



# 2023 POST SONA DISCUSSIONS

## PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC BRIEFING

11 AUGUST 2023 | CEBU

Marco Polo Plaza Hotel, Cebu City

### PROGRAM

7:00 AM	<b>Registration</b>
8:00 AM	<b>Program Briefing for Speakers/Panelists</b>
9:00 AM	<b>Keynote Message</b>  <b>BENJAMIN E. DIOKNO, PhD</b> <i>Secretary</i> Department of Finance
<b>Panel Discussion 1: A Fast-Growing and Forward-Looking Economy</b>  Amid a challenging global environment, the Philippine economy has successfully navigated through challenges and posted record-high growth in 2022. Sustained high levels of growth is a necessary condition to meet the economic objectives of economic and social transformation to reach upper middle-income country status by 2025, reduce poverty incidence to between 8 to 9 percent by 2028 and attain the Filipino people's aspiration of a Philippines that is a prosperous, predominantly middle-class society by 2040.	
9:10 AM	<b>Panelists:</b>  <b>BENJAMIN E. DIOKNO, PhD</b> <i>Secretary</i> Department of Finance

**AMENAH F. PANGANDAMAN***Secretary*

Department of Budget and Management

**FRANCISCO G. DAKILA, JR., PhD***Deputy Governor*

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

**JOSEPH J. CAPUNO, PhD***Undersecretary*

National Economic and Development Authority

**MELANIE C. NG***Regional Governor*Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry  
Central Visayas**Moderator:****MARGAUX MARIE V. SALCEDO***Undersecretary*

Department of Budget and Management

**Panel Discussion 2: Building Better and Smarter for the Future**

The establishment of sustainable, resilient, integrated, and modern infrastructure systems is crucial for driving economic transformation. With the Build Better More program, the Marcos, Jr. Administration aims to create a solid foundation for the future by implementing diversified and strategic infrastructure all throughout the country. In the medium term, the government will maintain infrastructure spending at 5 to 6 percent of GDP, encourage infrastructure investments, and explore viable funding methods to supplement public resources for financing crucial infrastructure initiatives to improve the lives of the Filipino people.

10:00 AM

**Panelists:****MANUEL M. BONOAN***Secretary*

Department of Public Works and Highways

**JAIME J. BAUTISTA***Secretary*

Department of Transportation

**RAPHAEL P. M. LOTILLA***Secretary*

Department of Energy

	<p><b>IVAN JOHN E. UY</b> <i>Secretary</i> Department of Information and Communications Technology</p> <p><b>MA. CYNTHIA C. HERNANDEZ</b> <i>Executive Director</i> Public-Private Partnership Center</p> <p><b>JOSEPH MICHAEL P. ESPINA</b> <i>Head</i> Cebu City Planning and Development Office</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <p><b>ATTY. MARIA LUWALHATI C. DOROTAN TIUSECO</b> <i>Undersecretary</i> Department of Finance</p>
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**Panel Discussion 3: Reinvigorate. Accelerate. Transform.**

The government will build on the game-changing reforms pursued in the past and complement these with policies to enable open and competitive markets. The Philippines is open for business as it seeks to be among the most dynamic economies in Asia and the world. The goal is to make it easier for companies to compete and innovate and assure investors of lower transaction costs and a healthy regulatory environment. Key strategies to transform the economy include revitalizing industry, reinvigorating services, and agriculture, and promoting and improving lifelong learning and education which are imperative to increasing the capacities and income-earning ability of the Filipino workforce.

