

"PANDEMIC OR NOT, SOCIAL DIALOGUE IS HERE TO STAY."

This is the message conveyed in the webinar on *Mainstreaming Social Dialogue in Participatory Governance under the New Normal* organized by the National Public Workers' Congress (PUBLIK), with the support of the Danish Trade Union Development Agency (DTDA) and in coordination with the Bureau of Labor Relations. The webinar, held on 16 and 17 December 2020, garnered 893 and 352 Facebook views on the first and second day – on top of the 100 members of public sector unions who participated in the webinar via Zoom.

It featured discussions on the Philippine Open Government Partnership (PH-OGP) and the 5th PH-OGP National Action Plan, the state of labor relations and social dialogue in the public sector, some cross-cutting issues or concerns of public sector workers, as well as the government initiatives to pass the bill on Freedom of Information. The webinar is a commitment of PUBLIK under the 5th PH-OGP National Action Plan, with the Department of Labor and Employment as the co-implementing agency. As a follow-through of the National Stakeholders' Conference in 2019, this year's webinar aims to build multi-stakeholder support to institutionalize social dialogue in the public sector.

The participants agree that the COVID-19 pandemic brought challenges and opportunities, further emphasizing the role of social dialogue in ensuring responsive programs, democratic ownership over policies, and less possibility of conflicts. The challenge is maintaining the successes and using this opportunity to mainstream social dialogue in the public sector. As Ms. Annie Enriquez-Geron, the PSLINK president, puts it, "Do we want to return to the past practice, or do we want social dialogue under the new normal?"

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