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DTI, OWWA ink MOU to help OFWs



(From left to right) OWWA Director Albert Q. Valenciano, OWWA Administrator Rebecca J. Calzado, DTI-ROG Undersecretary Zenaida Cuison-Maglaya, and DTI-BSMED OIC Alice M. Opeña signed a memorandum of understanding on the EDLP.

Following **President Rodrigo Roa Duterte's** directive to help repatriated overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) from Saudi Arabia, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) inked a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on the Enterprise Development and Loan Program (EDLP) on 6 September 2016 at the Century Park Hotel in Malate, Manila.

DTI-Regional Operations Group (ROG) Undersecretary Zenaida Cuison-Maglaya and **OWWA Administrator Rebecca J. Calzado** led the MOU signing, along with **OWWA Director Albert Q. Valenciano** and **DTI-Bureau of Small and Medium Enterprise Development (BSMED) OIC Alice M. Opeña**.

EDLP is an entrepreneurship program that aims to assist OFWs and their dependents in establishing business enterprises that can help them earn steady income, which consequently results in creating jobs for the community.

The MOU formalizes the partnership between DTI and OWWA in the implementation of joint and convergent programs, projects, and services for OFWs, in support of the OFW Reintegration Program (ORP).

ORP is the government's way of helping OFWs who came home and are interested in "reintegrating" with the country's social and economic mainstream by either joining the local labor force or starting a business. Through this program, OWWA and the National Reintegration Center for OFWs (NCRO), in collaboration with the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP), provide a lending facility and capability trainings to interested OFWs.

Under the memorandum, OWWA is expected to sustain the promotion of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), organize training and related activities, to make the business loan program available for OFWs, and ensure the support of both agencies' regional and overseas offices in this initiative.

The DTI, on the other hand, is expected to package priority MSME business models through its *Negosyo* Centers. The Department shall also assist in searching for resource persons for OWWA-organized activities related to entrepreneurship development, as well as provide technical assistance to OFW-entrepreneurs.

The two agencies agreed to collaborate in developing and distributing collaterals promoting MSMEs as well as to organize and hold special events like conferences and symposia.

Both the DTI and OWWA will also monitor and evaluate OFW-MSME operations, including counseling and mentoring of OFW-entrepreneurs.

"It's good that we have partnered with OWWA. What we really want to happen is for our OFWs to be able to help their families without leaving the country," Maglaya said.