



PH WELCOMES BAHRAIN'S FLEXI VISA SYSTEM

PH Welcomes Bahrain's Flexi Visa System



Ambassador to Bahrain Alfonso A. Ver (third from right, in blue barong) talks to the first batch of Filipinos who will avail of the Flexi-Visa program of the Bahraini Government at the about Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) Expat Service Centre at the Sitra Industrial Area. Also in photo is Department of Foreign Affairs-Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers' Affairs Executive Director Enrico Fos (second from right, in dark suit). (Bahrain PE photo)

13 October 2018 — The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) on Sunday welcomed the implementation of Bahrain's Flexible Work Permit, lauding how it will benefit undocumented Filipinos who may wish to regularize their status in the country.

“We congratulate the Bahraini Government for this forward-thinking policy, and wish them success in the implementation of this project,” Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter S. Cayetano said.

“We also express our hope that this will be replicated in other countries, particularly neighboring countries in the Middle East,” Secretary Cayetano added.

According to the Secretary, the Flexible Work Permit, or 'blue card', is a step in the right direction in promoting and protecting the rights of migrants as they are given relief and protection when they regularize their status in the country.

In its report to Secretary Cayetano, the Philippine Embassy in Manama said the Flexi Visa is a pathway for undocumented or out of status workers, including Filipino migrant workers, to acquire regular immigration status.

Ambassador to Bahrain Alfonso Ferdinand Ver said Flexi Visa holders will be issued a renewable work permit with two years validity, health insurance coverage, and a return ticket at the end of the contract period or when the worker decides to return to his or her home country. It also allows the migrant worker to legally work in Bahrain without an employer sponsor.

The visa may only be issued to out of status migrant workers without criminal records or travel ban due to an outstanding criminal case, and are not on domestic worker, business, or tourist visa.

The selection criteria are sensitive to security and anti-trafficking in persons concerns of Bahrain. The cost of obtaining the visa is one time administrative fee of BD449.00 and a monthly maintenance fee of BD30.00.

“Our Embassy in Manama, along with the representatives from our DFA Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs (OUMWA), are working with the Bahraini Government to ensure that some 1,295 of our out of status kababayan in Bahrain can avail of the program,” Ambassador Ver said.

“We are providing financial assistance for them to secure the visa and take care of two months worth of maintenance fees, so they need not worry of the fees as they look for jobs to finally regularize their status,” he added.

The Embassy launched its Financial Assistance Program for Filipinos qualified to apply for the Flexi-Visa program on Friday.

Ambassador Ver and OUMWA Executive Director Enrico Fos visited Bahrain's Labor Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) Expat Service Centre at the Sitra Industrial Area to witness the issuance of the “Blue Card” to the first batch of 30 overseas Filipino workers who filed their Flexi Visa applications and availed themselves of the financial assistance extended by the Government.

Ambassador Ver said that on the first week of November, the DFA, in coordination with the LMRA, plans to organize a big public awareness event and formally launch the Flexi Visa. END