11:00 AM	<p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <p><b>BIENVENIDO E. LAGUESMA</b> <i>Secretary</i> Department of Labor and Employment</p> <p><b>ALFREDO E. PASCUAL</b> <i>Secretary</i> Department of Trade and Industry</p> <p><b>CHRISTINA GARCIA FRASCO</b> <i>Secretary</i> Department of Tourism</p> <p><b>MARLO L. IRINGAN</b> <i>Undersecretary</i> Department of the Interior and Local Government</p>
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	<p><b>ATTY. GENEVIEVE E. VELICARIA-GUEVARRA</b> <i>Assistant Secretary</i> Department of Agriculture</p> <p><b>CHARLES KENNETH CO</b> <i>President</i> Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <p><b>MARGAUX MARIE V. SALCEDO</b> <i>Undersecretary</i> Department of Budget and Management</p>
11:55 AM	<b>Closing and Thank You</b>
12:00 PM	<b>Lunch</b>
1:00 PM	<b>Press Conference with Government Panelists</b>

## **SPEAKERS AND PANELISTS**

### **Panel 1: A Fast-Growing and Forward-Looking Economy**



**BENJAMIN E. DIOKNO, PhD**

*Department of Finance*

Dr. Diokno is the current Secretary of Finance. Prior to his appointment, he served as Governor of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) from 2019 to 2022. Under his leadership, the Philippine central bank was among the first to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and deploy decisive measures to cushion its adverse impact and pave the road to recovery.

Before taking charge of monetary affairs, he served as Budget Secretary under three presidents, where he pursued an expansionary fiscal policy to finance investments in human capital development and public infrastructure.

As Finance Secretary, Diokno seeks to rally the economic team to achieve three broad development goals by 2028: reduce the deficit-to-GDP ratio to pre-pandemic rates, bring down poverty incidence to single-digits, and achieve upper middle-income economy status by the end of the Marcos Jr. administration. Diokno seeks to go beyond headline economic expansion and achieve a brand of inclusive and sustainable growth with equity.

Diokno's policy expertise and research contribution extend to various areas of public economics, such as the structure and scope of government, tax policies and reforms, public expenditure management analysis, fiscal decentralization, national budget, and public debt, among other topics. He has vast experience in formulating and implementing public sector reforms, having also served as Budget Undersecretary from 1986 to 1991 and Budget Secretary from 1998 to 2001 and from 2016 to 2019.

He is Professor Emeritus of the University of the Philippines-Diliman. For over 40 years, he taught the following courses: Public Sector Economics, Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Development Economics, and Special Topics

(e.g., Public Enterprises Investment and Pricing Policies; Public Sector Reforms; Local Government Finance). He was also Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the *Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila* (City University of Manila).

He served as Fiscal Adviser to the Philippine Senate. He also served as Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Philippine National Oil Company and Chairman of the Local Water Utilities Administration.

Some of his major policy reform contributions include: formulating the 1986 Tax Reform Program, which simplified the income tax system and introduced the value-added tax in the Philippines; helping design the 1991 Local Government Code of the Philippines; initiating a What-You-See-Is-What-You-Get policy to streamline the release of funds; and sponsoring the internationally lauded Government Procurement Reform Act to modernize, regulate, and standardize government procurement activities in the Philippines.

He served as an adviser and consultant to various multilateral agencies like the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Commission, and US Agency for International Development for work in the Philippines, China, and transitioning economies like Vietnam, Cambodia, and Mongolia.

He has also participated in numerous international conferences hosted by the International Monetary Fund, Asian Development Bank, World Bank, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, and United Nations, among other international organizations. He authored numerous publications and discussion papers regarding his research interests that have been published in academic journals and policy reports.

He finished his Bachelor's Degree in Public Administration (1968) and his Master's Degree in Public Administration (1970) and Economics (1974) at the University of the Philippines-Diliman. He also holds an MA in Political Economy (1976) from the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, USA and a PhD in Economics (1981) from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs,

Syracuse University in Syracuse, New York, USA. In 2017, he received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from the University of the Philippines—the highest academic rank and honor conferred by the university.

**AMENAH F. PANGANDAMAN**

*Department of Budget and Management*

Amenah F. Pangandaman is the incumbent Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM). She is the first Muslim Budget Secretary and the only female member of the Philippines' economic team.

