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## Rody eyes 'endo' compromise

By ALEXIS ROMERO

A compromise on the issue of labor contractualization is being eyed by President Duterte, who admitted that he cannot force businesses to provide complete benefits to workers.

Duterte, who vowed to prohibit illegal forms of labor contractualization when he was running for president, said there are few businesses in the country that can absorb human resources.

"In other countries, be it Hong Kong, America, you work for a certain guy and if he does not like the quality that you produce, you get out, you get paid, separated and that's it. It could have been that simple but because there are few businesses to absorb the human resource, they want some radical changes," the President said during the inauguration of an Armscor Shooting Center Inc. branch yesterday in Davao City.

"I don't think that I can really give them all because we cannot force the capitalists if they have no money or they do not want (the employee) because he is lazy. Don't make it hard for them to run the business the way they like it because that's their money. So some sort of a compromise must be acceptable to everybody," he added.

Duterte admitted that the sheer number of people needing jobs remains an issue in the country.

Earlier this month, Malacañang said Duterte was still studying the proposed executive order prohibiting end-of-contract ("endo") and other forms of illegal labor contractualization.

Duterte announced a plan to issue the order on "endo" last year.

"I say now, I stand firm on my conviction to end 'endo.' The Labor Code guarantees all workers of the right to security of tenure. This has to be strictly enforced.

I just need time," the President said in a Labor Day speech last year.

"To this end, I will issue an executive order directing the strict implementation of the existing provisions of the law against 'endo' and labor only contracting."

As this developed, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) wants another round of consultations before the final signing of the proposed EO banning "endo" and other illegal forms of contractualization.

Renato Magtubo, Partido ng Manggagawa (PM) chairman, said Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III intends to consult anew the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) on the draft executive order, which labor groups are demanding President Duterte sign.

"We are seeking (Bello's) endorsement of the EO, but his reply was he needs to consult with the DTI first. This is unfortunate because the draft EO was a product of a series of labor consultations with him," Magtubo lamented.

Magtubo said Bello assured him that the consultation would only be with the DTI and not with employers' groups.

But Magtubo claimed that workers do not favor another round of consultations. They want the President to issue the EO banning illegal contractualization by March 15.

Members of PM and other labor groups yesterday staged a protest in front of the DOLE main office in Intramuros to demand the immediate issuance of an order banning illegal contractual employment.

They also asked Bello to immediately resolve pending labor disputes in several companies.

Magtubo said rallies against "endo" were held simultaneously in Cebu, Iloilo, Bacolod, Davao and Calamba.

- With Mayen Jaymalin

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