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IFEX Philippines 2022 a big success



Department of Trade and Industry-Management Services Group Undersecretary Ireneo V. Vizmonte (extreme right) leads the ceremonial ribbon-cutting during the opening of the International Food Exhibition (IFEX) Philippines 2022 that ran from 22-24 September 2022 at the World Trade Center in Pasay City. He is joined by (from left to right): Pakistan Ambassador to the Philippines, H.E. Dr. Imtiaz Ahmad Kazi,; Philippine Exporters Confederation, Inc. (PHILEXPORT) President Sergio R. Ortiz-Luis; Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions (CITEM) Deputy Executive Director Ma. Lourdes D. Mediran; and Pangasinan 4th District Representative Christopher de Venecia.

Some 6,000 local and foreign buyers and visitors trooped to the three-day International Food Exhibition (IFEX) Philippines 2022 held at the World Trade Center in Pasay City on 22-24 September 2022.

Organized by the Center for Internal Trade and Expositions and Missions (CITEM), IFEX 2022 was participated in by almost 400 exhibitors showcasing thousands of premium Philippine food products.

Senator Cynthia Villar, Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform, and its Vice-Chairperson Sen. Maria Josefa Imelda "Imee" Marcos, graced the event to support the Department of Trade and Industry's (DTI) thrust to promote the country's food micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

Among those present at the opening ceremony were top foreign and Philippine government officials including **DTI-Management Services Group Undersecretary Ireneo V. Vizmonte**; **CITEM Deputy Executive Director Ma. Lourdes D. Mediran**; **Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan H.E. Dr. Imtiaz Ahmad Kazi**; **Turkish Embassy Commercial Counsellor Serhan Ortaç**; **Design Center of the Philippines (DCP) Executive Director Maria Rita O. Matute**; **Philippine Trade Training Center (PTTC) Executive Director Nelly Nita N. Dillera**; **Export Marketing Bureau (EMB) Assistant Director Jhino B. Ilano**; **PHILEXPORT President and CEO Sergio Ortiz-Luis**; and **Pangasinan 4th District Representative Christopher de Venecia**.



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In his speech, Undersecretary Vizmonte reiterated DTI's commitment to the food sector, acknowledging the global factors that affect the country's economy and noting that these conditions require sustainable and inclusive government response.

He said science, technology, and innovation are essential in building a competitive economy and will be central to the work of the Department under the leadership of **DTI Secretary Alfredo E. Pascual**.

"The goal is to grow and develop globally competitive and innovative industries that support inclusive growth and improve environmental sustainability and the quality of life for Filipinos," said Vizmonte.

One of DTI's priorities, he said, is the digital transformation of MSMEs and the growth and development of startups. Through innovation and digitalization, DTI aims to double its efforts to upgrade and scale MSMEs in order to improve their productivity growth, employment creation, and participation in global value chains.

"The MSME sector is instrumental to the growth of the Philippine economy, accounting for 99% of all businesses in the country. Needless to say, it is of utmost importance that we ensure that entrepreneurs have access to all the resources, platforms, and technologies that they need to grow their businesses," he added.

On the same note, **DTI Assistant Secretary Glenn Peñaranda**, through a recorded message, highlighted the programs that help MSMEs boost their competitiveness in the global market, including PTTC's Global MSME Academy; export assistance programs like RIPPLES; and market access platforms like CITEM's signature programs and participation in overseas trade fairs.

“The Philippines is one of the most exciting destinations for quality food exports, but with stiff competition from our neighbors, and other drivers such as climate change and health crises, we must continuously adapt and reassert our place in the market,” said Peñaranda.

Meanwhile, CITEM Executive Director Mediran said IFEX Philippines 2022 is designed to be “a site of reunion and rediscovery” where Philippine food companies and international buyers can reaffirm their partnerships and make new connections. Visitors came primarily from the Philippines, the United States, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Japan.

Aside from providing an avenue for food MSMEs to showcase their goods, IFEX Philippines also recognized the most innovative products for each product category. CITEM named the winners of the **Katha Awards for Food** on the opening night of IFEX Philippines.

Katha Awards recognizes exporters that explore new galleries of flavors, original brand ideas, unique food fusions, and creative packaging methods. Through this, Katha Awards aims to strengthen the reputation of the Philippines as a go-to destination for globally competitive Asian food and ingredients.

IFEX Philippines (formerly International Food Exhibition) is CITEM's long-running trade event and sourcing program for Philippine and global food and ingredients. Together with IFEXConnect.com, IFEX Philippines serves as a one-stop business-to-business (B2B) platform aiming to optimize their sourcing experience of buyers from anywhere in the world.