She carries with her 20 years of government service, having worked in the legislative and executive branches, and the Central Bank. Thus, her unparalleled expertise in the areas of policy governance, economics, and public fiscal management.

She rose through the ranks from being a research assistant to becoming Chief of Staff to the late Senate President Edgardo J. Angara. Prior to her appointment as Secretary of the DBM, she served as DBM Undersecretary and Assistant Governor at the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

As the country's Budget Secretary, she is committed to supporting President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s administration towards a broad-based and inclusive economic recovery. She continuously champions financial inclusion and key budgetary reforms, such as Digitalization, Climate Change and Green Public Procurement, and Open Government Partnership to further promote fiscal transparency.

Secretary Pangandaman currently chairs the Development Budget Coordination Committee, which developed the Medium-Term Fiscal Framework and the country's 8-Point Socioeconomic Agenda. She also co-chairs the Intergovernmental Relations Body, strengthening relations for lasting peace and economic development in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao.

Under her leadership, the national government has enacted the fastest national budget in

recent history. She has been bestowed the Rising Tigers "Woman of Substance" award, the "Philippines' Women Leaders Award," and the "Tanglaw ng Bayan" award from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines. She dons the rank of Rear Admiral (two-star general) of the Philippine Coast Guard Auxiliary. Her weekly column, "Beyond Budget" keeps the public informed on the national budget and the country's economy.

**FRANCISCO G. DAKILA, JR., PhD***Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas*

Dr. Francisco G. Dakila, Jr. is the Deputy Governor of the Monetary and Economics Sector. Prior to this, he was the Assistant Governor of the Monetary Policy Sub-Sector, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. He provided highly technical advisory support on matters relating to the formulation, implementation and assessment of policies and programs in his areas of specialization, which include the monetary, external, real, and financial sectors.

Before joining the BSP, he worked at the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and at the Agricultural Credit Policy Council. He also previously taught at the University of the Philippines School of Economics and at the De La Salle University in Manila.

He received his Ph. D. and MA in Economics and B.S. in Economics (magna cum laude) from the University of the Philippines-School of Economics. He is a lifetime member of the Philippine Statistical Association (PSA) and the Philippine Economics Society (PES), wherein he also served as Secretary and Board Member from 2005-2006. He is also a member of the International Input-Output Association (IIOA). He is currently an Associate Editor of the Philippine Review of Economics. He has published papers at the Philippine Review of Economics, Philippine Statistician, Bangko Sentral Review, and BSP Working Paper series, as well as chapters in several publications of the BSP, including *Money and Banking in the Philippines: Perspectives from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas*, and *Philippine Central Banking: A Strategic Journey to Stability*.



**JOSEPH J. CAPUNO, PhD**

*National Economic and Development Authority*

Joseph J. Capuno serves as the Undersecretary for Investment Programming at the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA).

As Undersecretary for Investment Programming at the National Economic Development Authority, he is tasked to oversee the formulation of strategies for efficiency in linking the government's planning, programming, and implementation of projects. He is also tasked to provide policy guidance in the project appraisal, monitoring and evaluation of big-ticket infrastructure projects of the national government, formulation of development plans and policies, and programming of the official development assistance (ODA), among others.

Before his Secondment to NEDA, Dr. Capuno is a professor at the School of Economics, University of the Philippines Diliman. He has published research works on fiscal decentralization, health care utilization and financing, impact evaluation, and subnational growth and development.

