

RCM's 24th for Rotary Year 2019-2020
 Thursday, January 23, 2020, 11:00 AM, Ballroom, New World Makati Hotel, Makati City
 Officer-In-Charge/ Program Moderator : PP Francis Juico

"Rotary Anns' Day"

PROGRAM TIMETABLE

11:00 AM	Registration	
12:15 PM	Bell to be Rung: Members and Guests are requested to be seated	
12:20 PM	Program Proper	OIC/Moderator : PP Francis Juico
	Call to Order	Pres. Jackie Rodriguez
	Singing of the Philippine National Anthem	RCM WF Music Chorale
	Invocator	PP Boy Guevara
	A moment of silent prayer for the safety and general well-being of the victims of the Taal Volcano eruption	
	➤ RCM Hymn	RCM WF Music Chorale
	➤ The Four (4) Way Test Credo	All Rotarians to be led by STAR Rtn. Hansel Tillmann
	Distribution of Tikoy to everyone on the occasion of Chinese New Year courtesy of PVP Manny Dy	
12:25 PM	Introduction of Guests/Visiting Rotarians and Personalities seated at the Presidential Table	PDG Alex Cureg
	➤ Welcome Song	RCM WF Music Chorale
12:30 PM	Maligayang Bati (RCM Birthday Celebrants)	
	Jan. 24... PD Abe Pascual Jan. 29... PP Toting del Rosario, Rtn. Colin Patterson	
	Jan. 27... PP Babes Reyes, Rtn. Danny Go	
	➤ Happy Birthday Song	RCM WF Music Chorale
12:35 PM	Induction of new member to the Rotary Club of Manila	
	Mr. Juan Dayang, Jr. (Filipino)	
	Officer-in-Charge, Office of the Secretary-Intelligence & Security Unit	
	Department of Foreign Affairs	
	Classification: Government-Diplomatic Service	
	Proposer : AS Ariel Abriam	
	Charging of New Member	IPDG Rudy Bediones
	Formal Induction Ceremony	Pres. Jackie Rodriguez
	➤ Welcome Baby Rotarian Song	RCM WF Music Chorale
12:40 PM	President's Time	Pres. Jackie Rodriguez
12:45 PM	Introduction of Guest of Honor and Speaker	VP Hermie Esguerra
	Address : Hon. Maria Leonor Gerona Robredo	
	Vice President, Republic of the Philippines	
	Public Forum with Panelists	
2:00 PM	Response, Presentation of Token of Appreciation to Vice President Maria Leonor Gerona Robredo & Meeting Adjournment	Pres. Jackie Rodriguez

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Official Newsletter of
 Rotary Club of Manila

Issue No. 3821

January 23, 2020

THE HEART OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

RCM CONDUCTS TAAL RELIEF MISSION



GUEST OF HONOR AND SPEAKER



Hon. MARIA LEONOR G. ROBREDO
Vice President
Republic of the Philippines

KABALITA

After being enlightened on the heart of good governance in the financial sector and being good samaritans to our fellow Filipinos who are victims of the Taal eruption, let the Second Highest Official of the land present her advocacies for the general welfare of the Filipino people and on current issues as she graces "Rotary Anns' Day" at Asia's First Rotary Club.

www.rcmanila.org

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PROFILE

MARIA LEONOR GERONA ROBREDO

Maria Leonor Gerona Robredo is the 14th Vice President of the Philippines. She was elected as Vice President on May 9, 2016 and was inaugurated on June 30, 2016 in Quezon City.

Leni Robredo, as she is more popularly known, is the widow of *the late Interior Secretary and Naga City Mayor Jesse M. Robredo and a mother of three. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in Economics from the University of the Philippines (1986) and obtained her bachelor of laws degree from the University of Nueva Caceres (1992). She passed the bar in 1997.

As a lawyer Leni dedicated her life to public service, representing those who have no means of defending themselves. She initially served in the Public Attorney's Office (PAO) in Naga city defending those who cannot afford the services of a lawyer. After a year in the PAO, she transferred to an alternative lawyers group called Sentro ng Alternatibong Lingap Panligal (SALIGAN) where she focused on attending to the needs of the marginalized. As a member of SALIGAN, Leni was part of the team that helped farmers from Sumilao, Bukidnon get their own land after more than a decade of waiting.

In 2012, tragedy struck Leni and her family when the airplane of her husband, Jesse, crashed in the province of Masbate. A State Funeral was held in honor of the late Secretary in Malacañan Palace and in Naga City, Camarines Sur. It was during this time that the nation first saw the strength of Leni during difficult and trying times. Leni gave her first national speech when she accepted, on behalf of Sec. Jesse Robredo, the Philippine Legion of Honor, with the rank of Chief Commander, from President Benigno S. Aquino III. In her speech, she remembered the happy times with Jesse and promised him that "we will continue to live because your spirit lives in us. I will make sure that your dreams for our children will be fulfilled. I will not say goodbye because I know that you will never leave us, and will always be in our midst. You are home now. You are back where you truly belong. Rest well. We will love you forever."

