

DOT, DMW LAUNCH NEWEST INCENTIVIZED TOURISM PROMOTIONS CAMPAIGN

MANILA - The Department of Tourism (DOT) on December 15 officially launched an incentive program to entice Filipinos to take an active role in the promotion of Philippine tourist destinations.

In cooperation with the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW), the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) and private sector partners including SM Supermalls, the DOT unveiled the Bisita, Be My Guest (BBMG) Program, a promotional campaign which seeks to incentivize Filipinos, especially Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) and Overseas Filipinos (OFs) who invite foreigners to visit the Philippines with raffle tickets and chances to win vacation tour packages from select local destinations. *(continue on page 3)*



DOT: Staff

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DOT welcomes more travel awards on PHL destinations

The Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco welcomed the influx of global recognition for the Philippines and its prime tourist destinations from different travel organizations and United States-based online travel guides.

"As the international accolades for the Philippines continues to grow, so too the role of tourism as an engine of the Philippines' economic growth under the administration of President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. whose prioritization of tourism has brought much optimism and hope for the industry. These awards reflect the global traveling public's vote of confidence and enthusiasm for our country and it translates to more tourists visiting our shores as evidenced by our over two million arrivals thus far," Tourism Secretary Frasco stated.

The Philippines reemerged as the World's Leading Country at the Uzakrota Global Travel Awards 2022 by Turkish travel organization Uzakrota, after its first win in 2020. The country surpassed all the other nominated countries with 721 votes, and was followed by Malaysia which came in second place with 523 votes and the Dominican Republic in third with 459 votes.

The country, with its world renowned dive portfolio, also picked up 13 recognition

in all categories available at Scuba Diving's 2023 Readers' Choice Awards by US-based Scuba Diving Magazine, including the top honors for Shore Diving. The country ranked 2nd in Macro Life, Cavern / Cave & Grotto Diving, Beginners, Photography, and Best Value categories; 3rd in Wreck Diving, Snorkeling, and Health of Marine Environment; 4th in Wall Diving and Advanced; 5th in Best Overall; and 9th in the Big Animals grouping for the Pacific and Indian Ocean cluster.

The Philippines was also recently adjudged the World's Leading Dive Destination 2022 by the World Travel Awards.

Meanwhile, Cebu was also listed as the 19th slot of the 50 Best Places to Travel in 2023 by the US-based online travel guide Travel Lemming. Travel Lemming described Cebu as "perfect for all types of tourists" and "allows you to indulge in both thrilling experiences and waterfront relaxation."

Another key tourism destination in the Philippines, Palawan, was cited by another US-based travel guide Fodor as one of the 40 destinations on its Go List for 2023. Fodor called Palawan "the very definition of eco-luxury" and "one of the Philippines' most magical islands where underwater worlds meet lush jungles." **DOT**

@ @tourism_phl

TRAVEL PASSPORT



DOT, DMW launch newest incentivized tourism promotions campaign

BE MY GUL

(continued from page 1)

Frasco said that through this project, making them ambassadors of Philippine tourism, and, for OFWs and OFs, offer the country earn economic gains through increased tourist arrivals.

"By combining the aspects of rebuilding trust and confidence in traveling to the country; working hand in hand with our stakeholders, adapting products and services as well as the shift to digital, we are empowering fellow Filipinos to become part of nation-building by inviting visitors to program," Frasco said in her address during the campaign launching at SM MOA Music the public and private sector, and media.

Program as the Filipinos' way of showing their love for the country as we invite visitors to our homes, show them the beauty of our

to our nomes, show them the beauty of our landscapes and beaches, our culture and heritage, and let them experience world-class Filipino hospitality," she added. Also present at the launch event is DMW Secretary Susan "Toots" Ople, who emphasized the BBMG's significance in empowering OFWs to help the country empowering OFWs to help the country,

our country and to help our President succeed. saying, "Ano maitutulong namin?" "Paano Be My Guest] program gives them a vehicle to do just that," said Secretary Ople.

`[In] behalf of the Department of Migrant to, I just want to say, let's make this work. Let this be a pambansang effort to bring as many guests as possible and to make every ambassadors," she added.

Through a pre-recorded message, First Lady of the Philippines Louise "Liza" Araneta Marcos lauded the launching of

the BBMG program. "We all know that the Filipinos are the Most Hospitable people in the world and I'm of this program. We really need to bring in this project, which I'm sure will benefit the country," the First Lady said.

Also manifesting her support to the DOT and its partner agencies is no less than Vice President Sara Duterte, who in a prerecorded message expressed her confidence in the BBMG program.

"I trust that this program will create a wide avenue for the development of our tourism industries, while it seeks to provide excellent travel packages to foreign and domestic visitors. May your concerted efforts in this regard promote the beauty of progress of our local communities in various

Incentives and exciting prizes

The BBMG program shall have three components: a raffle promo, BBMG passport, and a BBMG privilege card (BBMG PC) which participants can use to avail of discounts, special rates, and

Participants of the program could either be a Sponsor or an Invitee. A Sponsor is an individual who shall be inviting a non-Filipino guest/visitor to travel to the Philippines during the campaign period,

while an Invitee is an individual invited by

Overseas Filipino Workers, Filipinos with dual citizenship living in the Philippines or living abroad as residents, and all Filipinos of legal age may qualify as

legal age, and has traveled to the Philippines during the promo period (January 1, holding dual citizenship living abroad for campaign, of legal age, and has traveled to the Philippines during the said period.

The complete promo mechanics as well and Invitees can be found on the official BBMG website: http://bbmg.philippines.

Positive trajectory for PH tourism

As of December 15, 2022, the country's tourism industry has already breached the two million guest arrivals, with the official count at 2,397,919 air visitors. Most visitors then Australia (118,228), Canada (109,041) and the United Kingdom (90,196).

Frasco noted that the easing of travel contributed to the yielding of high tourism revenues amounting to Php 130 billion as of November 16, 2022.

Through the BBMG campaign, the DOT aims to reintroduce the Philippines to the world amid life-changing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

look forward to inviting our foreign friends and guests to visit our country and to offer a wide range of culturally rich experiences along with all types of outdoor recreational activities on water and on land," Frasco said.

