

Philippines on SONA day - Golden age is full employment with living wage, safe workplaces, and healthy environment

Monday 25 July 2022, by [MAGTUBO Renato](#) (Date first published: 25 July 2022).

The labor group Partido Manggagawa, on SONA (State of the Nation Address) day, advised their fellow workers not to pin their hopes with the hype of a 'golden era' being promoted by the administration of Ferdinand Marcos Jr., saying the value of this campaign narrative, the same as wages, has already been eroded by hard realities.

Because the truth is, argued PM Chair Renato Magtubo, "Never has there been a golden age for workers under any administration and neither will it be realized under BBM, or until full employment, living wage, safe workplaces, and healthy environment are achieved."

Magtubo explained that over the last few decades, the army of unemployed and underemployed dominate the labor force, with the real value of wages failing to catch up with even half of the living wage.

In the face of soaring inflation, the real value of the P570 minimum wage in the National Capital Region (NCR) today stood only at P508.02, according to the National Wages and Productivity Commission (NWPC). On the other hand, the living wage requirement for a family of five has already reached P1,300/day based on PM's earlier estimates.

Thus, together with the Nagkaisa labor coalition, PM is advocating not only for an outright wage increase but also for a change in wage fixing mechanism and, in addition, a package of universal social protection programs that aims to lower households' daily cost of living.

The country's workplaces, added Magtubo, remain unsafe as far as workers' freedom of association is concerned as the anti-union policies of the capitalists do not only enjoy maximum tolerance but are, in so many ways, aided by the state itself such as contractualization (endo), red-tagging and worst, extrajudicial killings.

The Philippines remains in the list of 10 countries where trade union work is most dangerous, according to the latest report by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC).

The group pointed out also that despite the unemployment rate tilting back to the pre-pandemic levels, most of the jobs that were either recovered or created remain irregular, self-employment, and low-paid. Thus, the call of PM and Nagkaisa for employment guarantee and support to key sectors of the economy like the health sector, MSMEs, agriculture, and the environment.

Likewise, echoing the claim of climate activists that there's hardly any jobs to talk about under a burning planet, PM is asking the government that fighting the climate crisis and creating climate jobs be made one of the major priorities of this new administration.

“Otherwise, if Marcos Jr. simply goes on as business-as-usual during his first SONA, the rest of his six years will be the same over and over again, or even worse,” concluded Magtubo.

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Renato Magtubo

P.S.

- PM. Monday, July 25, 2022:
<http://partidongmanggagawa2001.blogspot.com>