

# The Advocate

The official newsletter of the League of Cities of the Philippines

Q3-Q4 2019



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National tax allotment of LGUs remains elusive

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# The Advocate

The official newsletter of the League of Cities of the Philippines

Q3-Q4 2019

## Editorial Team

### Editors

Fidel Pamintuan  
Maria Regina Santiago

### Contributors

Amelia De Guia  
Segfrey Gonzales  
Ma. Veronica Hitois  
Soleil Erika Manzano  
April Deevian Mosquera  
Rosylvia May Tolosa

### Photographers

Broderick Sapnu  
Jojo Gloria

## League of Cities of the Philippines

7th Floor, Units J & K, Cyber One Building  
11 Eastwood Avenue, Bagumbayan  
Quezon City, Philippines 1110

www.lcp.org.ph  
www.facebook.com/PHcities

For inquiries please contact the LCP Secretariat  
at league.cities.philippines@gmail.com.

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A campaign launched by UN-Habitat Philippines sheds light on the role of Philippine mayors as frontliners in the movement towards localizing the UN SDGs.

COVER

# Leonardia is the new LCP President; PRRD administers oath of new officers

After serving a number of key positions in the LCP National Executive Board (NEB) since 1995, Bacolod City Mayor Evelio (Bing) Leonardia is finally at the helm of the official association of cities in the country, having been elected as the National President of the League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP) at its 68th General Assembly in Edsa Shangri-La on 19 July 2019.

Leonardia first served as the LCP Vice President for Visayas during his inaugural term as city mayor in 1995. He then became Deputy Secretary-General for Visayas from 2004 to 2007, National Vice Chairperson from 2007 to 2010, National Executive Vice-President from 2010 to 2013, and Deputy Secretary-General for Visayas from 2016 to 2019.

In his acceptance speech, Leonardia expressed his gratitude to Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte, former LCP Chairperson and now Congresswoman Lani Cayetano, and former LCP President and Angeles City Mayor Edgardo Pamintuan.

Leonardia also emphasized that the LCP must always be aligned to the goals and objectives of the national government.

“The most fundamental agenda for the League is to be in line with the visions of the Duterte Administration,” said Leonardia. “The agenda made by the [LCP] Secretariat should be supplementary to what the mayors have in mind so we could have a platform that is an embodiment of each mayor.”

With plans to establish an executive board that listens to the sentiments of each and every mayor in the next three years, Leonardia also asked for the full participation of LCP members to create an organization that is “of the city mayors, by the city mayors, and for the city mayors.”



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- 1 — Mayor Bing Leonardia delivers his acceptance speech after winning the LCP presidency
- 2 — Senator Francis Tolentino addresses the members of the LCP after the induction of the newly elected LCP officers
- 3 — Outgoing LCP President Edgardo Pamintuan entrusts the LCP flag to Leonardia while outgoing LCP Chair and Congresswoman Lani Cayetano turns over the gavel to the newly elected Chairperson and Cebu City Mayor Edgar Labella
- 4 — Leonardia welcomes Manila City Mayor Isko Moreno (middle) and Ormoc City Mayor Richard Gomez (right) at the 68th General Assembly (GA) of the LCP
- 5 — Newly elected LCP Secretary-General and Calapan City Mayor Arnan Panaligan (left), Mayor Bing Leonardia, and Mayor Edgar Labella preside over the first board meeting of the newly elected LCP officers at the LCP 68th National Executive Board Meeting held a day after the 68th GA
- 6 — Senator Francis Tolentino poses for a selfie with the newly elected officers after the induction rites



President Rodrigo Duterte administers the oath of office of newly elected LCP officers at the Malacañang Palace on 6 August 2019

PHOTO COURTESY OF PRESIDENTIAL PHOTOGRAPHERS DIVISION

#### Cebu mayor elected chair

LCP members also elected Cebu City Mayor Edgardo Labella as the new National Chairperson of the LCP NEB. In his acceptance speech, Labella recognized the “able leadership” of Bacolod City Mayor Evelio Leonardia whom he believes will continue to promote unity and hard work in the League.

Labella also spoke of his experiences in public service as a former prosecutor for the Sandiganbayan, Ombudsman Director in the Visayas, four-time councilor, two-term vice-mayor, and now as the incumbent mayor of Cebu.

He encouraged city mayors to study certain amendments of the Local Government Code in order to come up with a version that is genuinely ideal for local governments.

Other newly elected members of the NEB include LCP Executive Vice-President and Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte; LCP Secretary-General and Calapan City Mayor Arnan Panaligan; LCP Women’s Sector Representative and Mandaluyong City Mayor Menchie Abalos; Public Relations Officer (PRO) and Ormoc City Mayor Richard Gomez; Deputy PRO for NCR and San Juan City Mayor Francis Zamora; Focal Mayor for Transportation and Bacoor City Mayor Lani Mercado; and Focal Mayor for Muslim Affairs and Marawi City Mayor Majul Gandamra.

The full list of LCP NEB officers may be found on the next page.

#### LGU representation in the Senate

Senator Francis Tolentino graced the assembly to induct the new set of officers.

As a former LCP National President and currently the Senate Committee Chairman on Local Government, Tolentino invited mayors to work more closely with him in pursuing the interests of LGUs.

“I filed a resolution encouraging DILG to include smart cities concept as a part of the SGLG,” said Tolentino. “I modified the bill filed by Senator [Grace] Poe on giving the President emergency powers on transport, not only to cover Metro Manila, but also all the urban growth centers in the Philippines.”

#### Oath-taking ceremony in Malacañang

Weeks after the election, a formal oath-taking ceremony of LCP officers took place at the Reception Hall of Malacañang on 6 August 2019 with President Rodrigo Duterte administering the oath of office.

In his remarks after the ceremony, Duterte mentioned that the national budget will be evenly spread among the regions in the country with the intent to spur local infrastructure development.

“The money of the people of the Republic of the Philippines will be equally divided proportionally,” said Duterte in a mix of English and Filipino. “*Pero makita ninyo ang pinakamaraming infrastructure, dito sa Luzon and sa Visayas [including] the airports there. Ang Mindanao, sabi ko, maybe towards the end of my term, kung may maiwan pa.*” [“But look, the greatest number of infrastructures are in Luzon and Visayas, including the airports there. For Mindanao, maybe towards the end of my term, should there be anything left.”]

