

on the DOT

DOT Secretary Berna Romulo Puyat: 'It has been an absolute honor representing the nation's tourism industry'



There was a time, back when I was an undersecretary at the Department of Agriculture, that I thought the Tourism Secretary must have the best job. Their portfolio is the entire Philippines, a beautiful country with friendly, hospitable people. All one needs to do is make these wonderful qualities known to the world.

Now that I've been in the role for four years – the last two spent coping with a devastating pandemic – you might think that I changed my mind. My term as Tourism Secretary has certainly had its ups and downs, but to be honest, my convictions have only grown stronger— it is the best job, especially because of the tough moments. I'm proud of how the government and the private

sector have become true partners in the accomplishments and the challenges that we've overcome in the tourism sector together.

Just a month before I was appointed DOT Secretary in May of 2018, President Rodrigo Duterte had ordered the closure of Boracay, the crown jewel of Philippine tourism, for a much-needed rehabilitation. Boracay drew millions of tourists over the years, which on the surface is a positive thing, but the neglect of sound environmental practices led to its degradation, in effect destroying what made the island so magical, so idyllic in the first place.

The valuable lessons learned from Boracay became a template for the development and conservation of our other prime destinations.

More people became aware of the dangers of overtourism, and Boracay became a model of resilience and sustainability all over the region.

I don't think it's a coincidence that the reopening of Boracay in late 2018, as well as the relaunch of the popular "It's More Fun in Philippines" campaign in early 2019, led to the Philippines' most successful year in terms of tourism. Many of the world's tourists are familiar with Boracay, but not much beyond that. Our campaigns at the time began to highlight other aspects of our country, not just our destinations but our unique culture, cuisine, and traditions as well.

By the end of 2019, we welcomed 8.26 million foreign visitors to our shores and recorded over 110

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DOT welcomes new Tourism Chief

The Department of Tourism (DOT) welcomes the impending appointment of Mayor Christina G. Frasco as its new Secretary with high hopes that the momentum that has been generated the past few months toward the revival, recovery, and resiliency of the tourism industry will be carried over to the new administration.

The transition team of the DOT is ready to welcome and brief the new Secretary and her team for a

smooth turnover. Among those that we will be turning over is the National Tourism Development Plan (NTDP) 2022 to 2028.

The DOT will also be turning over the reformulated Tourism Response and Recovery Plan (TRRP), which served as the Department's roadmap to the tourism sector's full recovery from the devastating effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

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DOT Secretary Berna Romulo Puyat: 'It has been an absolute honor representing the nation's tourism industry'



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million domestic trips, our highest ever. Tourism contributed to 12.8 percent of our GDP, but what I'm most grateful for is that tourism generated 5.71 million jobs for Filipinos, giving them decent livelihoods to support themselves and their families and improve their standard of living.

Unfortunately, this "golden" period didn't last long. As 2020 rolled in, the industry's worst nightmare had just begun to unfold. I'll never forget those sleepless nights in the early stages of the pandemic, dealing with stranded, panicking tourists and finding ways to bring them back to safety. It was also during this time where I saw the Bayanihan spirit at work; Filipinos from all segments of society lent a hand and helped in whatever way they could to bring relief to those who needed it most.

During this time, I also remember seeing pictures of our empty destinations pop up on my social media feed. The pandemic, ironically, gave our tourism areas some breathing space to recover. It was obvious that a paradigm shift

was required, and we needed to move away from mass tourism and instead provide more personalized and meaningful experiences that resonate with traveler's changing priorities.

Slowly but surely – a phrase I liked to repeat often as we fine-tuned and executed our recovery strategies – destinations began to reopen after the thorough process of consulting and working closely with local governments, stakeholders, and community representatives. We made a big push for domestic tourism, based on the data that it is our local travelers who contribute a much larger portion to tourism revenue. The DOT accredited establishments that conformed to health and safety standards, upskilled our tourism workers for operations in the new normal, and expedited the vaccination of our tourism workers.

Today, 98 percent of our tourism workers have been fully vaccinated. It was vitally important to protect our workers, especially the frontliners at our ports and destinations, and the staff at

quarantine facilities. Getting them vaccinated and boosted at the soonest possible time was essential to building momentum for our recovery efforts.

After Omicron caused a slight delay in reopening our borders to international tourism in late 2021, we were finally able to accept foreign travelers for leisure starting Feb. 10. As of May 23, 2022, over half a million foreign tourists have entered the country, pleasantly surpassing the DOT's expectations.

So, why are the world's revenge travelers seem to be making a beeline for the Philippines? Apart from the promise of how much #MoreFunAwaits, it's also because we have one of the most streamlined entry processes in Southeast Asia. Even so, the Philippines continues to have the one of the lowest new daily COVID cases in the region.

