



ADRA Holds PROJECT YOUManity: Dinner for a Cause

To create awareness about the activities that ADRA achieved in the past year and to raise fund for the ongoing relief operations for the earthquake victims in Mindanao and typhoon victims in Sorsogon and Samar, ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) Philippines held the "PROJECT YOUManity: Dinner for a Cause" on December 10, 2019 at Hotel Dominique, Tagaytay City.

A special focus was put on the REAP (Restoring, Empowering and Protecting) Livelihood Project which just concluded its 4-year operations in Northern Iloilo last September. Karl Max Morta, REAP Project Livelihood Officer talked about the achievements of the project as well as the challenges that the project faced. Glenda Bas, also known as "Nanay Glenda", gave a testimony of how her life and the lives of CBO (Community Based Organization) members changed because of ADRA's work.

"The REAP project spoke right to the heart of ADRA", shared ADRA Country Director Tom Pignon. "Through restoring, empowering and protecting livelihood, ADRA was able to address many of the root causes of poverty and the community's vulnerabilities to disasters," he added.

Project YOUManity, with its tagline "It takes You to make a better world", is about working together with individuals and organizations who are committed to impacting the world with positive change and improving the lives of vulnerable communities across the country. It is about harnessing the power of YOU.

ADRA was grateful to everyone who attended numbering closely to 150 and donated their time and resources towards the 1st Annual Project YOUManity Dinner for a Cause. The donations raised will be used to help Typhoon Tisoy victims in Sorsogon and Northern Samar and continue the assistance to the earthquake victims in Mindanao.

PCSO to allot P6B for UHC, Malasakit Centers next year

MANILA -- The Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) will allot PHP6 billion for the Universal Health Care (UHC) program and Malasakit Centers next year.

"Nagagalak kami na ipaalam na effective next year, 100 percent we support the (Universal Health Care). May pondo. [We are glad to inform that effective next year, we are giving 100 percent support to the Universal Health Care. There are funds for that]," PCSO General Manager Royina Marzan-Garma told reporters in a press briefing in Mandaluyong City on Wednesday.

Following the enactment of the law establishing Malasakit Centers, the PCSO allotted PHP3.1 billion for these centers.

"Since the Malasakit (Centers) Act is now a law, the hospital partners will be present in Malasakit Center. We allotted funds for that, PHP3.1 billion na pwedeng ma-access ng

ating kababayan (which the public can access) through Malasakit Center," she stressed.

"Yan ang magiging direction ng PCSO next year, ito po ay naayon sa charter [That will be the direction of the PCSO next year and it was based on the charter]," she added.

Earlier this month, President Rodrigo Duterte on Tuesday night signed into law a bill seeking to establish Malasakit Centers in all hospitals run by the Department of Health (DOH) across the country.

Currently, there are over 50 Malasakit Centers nationwide.

Meanwhile, the fund for the UHC came from the estimated and projected sales of the PCSO, Garma said.

However, Garma said PCSO's medical assistance program would be limited since a large part of its revenue would be given to UHC.

"Since we are giving a certain amount for

UHC, there will be a limitation for the medical assistance program. It will focus on catastrophic (cases), like (chemotherapy) and dialysis," Garma explained.

President Rodrigo Duterte signed the UHC law February this year to ensure that every Filipino, including overseas Filipino workers, are eligible to preventive, promotive, curative, rehabilitative, and palliative care.

Under the law, all Filipino citizens are automatically enrolled into the government's health insurance program.

Members who have the capacity to pay are considered direct contributors while the indigents and senior citizens are categorized as indirect contributors and are sponsored by the government.

Next year, PCSO General Manager said the agency is targeting to generate PHP52 billion.

"Our mandate is to generate funds for charity so we will focus on raising more funds for next year," she said.

She added that 40 percent of the funds that they generate will go to the Universal Health Care to support the PhilHealth insurance of indigents and for the procurement of medical transport vehicles.

