



VOLUME 2 | ISSUE 2 | JUNE 2022

UMAL HOKAN

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION-PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE

UPDATES ON THE FOI BILL

by Angelica May C. Antolin

Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO) Undersecretary and Freedom of Information (FOI) Program Director Kristian R. Ablan and the FOI Philippines' policy team met with Quezon City District 5 Representative Patrick Michael D. Vargas to discuss recent developments on the FOI Bill and to seek his support and endorsement of the same to the 19th Congress on 15 June 2022, via Zoom.

During the meeting, Undersecretary Ablan outlined the objectives and salient points of the bill to pave the way for the establishment of an FOI Commission in the Philippines.

Consequently, Representative Vargas pledged to review the key provisions of the bill and promptly shared his thoughts to the team.

The PCOO vowed to continue its efforts in lobbying for the passage of the agency's other priority legislative measures.

THE HOWs AND WHYs of FOI

by Maria Edralyn B. Amor

Can an agency designate an alternate receiving officer and/or decision maker?

Agencies may create a committee or they may designate an alternate Receiving Officer/s and/or alternate Decision Maker/s that may address the concern of agencies in case the permanent FOI Officers have prior engagements..

What if the FRO or FDM cannot access his/her dashboard or the FRO or FDM is not connected with the agency anymore?

The FOI Officer may reset his/her password at www.foi.gov.ph/password/reset or send an email requesting the deactivation of the old FRO or FDM and registering the new FOI Officer. In doing so, the agency must provide the name, office, and email address of the new officer/s.

Can requests via telephone calls/email be entertained?

An agency may entertain requests made through telephone calls or email. However, E.O. No. 02 provides that a requesting party must provide his/her valid proof of identification. To comply with the above, agencies may advise requesting parties to go through the FOI request process, via electronic or standard.



VOLUME 2 | ISSUE 2 | JUNE 2022

UMALOHOKAN

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION-PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE

EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor-in-Chief

Atty. Kristian R. Ablan, MNSA, CESO I

Managing Editors

Atty. Tristan E. De Guzman
Ms. Eden Darlene A. Mendoza
Ms. Krizia Casey P. Avejar
Ms. Dianne M. Gammad

Associate Editor

John Wilmer G. Jimenez

Content Editor

Atty. Joseph Adrian B. Llamas

Writers

Patricia Marri O. Maranan
Angelica May C. Antolin
Marinella R. Ricafranca
Maria Edralyn B. Amor
Armand Frederick V. Gatpayat

Layout Artist

Ryan G. Torda

Photographer

Robin E. Ricohermoso

PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS OFFICE
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION PHILIPPINES

BFB Building, 1575 Jose Laurel St., San Miguel, Manila

www.foi.gov.ph [f](#) foiph [t](#) foi_ph [i](#) foiph

Ka-FOI, Ka-SOSYO: FOI-PMO Partners' Corner

PHILSSA and FOI-PMO continues partnership to implement the FOI Bridging Series

by Marinella R. Ricafranca

Since 2021, the Freedom of Information Project Management Office (FOI-PMO) has had a long and fruitful collaboration with the Partnership of Philippine Support Service Agencies, Inc. (PHILSSA) and the Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PhilDHRRRA) as evidenced by the joint rollout of the FOI Training of Trainers. This has been followed by the FOI Bridging Program in July which delved into PhilSSA's priority agenda such as disaster risk reduction management, climate change adaptation, and housing.

This year, FOI-PMO aims to continue its partnership with PHILSSA, now in joint cooperation with John J. Carroll Institute on Church and Social Issues (JJCICSI), the University of the Philippines Women Lawyer's Circle, Inc. (UP WILOCI), Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), Commission on Human Rights (CHR), Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), and the

Bureau of Corrections (BuCor), by holding another installment of the FOI Bridging Series entitled "Women in conflict with the Law: Rising to the Challenges, Raising Inclusive Awareness through FOI" in March, in honor of the National Women's Month. From the presentation of information and government records, this webinar aims to foster an open and engaging dialogue between women in conflict with the law, their corresponding groups and organizations, and the relevant government agencies. These data are then expected to be used to address the issues and challenges that these sectors face.