Last April, we had a chance to back up our talk with action as we hosted the prestigious World Travel and Tourism Council Global Summit in Manila. We showed the world's travel and tourism leaders and decision makers what the

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Philippine tourism industry was all about – our ability to deliver safe and seamless travel experiences, the diversity of our culture and our heritage, our multi-layered cuisine and our world-class talents—and I knew that the country was on the right track, in fact leading the pack in the safe resumption of international tourism.

At the summit, the issues of sustainable tourism and regenerative tourism permeated every topic and panel discussion. The latter of which the DOT has been pushing for in the industry – to involve tourists in leaving a

destination in a better state than before.

I also believe that responsibility is not just about caring for the environment, but in making careful use of the resources that we have been entrusted with.

For two years in a row, the DOT received an “unqualified opinion” rating from the Commission on Audit, a testament that we have been operating with the highest degree of accountability and transparency. Restoring the public’s trust in the DOT was one of the first tasks entrusted to me. Four years later, with the COA to back me up, I think I can safely say mission accomplished!

Leaving any job is always bittersweet, but I’m happy to be handing over to the succeeding administration a department that operates with honesty, integrity, and always with the public’s best interests at heart.

It has been an absolute honor representing the nation’s tourism industry. In my four years as DOT Secretary, I have traveled the width and breadth of our wonderful country, with every trip a joyful discovery, a marvel for all the senses, a celebration of what our people can offer to the world. And even after I step down from this office, I’ll never stop representing the Philippines. **DOT**

DOT welcomes new Tourism Chief

Moreover, the next administration is assured that the DOT has been operating in utmost accountability and transparency, receiving an ‘unqualified opinion’ from the Commission on Audit (COA), the highest rating that indicates that all of our financial statements are reported fairly and correctly, for two straight years. The last time the DOT was awarded this rating was back in 2009.

The DOT has also maintained the agency’s ISO 9001:2015 certification for four years in a row, and has successfully expanded its Quality Management System (QMS) coverage to three additional regional offices, DOT-Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), Regions 4A (CALABARZON), and Region 10 (Northern

Mindanao).

Tourism Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat will bow out of the Department secure in the knowledge that the industry is back on its feet: borders have reopened and the livelihood of those dependent on tourism have gradually been restored. The new tourism chief can bank on the remarkable gains of the Duterte Administration that has piloted sustainable and regenerative tourism practices, not only on Boracay Island, but also in many tourist destinations across the country.

This being said, the Department is ready to make the next big strides to even greater heights under the leadership of the new secretary. **DOT**



DOT sees increased arrivals with additional int'l flights via Clark Airport

The Department of Tourism (DOT) sees a boost in tourist arrivals in the coming months as Clark International Airport announced its updated flights that would welcome more foreign tourists at the new passenger terminal beginning May 2.

Dubbed as a new world-class gateway, Clark International Airport's new passenger terminal building will serve both domestic and international flights.

Two of South Korea's largest low-cost airlines were among the new air carriers added to the list of airlines that operate direct flights from Clark.

The popular Jeju Air has launched its INCHEON-CRK-INCHEON route every Thursday and Sunday, while Jin Air started offering the same route beginning May 16, every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Other foreign flights that will be utilizing the new passenger terminal include destinations to and from Singapore via Jetstar and Scoot; Doha via Qatar Airways; Air Asia; and Dubai via Emirates.

Local air carriers Cebu Pacific and Philippine Airlines will also

have flights operating at the new passenger terminal.

The interior of the new terminal pays homage to the renowned Mt. Pinatubo and its crater lake, Mt. Arayat, and the Sacobia riverbed—three province's well-loved travel destinations.

Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat said the entire province alone offers a variety of tourism activities—from culinary, culture and heritage, to adventure—thus, she said, the opening of the new passenger terminal is a boost to the recovery of the pandemic hit sector.

"Clark is one of the destinations included in the recently concluded World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) Global Summit. More than just a freeport zone, clearly, this place is an emerging tourism hub that has great potential to bring huge gains for the tourism industry," Puyat said. **DOT**

on the DOT: Staff

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DOT, MMC Foundation partnership brings ER bikes to three Metro Manila tourist sites

The Fort Santiago, Manila - The Department of Tourism (DOT) and the Makati Medical Center (MMC) Foundation on 31 May 2022 launched the Hospital-in-a-Bike project which seeks to boost tourist safety in three tourism sites in Metro Manila.

The Emergency Response (ER) bikes will be deployed in the areas of Intramuros, Luneta Park, and Paco Park—which was recently designated as a National Cultural Treasure on its 200th year anniversary.

In celebration of MMC Hospital's 53rd anniversary, these ER Bikes were also donated by The MMC Wellness Center and the Embassy of Israel in the Philippines.

Two of the sites namely Luneta Park and Paco Park are being managed by the National Parks Development Committee (NPDC), while Intramuros is being overseen by the Intramuros Administration (IA).

The bikes, which are designed for cycle responders, were developed using custom-built mountain bikes fitted with appropriate lights and



sirens. The bikes are lightweight and include a strengthened back wheel and stronger spokes, water bottles and pannier bags which contain assorted medical supplies and equipment for first responders.

