said Act.

The TWG for the drafting of rules and regulations implementing RA 11165 is presently composed of the Office of the Undersecretary for Labor Relations, Special Concerns, and Regional Operations (Chairperson), Bureau of Working Conditions (Secretariat), Occupational Safety and Health Center, Institute for Labor Studies, Bureau of Local Employment, Bureau of Labor Relations, and Department of Legislative Liaison Office.

Under RA 11165 otherwise known as the Telecommuting Act, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) was identified to issue the rules and regulations for the implementation of the Act and to likewise conduct a pilot program to select industries for a period of no longer than three (3) years prior to its implementation, quarterly monitoring, and evaluation, and the findings for the same be submitted to Congress.

From the issuance of AO 11A-19 on 20 January 2019, consultation meetings were held on February 7 and 19 this year. Attendees to these meetings were representatives predominantly represented by companies from the Information Technology, Business Process Outsourcing, and Telecommunications Industries; also present are organizations such as the Employers Confederation of the Philippines, Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce & Industry, Inc., People Management Association of the Philippines, Semiconductor & Electronics Industries in the Philippines Foundation, Inc., and The Asia Foundation.

During the first consultation meeting with stakeholders, OIC-Undersecretary Benjo Santos M. Benavidez said: "This Act will not prohibit the existing work arrangement but instead recognize its existence. If *makikita niyo niyo 'yun sa batas*, it is institutionalizing telecommuting".

OIC-Undersecretary Benavidez added, "We want to seek your expertise on this [relating to telecommuting] so we can see *kung ano ang mukha talaga ng telecommuting*...Actually, what we want is to contain in the IRR the practice in the industry".

¹ RA 11165 was signed into law on December 20, 2018. The same was published on January 11, 2019.

With the expressed support of stakeholders on the drafting of rules and regulations implementing Telecommuting Act, the Department is of the positive view that this will encourage more employers to offer telecommuting work arrangement to its employees, if applicable, taking into account the importance of work-life balance of employees and the widening scope of traffic congestion in the Metro.

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