Months after the tragedy, the people of the Third District of Camarines Sur called on Leni to vie for the congressional seat in their district. Despite not having any political ambitions, Leni filed her candidacy after throngs of people staged a vigil in front of their home, urging her to run. Leni won by a landslide in the 2013 election, deposing a long entrenched political clan.

As Representative of the Third District of Camarines Sur, Leni continued to fight for her advocacies and continued the legacy of Jesse Robredo on Good Governance. Her first bill as a legislator, the Full Disclosure

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Bill, centered on transparency and accountability in the transactions of government offices in the national and local stage. Focused on empowering people and transparency, Leni subsequently filed the People Empowerment Bill, the Freedom of Information Bill, and the Bottom up Budgeting Bill. By the end of the 16th Congress, she was able to pass, as author and co-author, a number of laws. These include the Tax Incentives Management and Transparency Act and the Sagguniang Kabataan Reform Act—a testament to her continued fight for empowerment and transparency.

In 2015, various groups started to call for Leni to run for the second highest position in the land. After much reflection and consideration, Leni accepted the call to run as the running mate of Secretary Mar Roxas on October 5, 2016, in Club Filipino, San Juan. In her acceptance speech, Leni said: "Ibinigay ko po ang aking sarili ng buong buo sa ating mga kababayan, lalong lalo na sa inyong mga nakatsinelas na nasa labas, nasa ibaba, at nasa laylayan ng lipunan."

Despite only scoring one percent in surveys, Leni pushed on and let her hard work and determination speak for themselves. She became the only national candidate who was able to visit 87% of the country's provinces. Toward the end of the campaign, a familiar group of friends returned the kindness Leni once showed them during her SALIGAN day. The Sumilao farmers once again walked from Mindanao to Manila, this time not for land but to campaign for Leni and her running mate. Their march highlighted her main purpose in running—that those who have been forgotten will never be left behind again.

At the end of the election season, the Vice Presidential Candidate who started out with only one percent of the vote ended with 14,023,093 votes or 35.1% of the vote. She bested five sitting Senators and became the first Congresswoman to win the Vice Presidency.

Leni Robredo officially became Vice President of the Philippines on June 30, 2016. She immediately went to work saying that she wanted to shift the Office of the Vice President from a political and ceremonial one to an advocacy driven office focused on the needs of the marginalized. In her inaugural address, she said: "Our plan is to create partnerships between the government and the private sector towards real change. Collaboration is today's most important and powerful resource. In our world today, our most important work is the things that we can do together."

As Vice President, Leni launched the Angat Buhay Program centered on nutrition and food security, universal healthcare, education, rural development, women empowerment, and housing. The program was launched through a summit attended by 1,000 participants that served as a development market place.

Currently, Angat Buhay caters to 193 communities through the generosity of partner-organizations and individuals, most of whom are from the private sector.

She also launched Istorya ng Pag-asa, a program that aims to spread hope and positivity by featuring extraordinary stories of ordinary Filipinos, and Ahon Laylayan Koalisyon, a program that aims to unite sectors in different parts of the country, in a bid to promote people participation in governance.

On November 6, 2019, Robredo took on the responsibility of leading government efforts to combat illegal drugs, when she accepted President Rodrigo Duterte's offer to be the co-chairperson of the Inter-agency Committee on Anti-Illegal Drugs (ICAD), defying advice and warnings from well-meaning allies and supporters.

Soon after her appointment as ICAD co-chair, VP Leni set out to work in the bid to harmonize the efforts of the agencies involved in the anti-illegal drug campaign. She has since met with various government agencies, local government units, and private organizations, and visited different communities—several of which are deeply affected by the drug problem. VP Leni hopes to steer the campaign's direction to a more holistic, data-driven, and humane approach, believing that the fight against illegal drugs is not only the fight of government, but of every community and every Filipino.

Believing in the power of collaboration, and a faith in the people, VP Leni vows to keep working to help her fellow Filipinos, especially those in the fringes of society. #



Dear Fellow Rotarians,

Our Rotary soldiers pursued a relief mission to help the victims of the eruption of Taal Volcano in the most dire moments of our country last week. They gave their money. They gave their time. They gave their efforts to the country that they could have given to themselves and their families. We salute these patriotic soldiers of our club. Thank you PP Jimmie Policarpio, PP Benny Laguesma, Treasurer Jason Ong, PS Butch Marking, DE/IPAS Rene Policarpio, PD Ner Lonzaga, PT Jun Follosco, PD Knud Hedeager, VPE/Dir. Nicky Villaseñor, Rtn. Cons Robertz, AT Karlo Castro and VP Hermie Esguerra. Thank you to all those members of our club who donated all their money and time to care for the wounded citizens of our country. It is not easy to perform these functions. In the wake of all the damage done, our members with their efforts together did their duties. As members of our club, I congratulate all of you and I thank you.