DOT lands on Top 3 Highest Approval Rating among Government Agencies; bares targets for 2023

Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco welcomes the Publicus Asia survey result which placed the tourism agency in the top 3 of government agencies with the highest approval ratings nationwide.

The survey, conducted between November 25 to 30, 2022 likewise ranked the DOT 8th in terms of trust rating from the public.

"We are grateful for the Filipino people's positive response and support for the work we have done in the past 6 months to usher in the recovery of the tourism industry," said Secretary Frasco.

"Guided by the vision of President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. for tourism to be a strong engine of socio-economic growth, we are optimistic that just as we have greatly exceeded our targets this year, 2023 will usher in more record-breaking numbers, translating to more livelihood and employment opportunities for our fellow Filipinos. We are thankful for our continued partnership and collaboration with the hardworking men and women of the Philippine tourism industry from the public and private sectors across the country," added the Tourism Secretary.



2,462,140 MILLION INTERNATIONAL VISITORS AS OF DECEMBER 19, 2022

4.8 MILLION TARGET INTERNATIONAL TOURIST ARRIVALS FOR 2023

DOT's Targets for 2023

During the DOT's year-end media briefing held last December 19 at the Sheraton Hotel, Secretary Frasco disclosed that the DOT is targeting 4.8 million international visitors for 2023 as its baseline.

She said the Department is seeing its 2023 projections with full optimism, as the industry targets have been recalibrated after exceeding the targets before year-end.

The DOT had initially projected 1.7 million tourist arrivals this year, but the actual count recorded as of December 19 has reached 2.46 million guests. The United States emerged as the country's top tourist market with 461,967 visitors, followed by South Korea (387,780), Australia (122,971), Canada (112,015), the United Kingdom (93,440), Japan (91,557), Singapore (50,964), India (49,330), Malaysia (44,357), and Vietnam (37,028).

The Tourism Chief stressed that the Department will close the

year with a promising trajectory of 2.5 million visitor arrivals accounting to close to 30 percent of the industry's pre-pandemic arrivals data, when the Philippines recorded 8.3 million arrivals in 2019. This, she said, *"is a far cry from the 164,000 recorded in 2021"*.

The Secretary added that the new projections are made with consideration of factors that are beyond the control of the Department, such as the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, rising fuel prices, inflation, and the continued lockdowns in China which, for the longest time, has been the top tourist market of the Philippines.

"We look at it with optimism in a sense that our goal is to exceed our conservative projections in the same way that we have been able to exceed it this year," Secretary Frasco said.

"And we feel that we would be able to exceed our pre-pandemic numbers way earlier than the 2025 year that was told to us when we assumed office with the improved policies under the Marcos administration," she added.



Priority goals for 2023

Secretary Frasco said that part of the priority goals of the DOT for next year is fortifying its collaboration with other national government agencies and local government units (LGUs) in developing the country's tourism portfolio and exemplifying the Filipino Brand of Service Excellence (FBSE) by training 100,000 tourism workers, a highest record set by far for the industry.

The Tourism Secretary also inked a formal partnership with the Department of Information and Communication Technology (DICT) to enhance the overall tourist experience at the established tourist centers around the country. The partnership, she noted, would provide improved internet connectivity in at least 94 destinations all over the country, and more digitalized tourism services.

In fact, the removal of the One Health Pass and redundant health checks at the country's biggest and busiest gateways, as earlier lobbied by the DOT, has become key to surpassing the tourism targets of the DOT.

Frasco said the goal is to make travel seamless for all types of travelers, thus, the launching of the E-arrival pass together with the DOT, DICT, BI, BOQ, and DOH which integrates all the requirements of five government agencies into one platform.

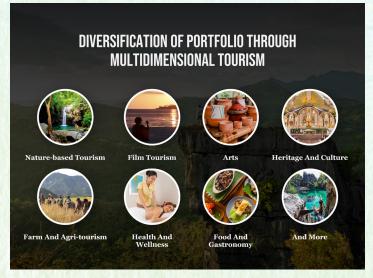
"It makes travel as convenient as possible for any Filipino or tourist coming into the country by removing any barriers that would otherwise dissuade tourists from coming into the Philippines," she said.





The Department also launched two of its newest tourism programs - the Philippine Travel Experience which would give tourists a window to discover the country's tourism gems in over a hundred cities and more than a thousand municipalities by making it easy and convenient for them to book tour packages; and the Bisita, Be My Guest Program, wherein Filipinos can become ambassadors of tourism by providing incentives and exciting prizes to those who can successful bring foreign friends or relatives into the Philippines.

The DOT has also laid the groundwork for the Philippines to be more tourism-competitive in Asia and the world through the establishment of one-stop-shop tourist centers called Tourist Rest Areas (TRA) in 10 strategic locations across the country which are: Manolo Fortich in Bukidnon; Samal Island in Davao del Norte; Baguio in the Cordilleras; Dauis in Bohol; Saud in Ilocos Norte; and Carcar, Carmen, Medellin, and Moalboal in Cebu, and in January 2023, in Roxas in Palawan.



"Aside from diversifying our products in arts and film tourism, we are also developing the country's existing tourism products including dive and marine sports tourism, education, health and cruise tourism, food and gastronomy tourism, culture and heritage tourism, MICE tourism and halal tourism," she said.

The Tourism Secretary said she will also ensure the continuity of her listening tours, which have proven to be helpful in gathering the most important insights from industry stakeholders on the ground, with the intent of establishing an inclusive, collaborative, and consultative Tourism Department.

She said the DOT is also in close coordination with its partner government offices such as the Department of Transportation (DOTr), the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), as well the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and Department of Health (DOH) for the enhanced travel connectivity and ensured safety of tourists.

Secretary Frasco revealed that the Department is currently working alongside with the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Bureau of Immigration (BI), and the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (NICA) to explore the possibility of converting to e-Visa applications and engaging an outsourced visa facilitation service provider for the Chinese and Indian markets.

