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DTI, Chinese Taipei SMEA conduct forum on MSME Marketplace and O2O



DTI-ROG Undersecretary Zenaida Cuison Maglaya expresses her gratitude to counterparts from Chinese Taipei for their cooperation and continuous work to help MSMEs integrate with the global value chain through O2O initiatives during the first day of the APEC Policy Dialogue on MSME Marketplace and O2O Forum on 17 October 2017 at the Diamond Hotel, Makati City.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), in partnership with the Chinese Taipei Small and Medium Enterprise Administration (SMEA), held the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Policy Dialogue on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise (MSME) Marketplace and Online-to-Offline (O2O) Forum on 17-18 October 2017 in Makati City, Philippines.

The forum was conducted simultaneously with the fourth Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Coordinating Committee on MSME (ACCMSME) Meeting and Related Activities on 16-20 October 2017.

Attended by over a hundred participants from the Asia-Pacific region, this year's forum is part of the second phase of the APEC SME O2O Initiative co-proposed by the Philippines and the Chinese Taipei SMEA. It aims to boost the digital competitiveness and resilience of MSMEs as they move towards modernization and quality growth.

The project involves the development of a cross-border platform for technology startups and young entrepreneurs called the APEC MSME Marketplace, accessible through <http://apecmsmemarketplace.com>. Also part of the initiative is the conduct of trainings, as well as networking and showcasing opportunities, to help MSMEs take advantage of new opportunities in the digital economy.

“Today, we find ourselves in a strong position to ride the waves of digital transformation where opportunities are limitless. Innovations, particularly through the emergence of financial technology more commonly known as fintech, can indeed be the catalyst for SME growth and development,” **DTI-Regional Operations Group (ROG) Undersecretary Zenaida Cuison Maglaya** pointed out.

The first day of the dialogue covered discussions on opportunities and challenges of modernizing the region’s MSMEs. Chief executive officers (CEOs) of startups from Asia-Pacific, together with top executives from digital solutions companies from the region, led the sessions.



(Clockwise) ServeHappy CEO Audrey Tanco Uy, Paynemics Chief Operating Officer Mylene Chua-Magleo, Accelr8 Co-working Space Co-founder Mikko Barranda, Acudeen Technologies CEO Mario Jordan Fetalino III, and Satoshi Citadel Industries Co-founder John Bailon share unique experiences in their entrepreneurial journeys during the second day of the forum.

There was also a simulation of an APEC O2O Board Meeting where MSMEs and startups presented their business plans to the Board of Directors. Members of the panel, namely **Samsung Big Data Team Senior Manager Sabrina Tachdijian**, **Ananda Development Public Co. Ltd Chief Strategic Development Officer John Leslie Millar**, and **Google Marketing Solutions Country Head Gilberto Gaeta**, gave advice to presenters in terms of business planning, as well as on accounting and legal issues.

For the second day, international, regional, and provincial participants visited the offices of several Filipino startups, namely Acudeen Technologies, ServeHappy, Satoshi Citadel, Acceler8 Co-working Space, and Paynemics in Makati City and Quezon City. In a forum, the founders of these startups shared the stories behind their ventures. They emphasized the importance of an enabling business environment, particularly in terms of policy and linkages.

“Now more than ever, it is becoming increasingly important to call for closer cooperation and stronger collaboration as we work towards helping SMEs become our partners in promoting inclusive growth,” **DTI-Bureau of Small and Medium Enterprise Development (BSMED) Director Jerry T. Clavesillas** said.