He also encouraged mayors to protect their constituents while persecuting unlawful elements, especially when it comes to illegal drugs

“[I]f there’s anything, *kung [mayroong] kaso*, if it is in the performance of your duty, do not worry,” said Duterte. “I will defend you to death. *Lakarin ko basta* performance of duty, *lalo na sa pulis pati iyong sa mga military. Pati kayo*, so that you can do your duty without fear.”

## The 2019-2022 LCP National Executive Board

#### National President

Mayor Evelio R. Leonardia  
Bacolod City

#### Executive Vice-President

Mayor Ma. Josefina G. Belmonte  
Quezon City

#### National Chairperson

Mayor Edgardo D. Labella  
Cebu City

#### National Vice-Chairperson

Mayor Ronnel C. Rivera  
General Santos City

#### Secretary-General

Mayor Arnan C. Panaligan  
Calapan City

#### Treasurer

Mayor Antonio A. Ferrer  
General Trias City

#### Women’s Sector Representative

Mayor Carmelita A. Abalos  
Mandaluyong City

#### Vice-President for Luzon

Mayor Francis Anthony S. Garcia  
Balanga City

#### Vice-President for Visayas

Mayor Felipe Antonio B. Remollo  
Dumaguete City

#### Vice-President for Mindanao

Mayor Sammy S. Co  
Pagadian City

#### Vice-President for NCR

Mayor Edwin L. Olivarez  
Parañaque City

#### Auditor

Mayor Emerson Pascual  
Gapan City

#### Public Relations Officer

Mayor Richard I. Gomez  
Ormoc City

#### Regional Representatives

##### Representative for CAR

Mayor Darwin C. Estrañero  
Tabuk City

##### Representative for Region I

Mayor Juan Carlo S. Medina  
Vigan City

##### Representative for Region II

Mayor Joseph S. Tan  
Santiago City

##### Representative for Region III

Mayor Nestor L. Alvarez  
Science City of Muñoz

##### Representative for Region IV-A

Mayor Arlene B. Arcillas  
Santa Rosa City

##### Representative for MIMAROPA Region

Mayor Lucilo R. Bayron  
Puerto Princesa City

##### Representative for Region V

Mayor Madelaine Y. Alfelor  
Iriga City

##### Representative for Region VI

Mayor Mark Andrew J. Golez  
Silay City

##### Representative for Region VII

Mayor John Geesnell L. Yap II  
Tagbilaran City

##### Representative for Region VIII

Mayor Nacional V. Mercado  
Maasin City

##### Representative for Region IX

Mayor Ma. Isabelle Climaco-Salazar  
Zamboanga City

##### Representative for Region X

Mayor Jennifer W. Tan  
Tangub City

##### Representative for Region XI

Mayor Al David T. Uy  
Island Garden City of Samal

##### Representative for Region XII

Mayor Angelo O. Montilla  
Tacurong City

##### Representative for Caraga Region

Mayor Ernesto U. Matugas, Jr.  
Surigao City

##### Representative for BARMM

Mayor Rosita U. Furigay  
Lamitan City

##### Representative for NCR

Mayor Oscar G. Malapitan  
Caloocan City

## The 2019-2022 LCP National Executive Board

### Deputy Secretary-Generals

#### Deputy SG for Luzon

Mayor Patricia Gonzalez-Alsua  
*Ligao City*

#### Deputy SG for Visayas

Mayor Nicholas M. Yulo  
*Bago City*

#### Deputy SG for Mindanao

Mayor Azucena P. Huervas  
*Valencia City*

#### Deputy SG for NCR

Mayor Lino Edgardo S. Cayetano  
*Taguig City*

### Public Relations Officers

#### Deputy PRO for Luzon

Mayor Rolen C. Paulino, Jr.  
*Olongapo City*

#### Deputy PRO for Visayas

Mayor Francis Frederick P. Palanca  
*Victorias City*

#### Deputy PRO for Mindanao

Mayor Darel Dexter T. Uy  
*Dipolog City*

#### Deputy PRO for NCR

Mayor Francis Zamora  
*San Juan City*

### Focal Mayors

#### Focal Mayor for Environment, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management

Mayor Noel E. Rosal  
*Legazpi City*

#### Focal Mayor for Sustainable Development Goals

Mayor Cielo Krisel Lagman-Luistro  
*Tabaco City*

#### Focal Mayor for Health

Mayor Ericson G. Singson  
*Candon City*

#### Focal Mayor for Muslim Affairs

Mayor Majul Usman Gandamra  
*Marawi City*

#### Focal Mayor for Migration and Development

Mayor Stephen A. Palmares  
*Passi City*

#### Focal Mayor for Education

Mayor Florencio T. Flores  
*Malaybalay City*

#### Focal Mayor for Infrastructure Development

Mayor Bernard Faustino M. Dy  
*Cauayan City*

#### Focal Mayor for Gender and Development

Mayor Rowena Tuazon  
*Masbate City*

#### Focal Mayor for Mobility and Transport

Mayor Lani Mercado-Revilla  
*Bacoor City*

#### Focal Mayor on Anti-Criminality and Illegal Drugs

Mayor Benjamin B. Magalong  
*Baguio City*

#### Focal Mayor for Youth and Sports Development

Mayor Julier C. Resuello  
*San Carlos City, Pangasinan*

#### Focal Mayor for International Cooperation

Mayor Imelda G. Calixto-Rubiano  
*Pasay City*

#### Focal Mayor for Peace and Development in Mindanao

Mayor Frances Cynthia Guiani-Sayadi  
*Cotabato City*

### PROJECT

## LCP to take part in project to strengthen basic education

The Asia Foundation (TAF) invited the LCP to work together in supporting the goal of the Department of Education to pursue innovative approaches that ensure access to quality education for children “in the areas of greatest need.”

Kimberly Mae Garcia of TAF met with LCP Executive Director Atty. Shereen Gail Yu-Pamintuan; Deputy Executive Director Ma. Veronica Hitois; and Junior Program Officer Rosylvia May Tolosa to introduce the Advancing Basic Education in the Philippines (ABC+) project of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

ABC+ is a five-year project that seeks to improve basic life skills for children in the most linguistically diverse settings at the primary level, specifically children from Kinder to Grade 3 in Regions 5 and 6.