She also mentioned that the DOT is set to enter into a formal agreement with the Department of National Defense (DND) in relation to the efforts to fully open up Mindanao as a tourism wonder and improve the region's halal program. She said this would primarily provide equal access to developments across all areas of the region and encourage more visitors to visit the unexplored virgin island beaches and exotic destinations in Mindanao.



More jobs for Filipinos

In terms of increasing employability in the sector, Frasco said the DOT has collaborated with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), in the launching of the Trabaho, Turismo Asenso! Program last September in the National Capital Region (NCR), Cebu and Davao to fill in the gaps in the tourism workforce.

The collaboration has aggregated 157 tourism-related companies and offered a total of 8,310 jobs with 9,000 cumulative registrants.

Tourism training sessions have also been conducted for 25,770 industry stakeholders from tourism-related establishments, Community Based Tourism Organizations (CBTOs), local tourism officers, and members of the academe to equip them with the needed knowledge and skills for the advocacy programs of the sector toward a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive Philippine tourism. Frasco also revealed that in 2023, the Department of Tourism has set the goal of training 100,000 Filipino tourism workers in the Filipino Brand if Service Excellence across the nation's 16 regions in line with the vision of making the Philippines the center for hospitality excellence in Asia. **DOT**



DOT, DICT ink deal for improvement of connectivity in tourist destinations, digitalization of services

The Department of Tourism (DOT) on December 20 has formally signed a partnership with the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) in a bid to introduce and further improve internet connectivity in 94 identified tourist destinations across the country, and digitalize tourism services nationwide.

The ceremonial signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was held at the DOT office led by the heads of the two departments, Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco and Secretary Ivan John Uy, and witnessed by their respective undersecretaries and other key officials.

Frasco said this partnership with the DICT is part of the fulfillment of the President's vision for tourism to become a pillar for economic development as the Department is pursuing, at the same time, the recovery of the pandemic-hit sector.

"Our push for digitalization and connectivity will allow Philippine tourism to finally take a primary role in the ASEAN and the globe. This will propel us to even greater numbers than we have already achieved thus far," the tourism chief said, pertaining to the new achievements the DOT has made wherein international tourist arrivals pegged at 1.7 million for 2022 have already reached 2.4 million before yearend.

According to Frasco, the DOT has identified 94 tourist destinations which will be part of the project. Aside from the tourist-magnets Boracay, Palawan, Cebu, Bohol, and Siargao, emerging and lesser-known destinations will be their priority.

"This itself fulfills another objective under the Marcos administration for tourism and that is to equalize tourism promotion and development because not only will it give opportunities for key destinations to continue to open for development, but also allow even the most far-flung tourist destinations and local government units opportunities to be heralded to the world as a viable tourism destination," she stressed.

DICT Secretary Ivan John Uy expressed his admiration for Secretary Frasco, whom she referred to as the "conglomeration of all that is amazing in tourism" with her political will to introduce wonderful interventions in the industry in the last six months.

"Some are really just common sense but took some time to implement for others but for her, political-will was there and she's able to deliver it very, very quickly and directly, and to many and others it's out-of-the-box thinking using imagination, using creativity in order to be able to introduce all of these wonderful interventions in our tourism sector," he said.

Secretary Uy also said that the partnership project will also look at the proper connectivity intervention per destination, whether fiber optics or satellites will be installed, as well as the security of the equipment.

"From the DICT perspective, we want to help all of the departments, all of the departments to be utilized, get the services out in a more effective, more efficient, less redundant manner," Uy said.

The tourism chief noted that the collaboration was part of the DOT's goal to fully digitize all manners of tourist transactions and integrate them into one system to further entice tourists, both foreign and local, to tour around the country seamlessly.

She also believes that having an improved internet connectivity will further boost the gains of the tourism sector that has contributed greatly to the country's Gross Domestic Product over the years next to trade.

"Truly, there is no innovative tourism program that does not involve internet communications technology and that is why this convergence expands through many aspects of tourism development," the tourism added. DOT

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DOT strengthens PHL-Saudi Arabia tourism relations, engages industry key players

RIYADH, KSA — Maximizing her participation at the 22nd World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) Global Summit: Travel for a Better Future from 28-29 November 2022, Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco met with tourism decision makers from the Middle East to pitch the viability of Philippines as a destination of visitors from the region.

The Tourism Secretary engaged in a bilateral meeting with Saudi Vice Minister of Tourism, Her Highness Princess Haifa Al Saud, on the opportunities and potential areas of cooperation in advancing the tourism sectors of both the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and the Philippines.

"We share in your excitement all of the prospects and possibilities for tourism in Saudi Arabia especially with the investment in the industry...We pride ourselves in the Filipino brand of service excellence. Therefore, we would be very happy to partner with you as far as capability building and further education in terms of tourism capability development is concerned," Secretary Frasco said during the bilateral meeting.

The two ministers agreed on formalizing their partnership with Saudi Arabia guiding the Philippines through Arabic-speaking tour guides, and in terms of developing the Halal and pilgrimage tourism portfolios, increasing direct flights, and creating an investor directory. On the other hand, the Philippines will provide hospitality and human capital development to the Kingdom's tourism frontline.

"Saudi Arabia actually ranks number one for our Middle East source market. We see great potential in ushering in more arrivals into the Philippines... At the same time, the development and relationship is mutual considering that there are over 800,000 Filipinos here in Saudi Arabia. Therefore our affection for each other is long standing and I am very interested in furthering this relationship by formalizing an agreement specifically focused on tourism development," Secretary Frasco stressed.

Secretary Frasco noted that Saudi Arabia is the top Middle East tourist source market of the Philippines pre-pandemic, with 43,748 arrivals in 2019. Currently, Saudi Arabia ranks 23rd with 9,424 arrivals since the Philippines reopened in February 2022.

As part of her Listening Tour, DOT Secretary Frasco also gathered travel and tourism industry leaders of the KSA on the sidelines of her official participation to the WTTC Global Summit.

She presented the country's tourism plans and prospects under the current administration, the seven-point tourism agenda and key strategies, routes resumption and development dialogues, diversification of tourism portfolio, and the strong relationship between the Philippines and the KSA.