The damage to our country is immense. The huge material and physical damage caused to the area is nothing compared to the anticipated affects Taal will continue to have in the months and years to come. But, we, as Rotarians, will always do our part for our country as we have done time and again when we are called or when we perform even without being called. We did this for polio. We did this in Marawi. We did this in Bicol. We did this in Asilo. We did this in Hospicio de San Jose. We did this in the Philippine General Hospital as well as in hundreds of places where we are needed. We shall be there as we have been there and as we are there. And that is what we are all about in Rotary. It is about sharing ourselves, our time, our bodies and our efforts to give a better life to all of those around us. This is to show them that we love them and that we care for them. For in their faces and in their pain, we see our own families, we see ourselves and we see our country. We see that we are needed.

Today, it is, but, right that we have with us the Vice President of our country, the Hon. Maria Leonor "Leni" Gerona-Robredo. We welcome her whole heartedly as we wish to listen to her views, her hopes and dreams for a greater Philippines.

Best,

Jackie

NOVEL CORONA VIRUS INFECTION

Elias D. Adamos, M.D.



Different strains of corona viruses are identified to be present in many species of animals. Virus mutation has resulted to human infection with Corona viruses. Corona virus infection in humans can transfer from one person to another. Recent examples of human corona virus infection are SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV, respectively in 2003 and 2012. Just after Christmas, China health authorities identified a new strain of Corona virus – Novel Corona virus (2019-nCoV) – in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. It resulted to close to 300 confirmed cases in early January 2020. The growing number of cases in China fast-spread to another continent and has human infection in Europe. On January 21, 2020 the United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed the first case of Novel Corona virus infection in the United States.

What is Corona virus?

Corona viruses were described for the first time in the 1960s. They were identified in the nasal cavity and nasal washings of people who are suffering from common cold. Thus, Corona virus can cause just a common cold. In simpler terms: Corona viruses, including the newly identified "Novel Corona" virus, can cause common cold.

Why then is there a need for Corona virus alarm?

Corona viruses, while they cause just the common cold or perhaps just a common and ordinary self-limiting febrile condition, can also be an impending cause for pneumonia. And when people and experts talk about pneumonia, one thing is certain: Pneumonia can be a cause of death. By simple logic: There is a need for corona viruses information and prevention campaign because Corona viruses, including the Novel Corona virus, can cause pneumonia, that which, in severe cases, can be a cause of death.

BRACING YOURSELF AGAINST NOVEL CORONA VIRUS INFECTION

1. Wash hands often. Wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
2. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
3. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF THE DISEASE

1. If you are sick or you feel that you are about to get sick, just stay at home. Stay at home while you are sick.
2. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, then throw the tissue in the waste can and wash your hands.
3. Avoid close contact with people who are suffering from fever and cold.
4. Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects.

TREATMENT

There is no treatment for Novel Corona virus infection. People infected with the virus recover on their own. If you are mildly sick, stay at home and rest. Drink plenty of fruit juices and water. It is safe to take a shower. Take paracetamol for pain and fever.

ATTENDANCE SUMMARY

RCM Members' Attendance Report, RY 2019-2020

Thursday, January 16, 2020

DOF Sec./ Rtn. Sonny Dominguez

All Members Present	49
Less: Exempt from Attendance	6
Total Active Members	43
ADD: Make-Up *	8
TOTAL	51
Total # of Members	222
Less: Exempt from Attendance	27
On Leave	21
Total Active Members (Total Percentage Base)	174
TOTAL ATTENDANCE %:	29%

No Credit for MAKE-UP	Date	EVENT
1 Rodriguez, Jackie	1.21.2029	District Chinese New Year
2 Dee, Marcus	1.21.2029	District Chinese New Year
3 Bediones, Rudy	1.21.2029	District Chinese New Year
4 Villaseñor, Nicky	1.20.2020	Taal Relief
5 Policarpio, Rene	1.19.2020	Taal Relief
6 Chotrani, Johnny	1.21.2020	District Chinese New Year
CREDITED MAKE UP		
1 Policarpio, Rene	1.16.2020	Taal Relief
2 Policarpio, Jimmie	1.16.2020	Taal Relief
3 Laguesma, Benny	1.20.2020	Taal Relief
4 Lonzaga, Ner	1.20.2020	Taal Relief
5 Esguerra, Hermie	1.19.2020	Taal Relief
6 Del Rosario, Oscar	1.17.2020	Taal Relief
7 Villaseñor, Nicky	1.16.2020	Special Board Meeting
8 Pineda, Susing	1.16.2020	Special Board Meeting