For its first year of implementation, supporting partners will gather baseline information on the attitudes and resource allocations of LGUs in early grade learning to help identify specific strategies in increasing support from cities.

### POLICY

## DBM clarifies issues with city mayors in exec session



City mayors pose for a photo opportunity with Secretary Wendel Avisado (standing, tenth from left) after the executive session on 6 September 2019

The LCP met with Department of Budget and Management (DBM) Secretary Wendel Avisado to tackle certain regulatory and fiscal concerns of city governments at an executive session on 6 September 2019.

Matters discussed included the proposal of the League to liberalize the guidelines on the utilization of the Special Education Fund (SEF).

Avisado committed to convene the Department of Education and the Department of the Interior and Local Government to issue a new joint circular outlining items that must be funded by the SEF, as proposed by LGUs.

Avisado also shared that a new circular will be issued to clarify the guidelines on the purchase of public vehicles and utilization of local funds for domestic travels.

With regard to the implementation of the Supreme Court’s ruling on the Mandanas case, Avisado emphasized that his agency will continue to facilitate dialogues to hear out proposed options of cities on the implementation of the High Court’s decision.

#### LCP board meeting

The executive session was also an opportunity to invite the budget secretary to the League’s 69th board meeting held in Davao last 27 September 2019.

At the board meeting, Avisado expressed his support to city mayors as they advocate for their “just share” of the national taxes.

## PARTNERSHIP

## League of Cities continues support for the ASEAN Mayors Forum



Philippine city mayors join the rest of the ASEAN delegates for a group photo after the reading of the ASEAN Mayors' Declaration on 27 August 2019

In keeping with its commitment to support the urban ASEAN community at large, the League, through its members, attended the fifth ASEAN Mayors Forum (AMF) on 26-28 August 2019 at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok, Thailand.

Organized by the Bangkok Metropolitan Association; United Cities and Local Governments – Asia Pacific; United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; and the European Union, this year's AMF was held in Thailand to coincide with the country's chairmanship of the ASEAN for 2019.

With the banner theme of "driving local actions for sustainable and inclusive growth," the forum was organized against the backdrop of a fast-growing Southeast Asia that is urged to sustain its economic development without worsening inequalities and compromising the environment.

A total of six LCP member cities actively took part in the event, with half of the delegates attending as resource speakers for the breakout sessions.

Tabaco City Mayor Krisel Lagman-Luistro highlighted her LGU's efforts to institutionalize the role of women in times of natural disasters and post-disaster recovery at the breakout session on ASEAN's multi-stakeholder approach for resiliency.

Catbalogan City Councilor Stephany Uy-Tan showcased her city's infrastructures that enhance its resilient and adaptive capacities at the session on ASEAN initiatives that address climate change.

Naga City Mayor Nelson Legacion showcased Naga City's pioneering efforts to mainstream the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the city's local planning process at the session on SDGs localization.

Meanwhile, LCP Executive Director Atty. Gail Yu-Pamintuan was invited to moderate and report on the session on multi-stakeholder approaches for SDGs localization.

At the last day of the forum, the Philippine delegation, including Vigan City Mayor Juan Carlo Medina, Lucena City Mayor Roderick Alcala, and Baguio City Councilor Fred Bagbagen joined other ASEAN local chief executives in the reading of the ASEAN Mayors' Declaration.

The said declaration outlines the commitment ASEAN cities to enhance collaboration and scale up efforts in achieving the ASEAN Vision 2020 and the SDGs; promote knowledge on smart urbanization strategies through the ASEAN Smart Cities Network; and to strengthen actions against climate change.

## POLICY

## 2019 national tax share of LGUs remains elusive

The unexpected outcome of the closed-door meeting in Malacañang between economic managers and local government leagues on 28 October 2019 have prompted mayors of the League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP) to study their next course of action for cities to avail their "just share" of national taxes, also known as the national tax allotment or NTA.

In an article by the BusinessMirror dated 30 October 2019, it was proposed during the meeting that the Supreme Court (SC) Mandanas decision expanding the share of LGUs to include national taxes will be implemented in 2022.

The proposed expansion comes three years later than the 2019 timeline pushed by the LCP and the League of Provinces of the Philippines (LPP).

Attended by President Duterte and heads of LCP, LPP, the Department of Finance (DOF), the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), and government financial institutions (GFIs), the meeting was supposed to secure an amicable solution that addresses the differing opinions of both the national and local governments on the reckoning date for the implementation of the High Court's ruling.

### Financing options presented

The Malacañang meeting served as a follow-up to a prior dialogue with the same agencies on 11 October 2019 where government leagues led by LCP President and Bacolod City Mayor Evelio Leonardia and LPP President and Marinduque Governor Presbitero Velasco, Jr. presented to the national government feasible options in sourcing the funds for the NTA starting this 2019.

Such options include an NTA monetization scheme where LGUs collect their shares from GFIs via a letter of confirmation issued by the national government; loaning from private banks through the same confirmation letter; and downloading the budget for devolved functions from national government agencies.

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III, however, has been wary towards the national government's formal recognition of its obligation to LGUs for purposes of monetization or borrowing.

According to Dominguez, giving in will breach the fiscal deficit ceiling and may trigger a downgrade in the



Former Senator and current President of the Manila Hotel Joey Lina (fourth from right) joins city mayors for a group photo at a caucus before the Malacañang meeting on 11 October 2019

country's credit rating.

Further, Dominguez insisted that LGUs are only entitled to their NTAs beginning 2022 as the prospective application of the SC decision means the reckoning year for accounting is 2019.

### LCP board resolution

Clamor for the early implementation of the SC Mandanas decision began when the ruling lapsed into finality on 10 June 2019.

The LCP, along with the LPP, believes that LGUs must receive their incremental share from the national taxes after the said date of finality.

This prompted the LCP's executive board to issue a resolution appealing for the immediate implementation of the High Court's decision.

Said resolution cites SC GR No. 208488 which clarifies that the duty of the judicial review "does not allow the Court to mark the time and await the rectification to be made by Congress of the unconstitutional situation."

The resolution also states that a deliberate delay in the implementation of the High Court's decision runs contrary to the 1987 Constitution's mandate for fiscal decentralization.