The attendees, who come from different top travel tour organizations and destination management companies for the Middle East including ITL World, Dnata Travel, Arjaa Travel, Al Sarh Travel, Seera, I Trip, Saudi Wings Holidays, Arabian Travelers, Elite Holidays, Ace Travel, Saudi International Travel Co., Hesen Almusafer, Fursan Travel, Arabian Company for Travellers Services, Al Shahin Travel & Tourism, and Sayar Travel & Tourism, as well as airline executives, including Philippine Airlines Country Manager for the KSA Ricky Solomon Pacquing, shared their on-the-ground travel and tourismrelated insights and concerns during the meeting.

The most common topics that emerged met Bulgarian Tourism Minister Ilin from the discussions were the need for Dimitrov and discussed a workable alliance Philippines tourism exposure in the with the Southeastern Europe country.





Kingdom, direct flights to other key gateways in the Philippines to and from Saudi Arabia, and the organization of familiarization trips for the tour and travel operators, among others.

Philippine Embassy in Saudi Arabia Chargé d'Affaires Rommel Romato, Tourism Undersecretary Shahlimar Hofer Tamano, OIC Undersecretary Verna Buensuceso, Assistant Secretary Maria Rica Bueno, and Philippine Market Representative to India San Jeet also joined the said Listening Tour.

Secretary Frasco also met with Indonesian Tourism Minister Sandiaga Uno and talked about the strong partnership of both nations and the upcoming ASEAN Summit 2023, which will be hosted by Indonesia in February 2023. She likewise met Bulgarian Tourism Minister Ilin Dimitrov and discussed a workable alliance with the Southeastern Europe country. **DOT**

Nine Tourist Rest Areas' construction underway, 10th in January 2023

The Department of Tourism (DOT) led by Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco in partnership with its infrastructure arm, the Tourism Infrastructure Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) has successfully broken ground to nine Tourist Rest Areas (TRA) across the country last year with the 10th slated in January 2023.

For the month of December, DOT signed the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the first-ever TRA in Luzon to be built near the Lion's Head, a favorite layover spot of tourists along Kennon Road last December 5; followed by another TRA in Municipality of Dauis in home province of the world-renowned Chocolate Hills, Bohol last December 7; and another TRA in the popular white sand destination of Saud Beach at Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte last December 12.

The DOT, TIEZA, and the local governments of Carcar City and the Municipality of Moalboal broke ground TRAs in these two key locations in southern Cebu on December 17 for the last set of rest areas of 2022.

Tourism Secretary Frasco led the morning ceremonies in the City of Carcar and the afternoon activity in the Municipality of Moalboal.

TIEZA Chief Operating Officer (COO) Mark Lapid represented by Assistant COOs Gregory Oller and Jethro Nicolas Lozada, Carcar City Mayor Patrick Barcenas, and Moalboal Mayor Inocentes Cabaron also signed the Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) confirming points of coordination between the three parties in the installation and operation of the TRAs. Also present during the ceremonies are Cebu Province Governor Gwendolyn Garcia, Moalboal Vice Mayor Paz Rosgoni, 1st District of Cebu Representative Rhea Gullas represented by Talisay Mayor Gerald Gullas, and Cebu Province 7th District Representative Peter John Calderon.

In her message, Secretary Frasco underscored that "This is the strengthened tourism governance that we wish to bring to the Department of Tourism, recognizing that none of our programs and plans in the national government can succeed without the input, the collaboration, and the help of our local government units, including our governors, our mayors, our district representatives... We are going to make sure that this partnership flourishes by way of incentivizing its maintenance."

Carcar City is the gateway to southern Cebu being the convergence point for both the eastern and western towns. (continue on page 9)





Pagudpud, llocos Norte



Baguio City



Dauis, Bohol



Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon



Samal Island, Davao del Norte





Medellin, Cebu



Carcar, Cebu



Moalboal, Cebu



Roxas, Palawan

(continued from page 8)

Moalboal is the most popular tourist hub of southwestern Cebu. It hosts world-renowned accommodations, expansive white sand beaches and spectacular dive sites.

"One of the very first [listening tours] was held here in Cebu. We proceeded to the other parts of the country and the world. One of the things that was asked of us was to put a rest area for tourists here in Carcar, which really is the gateway to the southeast and southwest of Cebu," Secretary Frasco said.

The establishment of TRAs across the country is a flagship program of Frasco, addressing the need for convenience and comfort of domestic and international tourists. Aside from serving as a tourist information center, the TRA will provide cozy lounge areas and clean restrooms, and will host a pasalubong center that will make local products and delicacies easily accessible to visitors.

Frasco has presided over the groundbreaking of nine TRAs nationwide--in Bukidnon, Davao del Norte, Cebu, Baguio City, Bohol and Ilocos Norte--since she assumed the tourism portfolio. The program was conceptualized as a result of the Secretary's listening tour at the beginning of her term.

"That is why we are here before the end of this year, fulfilling the commitment of our President BongBong Marcos to enhance the entire tourism experience, to provide our tourists with not only the treat of arriving in the destination but also a comfortable and convenient journey along the way," the tourism chief added.

Tourist arrivals in Cebu have steadily increased prior to suffering a setback due to the pandemic. Cebu recorded over 1,411,000 visitors in 2020 and 902,302 in 2021. Despite this, the province's tourist traffic for 2022 looks optimistic as it reached over 1,840,000 visitors as of September 30, 2022.

"As of October this year, tourism has already contributed over 130 billion pesos to the Philippine economy and we're very grateful to Cebu that has largely contributed to that number," Secretary Frasco enthused.

Meanwhile, Governor Gwendolyn Garcia, who served as one of the witnesses during the groundbreaking ceremonies and MOA signings, manifested her full support on the development of the TRA in the southern part of Cebu.

