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Sec. Lopez thanks DTI Family for impressive 2017 accomplishments CEODBG, CPG welcome respective Undersecretaries



Secretary Ramon M. Lopez (center) expresses his gratitude to DTI officials and employees for their contributions to the Department's accomplishments for 2017. To his right were ROG Undersecretary Zenaida Cuison-Maglaya, CPG Undersecretary Ruth B. Castelo, ROG Assistant Secretary Demphna Du-Naga, and CPG Assistant Secretary Ernesto V. Perez. To his left were MSG Undersecretary Rowel S. Barba and CEODBG Undersecretary Teodoro C. Pascua.

Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Secretary Ramon M. Lopez expressed his gratitude to DTI officials and employees for their passionate work in the previous year during the flag raising ceremony on 8 January 2018. Their collective efforts, he stressed, made the Department's record-breaking 2017 accomplishments possible.

Members of the DTI Executive Committee, namely **Competitiveness and Ease of Doing Business Group (CEODBG) Undersecretary Teodoro C. Pascua**, **Consumer Protection Group (CPG) Undersecretary Ruth B. Castelo**, **Management Services Group (MSG) Undersecretary Rowel S. Barba**, and **Regional Operations Group (ROG) Undersecretary Zenaida Cuison-Maglaya** graced the ceremony. **CPG Assistant Secretary Ernesto V. Perez** and **ROG Assistant Secretary Demphna Du-Naga** were also present.

A significant highlight for the previous year is the country's successful hosting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) meetings, with DTI chairing the ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting and the ASEAN Committee on Business and Investments Promotion (CBIP). These involvements engaged the international business community, investors, and other parties through business- and trade-related activities.

He likewise noted the P617-B investment approvals of the Board of Investments (BOI), the highest approval level BOI achieved in its 50 years. He also reported the success of the

Trabaho, Negosyo, Kabuhayan (TNK) program, which involved the conduct of job fairs and *negosyo* fairs locally and abroad.

On micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) development, Sec. Lopez acknowledged the continuously increasing number of *Negosyo* Centers, thus allowing DTI to assist more MSMEs and aspiring entrepreneurs. As of end-December 2017, 718 centers have already been established across the country. Also included in his updates is the launching of *Go Loka!* Stores in various malls. To date, 32 concept stores are in operation, including the store located at the East Wing, GF, DTI Main Building, Makati City.

In addition, Sec. Lopez shared updates on *Pondo sa Pagbabago at Pag-asenso* (P3), which has assisted about 30,000 borrowers over a span of two months. He similarly pointed out the 0%-interest loans being offered by DTI to Maranao traders in Marawi City.

On the same note, he highlighted the ceremony for the families of soldiers killed in action (KIA) held on 18 December 2017. In lieu of the Department-wide Christmas Party, the DTI Excom offered gifts, pledges, and livelihood kits to about 29 families of soldiers, to express the Department's gratitude to the sacrifices the soldiers have done for the country.

He cited the issue on the reported increases in prices of prime and basic related to the implementation of the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN). At the same time, he reminded the DTI staff to be prepared to address TRAIN-related concerns. He likewise enjoined the DTI staff to continuously uphold the rights of consumers, while also protecting businesses from abusive consumers.

Sec. Lopez encouraged the officials and employees to continue working with zeal to achieve DTI's vision of a more inclusive and prosperous Philippines.

"We are all looking forward to your passion to serve this year. Lahat tayo ay may maikukontribuhang para mas maraming investors, mas maraming trabaho, at mas maraming negosyo para sa mga Pilipino," he said.



Secretary Lopez witnesses the ceremonial turnover between CEODBG Undersecretary Pascua (seventh from right) and CPG Undersecretary Castelo (sixth from left). Also present were directors and assistant directors from the two functional groups.

A ceremonial turnover between Undersecretaries Pascua and Castelo, in line with Department Order No. 17-149, s. 2017, designating the two officials as Supervising Undersecretaries of CEODBG and CPG, respectively, also took place. Directors and Assistant Directors from the two functional groups welcomed the undersecretaries on behalf of their staff who were also present in the ceremony. The issuance was signed by Sec. Lopez on 6 November 2017, revoking some of the provisions of DO No. 17-35, s. 2017, on Organizational Reforms.