	12.5.2019	12.30.2019	1.0.2020	1.16.2020	ON LEAVE
RCM Members	52	70	55	49	
Members' Guests	3	13	8	8	
Club Guests	2	0	3		
NO 3810			5		
Visiting Rotarian			1	1	
ISP			23		
PHD			8		
Security Bank			3		
Robinsons Bank			8		
Palawan			8		
Union Bank			8		
SPY			8		
East West Bank			4		
Bankers Ass. of the Phils.			5		
Press			4		
NAC OUSU	2	0			
NAC Manila	1	0			
Dance Instructors		7			
TOTAL	60	90	151	58	

1 Abay, Val	11 Go, Michael
2 Bella, Jun	12 Marking, Butch
3 Benedicto, Dong	13 Masters, Lance
4 Bolton, Bollic	14 Montecillo, Dennis
5 Camus, Nando	15 Montinola, Tony
6 Esguerra, Hermie	16 Reynolds, Dave
7 Hedeager, Knud	17 Tanglao, Noel
8 Ko, Mon	18 Wong, David
9 Lopez, Ning	19 Villegas, Raoul
10 Lonzaga, Ner	20 Zalamea, Rick
11 Garcia, Vic	21 Zaladriaga, Chito



THE HEART OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

by
Rtn. Carlos “Sonny” G. Dominguez, III
Secretary
Department of Finance
Republic of the Philippines

Rotary Club of Manila President Joaquin Rodriguez; Rotary Club of Makati West President Eric Tensuan; Past District Governor Tony Rufino; Rotary Club Secretary Franco Del Rosario; Past President Junvee Vital; Rotarian Cons Robertz: His Excellency, Koji Haneda, Ambassador of Japan; Her Excellency, Jana Šedivá, Ambassador of the Czech Republic; my fellow Rotarians, distinguished guests.

Thank you for the opportunity to be with you today. I find that all my important speeches begin with the phrase my fellow Rotarians. I thank you as well for your interest in the progress of the comprehensive tax reform program.

The tax reform is more than just a foundational plank of the Duterte administration’s socioeconomic agenda. It is at the heart of good governance. It is indispensable for pursuing the infrastructure modernization program of President Duterte by raising the revenues to fund it. It is necessary to fund social investments – such as our new Universal Health Care Program – at unprecedented levels for inclusive growth and a more competitive workforce.

In short, the comprehensive tax reform program is key to building a better future for all law-abiding Filipinos.

It is important to note that this is the first time in our history that we are undertaking a reconfiguration of our revenue system without being compelled to do so by an economic crisis. All previous efforts to reform our tax system were constrained by the need to contain an economic meltdown or avert the eruption of a debt volcano.

As we are not responding to the urgency of an impending crisis, the comprehensive tax reform program benefits from thorough study. We have been able to build public support behind the reforms, respond to stakeholder concerns, and advance the program at the correct pace and timing.

After the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion or TRAIN Law – the first tranche of the tax reform program – was enacted in December 2017, 99 percent of our wage earners benefitted from a significant reduction in their personal income tax rates. Unfortunately, most of the Rotarians here earn more than P3 million a year so they were not included in the reduction in tax rates. In fact, we increased it because you can afford it. The equivalent of a month's take home pay was returned to the pockets of the workers to spend as they see fit. Our economic expansion was boosted by a surge in consumer demand.

Revenue losses from the lower personal income taxes were offset by higher excise taxes that better accounted for the negative effects of the sin products or commodities consumed disproportionately by higher-income households. Effective collection of these excise taxes produced a stronger revenue flow for the government. At the same time, it discouraged consumption of products that are unhealthy such as sweetened beverages and tobacco. In the middle of last year, we made history when the excise taxes on tobacco products were raised for a second time under one administration.

More recently, Congress passed a new set of sin taxes on electronic cigarettes or vaping products and alcohol to deter smoking and binge drinking while augmenting funds for the Universal Health Care program that will primarily benefit low-income families. We expect this measure to be signed into law this month.

For the first three quarters of 2019, total revenues from the first package of our tax reform program reached 91.3 billion pesos, outperforming our collection estimates by a little over 18 percent. This enables the government to fund both our ambitious Build, Build, Build program and expand social services, including the conditional and unconditional cash transfer programs, that help us cut poverty incidence.

A more reliable and recurrent revenue stream enabled the government to better manage its fiscal position as well as expand public spending. As a result, our sovereign credit rating was upgraded last year to BBB plus – the highest rating we have ever enjoyed. This has put us above countries like Italy and Portugal. This is just a shade below the single A rating we hope to achieve soon.

1

The higher credit rating tells investors that it is safe to do business in the Philippines and that the country is highly capable of paying its debts. For the private sector, this means being able to borrow at lower costs to finance business expansions. Ordinary Filipinos likewise benefit because banks would then be able to lend money to them at lower interest rates. This will translate into larger investments, as well as more jobs and better quality of life for Filipino families.