FOI-PMO's civil society empowerment agenda has been in place since the program's inception in 2016. As we work to further institutionalize FOI not only in the Executive branch but throughout the government, the only way forward is to make our programs more accessible and inclusive of the well-being of many sectors and communities.

A LEGACY OF TRANSPARENCY: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION IN THE PHILIPPINES

by Atty. Joseph Adrian B. Llames

With bated breath, the Filipino people, anxiously or excitedly, waited for the results of the 2022 Presidential Elections. For months, social media was rife with mud-slinging and trash talking from the supporters of different candidates. Discourse on politics often descended into a metaphorical boxing match, or a slugfest – with gloves off. No quarter was given, and none was asked.

Great was the fervor of many in their support that the bonds of friendship and family were often tossed aside or maintained based upon the politics of each person concerned. “If you are not with me, then you’re my enemy,” could have been a fitting battle cry for many as people were categorized, many times through no fault of their own, into one of two camps. One has to wonder how many no longer speak today in favor of politicians who would never speak to them at all, and if the cost was worth it. But maybe, just maybe, it was actually worth it... Maybe, when seen through a particular lens, that of patriotic duty and love of country and the willingness to protect its future and freedom, then it was worth it as when it comes to the protection of our democratic institutions, no price is too great.

But whichever side we are on during the elections, one has to accept the reality that the votes have been cast. The results are evident; there is no turning back. We cannot prevent the sun from setting, we might as well look forward to the dawn. The holding of elections is also one of our democratic institutions, and the upholding of the rule of law another. Therefore, we must adhere to the results of the former. “The day we stop believing democracy would work is the day we lose it.”

Although the legacies of certain candidates cast a long shadow, we must unite and support our future leaders, instead of faulting those who have cast their votes with the genuine belief that the platform of a candidate is the best course for the nation.

That is not to say that we should not lament those who cast their votes unmindful of its consequences. On the contrary, we must continue to advocate that education and information be more accessible to all, and continuing the good fight in pursuing Freedom of Information would further such advocacy.

Transcending Legacy

In matters of succession, legacy is something of value that is bequeathed to someone after the passing of another. The legacies of our ancestors, however, often cast a long shadow. Often, our inheritance is a “gift that is not a gift,” and descendants are often, rightly or wrongly, shackled by the past. Former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo’s reputation was not as incorruptible as that of her father,

and the former President Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino may not have been as iconic as his mother. Time will tell what President-elect Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos, Jr.’s legacy would be, if properly given the chance to lead.

Often, it is said that Filipinos are quick to forget. I do think otherwise. The results of the election may have been directly impacted by the legacies that overshadow the candidates, especially the consistent survey leaders. Such legacies may be in the form of the achievements or failures of their perceived predecessors, or the hopes, dreams, and unfulfilled promises of the movements or political parties they represent.

Call for unity

Talks about one’s legacy is the proper subject of an outgoing administration, not that of an incoming one. Whatever legacy the next president would leave, one thing is for sure, his call for unity is a step toward the right direction. A people divided against itself cannot prosper and democracies do not usually fall unless they have first eroded from within.

Of the many programs of the outgoing administration, Executive Order No. 2, series of 2016, or the FOI Program, is one of those worthy of continuance. Based upon the dictates of the Constitution itself, and not just on the previous administration’s policies, it is bereft of significant partisan ideology nor political leanings.

It is a tool that is useful to the body politic as a whole, whether one is a part of the government or of the opposition. It is an instrument for the issuance of more responsive government policies, acts as a check to power, and the promotion of openness and transparency. The FOI Program is therefore one all can unite around as it seeks the betterment of Philippine society as a whole.

An avenue for education

Symbolically, the president-elect shall take his oath at the National Museum of the Philippines. Education is the great social equalizer and Freedom of Information is a tool that can be used to bring about such equity of the conditions of men, in the furtherance of balancing the wheels of the social machinery.