Spearheaded by the MMC Foundation, the Hospital-in-a-Bike Project aims to distribute a total of 100 ER bikes among public sector partners around the Philippines, and will be pre-positioned in chosen strategic pilot areas in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

Tourism Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat shared her satisfaction with the latest development, citing its positive impact in promoting safe tourism in the three sites.

In her speech at the turnover ceremony held at the Fort Santiago in Intramuros, Puyat thanked the MMC and PLDT-Smart for their relentless support to the DOT's initiatives, particularly in medical and wellness tourism.

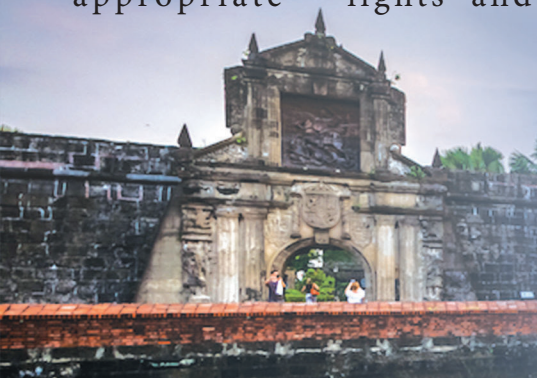
"I hope the partnership of the DOT with PLDT-Smart and Makati Med will continue. They have installed free internet in Intramuros, upgraded the Ciriaco Tirol Hospital in Boracay, helped in vaccinating tourism workers in

Siargao, and provided health security during the Philippines' hosting of the WTTC Summit, where our delegates experienced world-class healthcare and hospitality. Together, we showed that when the government and private sector work together, great things can happen," Puyat quipped during the turnover ceremony.

Present during the turnover were officials of MMC and PLDT-Smart led by Marge M. Barro, Executive Director of MMC Foundation, and Esther O. Santos, President of PLDT-Smart Foundation.

Key officials of the DOT, including Intramuros Administrator Atty. Guiller B. Asido, Medical and Wellness Tourism Director Dr. Paulo Benito S. Tugbang, NPDC Deputy Executive Director Jezreel Gaius A. Apelar, among others, also joined the tourism chief in the activity.

Early in 2020, Puyat has partnered with PLDT-Smart in providing emergency satellite (SAT) phones to regional tourism offices. Likewise, the existing partnership of the DOT and MMC Foundation ensured the necessary upgrade of the Ciriaco S. Tirol Hospital in Boracay Island. **DOT**



DOT promotes Mindanao as key tourist destination with colorful new brand

CAGAYAN DE ORO - The Department of Tourism (DOT) on May 2 launched the Colors of Mindanao campaign as it further promotes the Philippines' second largest group of islands that is home to a great many and diverse cultures, landscapes, and gastronomy.

The campaign was spearheaded by Undersecretary for Mindanao Myra Paz Valderrosa-Abubakar and the regional directors of Zamboanga Peninsula, Northern Mindanao, CARAGA, the Davao region, and SOCCSKSARGEN—Mindanao's five regions.

In her opening message, Tourism Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat noted that while each province is known for their unique attributes “this is the first time that the whole of Mindanao is united under one banner.”

“What a colorful banner it is, with each hue representing a tourism product that is part of an inter or intraregional circuit. This campaign is timely and significant, as we just recently reopened the Philippines to international tourism,” Puyat added.

The campaign showcased new tourism products and circuits under unique color themes corresponding to a tourism aspect: blue for dive tourism, teal for sun and beach, green for ecotourism, brown for farm tourism, violet for culture and heritage, red for adventure and sports, orange for food tourism, and yellow for faith tourism. These were formulated by the five Mindanao regional offices in a bid to foster unity in diversity, sustainability, inclusivity, and a more progressive tourism not only in Mindanao but also in the country.

“It is high time that travelers and tourists think of Mindanao as a top destination in the Philippines. The island region is blessed with a multitude of beautiful destinations, historical sites, and cultural wonders. The Colors of Mindanao campaign aims



to attract different types of travelers to the region, from divers, eco-adventurers, and beach bums -- to history buffs, foodies, and the faithful,” the tourism chief urged.

“This campaign also highlights Halal and Muslim friendly tourism, one of the fastest growing tourism sectors in the world. As one of the major new products of the DOT, halal tourism will bring special attention to the attractions and cuisine in Mindanao and help boost the tourism economy in the area,” she added.

It can be recalled in 2021 that the DOT instituted Halal Food Tourism and its first Halal-centric coffee table book titled, “Bismillah Before Eating” to showcase the traditional and culinary offerings of the different regions in Mindanao.