1 — LPP President and Marinduque Governor Presbitero Velasco, Jr. (standing) leads the delegation of LCP mayors and LPP governors at the dialogue with President Duterte and his cabinet on 11 October 2019  
 PHOTO COURTESY OF BACOLOD PIO  
 2 — President Duterte delivers his address before city mayors at the 69th National Executive Board Meeting of the LCP on 27 September 2019  
 PHOTO COURTESY OF PRESIDENTIAL PHOTOGRAPHERS DIVISION

Further, the resolution asserts that the punctual implementation of the Mandanas decision will enable LGUs to immediately and effectively “perform their duties according to the priority programs of the Duterte Administration.”

**National government’s support**

Despite differences in the positions of the national and local governments, President Duterte has constantly expressed his willingness to work with LGUs to move forward with the High Court’s ruling.

At the LCP’s 69th board meeting in Davao on 27 September 2019, Duterte stressed that while the timing of the decision is not perfect due to major programs currently being financed by the government, his administration will find a way to widen the share of LGUs from the NTA as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, at an executive session between city mayors and the DBM on 6 September 2019, Budget Secretary Wendel Avisado assured that his agency will continue to facilitate dialogues to hear out proposed options of cities. The national government is also willing to agree on certain

proposals outlined during the Malacañang meeting on 28 October to progress with the discussions.

These include the extension of a new loan facility by the GFIs; downloading proceeds from the road users’ tax; and devolution of functions to LGUs.

As part of its core advocacies for the current administration, the LCP will be proactive in technical working groups with national government agencies to compute and determine the NTA shares of cities, as well as push for better loan rates.

ADMINISTRATION

**City mayors unveil LCP executive agenda**



Members of the LCP executive board take a group photo with representatives from the DAP after the awarding of certificates

City mayors adopted the League of Cities of the Philippines Executive Agenda for 2019-2022 during the 69th National Executive Board (NEB) Meeting on 27 September 2019 at the dusitD2 Davao Hotel.

The agenda outlines LCP’s key priorities which will serve as basis for the core programs, projects, and activities of

the organization in the next three years.

Included is the League’s new strategic vision of becoming “the leading organization of local chief executives championing local governance” by 2022.

The agenda was drafted as an output of the strategic planning workshop of NEB officers held a day before the NEB meeting at Seda Abreeza in Davao City.

Formally called the “Certificate Course on Strategic Organizational Development,” the workshop was facilitated by the Development Academy of the Philippines Graduate School of Public and Development Management.

Newly elected members of the LCP NEB participated in interactive visioning and scanning exercises that fleshed out the aspirations and goals for the organization which are connected to the current issues affecting local governments in the country today.

A final version of the LCP Executive Agenda which will include the three-year strategic plan of the LCP will be presented to all member cities of the LCP by the end of 2019.

PARTNERSHIP

**16 cities pledge commitment to air quality and climate change action**

16 Philippine cities declared their commitment to accelerate local action to address air pollution and climate change in time for the United Nations Secretary-General’s (UNSG) 2019 Climate Summit.

The cities of Balanga, Baybay, Cagayan de Oro, Gingoog, Iloilo, Lapu-Lapu, Legazpi, Masbate, Muntinlupa, Sagay, San Carlos, San Juan, San Pedro, Tagaytay, Valencia, and Zamboanga join the 55 cities around the world that have committed to safe air by 2030.

In their letters submitted to the Climate Action Summit Team of the UNSG, the said cities expressed their support for clean and safe air and outlined measurable, scalable, and replicable actions aligned with the Paris Climate Agreement.

Specifically, these cities pledge to implement air quality and climate change policies; execute sustainable mobility

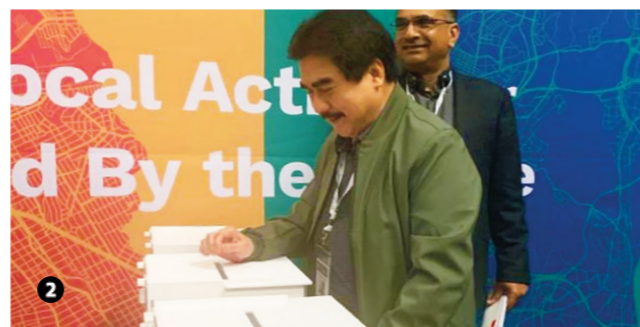
policies and practices; assess results of policies and programs; track progress; and share experiences and best practices.

The initiative was made possible through the ongoing partnership between the League and Clean Air Asia in order to help cities improve their capacities in air quality management.

Clean Air Asia is an international non-governmental organization that leads the regional mission for better air quality and healthier, more livable cities in Asia.

PARTNERSHIP

## Mayor Bing represents LCP at global summit of local governments



1 — City mayors (left to right) Madelaine Alfelor, Bing Leonardia, and Bernard Dy attend the UCLG General Assembly  
 2 — Mayor Bing Leonardia casts his vote for the new UCLG President  
 3 — The new UCLG President Mohamed Boudra raises the hand of Mayor Madelaine Alfelor who was elected as the new UCLG Treasurer

League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP) National President and Bacolod City Mayor Evelio (Bing) Leonardia represented the League of Cities of the Philippines at the 6th Congress and World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders of the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) in Durban, South Africa on 11-15 November 2019.

The five-day event is one of the largest, most influential gathering of mayors, leaders of local government associations, councilors, and local government practitioners from around the world.

Leonardia's attendance was primarily aimed at securing the League's seat in the UCLG World Council, a strategic move on the part of the LCP since a place in the Council will increase international visibility, thereby creating opportunities for global knowledge-sharing exchanges that Philippine cities can take advantage of.

### Iriga Mayor is the new UCLG Treasurer

As a representative of the LCP at the World Council, Leonardia was able to participate in the elections for the new UCLG Presidency for 2019-2022 where Iriga City Mayor Madelaine Alfelor won as the new UCLG Treasurer.

Alfelor, who also sits as the LCP Representative for Region V, will be responsible for the financial strategy and management of the UCLG.

### Learning and networking events

To efficiently organize its sub-events, the UCLG World Summit was designed according to four innovative and interactive tracks, namely: Assembly Track, Town Hall Track, Statutory Track, and Local4Action Track.

