



PASUGUAN NG PILIPINAS

WASHINGTON, D.C.

EMBASSY OF THE PHILIPPINES

## MESSAGE

The Embassy of the Philippines joins the US Department of Labor and all the workers in the United States in celebrating Labor Rights Week and the forthcoming Labor Day.

This year's labor rights week celebration has a very fitting theme, **"Promoting Labor Rights Is Everybody's Responsibility"**. The importance of promoting and protecting the rights of workers could not be overemphasized for indeed labor rights impact everybody's life.

The rights to fair compensation, freedom from discrimination, harassment and retaliation, a safe and healthful work environment, fair work hours and wages, and to form or join or not to join labor unions, are among the most basic standards in a civilized and humane work environment. As the theme of the celebration suggests, the promotion of labor rights is a concern and function not only of government or labor unions, but also of the employers, the workers, their families and communities.

Ensuring labor rights is good business practice for employers as it leads to increased productivity, reduced costs for work-related injuries and illnesses and reduced loss of work-hours due to employee-employer disputes. Thus, it equates to better business viability, competitiveness and more revenues for employers, as well as better wage and benefits for employees. The promotion of workplace rights is as important to a worker as to his family and the community of which he is a member because a safe, healthy and fairly treated worker is a productive worker and a happy member of the family and the community.

An important element of promotion of labor rights is empowerment of the workers through awareness of their rights. In this connection, the Philippine Embassy lauds the USDOL for reaching out to representatives of foreign governments in the US and forging arrangements with them for making migrant workers in the US aware of their workplace rights and in ensuring the enforcement of such rights. The Philippine Embassy – Washington, DC is one such partner of the USDOL with which it recently signed partnership agreement for joint undertakings for information dissemination to Filipino workers on their rights to fair labor standards and to safe and healthful

working environment, and for assisting them in redressing any violation of their rights. The partnership also aims to promote compliance of labor laws by Filipino employers in the US.

The Philippine Consulates General around the US will soon be forging alliances with district and regional offices of Wage and Hour Division and Occupational Safety and Health Administration to establish arrangements for the implementation of the partnership agreement between USDOL and Philippine Embassy. The parties to the alliances will reach out to Filipino workers and communities in their respective jurisdictions and conduct information and education activities, trainings and workshops on labor rights and on filing complaint for violation of labor rights.

This partnership agreement augurs well for the millions of Filipino workers in the US and will boost the ability of the Philippine Embassy and Consulates General to assist Filipino workers in ensuring compliance of their labor rights. With the support of USDOL we hope that everyday can be labor rights day for the Filipino workers.

While it is the objective of our partnership agreement to ensure that every non-compliance with labor rights is corrected or resolved, the ultimate success of the efforts to protect labor rights may be gauged in the absence of any complaint for violation of labor standards. But a state of full voluntary compliance with labor standards, while ideal, may be difficult to attain. To be more realistic, the minimum level of success of our partnership should be one where all complaints for labor rights violation are settled fairly and where labor justice is dispensed more in practice than in principle.

In behalf of the Philippine Government, we extend our warmest greetings to all the workers in the US, especially to Filipino workers, on the celebration of the Labor Rights Week and the forthcoming Labor Day.

**Mabuhay!**



**JOSE L. CUISIA, JR.**  
**Ambassador**

27 August 2012