Puyat added that the Colors of Mindanao was given a preview at the recently concluded 21st World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) Global Summit in Manila when the DOT regional directors of Zamboanga Peninsula, Northern Mindanao, Davao Region, SOCCSKSARGEN, and CARAGA graced the summit in a wardrobe made of Tausug fabrics, beadwork from Bukidnon, Yakan weaves, and other artisan handicraft from Mindanao. **DOT**

DOT eyes medical tourism boost

The Department of Tourism (DOT) has plans to boost medical tourism in the country - and increase public awareness for such in the global market.

Tourism Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat said the pandemic-induced crisis brought into light the importance of medical travel and wellness tourism.

"We see so much untapped potential in the health and wellness industry. With world-class hospitals and facilities, skilled doctors and nurses, and the Filipino brand of hospitality, the Philippines is poised to become an attractive destination for medical tourism," Puyat stressed.

"Currently, we have been implementing measures that will further develop the country as a medical tourism destination in a calibrated approach, including the development of an internal ecosystem and network of facilities in the country to accommodate concerns and issues surrounding this tourism product," she added.

According to her, the DOT has developed a gold standard in approaching health and safety for meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) events, following the successful hosting of the 21st World Travel and Tourism (WTTC) Global Summit in Manila last April, as well as institutionalizing health and safety in tourism activities.

Likewise, Puyat noted on the Department's partnership with the Department of Health (DOH) and Makati Medical Center to attend to the medical needs of tourists.

She also cited the DOT's ongoing coordination with relevant national government agencies and local government units (LGUs) to get tourism workers vaccinated against COVID-19, which has led to a 98% inoculation rate and helped restore confidence of people to travel to and within the Philippines.

Untapped potential

Juergen T. Steinmetz, a delegate in the recent WTTC Summit, shared his experience following the medical treatment at the Makati Medical Center for his left leg--which was diagnosed to be inflicted by a flesh-eating bacteria.

"It's a secret to be revealed and in the making to come out and go viral. The Philippines will become

the number one destination for medical tourism," Steinmetz quipped in his recent article published by eturbonews.com.

"All the ingredients are here. Excellent world-class doctors and facilities, nurses that keep the standard for high-quality care around the world, and a beautiful country, wonderful beaches, good food, and exciting cities," he added.

Steinmetz also noted the considerably cheaper medical costs in the Philippines compared to other countries.

Meanwhile, the DOT introduced its newly appointed director for medical, health and wellness tourism, Dr. Paulo Benito S. Tugbang.

Prior to his appointment, Tugbang led the Medical Travel and Wellness Tourism Program of the DOH and served with the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) Secretariat as the Technical Lead. Dr. Tugbang is a registered medical doctor, as well as a board top-notch nurse and midwife. **DOT**

Phl Scraps Covid Pre-Departure Test for Fully Vaccinated, Boosted Tourists

MANILA - The Philippine government will no longer require a pre-departure COVID-19 test for incoming fully vaccinated passengers as part of its measures to revive the pandemic-hit economy starting May 30, 2022.

Following the recommendations made by the Department of Tourism (DOT) as a means to further ease the travel requirements and encourage more tourists to visit the country, the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) approved Resolution 168 exempting all fully vaccinated and boosted foreign nationals from the RT-PCR test requirement. Based on the resolution, the visitor must be at least 18 years old and must have received the primary series of Covid-19 vaccines and at least one booster shot.

Also exempted from the pre-departure RT-PCR requirement are foreign nationals aged 12 to 17 who have received their primary Covid-19 vaccine/s; and those aged below 12 and traveling with fully vaccinated or boosted parents or guardians.

The same exemption guidelines apply to Filipinos travelling to the Philippines.

"We are glad that the propositions we have worked on have been approved by the IATF-EID and are now up for implementation. As we make it more convenient for tourists to visit the country, the public's health and safety will remain the DOT's priority," Tourism Secretary Berna-Romulo Puyat said.



"The DOT sees this development as a win for the local tourism industry as welcoming more tourists in the country will yield more revenues for our MSMEs and restore more jobs and livelihoods in the sector," she added.

Meanwhile, travel insurance is no longer required, but still highly encouraged, for arriving passengers. All types of vaccinations certificates, regardless of country of origin, will also be accepted.

Based on recent data, a total 517,516 foreign tourist arrivals have been recorded in the Philippines from 10 February to 25 May 2022.

A bulk of foreign tourists, totaling to 104,589 came from the United States, followed by South Korea with 28,474, and Canada with 24,337.

Australian nationals, British/English, and Japanese tourists came next on the list with 23,286; 20,846; and 13,373 respectively.

Other foreign visitors in the Philippines during the early months of the year include Vietnamese, Singaporeans, Malaysians, Italians, Irish and French.

Puyat said the Department is looking forward to an uptick in tourist arrivals in the coming weeks following the further easing of entry requirements into the country. **DOT**



DOT reminds AEs on proper flag etiquette

The Department of Tourism (DOT) on May 13 issued an advisory reminding accommodation establishments (AEs) to practice and observe proper procedures in displaying the Philippine flag within their premises.

