

Labor Standards Act Includes Employees at Farmers' Associations and Fishermen's Associations Starting from 2015

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There are around 26,000 employees hired by Farmers' Associations and Fishermen's Associations in Taiwan. Labor Standards Act started to cover them since the beginning of this year (2015). Under the law protection, the employees own the rights to be covered by the labor insurance, the health care insurance, and a 6% pension raise in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Labor Standards Act.

Because of the implementation difficulties due to special operational characteristics, management systems, and working conditions, it was announced that employees at Farmers' Associations and Fishermen's Associations used to be excluded in the Labor Standards Act of 1988. However, as the modification of Labor Standards Act to release and extend the coverage, more and more interest groups, such as trade and industrial organizations, freelancers, labor unions, and farmers' groups, which were not included in the past, have been gradually applied by Labor Standards Act. Thus, the related authorities invited representatives from the farmers' associations to meet and conclude that Labor Standards Act still covers their employees even though they have already been applied by the superior personnel policy associated with the farmers' associations.

The government will initiate a project-based inspection on farmers' associations and business units with more than 100 employees regarding their working conditions in order to ensure the quality of working environment provided by employers. The purpose of the inspection is to push employers moving towards good working conditions so as to stabilize the relations with their employees. Furthermore, such improvement can benefit the employment rate because of a good working environment. In addition, the government will promote the new application of Labor Standards Act starting January 1st 2015 to farmers' associations and fishermen's associations. It intends to clarify a complete picture regarding labor contracts, working rules, working hours, wages and salaries, and compensation upon occupational accidents. By doing so, both parties, the employers and the employees, can hold an asymmetric equal understanding of the law and the policy.

Labor is the foundation of the nation. The Labor Standards Act aims to protect labor rights and uphold employment equality, working environment safety, and employee's respects. It is, in fact, the shared responsibility among the employers, the employees, and the government. From the government's perspective, both employers and employees are expected to comply with the law in order to avoid unnecessary disputes. After all, a stable relationship between employers and employees can enhance business sustainability over a long period of time.

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