Leonardia, along with Alfelor and Dy, was able to attend networking and knowledge-sharing events based on the said tracks.

One learning event in particular was the "Cities Panel" on localizing the Sendai Framework at the Local4Action Hub wherein Alfelor served as a resource speaker.

Meanwhile, Leonardia spoke at the "CEO Forum" on Local Government Associations to share his insights on the future of the LCP vis-à-vis the challenges besetting Philippine cities today, specifically in the areas of DRRM, sustainable development, and climate change response.

Dy, on the other hand, joined Leonardia at the "Global Conversation" on ensuring the Agenda 2030—particularly the UN Sustainable Development Goals—is responsive to cities.

POLICY

## LCP and DILG settle agreements on LGU concerns

A dialogue was organized between the League of Cities of the Philippines and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) on 16 October 2019 following the unanimous agreement among LCP members at the 68th LCP board meeting to lobby their advocacy and propose policy measures before the national government.

Led by LCP National President and Bacolod City Mayor Evelio Leonardia and DILG Undersecretary Marivel Sacendoncillo, the meeting allowed for the much-needed discourse between the government agency and city governments on certain administrative issues of local government units (LGUs).

A survey conducted by the LCP Secretariat among local chief executives to consolidate their positions on LGU matters served as basis for the dialogue.

After the discussions, the LCP and DILG jointly committed to take necessary action in response to the proposals of cities.

### Greater flexibility

With regard to the Special Education Fund (SEF) and the 20% Development Fund (DF) of LGUs, the DILG agreed that the current guidelines on their utilization fail to respond to the increasing needs of LGUs.

According to city mayors, the restrictive measures in both funds hinder their optimal utilization.

It was agreed that a "negative list" will instead be formulated, indicating expenditures not chargeable to both funds.

For the DF, a new list will ensure that its expenses will not overlap with the other funds accessible to LGUs.

The LCP and DILG will also craft a general definition of education-related expenses prior to the formulation of a negative list for the utilization of the SEF.

### A critical oversight

City mayors also expressed their apprehension towards their inclusion in the per diem policy of Executive Order (EO) No. 77, which prescribes regulations when it comes to the travel expenses of government personnel.

According to city mayors, the said provision has repercussions on their safety and security, which the DILG likewise acknowledged.

The said agency proposed to review the stipulations of the EO and submit its recommendations to Malacañang.



City mayors join Usec. Marivel Sacendoncillo (front, third from left) and Atty. Odilon Pasaraba (front, second from right) for a group photo

### Keeping up with the SGLG

The DILG also encouraged cities to comply with the new set of Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) criteria under the SGLG Act, citing SGLG Performance Fund incentive which will be made accessible to winning LGUs.

The DILG then clarified that the evaluation will begin in 2021—using data from 2020—after city mayors requested a gradual implementation of the said law in order to give ample time to adhere to the criteria.

### Operationalizing the Mandanas decision

Funding for the implementation of the Mandanas decision by the Supreme Court was also tackled as both the national and local governments have yet to identify sources to finance the High Court's ruling.

It was suggested during the dialogue that funding can come from the budget on the devolved functions of national government agencies which can supplement the Local Government Support Fund.

### Thank you letter

The DILG has been a long-standing partner of the LCP, with the latter regularly coordinating with the agency's bureaus and attached agencies.

In its letter addressed to city mayors issued July 2019, DILG Secretary Eduardo Año acknowledged the efforts of the LCP in promoting the welfare of cities.

Año also recognized the League's focus on engaging its members to pursue its vision.

"LCP's strong value for stakeholder engagement and partnership has also been a notable milestone in facilitating the vision of the organization," he said. "I commend all your accomplishments as an organization, and your triumphs as individual city mayors. You are the true champions of good local governance."



LEARNING EVENT

# Cities take centerstage at sustainability summit



City mayors (from second from left) Oscar Moreno of Cagayan de Oro City, Abby Binay of Makati City, Jerry Treñas of Iloilo City, Bernard Dy of Cauayan City, and City Administrator Mike Alimurung of Quezon city attend as resource speakers at the “Cities Re-Imagined” session moderated by Liveable Cities Chair Bill Luz (leftmost)

A total of 162 local government unit (LGU) officers, 80 cities, and 32 city mayors attended the Sustainable Cities Summit organized by Liveable Cities, USAID, and the League of Cities of the Philippines.

The event was a platform to discuss specific topics of crucial concern to cities and local chief executives in light of the increasing demands of rapid urbanization taking place in the country today.

Through eight panel sessions, thought leaders and chief executives from the private sector, the academe, and the local government sector tackled issues such as investments for urban infrastructure, big data for cities, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, digital smart cities, mobility and public transportation, resilience and disaster preparedness, and innovations in governance.

**Spotlight on cities**

A number of city mayors have been invited to showcase their homegrown initiatives when it comes to addressing urban sustainability in their respective local governments.



Iriga City Mayor Madelaine Alfelor delivers a presentation at the session on cities’ preparedness and resilience in times of disasters



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1 — Malolos City Mayor Gilbert Gatchalian asks a question in one of the panel sessions at the summit; 2 — Meycauayan City Mayor Linabelle Villarica pays attention to the discussions; 3 — City mayors (left to right) Nico Yulo of Bago City, Ronnie Dadivas of Roxas City, Patricia Gonzalez-Alsua of Ligao City, Rowena Tuason of Masbate City, Edgar Labella of Cebu City, Madelaine Alfelor of Iriga City, and Francis Palanca of Victorias City pose for a photo opportunity during the event

At the panel session called, “Cities Re-Imagined: A Mayor’s Vision,” five city officials were put on the spotlight as they described their vision for their cities through their current initiatives.

The speakers include Cagayan de Oro City Mayor Oscar Moreno, Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas, Cauayan City Mayor Bernard Faustino Dy, Quezon City Administrator Mike Alimurung, and Makati City Mayor Abby Binay.

Meanwhile, at the session called “Business Continuity for Cities: Building Cities’ Preparedness and Resilience to Disasters,” Iriga City Mayor Madelaine Alfelor spoke of her city’s efforts to localize the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction through multi-sectoral dialogues and capacity building activities.