**MELANIE C. NG**

*Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Central Visayas*

Melanie Ng is the Regional Governor of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry for Central Visayas and a Private Sector Representative and Economic Development Committee Chair of the Regional Development Council for Region 7. She was also recently appointed as Private Sector Representative for the Visayas to the National Micro Small Medium Enterprise Development MSMED Council of the Department of Trade and Industry,

A Fellow at the Institute of Corporate Directors and a member of the Management Association of the Philippines, she was also a Past President of the Philippine Retailers Association Cebu Chapter and of the Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry. She is the Executive Vice President of Ng Khai Development Corporation,

## Panel Discussion 2: Building Better and Smarter for the Future



### **MANUEL M. BONOAN**

*Department of Public Works and Highways*

Secretary Manuel M. Bonoan is a licensed civil engineer, bringing to the table more than five decades of extensive experience in the public and private sectors combined.

He started his career in the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) in 1966 while he was still a senior student in then Mapua Institute of Technology. From his humble beginnings as a civil engineering aide, he rose from the ranks and held the positions of Chief Civil Engineer, Project Manager, Assistant Secretary and Undersecretary.

From January 30, 2007 to July 3, 2007, he was appointed as officer-in-charge of the DPWH by then president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. After such stint, he served as Senior Undersecretary of the Department until his retirement on June 30, 2010.

For more than a decade, he also immersed himself in private practice after joining the roster of top executives in San Miguel Corporation. He served as consultant adviser for its Infrastructure Sector and as President or Chief Executive Officer of its three subsidiaries: Skyway Operations and Maintenance Corporations; Star Tollway Corporation; and Manila Toll Expressway Systems, Incorporated.

Rooted on his very impressive experience and with his uncommon dedication to engineering competence and professional integrity, he was drawn back into the public service by the President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. to led the administration's infrastructure program and carry out the challenge to 'Build Better More' to enhance the living condition of the Filipino people.

**JAIME J. BAUTISTA**

Department of Transportation

The Secretary of Transportation has a solid grounding in transportation having spent more than three decades in the aviation sector, culminating in being president of Philippine Airlines.

He has a strong financial management background, allowing him to steer PAL through its most turbulent times.

He took on various posts at different companies. He succeeded at turning the University of the East financially stable when he sat at the UE Board of Directors for more than two decades.

He is more of a professional manager rather than a technocrat.

He dislikes to be praised. He endears himself to anyone at any time. He is known for his humility and disarming smile. He is soft-spoken with a fantastic memory.

**RAPHAEL P. M. LOTILLA**

Department of Energy

Secretary Raphael P.M. Lotilla has served in government for more than 20 years in various capacities --- professor of law in the University of the Philippines (UP), Undersecretary at the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) under three Presidents, President and CEO of PSALM, besides sharing his expertise as legal consultant to several Senate Presidents and Senators. He is currently in his second stint as Secretary of Energy. He also served as Regional Programme Director of a regional seas project funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

In the private sector, he was an independent director in several publicly listed conglomerates with diverse interests, including energy and financial services.

**IVAN JOHN E. UY**

Department of Information  
and Communications Technology

Secretary Ivan John E. Uy has an extensive career in the ICT industry and in public service. He specializes in information technology and its impact on law, justice, and governmental institutions.

He was a Hubert Humphrey Fellow under the Fulbright Program in University of Minnesota and a graduate of the College of Law, University of the Philippines. As a public servant, Secretary Uy served as Chairman of the Commission on Information and Communications Technology, the predecessor of the Department of Information and Communications Technology. From 2011 to 2016, he led the formulation of the Philippine Digital Strategy. He also served as Chief Information/Technology Officer of the Judicial Branch, responsible for the overall technology strategy and implementation of the courts.

**MA. CYNTHIA C. HERNANDEZ**

Public-Private Partnership Center

Cynthia's area of expertise is in corporate finance, transaction advisory and financial modeling and valuation. Prior to assuming her position at the PPP Center, she was a Principal at the Deal Advisory practice of KPMG in the Philippines. She was also the sector lead for Energy and Infrastructure, where she assisted corporate and multilateral clients.

Her technical background as a licensed engineer is a significant factor in her chosen career. In addition to her degree in Metallurgical Engineering from the University of the Philippines, she also acquired a Masters in Development Economics from the same institution.