PD Ner Lonzaga, PP Jimmie Policarpio, PP Benny Laguesma and VPE/Dir. Nicky Villaseñor set forth on a five car caravan relief mission to Bauan, Batangas last January 18, 2020, bringing with them assorted relief goods.



VP Hermie Esguerra overseeing the relief items



VP Hermie Esguerra helping in the bringing and sorting out of relief goods.

TAAL DISASTER FUND

As of Jan 21, 2020

DONOR	OR#	AMOUNT		
1 Abastillas, Celso	49484	5,000.00	DAVAO QUAKE FUND TO TAAL	227,000.00
2 Abriam, Ariel	49449	5,000.00	DISASTER FUND	
3 Bediones, Rudy	49438	5,000.00	TOTAL	407,000.00
4 Carlos, Vince	49463	5,000.00	LESS:	
5 Castro, Karlo	49489	5,000.00	Tissue Paper	25,000.00
6 Cureg, Alex	49487	10,000.00	Water & trash bag	192,500.00
7 Del Rosario, Oscar	49442	5,000.00	Matts / Banig	50,000.00
8 Dy, Manny	49414	5,000.00	Blankets	70,000.00
9 Eldebs, Issam	49490	5,000.00		337,500.00
10 Esguerra, Hermie	49412	5,000.00		
11 Evaristo, Frank	49443	5,000.00		
12 Fajardo, Beda	49449	5,000.00	Available funds	69,500.00
13 Follusco, Jun	49485	5,000.00		
14 Garcia, Vic	49497	5,000.00	DIRECT DONATION TO BENEFICIARY:	
15 Go, Michael	49488	5,000.00	1 Joseph, Bobby	5,000.00
16 Guevara, Boy	49486	5,000.00	2 Policarpio, Jimmie	200 blankets
17 Hallare, Jun	49492	5,000.00		300 towels
18 Lopus, Jesli	49481	5,000.00		10 boxes sanitary napkins
19 Lim, Fred	49493	5,000.00		200.00/sick evacuee
20 Locsin, Nick	49500	5,000.00		5000 gals drinking water
21 Lonzaga, Ner	49491	5,000.00		
22 Lopa, Tony	49480	5,000.00		
23 Matschuck, Gunter	49502	5,000.00	3 Laguesma, Benny	520 loaves of bread
24 Ong, Jason	49468	5,000.00		5 boxes corned beef
25 Pascual, Abe	49474	5,000.00		20 boxes ensaymada
26 Pineda, Bebot	49483	5,000.00		5 cases dove soap
27 Pujalte, Brix	49495	5,000.00	4 Villaseñor, Nicky	30 pcs. Towels
28 Recto, Philip	49439	5,000.00	5 Lopez, Tony	clothes
29 Rodriguez, Jackie	49442	5,000.00	6 Lonzaga, Ner	200.00/sick evacuee
30 Sibayan, Chito	49503	5,000.00		2 sacks used clothing
31 Tagaysay, Chito	49501	5,000.00	7 Marking, Butch	400 liters rubbing alcohol
32 Valdez, Amading	49494	5,000.00	8 Ong, Jason	
33 Villarica, Henry	49499	5,000.00		
34 Wong, David	49504	5,000.00		
35 Zalamea, Rick	49482	5,000.00		

Subtotal 180,000.00

RECEIVABLE	AMOUNT
36 Benedicto, Noy	5,000.00
37 Bolton, Bolle	5,000.00
38 Cutter, John	5,000.00
39 Hallerbach, Matthias	5,000.00
40 Lopez, Tony	20,000.00
41 Payumo, Tong	5,000.00
42 Reynolds, Dave	5,000.00
43 Rodriguez, Jackie	15,000.00
44 Yu, Geof	5,000.00
SUB-TOTAL	70,000.00



7,500 hard boiled eggs courtesy of VP Hermie Esguerra



One of the evacuation centers



Employees of PT Jun Follosco packing the relief goods



Cash subsidies distributed by PD Ner Lonzaga and PP Jimmie Policarpio to the sick persons, elderly persons and mothers at the evacuation center.



The truck bringing relief goods



The evacuation center in Bauan, Batangas

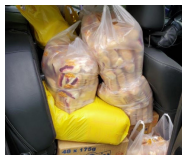
Batangas and Cavite Relief Missions were conducted by VP Hermie Esguerra. The Herma Group Taal Volcano Relief Operations was composed of five teams, seven 4-wheeler trucks load of relief goods brought to 19 Evacuation Centers (9 in Batangas, 6 in San Pablo and Dolores, Quezon, 3 in Silang and 1 in San Vicente, Biñan) last January 18 and 19, 2020. Loaves of bread and five boxes of corned beef for Inosliban refugees in Lipa City.



