

Registered Labor Organizations, CBA Workers Covered Increased in the First Quarter of 2020

The Presidential Decree No. 442 of the Labor Code of the Philippines, as amended, mandated the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) to process the application for registration of labor organizations for them to acquire legal personality and enjoy the rights given to legitimate labor organizations. The DOLE Department Order No. 40-03, as amended, set guidelines on the registration of private sector unions and collective bargaining agreements (CBAs), and the CSC Executive Order 180 provides guidelines for the public sector unions. The Bureau of Labor Relations (BLR) served as the national registry of the labor organizations and CBAs.

As of the first quarter of 2020, there 93,628 labor organizations registered nationwide with reported membership of more than 4.7 million workers. Of these registered labor organizations, seventy-nine percent (79%) or 73,947 are workers' associations covering about 2.7 million members. On the other hand, private sector unions comprised 19% or 17,904 of the total registered labor organizations with about 1.6 million members, while there are 1,777 existing public sector organizations covering 2% of the total union registration.

The workers' associations are group of workers without definite employers organized for mutual aid and protection, and other legitimate purposes except collective bargaining. About 99.92% or 73,889 of the total registered workers' associations are operating in one region covering more than 2.5 million members, while 58 workers' associations are operating in more than one region with 134,280 reported members.

The private sector unions, which comprised the 19% of the total registered labor organizations, are associations of employees in the private sector, which exist in whole or in part for the purpose of collective bargaining, mutual aid and other lawful purposes. The enterprise-based unions (EBUs) cover most of the registrations in this sector with a total of 17,748 labor organizations or about 99%. Of these, 57% or 10,112 unions are affiliated with a federation or a national union, while 43% or 7,636 are independent unions. Other registrations in the private sector are 14 registered trade union centers, 138 federations and 4 industry unions.

The public sector unions, on the other hand, are organizations or associations of employees in the agencies of government which exist in whole or in part for the purpose of collective negotiation, mutual aid and other legal purposes. About 46% (819 of 1,777) of these are from the Local Government Units (LGUs); 32% (563) are from the National Government Agencies (NGAs); 13% (227) comes from the State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) and 9% (168) are from Government Owned and Controlled Corporations (GOCCs). In terms of membership, the NGA has the highest number with 286,002 reported members, followed by the LGU with 112,732 reported members.

As mentioned, the private sector unions, specifically, the EBUs organize for the purpose of collective bargaining. Collective bargaining is the process of negotiations between employers and a group of employees aimed at reaching agreements that regulate working conditions. The CBA is the contract resulting from the negotiations. As of April 2020, there are 936 existing collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) nationwide that cover more than 190,000 workers.

The number of registered labor organizations increased by about 9% or equivalent to 7,795 from 85,833 reported registrations on the first quarter of the previous year.

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