

## **DOLE-BLR joined JILAF symposium**

The Japan International Labour Foundation (JILAF), an organization promoting international exchange and cooperation in the field of labour, invited Director Maria Consuelo Bacay as a panelist in the Symposium entitled, “Prevention of Industrial Disputes in Multinational Companies Operating in Asia” on 20 October 2021 via Zoom.

Director Bacay discussed the current situation about industrial disputes in the Philippines. She explained that, in the Philippines, labor relations is the interaction between the employer and employees or their representatives and the mechanism by which the employment standards are negotiated, adjusted and enforced. As such, labor relations laws are enacted to stabilize the relations of employees and their employers, adjust differences between them through collective bargaining, and settle labor disputes through conciliation, mediation, and arbitration.

Labor disputes in the Philippines may be categorized into labor standards disputes, labor relations disputes, and welfare and social legislation disputes.

“While there are different mechanisms that help resolve conflicts between labor and management, prevention is still better than cure”. In the Department, particularly at the Bureau of Labor Relations, we have existing programs that could help in the maintenance of good harmonious relationship between employer and employees, with the end view of fostering industrial peace in the country”, said Director Bacay.

She elaborated that the Bureau has Labor and Employment Education which aims to educate workers, employers, and other stakeholders on employment relations, including the workers’ and employers’ rights and responsibilities and responsible unionism, productivity, work ethics and values, and other relevant information pertaining to labor and employment, to enable them to become responsible partners in building harmonious labor management relations and the attainment of decent and productive workplaces.

Tripartism and Social Dialogue is another program of the Bureau which refers to the consultative process whereby three parties namely, workers, employers and government, collaborate in policy formulation or program implementation. The thrust of tripartism and social dialogue is to give workers and employers the opportunity to

be heard and more importantly to give authority to their voices by ensuring that they are represented and deeply entrenched in policy and decision-making on labor and employment.

In closing, Director Bacay emphasized the importance of compliance by multinational companies with the labor law wherever they are situated. Also, labor-management relationship must be nurtured for both the employer and employee to have mutual trust and respect. She explained, "With trust and respect in place, we can maintain a healthy, harmonious and robust working environment. Particularly in the Philippines, we encourage Multinational Companies to take time to read about Philippine labor law either by requesting for orientations or seminars from DOLE or through accessing the DOLE e-learning portal."

Lastly, she emphasized the importance of the MNE Declaration. MNE Declaration is an ILO document that provides clear guidance on how enterprises can contribute through their operations worldwide to the realization of decent work.

**END/Kim Margarete B. Martinez**