“Displaying our country’s flag is a sign of pride and patriotism as it reflects our loyalty and commitment to the Philippines. It should be given utmost respect and importance wherever it may be placed,” Tourism Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat stressed.

According to the DOT’s Advisory No. 03 s. 2022, AEs who wish to fly the Philippine flag must carefully observe and comply with Republic Act (RA) No. 8491 or the Flag and Heraldic Code of the Philippines.

Under RA 8491, establishments may only display the country’s flag in certain locations such as prominent places like lobbies, driveways, and courtyards among others.

Additionally, the advisory states that AEs may display the Philippine flag indoors, provided that it will be placed at the left of the observer as he/she enters the room.

Should the flag be attached on a building, its flagpole must be on the top of the roof or anchored on a sill projecting at an upward angle.

“When the Philippine flag is flown with another flag, the flags, if both are national flags, must be flown on separate staffs of the same height and shall be of equal size,” the advisory stated.

Moreover, the advisory also lists the prohibited acts relating to the use of the national flag, including use as a drapery or tablecloth, as a staff or whip, and as a costume whether in whole or in part among others.

For the full copy of the advisory, visit the Publications tab of the DOT website: <https://beta.tourism.gov.ph/> **DOT**



DOT launches “Keep the Fun Going” sustainable tourism campaign with gamified challenges

The Department of Tourism (DOT) launched the second phase of the Save Our Spots (SOS) campaign titled, “Keep the Fun Going”, to encourage tourists to practice eco-friendly travels.

The campaign builds on the gains of the SOS phase one that was launched in 2019 to educate travelers about becoming responsible tourists. “Keep the Fun Going” aims not only to educate but also motivate travelers to take part in sustainable tourism practices, mainly through gamified challenges.

“The DOT has been integrating sustainable tourism principles in its projects, programs and policies, even involving tourists to be part of these efforts. Through the SOS campaign, we aim to raise awareness about responsible travel and emphasize that every small act goes a long way to ensure that future generations will continue to benefit from and enjoy nature’s abundance,” said Tourism Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat.

The Philippines is home to some of the world’s richest ecosystems and diverse species, which are facing both climate change and human threats, such as overtourism and neglect of the environment.

To inspire more tourists to practice sustainable travel, the campaign will highlight a gamified experience featuring four eco-friendly ways to travel. The challenges will be demonstrated through collaboration with local key influencers, after which, the public will be enjoined to accomplish at least two of the four activities, which are:

- The “Certified Foot Soldier Challenge” that encourages travelers to walk, hike, or bike more often;
- The “Zero-Waste Warrior”, which inspires travelers to reduce waste by avoiding single-use plastics and always bringing reusable water bottles, utensils, and shopping bags;
- The “resTOURism Advocate Challenge” that encourages tourists to volunteer in restoration efforts of communities,

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DOT launches "Keep the Fun Going" sustainable tourism campaign with gamified challenges



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such as planting activities, clean-up drives, and wildlife preservation; and,

- The "Eco-Staycationer Challenge" that motivates tourists to book in eco-friendly accommodations, such as local homestays or ANAHAW-awardee hotels that take action to promote sustainability.

Participants will have a chance to win by completing at least two challenges and posting them on social media with the following guidelines:

STEP 1. Take a photo of yourself doing the challenges.

For Certified Foot Soldier, you may use an app to track or record your steps or bike ride as proof.

For Eco-staycationer, best if you can include an eco-friendly practice of the establishment in your video. Camping and staycation trips (in a green hotel) are qualified.

STEP 2. Upload your photo.

Put a geotag and write a short description.

STEP 3. Tag the official DOT social media accounts:

Tiktok: tourismphilippines

Instagram: tourism_phl

Facebook: facebook.com/DepartmentOfTourism

Twitter: TourismPHL

STEP 4. Include the #KeepTheFunGoing and #ChallengeDone hashtags in your caption

STEP 5. Tag 3 of your friends in your post

STEP 6. Make sure to set your profile in public so we can see your entry

All entries will be drawn through an electronic raffle. Weekly winners will be announced every Saturday and will be notified thru Facebook Personal Message. The two grand winners, which will be chosen from all the qualified entries, will win a FREE TRIP for two to Palawan.

Join the #KeepTheFunGoing movement today and be an eco-warrior. To learn more about the campaign, visit philippines.travel/saveourspots. **DOT**



DENR, DOT and DILG unveil Year of Protected Areas (YoPA) Campaign marking 90th anniversary of Protected Area establishment in the Philippines

By: DENR and UNDP Philippines

23 May 2022 (Metro Manila) – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Tourism (DOT) and the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) signed a joint declaration to support the celebration of the Year of the Protected Areas or the YoPA Campaign, which promotes Philippine national parks.

DENR Acting Secretary Jim Sampulna, DOT Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat, and DILG Secretary Eduardo Año led the signing ceremony at the launch of the YoPA Campaign marking the 90th anniversary of establishing national parks in the country. The campaign launch is also part of the wider celebration for the 2022 International Day of Biological Diversity (IDBD).

