

# Philippines: Workers want government assistance

Tuesday 18 October 2022, by [PALAUBSANON Michelle L.](#) (Date first published: 16 October 2022).

**CEBU, Philippines — As retrenchments hit various industries, the labor sector has called on the government to provide assistance to those affected workers.**

The call was made in reaction to the statement of the Confederation of Wearable Exporters of the Philippines (CONWEP) that some 9,450 to 10,800 workers in the industry may be laid off.

“By ayuda (assistance), we do not just mean immediate assistance to the thousands of workers who will become jobless in the coming months but institutionalized social protection for the entire labor force. Sa harap ng epidemya ng tanggalan, ayudang sapat para sa lahat ang sagot,” said Dennis Derige, Partido Manggagawa-Cabu spokesperson.

Derige said that CONWEP even painted a grim scenario that up to 27,000 workers or 10% of the total labor force in the apparel and wearable goods sector may be retrenched.

Two weeks ago, the Sports City group of companies based in Mactan Economic Zone in Lapu-Lapu City retrenched some 4,000 workers or one-fourth of its total workforce allegedly due to reduced orders from its clients.

Sports City supplies to global garment brands Adidas, Under Armour, Saucony, New Balance and Lululemon.

“Aside from the mass layoffs at Sports City, workers also lost their jobs due to the temporary closure of Coca-Cola plants in Iloilo, Bohol, Davao, Cavite, Zamboanga, and Camarines Sur. Employees of Shopee were also fired revealing that retrenchments are along all sectors from manufacturing to services,” Derige said.

Derige said that because of the worsening economic crisis, the government should provide social protection to the labor force.

“Social protection is one response to this challenge,” Derige further said.

PM is an affiliate of the labor coalition Nagkaisa.

The coalition had called for wage subsidies equivalent to 75% of the prevailing minimum wage to save jobs of workers in micro, medium and small enterprises (MSMEs).

“If huge companies like Sports City and Coca-Cola are reeling from economic shocks, what more MSMEs, which comprise 90% of the total number of enterprises. By providing wage subsidies to workers in MSMEs, the government incentives them against shedding their employees. This also protects the purchasing power of workers which enables the economy to float instead of sink due to the crisis,” Derige said.

In response, the Department of Labor and Employment undertook a study of social protection for workers, but the results have remained unimplemented.

“The DOLE should act now and not wait for another Sports City, another Coca-Cola or another Shoppee,” Derige said.

### **Available jobs**

Meanwhile, the Bureau of Local Employment (BLE) said that close to 6,000 production workers are currently in demand in the country.

In a recent social media post, the BLE said that production workers are the most in demand during the period of October 7 to October 13 at 5,836 job vacancies.

The BLE also said that next to production workers are administration service aides with 2,166 vacancies.

Meanwhile, call center agents are at third place with 1,595 employment opportunities.

The agency likewise said there are 1,586 vacancies for customer service assistants with the latter occupying the 4<sup>th</sup> spot.

At Top 5 are executive assistants with 1,286 job vacancies.

The BLE said the numbers are sourced from the different Public Employment Service Offices (PESOs) nationwide.

Interested applicants, the bureau said, may coordinate with the PESO nearest to them.

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