



UNION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES OF THE PHILIPPINES INC.

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PRESS RELEASE

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ULAP CALLS FOR TARGETED APPROACH IN CURBING HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE COUNTRY

To ensure a targeted approach at curbing human trafficking in the country, the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines suggested on Tuesday that the government identify pilot areas where it will establish help desks first.

This, as the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Justice's Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (DOJ-IACAT) recently announced it will soon establish help desks in local municipalities and barangays to address concerns on human trafficking.

ULAP president and Quirino governor Dax Cua said that the help desks are a welcome move, as he lamented that many Filipinos continue to fall prey to illegal recruiters.

"Totoo po na maraming nabi-biktima ng human trafficking, fake employments, at kung ano pang scam na may kinalaman sa illegal recruitment. Sobrang kawawa ang mga kababayan natin na naloloko, limas ang savings, lubog sa utang, para lang sana maka-trabaho abroad, pero kalokohan lang pala ang lahat," he said.

The governor, however, said expectations should also be tempered considering the large number of local governments in the country.

"Una, halos 1,500 kasi ang mga munisipyo sa buong bansa, at mahigit 42,000 naman ang bilang ng ating mga barangay. Napakaraming help desks po ito kung saka-sakali. Baka mas realistic po kung mag-identify ng PILOT AREAS muna. Siguradong may data naman ang ating Department of Migrant Workers, Department of Labor and Employment, o Department of Foreign Affairs kung saan-saan mga munisipyo o barangay pinaka-marami o madalas nanggagaling ang mga overseas Filipino workers o may balak makipag-sapalaran sa ibang bansa. Sampol muna tayo sa mga selected higher concentration priority areas na ito," Cua said.

He also urged the government to adopt the strategies employed by the Department of Health and Department of Social Welfare and Development in reaching out to far-flung communities for services such as vaccination and social aid, as well as in data collection and education campaigns.



Cua also highlighted the need to implement a digital component for the said help desks that applicants for overseas employment could easily access without the need to travel.

“Pangatlo, para di na rin aksaya sa oras ang chat, baka pwedeng may regular posts at updates ng ONLINE ANNOUNCEMENT ng mga listahan ng mga accredited or registered recruitment and placement agencies. I-post ito sa lahat ng social media platforms ng DFA, DOJ, DOLE, DMW at ng isang specific page or account para lamang dito. Halimbawa, ang pangalan ng page or account ay ONLINE HELP DESK (ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING), or kung ano mang mas bagay na pangalan. Kung wala sa listahan, huwag na dapat kausapin or makipag-ugnayan tungkol sa kahit ano, dahil sigurado iligal. Regular dapat ang updates dito. Real-time kung kaya. Tsaka hindi lang dapat listahan ng accredited or registered. Dapat may listahan din ng blacklisted or may pending case. Para po mas malinaw. Makakatulong ito sa mga kababayan natin para hindi sila ma-budol,” he added.

The governor also said that these projects should be in tandem with active deterrence efforts from the government, particularly in pursuing human traffickers/illegal recruiters who operate at community level.

He added that ultimately, the solution to prevent human trafficking in the country is by addressing the root causes that make Filipinos seek employment abroad, which are poverty and hunger.

Cua also said that ULAP is willing to meet with the government and help operationalize its plans.

“Sama-samang pagtulongan humanap ng solusyon sa problemang ito upang maprotektahan ang hanapbuhay, kabuhayan, kaligtasan at pangarap ng ating mga kababayan na walang ibang mithiin kundi i-ahon ang kanilang pamilya sa kahirapan,” he said.

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ULAP is the umbrella organization of all leagues of local government units and local government officials in country, serving as the focal representative and mouthpiece of the subnational government in all policy and program platforms to amplify our unified advocacy towards the strengthening of LGUs into able partners in nation-building.
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