The joint declaration states that the DENR, through its Biodiversity Management Bureau and the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) of UNDP Philippines, will lead the campaign implementation with DOT and DILG as partners. These agencies will work to promote protected areas (PAs) under the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) and coordinate with other agencies at the national and local levels to ensure effective conservation and sustainable management for national parks nationwide.

The Philippines' endangered biodiversity

According to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Philippines is one of the world's 18 mega-biodiverse countries, containing

two-thirds of the Earth's biodiversity and between 70% and 80% of the world's plant and animal species. The Philippines ranks fifth in the number of plant species and maintains 5% of the world's flora.

Over half of the country's 53,000 described species can be found nowhere else in the world. Sadly, the Philippines is also a biodiversity critical hotspot with at least 700 species being in danger of becoming extinct. Around 93% of the Philippines' original forest cover has been lost since the 1990s, with 53% of its remaining coral reefs in poor condition.

Government efforts to conserve Philippine PAs

Currently, there are 246 PAs under the NIPAS, 112 of which have been legislated, 13 have been proclaimed by the President, and 121 remain as initial components of the System. The NIPAS was established by virtue of Republic Act 7586 or the NIPAS Act of 1992 as amended by Republic Act 11038 or the Expanded NIPAS (ENIPAS) Act of 2018. The NIPAS Act, as amended, strengthens the protection of natural, biological and physical diversities of the environment needed for the conservation of biodiversity and the integrity of ecosystems, culture and indigenous practices by recognizing conservation areas and the management regimes being implemented by local government units (LGUs), local communities and indigenous peoples (IPs). It also ensures regular budget allocation for the conservation and sustainable management of each PA.

NIPAS is the classification and administration of all designated PAs to maintain essential ecological processes to preserve genetic diversity, to ensure the sustainable use of resources found therein, and to maintain their natural conditions to the greatest extent possible. *(continue on page 10)*



DENR, DOT and DILG unveil Year of Protected Areas (YoPA) Campaign marking 90th anniversary of Protected Area establishment in the Philippines (continued from page 11)

The year 2022 is an opportune time for the YoPA Campaign to commence as it coincides with the 90th anniversary of PA establishment in the country. On 1 February 1932, Republic Act 3915 was passed into law, which is An Act Providing for the Establishment of National Parks, Declaring Such Parks as Game Refuges, and for other Purposes. Following the passing of this law, Mount Arayat became the first national park in the Philippines established on June 27, 1933.

Institutionalization of such efforts is important to ensure continued financing and conservation for the country's national parks. Part of the campaign's sustainability strategy is to push for the approval of a proposed presidential proclamation to declare 2022 as the National Year of the Protected Areas and June of each year as Month of the PAs. This proclamation will empower DENR through the Biodiversity Management Bureau as the lead agency, with DOT and DILG as partners. This will also encourage other agencies and organizations to take part in efforts to conserve and protect PAs. The proposed presidential proclamation is currently awaiting signature of the President.

Kabahagi: An IDBD 2022 Capture Quest

A prequel event on May 20, 2022 was held by the DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) dubbed as Kabahagi: An IDBD 2022 Capture Quest, the DENR-BMB's first ever one-day simultaneous shoot photo contest featuring the DENR Regional, Field and Protected Area Management Offices staff as participants. Each regional team showcased their chosen protected area in their respective regions as well as their photographic talent and ingenuity.

Canon Philippines, Gerry Roxas Foundation along with USAID-Sustainable Interventions for Biodiversity, Oceans and Landscapes (SIBOL) project and UNDP- Biodiversity Finance Initiative



(BIOFIN) and Biodiversity Corridor (BD Cor) projects take pride as DENR-BMB's partners for its first ever Kabahagi: IDBD 2022 Capture Quest photo contest which also takes inspiration from Canon's PhotoMarathon contest.

The Year of the Protected Areas Campaign

With the theme Protected Areas for a Protected Future, the campaign aims to launch a massive information campaign on the urgent need to conserve PAs, while also encouraging people to visit these breathtaking ecotourism destinations. The rollout of the YoPA campaign hopes to generate additional revenues from tourist visits to ensure the continuity of conservation programs within PAs. This objective stays true to the 2022 IDBD theme of building a shared future for all life.

This year's campaign kicks-off by featuring six PAs in different regions: Bongsanglay Natural Park in Masbate, Apo Reef Natural Park in Occidental Mindoro, Samar Island Natural Park in the provinces of Samar, Eastern Samar and Northern Samar, Balinsasayao Twin Lakes Natural Park in Negros Oriental, Mt. Hamiguitan Range Wildlife Sanctuary in Davao Oriental, and Mts. Timpoong Hibok-Hibok Natural Monument in Camiguin.