"This is really something that we must congratulate her [Secretary Frasco] for because in such a short span of time, she will be opening, and has managed so far to open 8 or 9 [tourism] rest areas that will make a big difference to our tourists that will be going around the entire Philippines... She has zeroed in on how to increase tourist arrivals and how to enhance our tourism attractiveness and potential," the governor said. DOT



Filipino hospitality, Philippine sustainable tourism highlighted at WTTC Global Summit Saudi Arabia

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA — Philippine Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco bannered the Filipino brand of service excellence at the recent 22nd World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) Global Summit: Travel for a Better Future.

"Wherever you may find yourself in the world, whether it's a hotel, a restaurant, a hospital, a home, and in many other industries, you will find a Filipino, with a warm smile and the distinct hospitality of the Filipino that is ready and willing to go the extra mile to make our guests feel happy, at home and well-served. And therefore we recognize the strength of the Filipino Brand of Service Excellence as one of the core pillars of the tourism industry in the Philippines," Secretary Frasco relayed, during the Global Leaders' Dialogue on November 28.

Speaking in front of 2800 registered participants, representing 143 nationalities, 250 CEOs, and 52 tourism ministers from around the world, Frasco laid down the Department's frontline training target, saying, "next year, our goal is to train 100,000 Filipino tourism workers harnessing the seven values of Filipino hospitality...In addition to that, to continue to train our people to be purveyors of happiness and, more importantly, purveyors of hope. And to build upon all of that in the sense of community, in the sense of the Bayanihan spirit."

According to the Tourism Secretary, the DOT aims to "purvey the Filipino brand of service excellence" to its frontline tourism workers, recognizing the strength of the Filipino brand of service excellence as the core pillar of the tourism industry and in order to help the industry workforce become "beacons of hospitality to our 100 million Filipino population, ready and willing to receive tourists from all over the world."

In her remarks, Secretary Frasco also discussed the coordination of the 16 regions in the country to ensure that more tourist workers received the excellence training available.

The Tourism Secretary also covered the topics of ecotourism, the inclusion of green practices in updated accreditation standards, labor standards for Filipino tourism workers, and sustainable tourism as the cornerstone of Philippine tourism development.

Joining the Global Leader's Dialogue were Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Minister of Tourism Ahmed Al Khateeb; Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Vice Minister of Tourism Princess Haifa Al Saud; WTTC President & CEO Julia Simpson; World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili; and tourism dignitaries from Japan, USA, Austria, Maldives, Tanzania, Oman, Bulgaria, and private sector representatives from Carnival Corporation & PLC, InterContinental Hotels Group, Value Retail, Spencer Stuart Global Hospitality & Leisure Practice, VFS Global, Microsoft Corporation, Amadeus IT Group, and SITA at Borders.

Secretary Frasco also took part in the Panel discussion on Pillar 2 with the theme "Travel is a Solution for Enhanced Livelihoods."

"I was a mayor of a local government unit prior to becoming Secretary of Tourism this year, and therefore, I have a full appreciation of how important it is to work with our local communities in the development and preservation of destinations. It's imperative to work with mayors, with governors, with district representatives, with community leaders, so that theories about sustainability have a chance at actual implementation," Secretary Frasco shared during the panel discussions when asked how the government can assure communities benefit from tourism.

The same panel zeroing in on "Communities at the Core" also featured Greece Minister of Tourism Vassilis Kikilias, CLIA Chief Executive Officer Kelly Craighead, Abercrombie & Kent Chairman Manfredi Lefebvre, and Palace Resorts Executive Vice-President Gibran Chapur.

During the discussion, Secretary Frasco also touted the DOT's sustainability plans and programs, including equalized tourism promotion and development, the Philippine Experience: A Heritage, Culture, and Arts Caravan, and the national accreditation standards revisions to include sustainable and green practices incentives.

"And therefore, it's a whole of government, and whole of country approach as far as implementing sustainable practices in our communities," Secretary Frasco noted.

The 22nd edition of the global summit convened internationally renowned speakers, including former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and former British Prime Minister Lady Theresa May, actor and filmmaker Edward Norton to discuss the pressing issues affecting the post pandemic travel and tourism sectors. It also introduced the climate footprint of the global travel and tourism sector - Environmental & Social Research (ESR), a new global consumer survey by YouGov, and an augmented reality of the summit on Metaverse. The Philippines successfully hosted the global summit's 21st edition in Manila from April 20–22, 2022.

DO

DOT welcomes launch of eTravel system

The Department of Tourism (DOT) welcomes the launch of the Philippine Government's e-travel system as a streamlined digitalized platform that will provide convenience to the traveling public.

In support of President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr.'s vision for tourism development and a more enhanced traveler experience, he has also said that our country must "*take full advantage of the new technologies to provide the Filipino people the best services they deserve.*"

Pursuant to our President's direction, the Department of Tourism has supported the removal of the One Health Pass, the transition to the E-arrival Card and finally, this full integration of the arrival and departure system by the relevant government agencies into the E-travel System.

The DOT is optimistic with the continued collaboration between government agencies to improve the mechanisms of travel into and around the Philippines, we can encourage greater mobility and travel confidence and welcome an enhanced traveler experience. **DOT**

DOT qualifies for third consecutive ISO 9001:2015 standard audit

On its fifth year of Quality Management System (QMS) implementation, the Department of Tourism (DOT) has successfully passed the Third-Party Surveillance Audit in accordance with the ISO 9001:2015 Standard on December 13.

In her message during the Closing Meeting, DOT Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco mentioned that, "This accomplishment is great for the DOT because this shows consistency in terms of the level of quality of services, and also this shows that, thankfully, notwithstanding the fact that the new administration has been here less than six months, we were able to get the full cooperation of all the Regions and Offices of the Department."

On December 12–13, the DOT underwent simultaneous audits intended to evaluate and assess ISO compliance in the Central Office and Regional Offices, led by the ISO Certification Body, NQA Philippines.

Secretary Frasco reminded everyone of the importance of public accountability and public trust and expressed her heartfelt gratitude for everyone's support and dedication in making the ISO re-certification a success.

The scope of its certification includes the issuance of accreditation to tourism enterprises, the enforcement of rules and regulations for tourism enterprises, and industry manpower training and development services.