Unloading of relief goods



PD Ner Lonzaga, PP Jimmie Policarpio, VPE/Dir. Nicky Villaseñor and DE/IPAS Rene Policarpio after the distribution of relief goods. Lipa City, Batangas, January 19, 2020



Completing the tax reform program will not just secure for the Philippines an A credit rating, but more importantly, it will ensure fiscal stability long into the future.

The task of pursuing game-changing reforms is a long and arduous one as we have to deal with the vagaries of our politics, the inertia of the bureaucracy, and the resistance of those who would rather have things stay as they are. But we remain confident that the pending tax reform packages will be approved by the Congress this year.

By March this year, we hope to see the Corporate Income Tax and Incentives Rationalization Act passed into law. The measure will gradually reduce our corporate income tax rate, the highest in ASEAN, to match regional benchmarks. We would likewise rationalize our badly tangled tax incentives system to create a level playing field, especially for new businesses coming into our economy. A reduced corporate income tax rate and a simplified, fair and accountable tax incentives system will bring huge benefits to about one million micro, small and medium enterprises or MSMEs that compose the bulk of businesses in our economy and employ an overwhelming majority of workers.

The old tax system entrenched established businesses and discouraged new enterprises from coming in. It gave some businesses tax protection in perpetuity regardless of whether they improved their competitiveness or not.

For instance, in 2017, the government gave away a total of 441 billion pesos worth of tax discounts and exemptions to just 3,150 companies. This select group of firms, which account for less than half of one percent of almost a million companies currently registered in the Philippines, pay discounted tax rates of around 6 to 13 percent. In contrast, SMEs have to pay much higher corporate income tax rate at 30 percent. Moreover, a number of companies have also been receiving incentives from 15 to more than 40 years and all this is being done without proper cost-benefit analysis to determine whether these incentives have yielded real benefits to the economy.

In addition, some of these firms cheat the government of some 63 billion pesos by abusing transfer pricing rules or by shifting profits and costs to reduce tax liabilities. The total is a staggering 504 billion pesos in one year alone. That amount is equivalent to around 93 percent of the budget of the Department of Education and more than 5 times the budget of the Department of Health in 2017. In other words, we have to account for the 504 billion pesos that we gave up and ensure that the taxpayers' hard-earned money is not wasted.

Under the new system envisaged under CITIRA, incentives will be targeted, transparent, time-bound and performance-based. We just want to adhere to standards very similar to that of other countries.

In Singapore, for instance, while the maximum years to avail of incentives is 40 years, incentives are given initially for five years and renewed in five-

year tranches only after a thorough performance review on both quantitative and qualitative investment criteria. Investment regulations require firms to regularly submit progress reports and any breach of the performance contract is subjected to revocation of the incentives. This is what time-bound and performance-based mean.

Thailand has a good system to target industries by giving more incentives and longer availments to high priority sectors that are pre-identified in its investment priority plan. It also publishes the names of the recipients in its Board of Investments website. This is what targeted and transparent mean.

Under the Philippines' current tax system, 13 separate agencies independently award incentives. This has created a chaotic incentives regime that does not effectively support our development goals. It has also caused the government to give up hundreds of billions in potential revenue. The proposed system in CITIRA would closely resemble what is in effect in Malaysia, considered the best practice in the region. In Malaysia, the grant of incentives is centralized under the National Committee on Investment — thereby providing greater development coherence in the incentives system.

Moreover, this reform measure will create about one and a half million jobs for our people. More jobs will be generated as we can reasonably expect companies to reinvest at least 50 percent of their additional money from the reduction of the corporate income tax rate towards growing their businesses. In addition, a new menu of incentives for investors, as proposed in CITIRA, will encourage job creation, upskilling, and linking up SMEs into the export value chains.

The sooner Congress passes the bill, the quicker potential investors will discard their wait-and-see attitude and bring more business to the country. This will have incalculable benefits for our economic growth.

Meanwhile, the third package of the tax reform program aims to adopt globally benchmarked valuation standards and inculcate a higher degree of professionalism in real property valuation, which in turn, will promote investor confidence. It will likewise enhance the revenue-generating capacities of our local governments. As a beneficial side effect, it will help clear right-of-way issues currently inhibiting many key infrastructure projects.

The fourth package, known as the Passive Income and Financial Intermediary Taxation Act, seeks to make the country more attractive for capital and investments, which are urgently needed to finance large-scale infrastructure projects, including those under the Build, Build, Build program. Rationalizing the tax system in the financial sector will be a game-changer in encouraging long-term investments.