The proper exercise of the right of access to information is an opportunity to increase one’s learning. It has been said that it is in the interest of the State that the channels of free political discussions be kept open in order to be responsive to the populace’s will. However, only when the people have access to information can the same formulate their will intelligently. The FOI Program can assure such access.



Freedom of Information: Enabler of a vibrant democracy



Michael Eric L. Castillo

DAP-FOI CCIO Mentor and Facilitator

Inspirational Message of Prof. Michael Eric L. Castillo delivered during the conduct of the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) and FOI Certificate Course of Information Officers (CCIO) Graduation Ceremony on May 19, 2022, at the City Garden Suites, Malate, Manila.

“

In the market of economic goods and services, the Law of Supply and Demand rests on one fundamental assumption: there exists perfect competition in the market. Perfect competition in the market, however, presupposes that there exists symmetry in information. This means that buyers are aware, in the same degree, of the quality and prices of goods and services available in the market. When information symmetry is obtained in the market, buyers will be able to purchase the best quality of goods and services at the lowest price. Along the same vein, producers of goods will be able to produce the best quality of goods or provide the highest quality of services because they are aware of the best quality of inputs to production being sold in the market at the lowest cost. Information will enable perfect competition in the market which will benefit consumers by getting the best product at the lowest cost or price possible.

In the market of political ideas, information serves similar, if not exactly the same, purpose.

In the recently concluded national and local elections, the Filipino people is said to have forged a new social contract with a new set of leaders or government. This social contract has one end goal—protect and promote the welfare of the people.

Freedom of information is the necessary first tool by which the people, the governed, can hold the leaders and the government accountable when it fails to deliver the purpose of the social contract. Without freedom of information, the people are helpless in demanding the best possible service from our leaders and the government.

The principle “sovereignty resides in the people and all government authority emanates from them” is the bedrock of the Social Contract Theory of John Locke, which is the philosophical foundation of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, and the foundation of most democratic societies. Yet, after every election, the people seem incapable of invoking the sovereignty that resides in them and the authority that emanates from them. The people simply get what the government provides and enjoy what the leaders allow them to enjoy.

Every election seems to be a “trial and error” exercise. The public is always in a “wait and see” mode hoping and praying that those elected to power will make good of their campaign promises; and, that those who were appointed by the elected and vested with public authority will perform, with the best of their abilities, the oath of office.

We all know that elections do not guarantee that the most well-meaning and most competent candidates are elected into office. This is fine. What is frustrating to many is that people who have proven themselves to be a failure are often re-elected into office.

Ever wonder why this phenomenon is recurring? It is because people could not freely and fully exercise their freedom of information.

There exists “imperfection in the market of political choices.” There is information asymmetry in the market of political ideas and political personalities. Hence, consumers, a.k.a. voters are not similarly aware of the best possible political options or political candidates who could best deliver the end goal of the social contract.

Freedom of information is essential in building an informed and political savvy community which is a requisite of a mature polity that is necessary for a vibrant democracy to thrive and prosper.

Some say “people deserve the government that they elect”, but I say, “people deserve freedom of information so they could better select whom to elect.”

Thank you!

Congratulations, FOI Learners!

”



The Founding of #InfoDataQuest, a Next Level FOI and Data Storytelling Competition

by Patricia Marri O. Maranan

To promote and support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Indicator 16.10 and the growing need in the country to embrace the culture of data science and analytics, the Freedom of Information - Project Management Office (FOI-PMO) initiated the **#InfoDataQuest: Advancing SDG Indicator 16.10 through Freedom of Information (FOI) and Data Analytics in the Philippines**, in collaboration with the Analytics Association of the Philippines (AAP), CirroLytix, 2030 Youth Force in the Philippines, Inc. (2030 YFPh), and the Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency (GIFT). This was achieved through a series of events and activities, including the #InfoDataQuest launch and workshops that took place last March, a month-long Data Storytelling Contest, and a participant Awarding and Recognition Ceremony held last May.