Aside from educating people on the importance of conserving biodiversity and managing PAs, the campaign highlights the critical need to increase the number of visits and to allow travelers to contribute to conservation efforts. The revenues earned by the PAs will be used for programs and activities such as, habitat protection and monitoring, wildlife protection and enforcement, resources assessment and monitoring, ecotourism development, conservation interventions, and communication, education and public awareness, among others. **DOT**



Department of Tourism and Mickey Go Philippines introduce Pinoy Mickey Funko Pops

MANILA - The Department of Tourism (DOT) has teamed up with Funko and Disney to bring one of the world's most iconic and beloved characters, Mickey Mouse, to the Philippines via Funko Pops – with a locally inspired design for the first time!

This new line of Mickey-themed Funko Pops were specially created together with Disney and Funko, featuring Mickey Mouse in a barong tagalog, the national attire of the Philippines, an embroidered long-sleeved shirt commonly used as a formal outfit. The package also contains a postcard from the country's major tourist magnets Boracay, Baguio, Cebu, Manila, and Siargao Island.

The items are now in the market since May 18, 2022.

On May 17 (Tuesday), Tourism Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat met with Ban Kee Trading, Inc CEO, Eric Bautista, the authorized Philippine distributor for Funko and Funko Funatic Philippines founder Nikko Lim to formally forge the partnership with the DOT.

"We believe that having a global icon like Mickey Mouse will help promote the Philippines, and its tourist destinations, to the world. This collectible will not only be enjoyed by children, but also adults who want to reminisce about all the good times they had with their favorite Disney character," Puyat said, citing that this collection would also contribute to the recovery of the pandemic-hit tourism industry.

Last November 2021, the DOT collaborated with The Walt Disney Company Southeast Asia for the Mickey Go Philippines campaign, which included the production of various digital content featuring local travel destinations, and Mickey-inspired versions of local delicacies such as arroz caldo, halo-halo, and Vigan empanada.

In November 2018, Mickey Mouse also traveled around the Philippines wearing a barong as part of world-wide celebrations honoring 90 years of Mickey Mouse. **[DOT](#)**



DOT spotlights PWDs and women in tourism with new "It's More Fun for All" campaign

The advocacy programs of the Department of Tourism (DOT) take center stage in "It's More Fun for All" - a new campaign that promotes inclusiveness and accessibility in the tourism sector.

The campaign highlights DOT programs namely: Tourism Integrates, Supports and Minds Women's Rights and Child Safety (TourISM WoRCS); Barrier-free Tourism (BFT); and the Filipino Brand of Service Excellence (FBSE).

"Through this campaign, we believe that our advocacies on women empowerment, persons with disability (PWDs), and the protection of children in tourism, will get the much-needed support from our local governments and tourism stakeholders in making our industry more inclusive, accessible, safe, and fun for all.", said Tourism Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat.

The campaign features a video series on stories and case studies of actual tourism workers who have benefitted from the DOT's advocacy programs. Among them are the Association of Boat Operators president, Ka Tung Samson; community tour guide, Rubelyn Sarigumba; Virignia Dominguez, a weaver from Ilocos Sur; Isang Ibrahim, a community tourism worker of Sta. Cruz, Zamboanga; Manila deaf tour guide, Emerson; PLT. Maricel Guevarra, Commander in Chief of the Boracay Investigation and Detective Management Section (IDMS); and, the Museo ng Muntinlupa management and staff.

TouRISM WoRCS is an advocacy program of the DOT that aims to educate tourism stakeholders



on their role in eradicating women and children abuses within the tourism sector. This involves educating tourism stakeholders on the laws protecting women and children, as well as government policies and programs on anti-human trafficking.

Also included in this program are training courses that seek to empower women in the tourism industry, such as the Kulinarya program, where female participants are given skills training and livelihood opportunities on the preparation and presentation of heritage dishes for tourists.

The BFT advocacy program, on the other hand, enables travelers with accessibility needs, such as PWDs, senior citizens, and pregnant women to participate in and enjoy tourism experiences with utmost comfort and convenience. The program also provides opportunities for physically challenged individuals to be part of the tourism industry.

Lastly, the FBSE program is envisioned to enhance and uplift the quality of tourism services in the country. It is designed to promote service excellence in all tourism establishments by capacitating the country's tourism workforce with a unique and exceptional way of delivering customer service founded on the 7Ms or the Filipino Core Values of Maka-Maylikha, Makatao, Maka-kalikasan, Makabansa, Masayahin, May Bayanihan, at May Pagasa.

"The DOT's advocacy programs are envisioned to represent everything that is good about our tourism industry. They serve as a guide to all our partner agencies and stakeholders in properly dealing with all kinds of tourists, providing opportunities for all kinds of people, and protecting the vulnerable groups of the sector," said Puyat. **DOT**



Region 2 braces for tourists influx

By: DOT 2

The Department of Tourism Cagayan Valley Region (DOT-2) expects a substantial increase in tourist movement this summer season as the region is now on Alert Level 1.

The valley provinces of Region 2 include Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino.