Taken together, the packages of the comprehensive tax reform program will dramatically alter the business environment in this country, removing the remaining hindrances to investment flows that make

RCM CONDUCTS TAAL RELIEF MISSION

Bauan, Batangas, January 18, 2020

THE TAAL VOLCANO ERUPTION AND THE BAUAN RELIEF MISSION

by DE/IPAS Rene Policarpio
BALITA Managing Editor

Residents of Agoncillo, Lemery, Talisay, Balete, San Nicolas and all communities surrounding the shoreline of Taal Lake were alerted to depart immediately, January 12, 2020, due to imminent eruption of Taal Volcano. More than 13,000 families heeded the warning leaving all their belongings behind; unprotected homes and abandoned livestock with only clothes on their backs and small personal items. Those with private means of transport (mostly tricycles) and government support vehicles conveyed evacuees to public school buildings and churches transformed into evacuation centers. Schools and churches filled up quickly in towns considered safe zones, causing a shortage of basic necessities such as food, clothing, humane living conditions, and unsafe health conditions.

National/local governments joined hands in providing assistance but most impressive is the overflowing provisions coming from the private sector of society. Abundant food supply, medicines, used clothing and hygienic supplies started flowing but more significant is the demonstration of compassion and attention coming from all sectors of society.

On ground zero of the evacuation centers, talks of gratitude for the outpouring support are heard coming from the evacuees and Barangay personnel who have acted as their temporary guardians.

The cold concrete floors on their backs suddenly become bearable to sleep on with a sense of assurance that their fellowmen will not forsake them.

However, the influx of evacuees continue to arrive in overpopulated evacuation centers, forcing the supervisors to redirect them to family homes willing to take them in. This creates an issue of supply distribution.

The Punong Barangay in charge of the Bauan Public High School housing over 2000 evacuees admits that he is very concerned about re-directing supplies he receives in his jurisdiction to individual homes also caring for evacuees for fear of being accused of smuggling goods for profit. Individual donors do not care much to support the individual home evacuation centers, suspicious of their existence. This is now the dilemma being faced by our evacuation center administrators.

Lastly, the Rotary Club of Manila donation was greatly appreciated at the BAUAN EVACUATION CENTER, Barangay AS-IS, Bauan, Batangas.

Changing for the future

Knaack also urged members to embrace change so Rotary can expand and thrive. Rather than setting a specific target for increasing the number of members, Knaack said he's asking clubs and districts to think about how to grow in a sustainable and organic way. He wants clubs to focus on keeping current members engaged and adding new members who are the right fit for their club.

"We need to stop thinking of new members as people we can mark down as statistics and then forget about," Knaack said. "Every new member changes us a little bit. That person brings a new perspective, new experiences. We need to embrace this constant renewal. We will grow stronger as we learn from new members."

Knaack pointed to Rotary's Action Plan as a compass that can guide clubs as they evolve. He recommended that every club have a strategic plan meeting at least once a year. At that meeting, clubs should ask where they want to be in five years and how they can bring more value to their members.

Knaack also wants to see more women in leadership roles and see Rotaractors play an integral role in how new clubs are formed and run. He encouraged district leaders to create new club models and rethink what it means to be in Rotary, and allow young people to be the architects of these new clubs.

"We have to be open to new approaches, and creating unique clubs for younger people is just part of the solution," said Knaack. "Let Rotaractors decide what kind of Rotary experience works best for them. These young people are bright, energetic, and they get things done."

In stressing the need for Rotary members to embrace change, Knaack noted that time won't slow down for Rotary: "We will not let rapid change defeat us. We will capture this moment to grow Rotary, making it stronger, more adaptable, and even more aligned with our core values."

us a laggard in the region. This program will help us create better jobs for our people. It will surely enable this administration to deliver on its ultimate goal, which is to reduce poverty incidence from 23.3 percent in 2015 to 14 percent or lower by the end of the President's term in 2022.

This is a tough assignment, you will agree. Residual incidence of poverty is always more difficult to root out. But I am pleased to inform you that our people are beginning to reap the rewards of a well-managed economy under the Duterte administration. Poverty incidence has significantly declined to 16.6 percent in 2018. A total of 5.9 million Filipinos lifted themselves out of poverty in three years. We are very optimistic about achieving and maybe even surpassing our goal.

Our strong economic performance and exemplary governance are reflected in the approval rating of our decisive leader. In a recent opinion survey conducted by an independent research firm, President Duterte received an 87 percent approval rating—unprecedented for a head of state during the second half of his or her term. The public satisfaction in the President was also apparent in the midterm elections that saw administration candidates winning a landslide vote. This electoral triumph translates to a supermajority in both chambers of Congress and eventually to the passage of more people-oriented reforms at the soonest possible time.

This is a virtuous cycle that we hope will continue producing positive results in the coming period.

Thank you, and if you have any questions, I will attempt to answer them.

Thank you very much.

