

# Philippines: Labor group says P33 minimum wage increase in Northern Mindanao still inadequate

Thursday 11 January 2024, by [ROSETE Franck Dick](#) (Date first published: 5 January 2024).

**CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY - A labor group here cited the additional pay for workers, but it still hoped that the government would approve a higher wage increase, as it said that the upcoming implementation of the P33 minimum wage hike in the region this year is “still inadequate.”**

Lawyer Doris Javier, OIC vice president of the Associated Labor Unions-Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (ALU-TUCP) in Northern Mindanao, stressed that the P33 increase is still unable to provide workers’ most basic necessities due to the uncontrollable increase in prices of basic commodities.

“Based on the Consumer Price Index as of November 2023, the purchasing power of P438 is only P353. The P33 increase can hardly compensate for the P85 already lost to inflation,” Javier said on Friday, January 5.

On December 21, the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board (RTWPB)-Region 10 issued Wage Order No. RX-22 granting a P23 increase in the daily minimum wage in Northern Mindanao across all categories, which will take effect on January 11, and an additional P10 as a second tranche on July 1 this year.

The daily minimum wage in the region will be P423 (Wage Category 2) to P438 (Wage Category 1) for the non-agriculture sector and P411 (Wage Category 2) to P426 (Wage Category 1) for the agriculture sector upon full implementation of the two tranches.

Wage Category 1 includes this city, Iligan City, Ozamiz City in Misamis Occidental, the towns of Tagoloan, Villanueva, Opol, Jasaan, and Lugait, El Salvador City and Gingoog City in Misamis Oriental, and the towns of Manolo Fortich, Maramag, and Quezon and Valencia City and Malaybalay City in Bukidnon.

Wage Category 2 includes Oroquieta City and Tangub City in Misamis Occidental, the towns of Laguindingan and Balingasag in Misamis Oriental, the municipality of Mambajao in Camiguin, and all other areas that are not covered under Wage Category 1, as well as all retail and service establishments with not more than 10 workers.

Javier said reforms in the wage-setting procedures and methods used not only in the region but throughout the country are unquestionably necessary.

“The P438 minimum wage will only amount to approximately P398 daily or P10,400 per month after government deductions. How can that possibly be enough to sustain the needs of an individual, much less the nutritional requirements of the whole family for three meals a day? It’s not even

enough for rice,” she said.

ALU-TUCP expressed hope that a higher wage hike would be approved in consideration of the public’s response, citing the survey conducted during consultations that resulted in an “overwhelming clamor” for a substantial increase. Javier said that even management representatives in the audience voted for an additional payment of more than P50.

RTWPB-10 Attorney IV Gretchen Dy Lamayan said that some board members remarked that no amount will be enough. But as the agency that studies, fixes, and raises wages on a regional level, she said they were trying to balance the interests of both employers and employees by following the proper procedure in implementing wage orders.

To come up with the amount, Lamayan said they considered the data on the poverty threshold from the Philippine Statistics Authority and the competitiveness of the region. She said there were three wage rates from the last wage order that had not reached the threshold.

“One of the reasons that there is a need to increase our wage is to be able to fill in the gap so that all our wages are aligned to the poverty threshold here in Region 10,” she said, adding that the minimum wages in the region after the full implementation of the new wage order are already above the poverty threshold.

The last wage hike in Northern Mindanao was implemented on May 27, 2022 and took effect on June 18, 2022, for domestic workers and employees of private establishments.

Lamayan said no official survey was conducted by the RTWPB-10 during the consultations but they received position papers from management representatives on the amount for the increase which ranges from P15 to P25.

According to the National Wages and Productivity Commission, wage consultations were conducted on October 16 in Misamis Oriental and Camiguin, October 17 in Lanao del Norte, November 6 in Misamis Occidental, and November 28 in Bukidnon. A region-wide public hearing was also conducted on December 15 in this city and a wage deliberation was held on December 19.

This year’s wage order, Lamayan said, was initiated by the board, as there was no petition submitted by any labor groups.

The ALU-TUCP Northern Mindanao urged the Department of Labor and Empowerment (DOLE)-Region 10 to closely monitor the implementation of the wage increase, stressing that inspections and penalties “should be seriously and truthfully enforced to avoid abuse and oppression of the workers.”

“We have a steady flow of workers at the office asking for legal assistance because of underpayment and non-payment of wages by their employers,” Javier said.

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