

News Release
Department of Labor and Employment
Bureau of Working Conditions
30 September 2021



“Reinforcing industrial partnerships and workforce development towards an accelerated economic recovery”

On 29 September 2021, the Iloilo Business Club, in partnership with The Daily Guardian, launched “Iloilo Business Online.” The program seeks to inform and orient Ilonggo businessmen about the latest news and trends in the country, particularly about the pressing issues in the industry amid the pandemic.

Labor Secretary Bello thanked the group for providing the DOLE the opportunity to discuss how the pandemic has affected labor and employment and what the national government has been doing in response thereto. He also commended the Iloilo Business Club for “being steadfast partners of the national government in preserving and creating a business environment which revitalizes businesses, investments, livelihood, and business demand which in turn creates the much-needed employment as we [the country] grapple with the pandemic.”

“The DOLE has always been in the forefront of holding vision work and productive employment in our country despite the seemingly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world of work. The principles of full employment, rights of work, social protection, and social dialogue remain crucial in ensuring a stable environment where employment prospers, and industrial peace thrive,” Labor Secretary Silvestre H. Bello III said in his recorded message.

“Moving forward from this pandemic, these remain as our guiding principle in DOLE – by making programs and policies relating to the enforcement of labor standards, occupational safety and health standards, security of tenure, wages, tripartism, and employment generation, among others, that balance the interest of both the employers and the workers,” he added.

Assistant Secretary Dominique Rubia-Tutay, concurrent Director of the Bureau of Local Employment shared that employment in the country was negatively affected by the pandemic because of interruptions in economic activities. Her presentation also showed key employment

indicators last year when employment rate was recorded at 89.7% and unemployment rate at 10.3% - the lowest and highest, respectively, since 2005. While seeing clear signs of the economy early this year, the re-imposition of Enhanced Community Quarantine in Metro Manila last March 2021 set the country a step back by an upswing on the unemployment rate and employment rate dipping down again.

She added that employment indicators last July 2021 provide mixed signals. While maintaining the positive trend observed on employment rate at 93.1% and unemployment rate at 6.9%; underemployment rate, however, significantly increased to 20.9%.

Moving forward, ASec Tutay said that the DOLE remains focused on safely reopening the economy while sustaining the continuous improvement of the labor market. "We continue to put premium on occupational safety and health in the workplace which is paramount of the DOLE's mandate," she added.

In closing, she reiterated the government's call on the continuous strict implementation and compliance to minimum public health standards. She likewise urged all workers and priority groups to be inoculated and help minimize social economic disruptions caused by COVID-19. "We continue to be one with the country's economic managers in safely reopening the economy, backing much needed support for businesses through available incentives to ensure sustained operation and continue recovery of the labor market. Rest assured that the DOLE will continue to work with the various government agencies and support initiatives such as the Task Group on Economic Recovery or TGER and the National Employment Recovery Strategy Task Force towards safely reopening the economy and sustain improvement," Asec. Tutay said.

Also present are panel discussants representing the DOLE are Ms. Grace Baldoza of the Bureau of Local and Employment, and Mr. Nicanor Bon and Dr. Felix Labanda Jr. of the Bureau of Working Conditions.

You may watch the recorded live streaming of the Iloilo Business Online at <https://tinyurl.com/IBowDOLE>

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