



Prospects for Filipinos seeking employment abroad remain bright

MANILA, Jan. 3 (PGON) - Prospects for Filipinos seeking employment abroad remain rosy, Labor Secretary Arturo Brion said today, as he pointed out that job opportunities still abound for Filipinos in many foreign countries.

Brion made the statement during the taping this afternoon in Malacanang of “The Cabinet Speaks” hosted by Undersecretary Martin Crisostomo, with co-host Palo Romero of the Philippine Star.

“For example in the past two years, we have always topped the one million level of overseas Filipino workers. And I would say that for 2008, we will easily top the one million level,” Brion said.

Although it is not a policy of the government to send workers abroad, Brion said overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) continue to help the country’s economic growth through their remittances, especially the OFWs belonging to the higher pay levels.

“One reason why we have steep remittances now is, in 2007, we had more professional and skilled workers going overseas rather than non-skilled workers,” Brion said.

In 2006, he said that 60 percent of the more than one million Filipinos who worked abroad were professionals, while 40 percent were non-skilled workers.

In 2007, Brion said the deployment of skilled overseas workers increased to 73 percent compared to 27 percent for non-skilled workers, including domestic workers.

Brion attributed the shift in the employment pattern of OFWs to the household service worker reform package established last March wherein the Philippines set a minimum \$400 salary for Filipino household workers deployed abroad.

He said Filipinos with higher opportunities for deployment abroad are topped by those coming from the medical and health, information and technology, and services sectors.

Brion said nurses were not affected by the nursing examination scandal last year, citing the big employment opportunities in Europe, Canada and even Saudi Arabia.

He said that last year alone, the Philippines could only send about 3,000 of the 5,000 needed by Saudi Arabia.

However, Brion said the DOLE and Department of Health (DOH) would also adopt a new policy in the deployment of nurses so as not to affect the operation of local hospitals and clinics.

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