Garma said the PCSO will introducing more games in 2020 at the same time will also strengthen their campaign to only patronize legitimate number games.

She added their focus next year will be on sales and marketing in order to generate more funds to support more government projects.

Crucial to the plan, she said, is the opening of more provincial branches throughout the country next year. For this purpose, she said they have already started hiring employees for the planned expansion.

Garma said they are

OFW rights group backs cut in workers' deployment to Saudi

MANILA -- A group advocating for the welfare of Overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) on Wednesday expressed support for the decision of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) to scale down the deployment of Filipinos to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

Blas Ople Policy Center president Susan Ople said it is only right for DOLE to push for the welfare of the workers as the latter have fulfilled their contractual obligations.

"They actually fulfilled their side. They worked and rendered services but they were not paid because the companies went bankrupt or faced other financial and legal problems," she said in an interview.

"It is incumbent on the government of Saudi Arabia because, this is not through any fault

of the worker, to make sure that the workers get their just share of compensation," the group official added.

Ople said there is a need to send a message to Riyadh for it to act accordingly on the plight of OFWs there.

"What DOLE is doing is trying to apply pressure on the host country. There's a moral, legal, and even human rights issue that cannot be ignored," she added.

Ople also urged the DOLE to ensure that there are enough safety nets to cushion the adverse effects of the measure.

"Is there a program directive from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration to look for alternative employers? If new hires will be reduced, we need to find alternative markets," Ople added.

Meanwhile, Trade

Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) president and Party-list Rep. Raymond Mendoza said they will ask DOLE for an explanation on the decision.

"We will ask (Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III) to explain the move. We will support that move, subject to our hearing to really understand the situation. He is the Secretary so he understands the situation. So we trust the judgment of the Secretary until the next hearing where we will call him," Mendoza said in an interview.

On Tuesday, Bello announced the scaling down the sending of Filipinos to Saudi Arabia next year.

The decision was made due to the slow action of the Saudi government on the plight of more than 300 OFWs, whose salaries and monetary claims have yet to be settled. (PNA)

AFP urged to 'crush' illegal drugs, terrorism

MANILA -- President Rodrigo Duterte on Tuesday renewed his call for the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to "crush" illegal drugs and terrorism to ensure a safer country for the future generations of Filipinos.

During the 84th AFP anniversary at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City, the President vowed to take full responsibility for the consequences of his war on drugs and terrorism.

"Ang utos ko sa kanila, at pag sila'y lumaban, durugin para matapos na ang problema ng Pilipino (My order to them is that if they retaliate, crush them to end the problems of all Filipinos)," Duterte said in his speech.

Duterte tagged the

New People's Army (NPA) and the Abu Sayyaf as his "enemies", saying they were responsible for wreaking havoc on the lives of many.

"Try to make this country as peaceful as it can ever be. Ako sa utos ko na 'yan na ubusin ninyo sila, sabihin ko sa inyo (My order to you is to finish them off), time and again, I take full legal responsibility for it," he added.

Duterte defended anew his drug war, saying he could not afford to have at least "one-fourth of the population disoriented, insane because of drugs."

He also acknowledged that illegal drugs remain to be a global problem that needed to be addressed.

"That is why I declared war. War is war. Itlong droga (Drugs) is

worldwide. It is not limited to any country which borders. It is almost seamless. At lahat nagdudusa (Everyone suffers)," Duterte said.

He also expressed hope that the AFP will fight corruption within its halls through internal reforms to improve the financial state of soldiers.

Love your soldier

Recognizing the organization's "selfless service", Duterte thanked the AFP for defending the nation from external and internal security threats and for providing humanitarian and disaster response in times of disaster.

Duterte also called on the public to provide them with support as they risked their lives in making the country safer and more secure.

currently reviewing the fees and the process in franchise applications to streamline their system.

"The process is

complicated and in order to comply with the directive of the President relative to "ease of doing business," we need to remove other

unnecessary requirements and reduce the cash bond needed in the opening of the lotto outlet," she said.