

## DOLE Mediator Arbiters Meet for the 2019 Annual National Consultation



The Bureau of Labor Relations (BLR) conducted the 2019 Annual Mediator-Arbiters' National Consultation on 23-27 September 2019 at the Hotel Essencia in Dumaguete City. Twenty-one (21) DOLE Mediator-Arbiters from the Bureau of Labor Relations (BLR) and DOLE Regional Offices attended the activity.

This year's national consultation seeks to achieve a uniform and proper application of labor laws and regulations vis-à-vis the policy directives of this administration. It focused on the discussions of the pressing issues and concerns on the application of Department Order No. 40-03, as amended, and Department Order 174-17 on labor-only contracting in relation to certification election. It highlights the importance of social dialogue between and among representatives of government, employers and workers on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy.

Assistant Regional Director Roy Buenafe welcomed the participants and expressed his gratitude for choosing DOLE Region VII as the venue of this year's consultation.

OIC-Director Maria Consuelo S. Bacay of the BLR explained that the national consultation is conducted for Mediator-Arbiters to gain knowledge and have a common understanding on the implementation of Department Order No. 40-03. "As Mediator-Arbiters, we must show competence, dependability, and knowledge as we are not ordinary staff of the Department," she underscored.

New issuances jointly issued by DOLE and other government agencies were discussed during the second day of consultation. Atty. Gerard Peter Mariano of the Bureau of Workers with Special Concerns (BWSC) discussed the 105-day Expanded Maternity Law while Ms. Geraldine Labayani of the Bureau of Local Employment (BLE) discussed the DOLE-DOJ-BI Joint Guidelines on the Issuance of Employment Permits to Foreign Nationals. Ms. Marian Jane Alumbro of the Bureau of Working Conditions (BWC) discussed Department Order 198-18 or the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 11058 or the Occupation Safety and Health Law.

The remaining days of the consultation were allotted for the discussion on the provisions of Department Order No. 40-03. OIC Director Maria Consuelo S. Bacay and Atty. Ramon Saura III presented the issues and concerns on certification election and inter-intra union disputes identified and raised during the 1st and 2nd Mediator-Arbiters' En Banc meetings. Atty. Juevanrey Narisma also gave a brief presentation of the certification election case of Coca Cola.

OIC-Assistant Secretary Philip A. Paredes graced the event as keynote speaker. "Bilang Mediator-Arbiters, kayo ang nagbabalanse ng interest ng labor at management," he said. He further emphasized the importance of labor relations in maintaining industrial peace as well as the vital role of Mediator-Arbiters as legal officers in the DOLE Regional Offices.

The national consultation serves as an avenue for knowledge calibration and dialogue on relevant issues concerning the functions of mediator-arbiters. It provides a venue to explore and share good practices and to keep attuned to new developments on labor and employment.

**END/Honey Glaze M. Alipio**