**Launch of signature Liveable initiatives**

The summit also saw the launch of two activities spearheaded by the Liveable Cities and supported by the LCP.

The Liveable Cities Database is a data-gathering and data visualization project that will allow mayors to monitor data-driven developments in their respective cities towards a more informed decision-making process.

On the other hand, the Liveable Cities Challenge is a 90-day design competition where cities will have the chance to pitch their designs before a panel of judges and vie for awards.

The Liveable Cities is currently in talks with the League to drum up support for both activities.

PARTNERSHIP

## 57 cities bag 2019 Seal of Good Local Governance



Calapan City Mayor and LCP Secretary-General Arnan Panaligan (third from right) receives the city's SGLG plaque from DILG Secretary Eduardo Año (middle)  
PHOTO COURTESY OF DILG-BLGS

A total of 57 cities successfully heeded the Department of the Interior and Local Government's (DILG) "all-in" challenge to all local government units (LGU) in this year's edition of the highest recognition bestowed to cities, municipalities, and provinces in the country.

The winning cities are part of the 380 LGUs that were formally conferred the 2019 Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) at The Manila Hotel on 4-5 November 2019.

City mayors together with LGU officers received their awards which were personally handed to them by DILG Secretary Eduardo Año and Undersecretary Marivel Sacendoncillo.

### "All-in" and leveled-up

This year's assessment criteria for the SGLG was dubbed "all-in" by the DILG as it makes all seven performance or governance areas mandatory for evaluation rather than allowing certain criteria to be optional.

The seven areas against which LGUs have been evaluated this year include: Financial Administration; Disaster Preparedness; Social Protection; Peace and Order; Business Friendliness and Competitiveness; Environmental Protection; and Tourism, Culture and the Arts.

### The SGLG Act

Guests at the awarding ceremonies also witnessed the formal launch of The Seal of Good Local Governance Act of 2019 (RA 11292) signed by President Rodrigo Duterte in April of this year.

The law institutionalizes the Council of Good Local Governance, an advisory body composed of nine government agencies headed by the DILG to ensure a collaborative relationship between the national and local governments towards promoting good local governance.

RA 11292 also transforms the Performance Challenge Fund to the SGLG Fund, which incentivizes LGUs awarded with the SGLG.

Moreover, the law mandates the inclusion of Health Compliance and Responsiveness, Sustainable Education, and Youth Development in the areas of performance, increasing the total number of assessment criteria from seven to ten.

## 2019 Seal of Good Local Governance Awardees

<b>NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION</b>	Caloocan City Malabon City Quezon City Mandaluyong City Muntinlupa City San Juan City Navotas City Pasay City	<b>MIMAROPA REGION</b>	Calapan City
<b>REGION I</b>	Alaminos City Batac City San Carlos City San Fernando City, La Union Candon City Vigan City	<b>REGION V</b>	Iriga City Legazpi City Ligao City Masbate City
<b>REGION II</b>	City of Cauayan City of Ilagan Tuguegarao City	<b>REGION VI</b>	Bacolod City San Carlos City, Negros Occidental Victorias City Passi City Silay City
<b>REGION III</b>	Balanga City Tarlac City Mabalacat City San Jose del Monte City Science City of Muñoz Meycauayan City Palayan City San Jose City City of San Fernando, Pampanga	<b>REGION VII</b>	Lapu-Lapu City
<b>REGION IV-A</b>	Antipolo City Biñan City City of Imus City of Dasmariñas City of San Pedro City of Santa Rosa Calamba City City of Bacoor	<b>REGION VIII</b>	Baybay City Maasin City Tacloban City
		<b>REGION IX</b>	Dipolog City
		<b>REGION X</b>	El Salvador City Valencia City
		<b>REGION XI</b>	Digos City Island Garden City of Samal
		<b>REGION XII</b>	Kidapawan City
		<b>CARAGA REGION</b>	Surigao City Tandag City
		<b>BARMM</b>	Lamitan City

## PROJECT

## LCP to showcase good practices of cities in promoting gender and development



1 — The Yakan women from Lamitan City showcase their skill in loomweaving  
2 — LCP staff Broderick Sapnu (second from left) and Soleil Manzano (rightmost) pay a courtesy visit to Lamitan City Mayor Rose Furigay (second from right)

The League of Cities of the Philippines launched a two-year project envisioned to improve the capacity of cities in implementing policies that encourage better outcomes for women and girls.

The “Promoting Gender and Development (GAD) Advocacy in Philippine Cities through Establishment and Strengthening of GAD Focal Point Systems (GFPS)” project was formally introduced to city mayors at the LCP 69th NEB Meeting last 27 September 2019 in Davao City.

The project is funded by the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) and aims to achieve its targets by generating evidence and best practices that support the need to institutionalize local GFPS, a sub-organization in government offices in charge of accelerating gender mainstreaming strategies, activities, and programs.

The LCP will develop an online database where cities and other stakeholders can access relevant data on gender from which they can benchmark their own initiatives.

A survey tool will be disseminated to all member cities to assist the League in data gathering.

### Good GAD practices

Project updates, which include cities that have been visited for validation, will be reported through the League’s online channels.

As of 30 October 2019, the League has featured the efforts of Zamboanga City in further mainstreaming GAD in the city’s development strategies and implementing projects and activities among local government departments that contribute to gender equality in the city.

The LCP also showcased the Yakan women weavers of Lamitan City who have been taught basic computer and online marketing skills as part of the Department of Information and Communications Technology’s (DICT) Tech4ED Project. As a result, the weavers are now selling their wares to a wider clientele via an online shop on Facebook which they have been taught to put up.

By the end of the project, the LCP will also produce a knowledge product documenting the GAD-related practices of cities to encourage other LGUs to become gender-responsive.

## LEARNING EVENT

## Gapan mayor represents LCP in Vancouver eco summit

Gapan City Mayor Emerson Pascual represented the League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP) at the 13th Ecocity World Summit, an event hosted by the City of Vancouver on 9-11 October 2019 that gathered urban stakeholders to discuss innovative approaches in building ecologically sustainable cities.

Pascual saw the event as an opportunity to articulate before attendees the concerns of Philippine cities grappling with the challenges of sustainability, part of which is due to limited resources available.