In a career spanning 23 years, Cynthia has been involved in significant deals and transactions as an advisor. As the head of the lead Philippine government agency for PPPs, she hopes to help drive economic growth through the

development of inclusive and sustainable infrastructure projects.



**JOSEPH MICHAEL P. ESPINA**

Cebu City Planning and Development Office

Joseph Michael P. Espina is an Architect, Environmental Planner, Civil Engineer and Geodetic Engineer by profession. He has been in private practice with Espina, Perez-Espina & Associates in Cebu City. He was a former Dean of the School of Architecture, Fine Arts and Design of the University of San Carlos (USC-SAFAD) and former President of the Council of Deans and Heads of Architecture Schools in the Philippines (CODHASP).

He was the Land Use Planner of the Metro Cebu Land Use and Transport Study (MCLUTS), a project of the former Ministry of Public Works, Transportation and Communications when these agencies were still one in 1980. The Land Use Planning Consultant of Metro Cebu Roadmap Study with JICA in 2015. Ar. Espina was also appointed as Private Sector Representative of the NEDA7 Regional Land Use Committee since 2016 and the Visayas Representative (Regions 6, 7 & 8) to the NEDA Board Regional Development Committee (NEDA-RDCOM, 2017-2019). He was Vice-chair of the Sub-committee on Infrastructure Planning and Spatial Development of Mega Cebu of the Metro Cebu Development and Coordinating Board (MCDCEB).

Member of professional organizations of the United Architects of the Philippines, Philippine Institute of Civil Engineers, Philippine Institute of Environmental Planners and the Geodetic Engineers of the Philippines. He was recognized a Fellow UAP and Fellow PIEP by these respected professional organizations, an ASEAN Architect and an APEC Architect.

With Socio-Civic Organizations, Ar. Espina served as a Past District Governor of Rotary District 3860 covering parts of the Visayas and Mindanao Regions.

Currently, he has been appointed by Mayor Michael Rama as the City Planning and Development Coordinator of the City of Cebu.

### Panel Discussion 3: Reinvigorate. Accelerate. Transform.



#### **BIENVENIDO E. LAGUESMA**

*Department of Labor and Employment*

Bienvenido Estudillo Laguesma is the current Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), committed to provide responsive support interventions for Filipino workers, especially those in rural and far-urban areas.

Secretary Laguesma has a long track record of protecting and promoting the welfare of Filipino workers, having previously served the labor department in various capacities for over 25 years. He started his public service career as a mediator-arbiter at the Bureau of Labor Relations - Department of Labor (now DOLE) in 1976 and rose from the ranks until he was appointed as labor secretary in 1998 under the Estrada administration.

He was a part of the Social Security Commission as Commissioner from 2011 to 2016, during the administration of the late President Benigno Aquino III.

Secretary "Benny," as he is commonly called, obtained a Bachelor's degree in political science from the Lyceum of the Philippines University in 1971. He then attended the Ateneo de Manila University where he graduated with a law degree in 1975. He was a member of Session XIX of the Career Executive Development Program of the Development Academy of the Philippines in 1985.

**ALFREDO E. PASCUAL***Department of Trade and Industry*

Fred Pascual is the Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). At the time of his appointment to DTI in June 2022, he was the President of the Management Association of the Philippines (MAP).

Over the past four decades, Mr. Pascual has contributed to society serving at four esteemed national and international institutions, viz.: Institute of Corporate Directors (ICD) as President and CEO in 2018 and 2019; University of the Philippines (UP) System as President and Co-Chair from 2011 to 2017 and as Alumni Regent in 2009 and 2010; Asian Development Bank (ADB) for 19 years (1989-2008) in several positions including as Director for Private Sector Operations, Director for Project Finance, and Advisor for Public-Private Partnership; and Asian Institute of Management (AIM) as a finance professor in the 1980s.