The **#InfoDataQuest** (#IDQ) launch and workshop events aim to lay the foundation on understanding the #IDQ initiative to all attending FOI stakeholders, partners, and the general public and to publicize its lineup of activities, most especially the Data Storytelling Competition. It further seeks to encourage attendees to participate in the lineup of activities and to provide the participants with useful and practical knowledge on data storytelling and basic graphic design.

As part of the #IDQ celebration, a Data Storytelling Competition resonating the theme, "Advancing Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Indicator 16.10 through Freedom of Information (FOI) and Data Analytics in the Philippines" was held from 23 March to 29 April 2022.

Participants of the competition, both individual and group categories, were required to source out their data from government transparency websites and databases, scholarly, credible, and peer-reviewed articles, journals, and other offline and online resources. They also have the option to incorporate GIFT's budget track method.

For the individual category, John Lloyd B. Gildo was acclaimed as the winner with his submission *Electronic FOI Requests at a Glance*. Czarina Nicole Lara M. Lanes' *Data on the Onboarding Activity of State Universities and Colleges in the FOI Portal* and Conycel B. Ramirez's *Greater Transparency and How Vital it is for Every Filipino* were awarded first and second place, respectively.

The Digital Informers composed of Princess Friel Lontoc, Kyle Nicole Marcelino, John Lester Tea, and Maria Allaizah Domiquil's *FOI: FOR OUR INFORMATION* submission won the group category. The first and second-place finishers were earned by the entries of DOLE PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS FOR CYS 2019-2021 by the Malaya group and GINHAWA FOR ALL (GFAL) LOAN PROGRAM by the Protego Informacion group.

The set of judges are experts coming from the fields of transparency, graphic design, and data and information analytics.

The #InfoDataQuest awarding and recognition ceremony was held on 20 May 2022, live on Facebook.

Each of the winners received a Certificate of Recognition, an FOI Merchandise set, and gift certificates.

The event was attended by various transparency communities and advocates such as FOI Receiving Officers (FROs), FOI youth ambassadors, FOI advocates, SDG advocates, design and creatives specialists, data scientists, and analytics specialists.



MARIANNE FABIAN

Communications and
Outreach Coordinator
Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency



KATE REFENDOR

FOI Creatives Lead,
Freedom of Information-
Project Management Office



RANZE AARON CALDERON

National Director for Membership
and Governance
2030 Youth Force in the Philippines, Inc.



DAVID JENSEN ROSARIO

Co-Chair for Membership and Marketing
Analytics Association of the Philippines



GABRIEL KRISTOPHER SOONG

Consultant for Emerging Technologies
CirroLytix Research Services, Inc.





Under the lens: Indonesia's Central Information Commission

by Angelica May C. Antolin

The goal of the Freedom of Information – Project Management Office (FOI-PMO) in fostering openness in the administrative procedures of the government is strongly anchored in its mission to empower every Filipino through the effective exercise of his/her right to access government information. For the past six years, the FOI Program has been running towards innovative improvements while lobbying for the passage of an FOI Law in the country.

Despite the challenges of the changing times, the organization moved forward to the new normal and has taken advantage of every learning opportunity. To highlight, the FOI-PMO delegation conducted a series of study visits to Information Offices in other jurisdictions. One of which is the *Komisi Informasi Pusat (KIP) Republik Indonesia* or the Central Information Commission (CIC) of the Republic of Indonesia in Central Jakarta.

Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO) Undersecretary and FOI Program Director Kristian R. Ablan, in his opening engagement, stressed the necessity of information exchange among FOI advocates, especially in the Southeast Asian region, as the same fosters growth and innovation in the implementation of the right of access to information.

The three-day technical cooperation visit to the Indonesian Information Commission from May 11 to 13, 2022 provided new insights on the legal foundation for the creation of an FOI Commission, its organizational structure and the composition and qualifications of its members, among others.