The valley is easily accessible through the Tuguegarao Domestic Airport and Cauayan City Airport with two flights daily through the Cebu Pacific.

Bus companies like Victory Liner, Florida Liner and Partas Bus Line are also plying the Manila-Cagayan Valley routes with daily.

Motorist from Metro Manila are advised to take the NLEX and SCTEX for seamless driving over picturesque landscapes.

Tourists and visitors traveling to Region 2 can have a choice of a wide array of nature, culture and adventure activities starting from caving and paragliding in Nueva Vizcaya.

Quirino province offers an unfiltered experience with their waterfalls, clean rivers, hinterlands and wake boarding experience.

The valley municipalities of Isabela offer a long list of cultural and farm escapades while the coastal areas offer an immersion experience in the Sierra Madre Mountains.

Cagayan province welcomes visitors to its long stretches of beach from Sta. Praxedes in the west to Sta. Ana in the east. Cagayan sojourn also has a complete nature, culture and farm experiences.

The valley provinces offer DOT-accredited accommodation facilities in major service areas, dot accredited and trained tour guides and transport groups.

Batanes province in Region 2 is still not open for tourists.

For a seamless travel experience, the DOT advises tourists and motorists to tap only DOT-accredited enterprises and other service providers. For more information on travel to Region 2, go to <https://region2fun.ph/> **DOT**



ON THE GROUND NEWS REGIONAL NEWS UPDATES

"Care for Cebu's Canyons" project launched

By: DOT 7

The Department of Tourism Central Visayas (DOT-7) and the Tourism Promotions Board of the Philippines (TPB), in partnership with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Region VII, Province of Cebu through the Provincial Tourism Office, and the Municipalities of Badian and Alegria, launched the "Care for Cebu's Canyons" Project under its Sustainable Tourism Program on April 30, 2022 at the Cuestas Beach Resort and Restaurant, Badian, Cebu.

This project aims to provide enabling programs for the local canyoneering operators including:

- Seminar and trainings on biodiversity and the riverine ecosystem on which it thrives on, government policies and guidelines for sustainable development, Community-based Tour Guiding and Filipino Brand of Service;
- Tourism product development and enhancement of visitor activity flow and their overall experience, and
- Integration of value-adding mechanisms such as the provision of reusable water containers as the preferred alternative to single-use plastic bottles, and the installation of water refilling stations in strategic areas in the canyoneering site by respective host LGUs.

These containers, which can also serve as souvenir items, allow visitors to take part and have an active role in the protection of the natural environment, and in turn may entice them to have repeat visits and influence their family circle and friends to do the same. **DOT**



DOT 49th Founding Anniversary: "Bouncing Back in the New Normal"

11 MAY 2022, DOT PENTHOUSE

THANKSGIVING MASS AND MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY BERNARD ROMULO-PUYAT



30 MAY 2022, DOT MAIN LOBBY AREA FUNSHION SHOW" SUSTAINABLE FASHION COMPETITION



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

TO OUR JUNE BIRTHDAY CELEBRATORS

1	Cynthia Monzon	13	Leslie Marie Zaldua	24	Benjamin Balla Jr.
2	Omar Nathaniel Domingo	14	Blando Soriano	24	John Lañojan
3	Janen Punit	14	Jerome Pineda	24	Junalyn Bolo
3	Jan Danielle Quicho	15	Tristan Tenedero	25	Realyn Manalo
3	Juanito Tejado III	17	Johnny Delfin	26	Evangeline Dadat
4	Ma. Teresa Esguerra	17	Analiza Macababbad	26	Rosavella Mercurio
4	June Garduque	17	Ryan Lorenzo Manalo	26	Marcos Aradanas
5	Dennis Atienza	18	Jovita Ganongan	26	Kristine Andres
5	Lia Insigne	18	Jennifer Rucio	26	Virgilio Mijos
5	Sheryl Santos	19	Susan Ramirez	26	Gleisa Marie Biscocho
6	Michael John Nicolas	20	Judy Gabato	26	Manolito Villegas
7	Norberto Lumbré	20	Jordan Yalong	27	Adrian Cruz
7	Joanilee Roda	20	Toni Rimando	28	Beverly Tapongot
8	Dennis Dacumos	20	Czarina Morandarte	28	Richmond Patrick Jimenez
8	Rizalyn Gonzales	20	Dina Marie Baoec	28	Riza Marie Macaibay
10	Amadeo Deodato	20	Rosalio Acogido Jr.	28	Sharlian Carvajal
10	Ma. Catherina Apostol	21	Russel Dela Cruz	29	Anneli Olin
10	Andrea Nocom	21	Micah Maria Anne Sales	29	Jesus Brian Jadulco
12	Gina Marie Libery Esmaña	23	David Ferrer	30	Alan Palad
12	Genesis Raenani Renos	23	Al Olden	30	Rizelle Micah Potes
12	Reggie Tupas	24	Ralph Rodney Lozano		