He was an independent director on the board of publicly listed companies (e.g., SM Investments, Megawide Construction, and Concepcion Industrial). His past board memberships included non-profits and other organizations, such as the Philippine Institute of Development Studies (PIDS), International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), ICD, Institute for Solidarity in Asia (ISA), FINEX Academy, UP Foundation, UP CIFAL Philippines, Philippine Council for Foreign Relations (PCFR), and US-Philippines Society (USPHS).

Mr. Pascual finished his MBA and BS in Chemistry (cum laude) at UP. He attended the EC-ASEAN Program on Strategic and Organizational Change at the Euro-Asia Centre, Campus INSEAD, France. His awards included Honorary Doctorates from UP and four other universities, Presidential Lingkod Bayan Award from Malacañang, Rotary Golden Wheel Award for Higher Education.

**CHRISTINA GARCIA FRASCO***Department of Tourism*

Secretary Ma. Esperanza Christina Garcia Frasco leads the Department of Tourism, tasked with the Marcos administration's vision of transforming the Philippines into a tourism powerhouse in Asia. Prior to her appointment, she was elected to serve three terms as Mayor of Liloan in Cebu. Her transformational leadership focused on education, infrastructure, sustainability, livability, and innovation, resulting in Liloan being awarded Top Model Municipality in the Philippines, and receiving more than 40 good governance awards and citations from various award-giving bodies.

Secretary Frasco received the Presidential Lingkod Bayan Regional Award in 2021 and was ranked the Top Performing Mayor in Central Visayas. She was also the first woman President of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines (LMP) Cebu and served as LMP National Vice President. Prior to being elected Mayor in 2016, Secretary Frasco was a practicing lawyer in international arbitration and commercial litigation, and a law professor in international law.

President Ferdinand R Marcos, Jr. handpicked Secretary Frasco to lead the DOT in 2022. Significant institutional reforms have since been introduced to the tourism industry through the three-pronged strategy of Connectivity, Convenience, and Equality, focused on reintroducing the Philippines to the world upon the strength of its natural assets, culture and heritage, and multi-dimensional tourism offerings. Towards this thrust, "Love The Philippines," the country's enhanced tourism branding has also been introduced to expand the country's value proposition to highlight the Philippines' many attributes.

Going beyond promotional efforts alone, Secretary Frasco has emphasized from the start the necessity of improving the essential pillars of tourism development in order to elevate the Philippines' position as a preferred destination in Asia. Under the Marcos Administration's National Tourism Development Plan 2023-2028, the DOT has seven objectives aimed at strengthening the tourism industry, namely: 1)



the Improvement of Tourism Infrastructure and Accessibility, 2) Cohesive and Comprehensive Digitalization and Connectivity, 3) Enhancement of Overall Tourist Experience, 4) Equalization of Tourism Product and Development, 5) Diversification of Portfolio through Multidimensional Tourism, 6) Maximization of Domestic Tourism, and 7) Strengthening Tourism Governance through Close Collaboration with LGUs and Stakeholders.

To enhance the overall tourist experience, Secretary Frasco has initiated the Marcos Administration's construction of 10 tourist rest areas (TRAs) across the Philippines, with 15 more rising in tourist destinations nationwide. The TRAs have a comfortable lounge, information center, clean restrooms, a pasalubong or souvenir center, and other convenient services for tourists. Introducing innovation to the urban tourism offerings of Metro Manila, the Philippines now has its very first Hop-On Hop-Off Bus Tours, providing tourists a convenient way to discover cities in Metro Manila. She also launched the Bisita, Be My Guest (BBMG) Program to incentivize Filipinos around the world to become tourism ambassadors for the country by inviting foreign visitors to travel to the Philippines, as well as the Philippine Experience: Heritage, Culture, and Arts Caravans, aimed at giving equal opportunities for tourism development and promotion to emerging and lesser known cities and municipalities, including Mindanao.

