

Submission from United Filipinos in Hong Kong

Ensure Foreign Domestic Workers' Protection, Health and Safety.

Submission to the Panel on Manpower

Legislative Council Meeting

20 June 2017

The United Filipinos in Hong Kong is glad to be invited to the Legislative Council Meeting
Receiving public views on "Follow up on the report of the Standard Working Hours Committee"

The working conditions of migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong are worsening and our rights remain in peril. Majority of, if not all, MDWs work an average of 12-16 hours a day. We work six days a week and many of us do not have sufficient time for rest or sleep.

In recent months we have read of fellow MDWs' deaths - either by suicide, accident or succumbing to a grave health condition.

In 2016 alone, more than 137 MDWs in Hong Kong died due to illnesses and accidents. This causes alarm to us.

While we welcome the HK government's positive response to our series of actions and demand to ban exterior window cleaning task for MDWs, we see the many problems caused by regressive and anti-migrant policies such as the Mandatory Live-In Conditions, vague provisions on "decent" accommodations for MDWs, the Two-Week Rule, and the arbitrary "punishment" for suspected "job-hoppers" among others.

We urge the Hong Kong government to consider our Submission:

1. To be able to fulfill our work with quality, we need a good time of rest that is not happening with the current working conditions. An FDW must have a rest of no less than 11 hours, which would mean 8 hours of sleep and some more time to do their other personal things.

2. Domestic work is not considered work in Hong Kong and hence domestic workers here do not receive the much-deserved recognition and protection of their rights and welfare. Shouldn't the HK government, as a measure towards recognizing domestic work as work, ratify the ILO Domestic Workers Convention (ILO C189) and domesticate laws following the convention?

We raise these to the HK government as we extend our solidarity and support to our local brothers and sisters here who too demand the same - wage increase, regulated working hours and protection of their rights as workers.