

Welcome Address
Orientation for Laboratories on Trade Facilitation and Accreditation
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It is with pleasure that I welcome all of you to this orientation on trade facilitation and accreditation. This and other forthcoming activities of the Philippine Accreditation Bureau (PAB) are part of our design to put accreditation in its proper place in industry, trade and consumer welfare.

As part of the global community, we, as global consumers, enjoy a vast array of goods and services from local and overseas suppliers. This choice is important for individuals to enjoy life in general as well as to nations around the globe for economic gains. Latest World Bank figures put world trade at US\$16.6 trillion (Source: World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/topic/trade>). As more trading takes place, consumers are exposed to risks on product safety and quality.

The growth in international trade gives rise to number of national and international voluntary and mandatory technical regulations, standards, testing, inspection and certification procedures to meet the legitimate requirements of quality and safety that consumers, businesses, regulators and other organizations demand of goods and services.

Some of these regulations and standards—which vary from country to country—can be costly or burdensome to businesses and serve as technical barriers to domestic markets and export opportunities. In the context of international trade, mutual recognition agreements in accreditation can eliminate or minimize trade barriers as signatory members agree among themselves to recognize as equivalent each other's accreditation systems. The PAB is a signatory member of international and regional bodies such as International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC).

In complex and highly competitive markets, accreditation provides the confidence required when products or services are traded between economies. Accreditation hinges on trust that gives assurance of product and safety, quality as well as accurate, reliable and competent testing, calibration and certification. An Accreditation Body, through

accreditation, gives that assurance that conformity assessment services like certification, testing, inspection and calibration performed by conformity assessment services (CABs) can be trusted. A system of quality infrastructure ultimately works to enhance global trade through the confluence of accreditation, standardization and conformity assessment.

This event will not only highlight the connection between accreditation and trade facilitation but will also serve as the first step in setting up the proposed National Laboratory Network. The need for laboratory networks particularly in the health sector cannot be more relevant than in the current times where there is greater exchange of persons, goods and services. Many countries are susceptible to outbreaks and epidemics due to weak health systems. Strong surveillance, quality laboratory performance, and research are necessary in the early detection and strategic response to disease outbreak. A well-functioning laboratory network will also work in serving the needs of other sectors of the economy.

In closing, let me cite that President Duterte, during his SONA, highlighted reforms that would make the ease of doing business mandatory. Improving trade facilitation would contribute much in improving the ways and cost of doing business in the country. As our President promised change, we also do.... the good change ... in the country's national quality infrastructure.

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.