The mayor’s sentiments eventually led to a conversation where an environmental policymaker specified cases of how people in low-income urban communities including Philippine cities are taking the lead and making headway in promoting sustainability.

Such examples include their habit of reducing wastage,

use of public transport, varied dietary sources, and use of passive cooling at home.

### Breakout sessions on ecological sustainability

The summit was organized by the British Columbia Institute of Technology and Ecocity Builders to also bring focus on the International Ecocity Standards that are built on the pillars of urban design, bio-geophysical conditions, socio-cultural features, and ecological imperatives.

Breakout sessions were held every day at the summit to promote understanding of the said pillars.

LCP Deputy Executive Director Ma. Veronica Hitosis presented at a session on the bio-geophysical conditions pillar where she discussed the imperatives of promoting organic farming towards sustainability using the practices in Sorsogon City as an example.

## PARTNERSHIP

## QC aims to be center of innovation as it hosts world’s biggest hackathon

Speaking before the media at the press launch of Impact Hackathon on 8 October 2019, LCP Executive Vice-President and Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte highlighted her city’s willingness to innovate and experiment in order to find solutions to challenges faced by the country.

Belmonte described her local government unit’s (LGU) position at the forefront of progressive leadership that encourages ideas which are new and controversial, yet necessary in addressing socioeconomic issues.

“I would like our city to be known as an innovative city, a creative city, a progressive city, a forward-thinking city; a city where our young people are not just thinking about themselves but are more concerned about solving problems in our country,” Belmonte said.

Belmonte also shared her advocacy on good governance, underscoring the importance of technology in resolving issues in her LGU.

“I would like to look towards technology [as part of the

solution], because person-to-person interaction could cause a lot of corruption, friction, disagreements, etc.,” Belmonte explained.

### A hackathon with a twist

The Impact Hackathon was organized by Impact Hub and hosted by Quezon City last 30-31 October 2019.

Held at the Smart Araneta Coliseum, the event was an attempt to break the world record for the world’s biggest hackathon.

The hackathon challenged 10,000 participants across the country to develop tech-based, sustainable solutions anchored on the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Impact Hub Manila formally introduced the event to city mayors at the 68th board meeting of the League last July 2019. Among those who expressed interest and offered assistance in conducting the nationwide hackathon were Belmonte, LCP Region V Representative and Iriga City Mayor Madelaine Alfelor, and LCP Public Relations Officer and Ormoc City Mayor Richard Gomez.

LEARNING EVENT

## LCP mayors learn about urban development in China



1 — Mindanao city mayors attend the opening session of the China-ASEAN Mayors' Forum on 18 September 2019  
 2 — President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo shares a light moment with Oroquieta City Mayor Lemuel Acosta (middle)  
 3 — Victorias City Mayor Wantan Palanca (middle) discusses the value of local infrastructure at a session on sustainable urban development and connectivity

Eight member cities represented the LCP at the China-ASEAN Mayors' Forum (CAMF) 2019 in Nanning City, China on 18 September 2019 as part of the League's partnership with the Guangxi Association of Mayors to foster greater understanding about the Chinese government's Belt and Road Initiative.

The event brought together local chief executives from China and the ASEAN region to network and tackle urban issues particularly on sustainable city development, infrastructure connectivity, business investments, and tourism, while focusing on the event's theme of "Boost China-ASEAN Cooperation in Sustainable Development, Work Together for a Brighter Future of 21st Century Maritime Silk Road."

The LCP delegation included the following: Victorias City Mayor Francis Frederick Palanca; Cabadbaran City Mayor Judy Amante; Marawi City Mayor Majul Usman Gandamra; Borongan City Mayor Jose Ivan Agda; Oroquieta City Mayor Lemuel Meyrick Acosta; El Salvador City Mayor Edgar Lignes; Baguio City Vice Mayor Faustino Olowan; Gingoog City Mayor Erick Cañosa; and LCP Program Officers Fidel Pamintuan and April Deevian Mosquera.

As the lone LCP board member at the forum, Mayor Francis Frederick Palanca was invited to deliver a brief presentation at the plenary session on sustainable city development and infrastructure connectivity.

In his presentation, Palanca shared the value of local infrastructure in urbanization and in opening up Victorias City to a number of economic opportunities, citing local infrastructure projects that greatly benefit his city.

After the closing ceremony, the Philippine city mayors were invited to a dinner hosted by Dahua Technology and former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, who attended the CAMF as a guest of honor.

Dahua is a video-based smart city service provider that offers security, traffic management, and surveillance systems for cities. At the dinner, the company presented case studies of cities that have availed of their services, including the City of Santa Rosa.

PARTNERSHIP

## Mayors raise awareness on urban sustainability, 'ice bucket challenge' style



Cagayan de Oro City Mayor Oscar Moreno kickstarts the Mayors' Challenge by organizing a "plogging" activity in his city

A campaign launched by UN-Habitat Philippines (UNH) and supported by the League of Cities of the Philippines sheds light on the role of Philippine city mayors as frontliners in the movement towards urban sustainability.

The Mayors' Challenge encourages nominated city mayors to perform on video a particular urban sustainability practice that can meaningfully contribute to urban development, with the goal of building awareness on practical and achievable efforts at the city level.

Said mayors are then required to nominate other city mayors—a *la* ALS Ice Bucket Challenge—to likewise showcase their own urban sustainability practice.

Both the League and UNH took the task of personally inviting members of the League, with UNH presenting before local chief executives at the LCP board meeting in Davao last 28 September 2019.

Seven mayors have so far accepted the challenge and made the effort of producing highly creative and enlightening challenge videos with the help of their respective local government staff.

Cagayan de Oro (CDO) City Mayor Oscar Moreno kick started the Mayors' Challenge with "plogging," a regular, bi-monthly activity in CDO where city government employees pick up litter while jogging in certain parts of the city.

Nominated by Moreno, Ormoc City Mayor Richard Gomez accepted the Mayors' Challenge by visiting a climate-vulnerable community to conduct local consultations—a practice that enables local authorities to harness local knowledge and include their constituents in decision making.