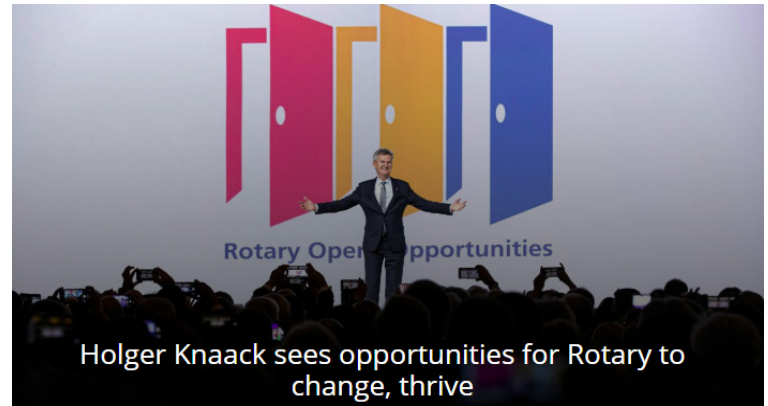
ACTIVITY CALENDAR

January 30

**12N, Manila Polo Club
Rep. Ferdinand Martin Romualdez
– Subject to Confirmation**



The Board of Directors of the Rotary Club of Manila for RY 2019-2020 held a Special Meeting last January 16, 2020 at the Lodge Room of the Manila Elks Club in Makati City. The agenda of the meeting mainly focused on the appointment of the Chairman and Co-Chairman for Disaster Relief Operations as well as the Audit Report for RY 2018-2019 by Ernst & Young personnel.



Incoming RI president announces 2020-21 presidential theme

By Ryan Hyland

Rotary International President-elect Holger Knaack is encouraging Rotarians to seize the many opportunities Rotary offers to enrich their lives and the communities they serve.

Watch the theme address

Knaack, a member of the Rotary Club of Herzogtum Lauenburg-Mölln, Germany, revealed the 2020-21 presidential theme, Rotary Opens Opportunities, to incoming district governors at the Rotary International Assembly in San Diego, California, USA, on 20 January.

"We will capture this moment to grow Rotary, making it stronger, more adaptable, and even more aligned with our core values."

Holger Knaack
Rotary International President-elect

Rotary isn't just a club for people to join, but rather "an invitation to endless opportunities," said Knaack, who becomes president on 1 July. He emphasized that Rotary creates pathways for members to improve their lives and the lives of those they help through service projects.

"We believe that our acts of service, big and small, create opportunities for people who need our help," Knaack said. He added that Rotary creates leadership opportunities and gives members the chance to travel the world to put their service ideas into action and make lifelong connections. "Everything we do opens another opportunity for someone, somewhere," said Knaack.



IAT Marcus Dee, DE Johnny Chotrani, President Jackie Rodriguez and IPDG Rudy Bediones attended the **District Chinese New Year** hosted by the Rotary Club of Manila Metro last January 21, 2020 at the Rizal Park Hotel in Manila



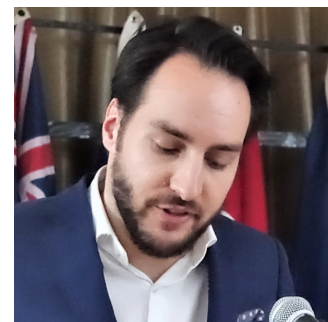
PP Cesar Ubaldo and SDG/Club Sec./DE/Dir. Albert Alday attended the **DISCON 2020 Meeting** last January 22, 2020 at the VIP Lounge of Midas Hotel and Casino in Pasay City.



Pres. Jackie Rodriguez, for the Rotary Club of Manila (RCM) and Pres. Eric Tensuan, for the Rotary Club of Makati West (RCMW), call the joint meeting, to order.



RCMW Sec. Franco del Rosario, as Officer-In-Charge/ Program Moderator, calls the sequence of activities.



RCM Rtn. Cons Robertz delivers an ecumenical prayer.



Rotarians from RCM and RCMW introduce their respective guests in attendance at the joint luncheon meeting.



RCMW PP **Junvee Vital** recounts his accomplishments in his club during his term as President, during the President's Time.



RCMW PDG **Tony Rufino** does the honor, pleasure and privilege of introducing **Hon. Carlos "Sonny" G. Dominguez, III**, Secretary, Department of Finance and Member, Rotary Club of Manila, as Guest of Honor and Speaker.



Among the Manila Rotarians who raised question/s during the open forum were **PD Jess Santos** and **Rtn. Celso Abastillas**.



Secretary Carlos "Sonny" G. Dominguez, III presented before Manila Rotarians and Makati West Rotarians as well as their guests, **"The Heart of Good Governance"** --- the department's financial stewardship for a sound fiscal policy and formulation of revenue policies to ensure funding of critical government programs that promote welfare and accelerate economic growth and stability.

A public forum with **Secretary Carlos "Sonny" G. Dominguez, III** followed suit.



RCM Pres. Jackie Rodriguez and **RCMW Pres. Eric Tensuan** during their respective responses, presentation of tokens of appreciation to **Secretary Carlos "Sonny" G. Dominguez, III** and meeting adjournment.