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## “WEE can do it!” DTI celebrates National Women’s Month



*Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Secretary Ramon M. Lopez honors the key economic role of women during the launch of 3A (Accept, Adapt, Act) Program Batch 2, Handog Kabuhayan: Alay kay Juana in line with the celebration of the Internal Women’s Day. Also in observance of the National Women’s Month, DTI Regional Operations Group (ROG) Undersecretary and DTI Gender and Development (GAD) Focal Person Blesila A. Lantayona and Consumer Policy Group (CPG) Undersecretary Atty. Ruth B. Castelo rev up the GAD Agenda video teaser with an empowering line, “Babae tayo, Taas Noo!” that was shown during the virtual DTI flag raising ceremony on Monday, 8 March 2021.*

The DTI Resource Generation and Management Service (RGMS) led the Department’s celebration of the 2021 National Women’s Month with the theme, “We Make Change Work for Women, *Juana Laban sa Pandemya: Kaya!*” during the virtual flag-raising ceremony on 8 March 2021.

Relatedly in line with the celebration of the International Women’s Day last Monday, **DTI Secretary Ramon M. Lopez** recognized women entrepreneurs during the launch of the 3A (Accept, Adapt, Act) Program Batch 2, *Handog Kabuhayan: Alay kay Juana*.

In his message, Sec. Lopez underscored the increase in the number of women-led micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSMEs) during the pandemic, showing how women play a vital role in the overall economic recovery of the country amidst COVID-19.

*“Today, as we celebrate International Women’s Day, we want to highlight the extraordinary roles of women-led MSMEs. Sa tulong ng mga MSMEs, our country can be more hopeful for a post-COVID future that will be poised for a better normal,”* he said.

The 3A program, an integrated training package of the DTI-Regional Operations Group (ROG), Bureau of Small and Medium Enterprise Development (BSMED), and the Philippine Trade Training Center (PTTC), aims to assist MSMEs thrive despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

Under the 3A program, not only will the participants undergo training and mentorship from business experts but they will also be granted financial assistance to help them kick start their

business ventures. This is made possible in partnership with the National Council of Women of the Philippines (NCWP).

Notably, the International Women's Day Celebration served as a venue to present the overview of the DTI GAD Agenda that is expected to be finalized and implemented within the year.

In her message for the special occasion, **DTI Regional Operations Group (ROG) Undersecretary** and **DTI-GAD Focal Person Blesila A. Lantayona** encouraged the DTI Family to support this cause.

*"I therefore enjoin everyone to factor in gender responsiveness in the course of the delivery of our services to our clientele. Let us continue our advocacy within and outside DTI and emphasize the value of empowering the productive partnership of women and men as enablers of sustainable development,"* she said.

In accordance with Republic Act 9710, also known as the Magna Carta of Women (MCW), the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) and Department of Budget and Management (DBM) issued MC 2018-04 which provides the guidelines in developing the GAD agenda for government agencies.

Resulting from a series of Focus Group Discussions among DTI stakeholders, the issues and challenges that women face were identified. Among these are the following: 1) Immediate need to reboot, reset, and restart women-led enterprises and MSMEs; 2) Economic difficulties and the search for windows of opportunity; 3) The pandemic has exacerbated the low participation of MSMEs and WMEs in Global Trade; and 4) Need to revive consumer spending and to protect women's welfare as consumers.

Led by **RGMS Director Lydia R. Guevarra**, the DTI GAD Agenda was developed to serve as a strategic plan and framework in conducting programs within the Department to achieve the GAD goals and outcomes based on its core mandates of MSMEs development, trade policy, investment promotion, and consumer welfare.

Part of the celebration is the showing of the GAD Agenda teaser video featuring Undersecretary Lantayona and **Consumer Policy Group (CPG) Undersecretary Ruth B. Castelo**.

*"Ang DTI GAD Agenda ang siyang magiging basehan sa pagpapalano at pagpapatupad ng mga programa upang mas maisulong ang Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) para mas maging pantay-pantay ang mga oportunidad ng bawat Pilipino, lalaki man o babae."*, Usec. Lantayona explained in the teaser.

On the same note, Undersecretary Castelo likened the DTI GAD Agenda to the sports of basketball as a game plan and strategy to maximize the players' potentials as well as a cooking recipe that needs to be followed in perfecting a dish.

The same video was also uploaded on the DTI YouTube Channel and shared on the DTI Official Facebook Page of the same day as part of the promotional campaign. A mural at the DTI lobby featuring the DTI GAD Agenda will also be put up by the end of March.

To further empower women, the Department continuously promotes the SheTrades initiative which was launched in December 2020 by the DTI-Export Marketing Bureau (EMB) and the International Trade Centre (ITC). SheTrades is a global endeavor that aims to connect three million women by 2021 through various ITC projects, in collaboration with international partners through e-learning and SheTrades.com. The concept is a decentralized platform for in-country interventions of the ITC SheTrades Initiative with the objective of increasing sustainability by promoting local ownership, through a participatory approach and alignment with national and sectoral priorities. In the country, the SheTrades Philippines hub provides women-owned businesses and corporations to, among others: 1) connect with global businesses, 2) export products and services, 3) learn through e-learning courses; and 4) participate in workshops, trade fairs, and other business events.