Aggressive efforts to improve policies on travel into the Philippines and other institutional improvements led the country to record 2.65 million arrivals in 2022, surpassing initial targets and generating over PHP1.87 trillion in tourism revenues and employing over 5.35 million Filipinos in tourism-related jobs. As of July 17, 2023, foreign visitor arrivals have breached the 3 million arrivals already surpassing the previous year.

This translated to over PHP212 billion in estimated tourism receipts from international visitors for the period of January to June 2023, a 502.02% increase from the same period last year.

Signaling the Asia Pacific's confidence in the Philippine tourism, the Philippines represented by Secretary Frasco, was recently elected Vice President of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) General Assembly, and Chairman of the Commission on East Asia and the Pacific, as well as Host of the UNWTO Joint Commission Meetings for East Asia and the Pacific and South Asia in 2024.

Secretary Frasco continues the Marcos Administration's efforts towards Philippine tourism's transformation as Asia's tourism powerhouse and a major economic pillar and driver of the country's post-pandemic recovery.

**MARLO L. IRINGAN**

*Department of the Interior and Local Government*

Marlo L. Iringan is a distinguished public servant who has made significant contributions to the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) throughout his career. His journey began in 1989 when he joined the DILG as a Barangay Government Operations Officer (BGOO), demonstrating his commitment to serving his community and making a positive impact at the grassroots level. He is currently serving as the Undersecretary for Local Government of the Department since 2021.

Despite starting at an entry-level position, Undersecretary Iringan's dedication, expertise, and strong work ethic propelled him through the ranks. With a background in civil engineering, he harnessed his design and systems thinking skills to assist local governments and contribute to the realization of the mandate of the Department.

His exceptional abilities and potential were duly recognized, leading to a series of promotions and increased responsibilities within a relatively short span of time. He held various Director-level positions within the department, including LGOO VIII from 2010 to 2011, Director III from 2011 to 2015, and Director IV from 2015 to 2021. This rapid progression reflects both his exceptional capabilities and his unwavering commitment to delivering excellence in field operations and program implementation.

Given his extensive experience in field operations and program management, Undersecretary Iringan plays a crucial role in shaping responsive policies and strategic direction as the Department continues to help develop our local communities. His journey exemplifies the transformative power of dedication, hard work, and a genuine desire to serve the public.



**ATTY. GENEVIEVE E. VELICARIA-GUEVARRA**  
*Department of Agriculture*

Atty. Genevieve E. Velicaria-Guevarra is the Department of Agriculture's (DA) Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs and Department Legislative Liaison Officer (DLLO), as appointed by His Excellency President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr., in March 2023. She also serves as the concurrent Officer-in-Charge (OIC) Executive Director of the Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority (PhilFIDA), an attached agency of the DA.

Asec. Guevarra is a seasoned Career Executive Service Officer-Eligible and has been in the government service for 16 years. Prior to her appointment as Department Assistant Secretary, she began her legal career as an Associate Lawyer at the Philippine Supreme Legal Advocates Inc. (PSLAI), where she handled various litigation cases involving labor disputes, family relations, and other legal matters.

In 2007, she entered government service as an operations lawyer at the Commission on Elections, where she contributed heavily in policy making and in the conduct of national, local and special elections. One of Atty. Guevarra's electoral highlights included her designation as Head of the Printing Committee for the 2016 National and Local Elections. Her main responsibility was to oversee the printing of official ballots and accountable forms in close collaboration with the National Printing Office, ensuring smooth coordination which resulted to the printing of 63 million ballots in a record-breaking 57 days. She was also designated as the Acting Head of the Overseas

Filipino Voters Office in 2017, where she implemented rules and regulations on registration of Filipino voters overseas with the assistance of the Department of Foreign Affairs. She also proposed a study on how to increase accessibility of overseas voting for Filipinos through the use of the internet technology.