Aside from passing the surveillance audit, the Department's certification has also been expanded to include DOT Regional Offices 3, 5, and 13. **DOT**







DOT assembles maiden National Farm Tourism Summit and Trade Fair

Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco opened this year's National Farm Tourism Summit and Trade Fair 2022: Innovative, Inclusive and Sustainable Farm Tourism in the Philippines organized by the Department of Tourism (DOT) in partnership with the Regional Farm Associations and with the assistance of the Department of Agriculture (DA) in Clark, Pampanga, on December 1.

In her address, Secretary Frasco emphasized the importance of farming and agriculture in the Philippine economy, citing that the two sectors must go together alongside tourism, as identified by President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr., as part of his priorities under his helm.

As of July 2022, the DOT has accredited 228 farm tourism sites nationwide.

"We can look forward to more accreditations as there are other farm tourism sites in Benguet, Palawan, Iloilo, and Bukidnon subject to product audit in the coming months," she said, noting that tourism programs like the "Kain na! Food and Travel Festival" have become a factor in the accreditation of more and emerging farm tourism sites across the country.

Frasco, who is the former mayor of Liloan town, also recognized the importance of local farmers as a driver for economic growth development, especially in the sectors of agriculture and tourism.

"I was a mayor prior to becoming Secretary of Tourism in the Municipality of Liloan, where I have 14 Barangays 6 of which are in the mountains, the population of which are all farmers. And therefore, I recognize the importance that our farmers play in our economy as well as in the development of agriculture and tourism in the Philippines," she said.

"I express my deep and heartfelt gratitude to all of our farmers who have forged forward despite all the challenges that we have faced under the pandemic and various calamities. No matter what the climate is, you get up, you do your work and you provide food on the tables of every Filipino family in the Philippines. That is important work and that is the work that we intend to continue to support in the years to come."

She added that the Department will continue pushing for the maximization of farm tourism sites through the DOT's core goals, namely, connectivity, convenience, and equality, by partnering with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), the Department of Transportation (DOTr), and the DA.

Secretary Frasco was joined by DOT officials Undersecretary Shahlimar Tamano, Undersecretary Cocoy Jumapao, Assistant Secretary Chris Morales, and DOT Central Luzon Regional Director Carolina Uy, together with Farm Tourism Development Board Divina Quemi and National Farm Tourism Association President Josephine Costales, during the opening ceremony.

Online sessions about agriculture as an emerging tourism innovation, integrating agriculture and tourism for sustainable development, and strategic marketing and promotion planning are also slated for the day. The trade fair is scheduled from December 3 to 5 at Robinsons Starmills, in the City of San Fernando, Pampanga.



Frasco announces DOT's 2023 prospects at year-end media briefing

After nearly three years of standstill amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Tourism (DOT), led by Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco, once again welcomed representatives from the media for its year-end media briefing earlier today.

Secretary Frasco reported the DOT's highlight accomplishments in just over five months into the post, which include flagship programs such as the Philippine Experience caravan, Tourist Rest Areas, and Bisita, Be My Guest, among others.

The tourism chief also revealed the agency's target of 4.8 million international visitors for 2023 after breaching the 2.46 million mark initially pegged at 1.7 million tourist arrivals this year.

Undersecretary and Chief of Staff Elaine Bathan, OIC Undersecretary Verna Buensuceso, and OIC Assistant Secretary Warner Andrada joined the Q&A with the media. **DOT**



DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM 1ST RUNNER UP



DOT secures FOI Department award category runner up honors

The Department of Tourism (DOT) bags the 1st Runner Up citation in the Department Award Category at the Freedom of Information (FOI Philippines) Awards 2022 on November 25, 2022.

DOT Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco expressed her deepest gratitude on behalf of the Department to the Philippine Information Agency (PIA) for bestowing the distinguished award.

"Experience will tell us that the bedrock of integrity in public service is consistency and transparency. We welcome the Filipino people's participation in all of our programs and projects as we thank the efforts of PIA in encouraging transparency and accountability in government services," Secretary Frasco said in a video message.

Since its inception in 2017, the annual FOI Awards have been established to recognize the efforts of government agencies, individuals, and organizations that contributed to the development and progress of the FOI Program.

The DOT FOI team is composed of DOT Secretary Frasco, FOI Receiving Officer Maricel Malalad, FOI Decision Maker Atty. Jennifer Olba, and FOI Appeals and Review Committee Members Assistant Secretary Maria Rica Bueno, Officer-in-Charge Assistant Secretary Warner Andrada, and Director Czarina Zara-Loyola.

The Department of Energy (DOE) championed the Department Award category, with the Department of Transportation (DOTr) as the 2nd Runner Up. **DOT**

Loyalty awardees, retirees honored at **PRAISE 2022**

Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco congratulated officials, employees, and retirees for their loyalty in government service during the PRogram on Awards and Incentives for Service Excellence (PRAISE) 2022 on December 14 at the DOT Multipurpose Hall, Makati City.

A total of 57 loyalty awardees who have served in the agency for 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, and 40 years, together with 19 retirement service awardees, were conferred during the said gathering led by the DOT Human Resource Division.

The awardees also received a plaque of recognition during the yearly activity of the Department, which aimed to promote uniformity and consistency in the implementation of awards and incentives programs in accordance with existing Civil Service Commission (CSC) rules and regulations.

The 2022 PRAISE awards likewise recognized the incalculable contributions of the awardees to the Department's efforts in exceeding the target tourist arrivals as well as in receiving tourismand hospitality-related awards for the Philippines.