Mayor Richard Gomez conducts local consultations in a climate-vulnerable community in Ormoc City



Legazpi City Mayor Noel Rosal organizes a coastal cleanup and mangrove tree planting activity in his challenge video



Cauayan City Mayor Bernard Dy promoted the city's food bank where food is stored and distributed to low income families to alleviate hunger



In her challenge video, Zamboanga City Mayor Beng Climaco gives a tour of Santa Cruz Island where protection and conservation efforts are ongoing



Vigan City Mayor Carlo Medina showcases his local government's efforts to offer livelihood to persons with disabilities working as loom weavers



Tagum City Mayor Allan Rellon builds artificial coral reefs to support fish population in his city

Legazpi City Mayor Noel Rosal accepted Gomez's nomination by leading a back-to-back community coastal cleanup and mangrove tree planting activity participated by city government employees and local townsfolk.

In his challenge video, Cauayan City Mayor Bernard Dy featured a food bank where food is stored and distributed to poor families and children in an effort to alleviate hunger and malnutrition in his city while ensuring that no food goes to waste.

Zamboanga City Mayor Beng Climaco-Salazar gave a tour of Santa Cruz Island which is famous for its pink sand beaches and century-old mangrove tree. Its protection and conservation have been a top priority of her city.

Vigan City Mayor Carlo Medina's challenge video demonstrated how an inclusive economy is fundamental to urban sustainability. It features livelihood opportunities provided by the LGU to persons with disabilities who work as loom weavers specializing in the traditional weaving culture of Vigan.

Lastly, in Tagum City's video led by Mayor Allan Rellon, civic groups and NGOs join the local government in building artificial coral reefs to support fish populations under the aptly named "I'M SEACURE" program. They also work together to keep a mangrove nursery as a way of protecting life underwater.

To build momentum and promote their efforts to a wider audience, the challenge videos of the seven mayors have been uploaded to the social media platforms of the LCP ([facebook.com/PHcities](https://www.facebook.com/PHcities)) and UNH ([facebook.com/UNHabitatPhilippines](https://www.facebook.com/UNHabitatPhilippines)).

## LEARNING EVENT

## Three Philippine local chief executives attend global academy for mayors

Out of the 48 first-time Philippine city mayors that have been invited by the LCP, Sinalay City Mayor Gina Lizares, Dagupan City Mayor Brian Lim, and Naga City, Camarines Sur Mayor Nelson Legacion were selected as fellows of the Asia Pacific Mayors Academy for Sustainable Urban Development, class of 2019-2020.

The Mayors Academy was launched by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), in cooperation with the United Nations University; Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS); the Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU); United Cities and Local Governments Asia-Pacific (UCLG-ASPAC); and the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies.

Through three intensive bootcamps, the Mayors Academy offers local chief executives the opportunity to enhance their capacities on issues related to urban sustainability such as financial planning and management, integrated planning, application of smart solutions, inclusive

governance and stakeholder engagement, and urban resilience.

Further, the program will assist mayors in localizing global agendas such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda.

According to Stefanos Fotiou, Director for the Environment and Development Division of UN-ESCAP, the selection of fellows was based on the alignment of their development priorities with the overall objectives of the Mayors Academy, as well as the expected benefit of the program in preparing mayors to implement sustainable urban development in their respective communities.

The inaugural session of the Mayors Academy took place at the 7th Asia-Pacific Urban Forum on 15 October 2019 in Penang, Malaysia.

The other sessions are set to be held in Bangkok, Thailand and at the Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum in Abu Dhabi, UAE in February 2020.

## PROJECT

## City health officers and councilors attend workshop to update local AIDS ordinances

In culmination of the "Fast Track Cities Project," 21 cities in the country—represented by health officers and councilors—took part in a one-day workshop on updating local AIDS ordinances (LAOs) on 23 August 2019 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Quezon City. The event was jointly implemented by the League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP) and the Joint United National Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) to accelerate HIV/AIDS response at the local level

The workshop assisted local government units (LGUs) in amending their existing LAOs to accommodate the new provisions that demand local government action in the reconstituted national policy on HIV/AIDS called the "Philippine HIV and AIDS Policy Act."

Quezon City Mayor and LCP Executive Vice-President Joy Belmonte opened the workshop by sharing examples of how her city became a model for local HIV/AIDS response in terms of policy and facilities.

Meanwhile, Philippine National AIDS Council Supervising Health Program Officer Leydo Gamiao discussed the salient features of RA 11166 to acquaint participants with the new law.

Attending LGUs were able to come up with updated versions of their LOAs after the workshop and urged to campaign for the filing of these ordinances at their respective city councils.

A guidebook on local AIDS responses entitled, "Revolutionizing HIV/AIDS Response of Cities in the Philippines" was also formally launched and distributed to the attendees.

Produced by the LCP and UNAIDS, the guidebook assists cities in improving their HIV/AIDS response by identifying practical, specific, and effective efforts from select case studies of city governments that address HIV/AIDS in their localities.

PROJECT

## LGUs to pursue inter-local cooperation for Manila Bay rehab



1 — Organizers from the LCP and VNG International join resource persons and local government officers for a photo opportunity during the workshop  
2 — Vice Mayor Angel Cruz of the Municipality of Hagonoy, Bulacan talks about the establishment of an inter-local alliance that helped address solid waste and flood problems in the provinces of Bulacan and Pampanga

Responding to the request of the National Economic and Development Authority to introduce the Manila Bay Sustainable Development Master Plan (MBSDMP) before concerned local government units (LGUs), the LCP organized a one-day workshop on improving solid waste management through inter-local cooperation last 22 July 2019 at the Astoria Plaza in Pasig City.

The workshop was conducted with the support of VNG International, the international cooperation agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities which provides capacity building services to strengthen local governments in developing countries such as the Philippines.

Technical officers from the cities in Metro Manila, Region III, and Region IV-A took part in exercises which aimed to improve the solid waste management practices of cities and municipalities that are part of the Manila Bay region and to fast-track the rehabilitation of the bay in accordance with the MBSDMP.

During the workshop, Joan Flores of the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources – Environmental Management Bureau presented cities that have completed their 10-year solid waste management plans.

Meanwhile, Hagonoy Vice Mayor Angel Cruz discussed the establishment of the Alyansa ng mga Baybaying Bayan ng mga Lalawigan ng Bulacan at Pampanga and its response to solid waste management and other flood-related problems.

At the end of the activity, the participants were able to identify and propose specific solutions to regional concerns that require an inter-local framework.