Asec. Guevarra also possesses extensive expertise in legislative affairs and public relations. In 2019 she took a leap of faith and served as the Chief Political Affairs Officer for the Office of Cong. Jorge "PATROL" Bustos, representing the PATROL Party-List in the House of Representatives. Her contributions during this time involved developing policies and bills aimed at promoting the public safety sector. In addition to that, she took charge of the overall administration and coordinated with different government agencies to seek assistance for congressional projects and activities. Asec. Guevarra also served as Court Attorney V at the Office of Hon. Nesauro H. Firme, a Regular Member (academic) of the Judicial and Bar Council at the Supreme Court in Manila. In this capacity, she handled and assisted the search, screening, and selection processes for appointees to the Judiciary and the Office of the Ombudsman. Her proficiency and diligent evaluation significantly contributed to upholding the integrity and competence of the justice system.

Asec. Guevarra graduated with a bachelor's degree in Mass Communication, major in Journalism from the University of the Philippines-Baguio in 1998. Driven by her pursuit for higher learning and in making a positive impact in people's lives and the community, Asec-OIC Guevarra pursued a Bachelor of Laws degree at the San Beda College of Law, then later in Arellano University School of Law, and became a full-fledged lawyer in 2006.

**CHARLES KENNETH CO***Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry*

President Charles Kenneth Co is the 50th President of the Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Before he was elected as president, Co served as Vice President for Membership Development / Chamber Growth in 2020, Vice President for the External Affairs and Relations Division in 2018, and Overall Chairman of the Cebu Business Month in 2017. He also served the Chamber as a Trustee in 2016.

A graduate of Bachelor of Science in Management at Ateneo de Manila - University, Co is currently the Assistant to the President of Cebu Steel Corporation. He also served as the Assistant to the President of the Cebu Oversea Hardware, and Treasurer of the Cebu Contractors Association.

## MODERATORS



**MARGAUX MARIE V. SALCEDO**

Department of Budget and Management

Margaux Salcedo is the Undersecretary for Communications and Stakeholder Engagement of the Department of Budget and Management. She heads the Functional Group for Advocacies, Communications, and Training Services or DBM-ACTS.

She was Communications Consultant for the Department of Budget and Management under the Duterte Administration; editor of Core, the economic analysis book series authored by Finance Sec. Benjamin Diokno; a media strategies and crisis management consultant for 10 years; spokesperson of former President Joseph Estrada; and former news anchor of GMA News Live.

She is also a food critic of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, with a column entitled First Class, published on Sundays in the Business Section. She is also the founding editor-in-chief of the award-winning Catholic website DominusEst.PH.

She has a Juris Doctor from the Ateneo Law School, where she was Senior Associate Editor of the Ateneo Law Journal; and an Economics degree from De La Salle University.



**ATTY. MARIA LUWALHATI C. DOROTAN TIUSECO**

Department of Finance

Alu is the Department of Finance's spokesperson and head of Climate Finance Policy Group, Information Management Service, and Political & Legislative Liason Group.

Prior to joining the economic team, Alu served as chief legal counsel and policy head in the Office of Senate President Franklin M. Drilon and the Office of Senate President Juan Miguel F. Zubiri. She co-wrote and closely supervised the passage of landmark measures, including the Revised Corporation Code, Bangsamoro Organic Law, concurrence to the ratification of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement, and amendments to the Public Service

Act and Retail Trade Liberalization Law, to name a few. She lent her expertise on various other measures and is well-regarded in the field of policymaking and legislation.

While Alu began her career as a corporate law associate at Picazo Buyco Tan Fider & Santos, one of the Philippines' leading firms specializing in corporate law and special projects, she has spent most of her career in government service. She also served as spokesperson of the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and permanent representative to the Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Presidential Cabinet Cluster, and convenor in a number of solid waste, urban renewal, traffic and international relations programs. Alu was likewise a member of the Boards of the Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA), the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), and served as board secretary of the Metro Manila Council (MMC).

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