Longest loyalty awardees include Ramon Rebulado of the Office of Public Affairs and Advocacy, Susan Josephine Ramirez of the DOT National Capital Region (NCR), and Eleanor Sagnit of the General Services Division all with 40 years of government service and retirement service awardees such as Rodel Almazan of the Infrastructure Technology Division (41 years and nine months), Anneli Olin of the DOT IV-A (42 years and five months), and Magdalena Jamilla of the Office of the Assistant Secretary (42 years and 10 months). **DOT**



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Loyalty awardees, retirees honored at **PRAISE 2022**





































TOURISM-RELATED MEETINGS

Courtesy calls and listening tours



Courtesy meeting with Ambassador of Switzerland



Courtesy meeting with Singapore Ambassador



Ambassador of Spain



Emirates Airlines



Turkish Airlines



Listening Tour Bohol



PHOA Listening Tour



Courtesy Meeting with DFA



Meeting with Mayor of Talisay, Cebu



Courtesy Call from SB Members of Liloan, Cebu



DOT YEAR-END FELLOWSHIP 2022

Photos by HRD and OPAA

Sectoral Presentation

































Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco led the Christmas lighting ceremony in front of the Department of Tourism head office in Makati City. The ceremony highlighted the symbolic revitalization of the tourism industry after two years of the pandemic, which closed the country's borders to visitors.

ON THE GROUND NEWS Regional News Updates









Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy executives tour Intramuros

The Department of Tourism (DOT) welcomed the Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy top executives for an exclusive tour of the country's historical landmarks in Intramuros, Manila on December 8.

The Department led a historical exploration of Casa Manila living museum and Fort Santiago for the Louis Vuitton executives, visiting Baluartillo de San Francisco Javier, Promenade Area and Chapel Cell of Jose Rizal, featuring the country's distinct culinary, heritage, and arts tourism portfolio.

Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy, commonly known as LVMH, is a French multinational corporation and conglomerate specializing in luxury goods headquartered in Paris.

The Philippines is considered a priority market for LVMH's brands, which include Christian Dior, Fendi, Givenchy, Marc Jacobs, Stella McCartney, Loewe, Loro Piana, Kenzo, Celine, Sephora, Princess Yachts, TAG Heuer, Bulgari, and Tiffany & Co.

The tour event, titled "Painting in the Philippines: A Colorful Cultural and Heritage Tour of Intramuros," was participated in by top executives from LVMH: Laurent Boillot, President and CEO of Hennessy; Sebastien Vilmot, Managing Director of Moët Hennessy Southeast Asia emerging markets; Laurent Boidevezi, President of Moët Hennessy Asia Pacific Travel Retail & Private Sales; Lisa Mackenzie, Business Development Manager of Asia Oceania - Hennessy, Julien Issenmann, Business Development Director of Asia - Hennessy; Eric Gilabert, International Business Development of Hennessy; Director Rommel Fuentevella, Marketing Director of Moët Hennessy; Michael Elinworth, Country Director of Moët Hennessy, and Filipino TV presenter Tim Yap.

Tourism Undersecretary for Tourism Regulation Coordination & Resource Generation (TRCRG) Shahlimar Hofer Tamano and the officials of Department of Tourism - Metro Manila Intramuros Administration led the said welcome.











DOT Region 2 participates in the Month of Overseas Filipinos Migrant Fair

Words and photos by DOT 2

The Department of Tourism, Region 2 (DOT-Region2) participated in the Month of Overseas Filipinos Migrant Fair in Cagayan at the Cagayan Coliseum, Tuguegarao City, Cagayan last December 2, 2022.

The one-day event provided overseas Filipinos and their family members free basic medical check-up, health promotional and wellness activity, showcased products of successful OFW returnees, and offered free consultation from migrant-serving agencies. The program also included a short forum and sharing of success stories of OFWs, mini-trade fair and cultural show.

The Migrant Fair is a convergence activity at the local level of migrant serving agencies and organizations in recognition of overseas Filipinos hard work and efforts, sacrifices and important contributions to national development.

The DOT-Region 2 also showcased the launched tourism circuits in the region and shared the program under accreditation of tourism enterprises. The office provided tokens compose of t-shirts and food products to the participants who visited the information counter.

The program is also timely as the DOT is set to launch the Bisita Be My Guest (BBMG) program soon, which incentivizes overseas Filipinos to bring friends to visit the Philippines. The BBMG will encourage Filipinos abroad to invite tourists to the Philippines by giving them the chance to win prizes and earn discounts through a privilege card. **DOT**

Western Visayas Cinema Isla

Words and photos by DOT 6

In 2015, the Department of Tourism (DOT) Region VI in partnership with the Western Visayas Filmmakers Network under the CineKasimanwa Western Visayas Film Festival program produced the first Western Visayas Film Grants Program. It is a grant program that aimed to help aspiring filmmakers in the region produce short films with the topmust experience destinations in Western Visayas as the locale of the film. From 2015 to 2020, this partnership has produced a total of 20 locally produced films featuring local talents and the different sites of the region.

The partnership in collaboration with the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Malay presented Western Visayas Cinema Isla in Boracay Island on November 30-December 1, 2022. The island was deemed as the ideal venue for CineKasimanwa Western Visayan films, its filmmakers and their stories produced from the CineKasimanwa Film Grants Program, to be presented to local audiences and the world since it is now open to domestic and foreign tourists. The event created an avenue for exploring film tourism potential in the region as the goal is to promote local culture, increase community awareness of tourism, and encourage local filmmakers to explore Western Visayas' scenic filming locations.

The film screening was attended by youth organizations from the LGU of Malay, faculty and students of Malay College and partner tourism stakeholders.

The organizers thank the Western Visayas Filmmakers Network headed by Mr. Noel G. De Leon for making this collaboration a success and Director Elvert Bañares for being instrumental in making CineKasimanwa Film Grants Program possible.

The Director's Spotlight session was graced by Filmmakers Mia Reyes, Kurt Soberano, Aimee Apostol-Escasa and Romart Malapad Martesano. **DOT**













DOT IV-A honors excellence of CALABARZON industry partners

Words and photos by DOT 4-A

For the third time, the Department of Tourism Region IV – A honored partners in the tourism industry both from the public and private sector, acknowledging their initiatives and support to create a vibrant destination, pursuing sustainable tourism, adopting and implementing local policies to protect not only the interest of the tourist but our country as well.

On December 12, DOT Region IV-A held the CALABARZON Tourism Excellence Awards 2022 in Twin Lakes Hotel, Laurel, Batangas bestowing recognitions to Local Government Units for their increasing tourist arrivals, creation of more activities, support to legislations and support to all DOT-led programs and activities.

