

KEYNOTE MESSAGE OF SECRETARY BIENVENIDO E. LAGUESMA

22nd National PESO Congress

25 October 2022

SMX Convention Center, Clark, Pampanga

- Province of Pampanga Governor, **Hon. Dennis G. Pineda**
- Mabalacat City, Pampanga Mayor, **Hon. Crisostomo C. Garbo**
- Officers of the PESO Managers Association of the Philippines (PESOMAP)
- All PESO Managers from all over the country
- Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

A pleasant afternoon!

1. For over twenty-two (22) years after the passage of the Public Service Employment Office (PESO) Act, the PESOs and Job Placement Offices have always been at the forefront of our policy to promote gainful and quality employment and develop human resources in line with the Administration's socio-economic goals and priorities. They have served as the Department's implementing arm for various employment facilitation services at the local level and we laud the unrelenting service of the PESOs in ensuring that no Filipino was left behind even amidst the crises the country faced. We commend the efforts of the PESOs in serving as one of the frontline providers during the times our workers have struggled because of the global pandemic. You remained steadfast in pursuing decent work and full employment through our active labor market interventions and social safety nets.

2. This year's theme of the National PESO Congress, "*PESO Kaagapay ng Sambayang Pilipino sa Makabagong Mundo ng Trabaho*" is befitting of the Department of Labor and Employment's thrusts and directions under the new administration. For the past two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has derailed our economy with the restrictions imposed to secure public safety and public health. Despite this, the Filipino people have adapted and shown resilience in making means of livelihood, taking advantage of the technological advancements brought about by the fourth industrial revolution. The employment landscape has evolved, which in turn has introduced new avenues of work. Given these changes, PESOs, now more than ever, are

expected to improve and innovate their employment services to address employment issues, among them are job-skills mismatch, low labor capital productivity, and underutilization of labor.

3. DOLE, under the new administration, has aligned its vision and goals with President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr.’s socio-economic agenda towards economic recovery and reduced poverty by focusing on creating more quality and decent jobs. As I have shared during the Post-SONA economic briefing, the DOLE shall endeavor to promote gainful and quality employment by making decent, remunerative, green, and sustainable work and employment opportunities available to all regardless of sex, age, race, or creed. The PESO, as our partners on the ground, will be instrumental in advancing this mission of the labor department.
4. In line with this promotion of the workers’ welfare, the DOLE shall be a strong advocate of policies that are responsive to the needs of the labor force, one of which is the proposed amendments to the PESO Law. This amendment will entail the evolution of the PESO to an office providing full-cycle services to its clientele—from referral and placement, effective employment counseling, capacity building, skills training, to entrepreneurial interventions. The Department’s vision of the new PESO is to be the channel for workers to complete their transformation journey to decent wage employment or self-employment. To this end, the DOLE shall provide a series of capacity-building training to help the PESO prepare for the evolving world of work and changing needs of the workers to adapt to the new labor market.
5. Given that the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), is now back in our fold, PESOs can rely on DOLE’s comprehensive assistance in addressing employment issues, especially in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and climate change adaptation. Through TESDA’s assistance in providing responsive and updated technical and vocational education and training strategy, we shall advance gainful and

quality employment opportunities and develop our human resources according to the skills needs of our recovering and growth industries.

6. We also intend to intensify our employment facilitation services by maximizing technological advancements and increasing outreach of our programs and services to the poorest communities and vulnerable sectors. This will be made possible through the enhanced PhilJobNet, and accessible Job Fair facilities. Sectoral Job Fairs will be put in place in partnership with different agencies and institutions to cater to job seekers in need of jobs in their chosen field of work. DOLE has already tied up with the Department of Tourism (DOT) for the Philippine Tourism Job Fair and will explore forging of partnership with the Department of Education (DepED) for the K to 12 graduates. The Department shall assure that the general public, through the PESO, shall have easy access to nationwide job vacancies, career guides, and labor market information.
7. These policy directions of the Department will not be possible without the support of our stakeholders, one of which is the association of PESOs nationwide. With the combined efforts of the DOLE and the Local Government Unit's employment arm, we will attain the targeted results, with greater efficiency and further reaching outcomes. As our President would say, it is by unity that we shall recover from any crisis. DOLE will continue to be of assistance to PESOs nationwide and will maintain the commitment to develop more policies and create programs and services that will help alleviate the livelihood and working conditions of our Filipino workers. Consistent with this year's theme, *makakaasa kayo na ang DOLE ay kaagapay ng PESO at ng sambayang Pilipino sa makabagong mundo ng trabaho*.
8. In this National Congress, the DOLE shall recognize the extraordinary performance of PESOs who continue to strive for excellence in giving services to the people despite the limitation brought by the COVID-19 pandemic through the "Secretary's Bayanihan Service Awards". As the frontrunners in providing employment facilitation, we appreciate your efforts in attending to

the crisis through innovative, resilient, and humanitarian programs directed to those workers displaced by the pandemic. We congratulate in advance those who will be awarded tonight. May this recognition be your inspiration to do more for our workers, now that we are on the road to recovery from the global crisis.

9. As we celebrate this national assembly of PESO Managers, I urge everyone to continue to be an advocate and contributor to our economic recovery. Today, more than ever, our efforts must be united to address pressing issues that affect our dear workers, especially at the grassroots level. I call for our Local Chief Executives (LCE) to institutionalize their respective PESOs, to enable the local employment service providers to find stability and produce more sustainable programs for their constituents. With our strong partnership with the Department of Interior and Local Government supporting for the Institutionalization of the 1592 LGU-based PESOs, we enjoy that our partners at the local level see the importance of having this permanent office with regular plantilla PESO Managers created to expeditiously facilitate employment facilitation services to our labor force towards the improvement of their skills, find decent work, and attain sustainable livelihood. DOLE will always be at your service should you need assistance in institutionalizing your PESO.

10. The Department of Labor and Employment is truly grateful for the PESOs' commitment and dedication to serving our Filipino workers. May we continue to work hand-in-hand as partners in progress and resilience in confronting whatever challenge comes our way. *Sama-sama tayo sa pagbabago at pagtataguyod ng mga karapatan ng manggagawang Pilipino!*

Mabuhay ang PESO!