Tourism organizations and associations, local businesses and community-based tourism organizations were also honored for their hard work and support to tourism endeavors in the region through the Customer Service Excellence Awards, Tourism Experience Awards and Special Awards and Director's Choice Awards focusing on sustainability, resilience, gender innovation, responsiveness, community barrier-free care and friendliness.

And for the first time, the People's Choice Awards was introduced wherein the public was given the power to vote for their favorite accommodation, restaurant, attraction and destination in the region. **DOT**











DOT IV-B recognizes outstanding MIMAROPA tourism stakeholders

Department of Tourism (DOT) - Mimaropa (IV-B) organized on December 8 a cordial gathering of tourism stakeholders, local government units, and government line agencies as a show of gratitude for their excellence in the delivery of services, unwavering support, and relentless effort to advance tourism in the Southwestern Tagalog Region.

The DOT-IV-B, spearheaded by Regional Director Bevienne Malateo and joined by Assistant Secretary Christopher Morales and Director Ina Zara-Loyola, honored tourism partners from the regions' five provinces, namely Marinduque, Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Palawan, and Romblon during the said event. El Nido is ranked first among the top five local government units (LGUs) in the region during the ceremony for having the most DOT-accredited TREs (tourism-related businesses), followed by Puerto Princesa, Coron, Puerto Galera, and San Vicente.

Tourism establishments such as Amanpulo, Club Paradise, Banwa Private Island, Sunset Beach Resort in San Vicente, and Coron Natural Farms received commendations for exemplary attributes and adherence to the standards set forth by the Department.

The Provincial Government of Palawan was also acknowledged for the destination being named as the Most Desirable Island by London-based Wanderlust Travel Magazine. <u>DOT</u>





W Ayala Malls Abreeza KAON TA, KAIN PA! Food Tripping Christmas

DOT's Kaon Ta, Kain Pa! Food and Travel Festival ushers holiday food trips in Davao

Words and photos by DOT 11

The Department of Tourism's (DOT) Kaon Ta, Kain Pa! Food and Travel Festival ushered in the start of the holiday season food trips on December 2 at the Ayala Mall Abreeza in Davao City.

With the theme "Food Tripping Christmas," the 21st edition of the Kain Na incorporates food, travel, and the culinary extravaganza of the Filipino holidays.

DOT Undersecretary Myra Paz Abubakar, OIC Undersecretary Verna Buensuceso, DOT Davao Regional Director (RD) Tanya Rabat-Tan, DOT Bicol RD Herbie Aguas, DOT Western Visayas RD Christine Mansinares, DOT Eastern Visayas RD Karen Tiopes, DOT Zamboanga Peninsula RD Krisma Rodriguez, DOT Northern Mindanao RD May Unchuan, and DOT SOX OIC Director Armin Hueta led the opening festivities.

This three-day festival (December 2-4) features a flavorful spread of holiday cuisines and noche buena staples from Regions 1, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 as well as from the Cordillera Administrative Region and the National Capital Region. **DOT**



DOT BEYOND BORDERS Foreign Offices Updates

DOT wins big at the Uzakrota Awards, reintroduces Phl through a three-city Turkiye roadshow

Words and photos by OPMD

The Philippines received the World's Leading Tourism Country Destination in the Uzakrota Travel Awards held in conjunction with the Uzakrota Travel Summit last November 29, 2022.

This is the second time the award was given to the Philippines, the first being in 2020. Palawan was also awarded the "World's Leading Honeymoon Destination" by the same body in 2021.

The DOT, through the Office of Product and Market Development and DOT London Office, participated in the said travel summit, where the Philippines was highlighted as an emerging destination for Turks through a panel discussion led by the OPMD representatives, the Philippine Embassy in Turkiye, and the Philippine Consulate General in Istanbul.

Post-Uzakrota Travel Summit sales mission was organized where the DOT conducted business to business meetings through a roadshow in the key cities of Istanbul, Izmir, and Ankara to provide further leads in bringing Turkish tourists to the Philippines. DOT, joined by the official partner airlines of the event - Turkish Airlines, and two Engligh as Second Language (ESL) schools, was given the opportunity to engage with various tourism stakeholders during the said roadshow. DOT





TO OUR JANUARY BIRTHDAY CELEBRATORS

1 Anne Barnuevo 1 Fe Reverente Buela, **Giselle Machutes** 1 1 Maria Ana Banawa

- 1 Ryan Manalo
- 1 Sheila Pineda
- 2 Abe Valencia Jr.
- 2 Rowena Hidalgo,
- 3 Michael Putulan
- 5 Thea De Guzman

6	Ryan Llanes	14	Erin Esguerra
7	Marcelito Medina	14	Macrina Lejos
7	Ronnie Parado	14	Saida Pagayao
7	Heidi Sulangi	14	Rodel Balierbare
8	Alven Talisic	14	Justine Geronimo
9	Gina Velasco	16	Precy Aguinaldo
9	Charisma Evangelista	16	Leadel Meneses
9	Czarina Zara Loyola	16	Joylyn Ricohermozo
12	Ryan Sebastian	17	Ryan Hizon
12	Shimea Villanueva	17	Aenn Nuqui

18	Bayani Malicdem
18	Milagros Sapaning
19	Lydia Pabonan
19	Katherine Rubio
19	Juliane Garcia
20	Bernadette Manuel
20	Rowel Samson
20	Beth Lamera
20	Jannah Reyes
21	Erwin Tamayo

- 21 Tiara Julia Santos
- 23 Glaiza Sarmiento
- 24 Janneth Regio
- 25 Elisa Camunggol
- 26 Danilo Ubaldo
- 26 Lexie Day Flores
- 29 Paulo Magramo
- 30 Shahlimar Tamano
- 30 John Phire Villamin
- 31 Ryan Ramos Carlos

Å BISIT BE MY GUEST PHILIPPINES

Bisita, Be My Guest is an incentivized promotional campaign wherein Filipinos, specially Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW), Overseas and Former Filipinos who invite foreigners to visit the country will be entitled to a raffle ticket and have a chance to win special prizes.

> **VISIT OUR SITE** https://bbmg.philippines.travel/