On the Establishment of an FOI Commission

Operated under the Ministry of Communication and Information, the CIC is an independent institution mandated by law to implement “Public Information Openness.” It establishes a technical guidance of public information service standards and resolves public information disputes through mediation and/or non-litigation adjudication.

The passage of Indonesia's FOI Law in 2008 was a response to the fall of then President Suharto, after being in power for

more than 30 years. In the 19th century, a British statesman named Lord Acton said that as a person's power increases, his/her moral sensibility weakens. Regardless of it being true or not, the succeeding administration was determined to manage power through advocating for democracy. The active promotion of FOI by civil service organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) played an important role in its passage into law.

The CIC has 34 provincial counterparts, one of which is *Komisi Informasi Provinsi Daerah Khusus Ibukota (DKI) Jakarta* which the delegation was also able to visit.

On the organizational structure of the Information Commission

Compared to the organizational structure of FOI-PMO which is composed of one Program Director and 43 personnel, the Central Information Commission has seven Commissioners coming from the government and civil society, who elect among them a Chairman and a Deputy Chair. Each provincial commission, on the other hand, has five Commissioners. Both central and provincial commissions are assisted by a Secretariat, which is divided into three functions: administration and finance, planning, and dispute resolution.

One thing that sets CIC Indonesia from FOI Philippines apart is its exercise of quasi-judicial functions. If a request for information is rejected, the requestor may file a dispute settlement to the CIC, the Provincial Information Commission, or the Municipal Information Commission in accordance with their respective jurisdictions.

The concerned office shall begin the process of Public Information Dispute Settlement through mediation and/or non-litigation adjudication within 14 working days upon receipt of request for settlement. Each case is handled by members of the commission who sit and hear such in divisions of three. Regardless of the rank of the public officer involved in an information dispute, the same will be requested to appear when called for by a commission, following the principle of equality before the law.

Maximum access, limited exemption

On information disclosure, Indonesia adheres to the rule of “Maximum Access, Limited Exemption” or M.A.L.E. Public bodies, or in our jurisdiction government agencies, are mandated to disclose all requested information under its authority.

Indonesia is yet to pass its data protection law. Due to a lack of focus on data privacy, public bodies are more inclined to disclosing rather than denying a request for information. They may, however, deny a request if the same is covered by their list of exempted information, such as information that would reveal the natural resource assets of Indonesia and those detrimental to their national economic resilience.

FOI Index

The success of Indonesia’s Public Information Openness is determined in three areas or success indicators – Politics, Law, and Economic impact. In 2021, the CIC launched its Public Information Disclosure Index (PIDI) to measure the effectiveness of the implementation of public information disclosure in different parts of Indonesia.

PIDI is a tool used by CIC that is administered in each province through manual questionnaires and interviews to assess information disclosure implementation. Results obtained are often evaluated via focus group discussion.

During its pilot year, Indonesia is in the moderate level (with an overall rating of 71.37%) when it comes to its implementation of FOI. Inspired by this, FOI Philippines expressed its interest in adopting a similar monitoring tool that measures the impact of FOI implementation in the country.

One Data Indonesia

The public bodies do not have an eFOI Portal where requests for information are submitted. Instead, they have a website called “One Data Indonesia” which contains public information and data in Indonesia. This website is intended to hold information that is accurate, up-to-date, accessible, and shared among agencies.

The CIC, however, uses another website called Lapor (Report), which serves as a public service complaints portal where citizens can send disputes, as well as request for public information about the commission.

Meanwhile in the Philippines, the public utilizes the electronic FOI Portal to obtain information, but are unable to file complaints using the same since the FOI-PMO lacks the capacity to resolve disputes as it only acts as a project monitoring office as of this time. It is in this spirit that it has been advocating for its conversion to an FOI Commission, to provide a streamlined and inexpensive dispute settlement service to stakeholders.

The technical study and cooperation visit to Indonesia is part of FOI-PH’s ongoing efforts to enhance its FOI Program by studying and examining the policies, processes, and best practices of FOI offices in other jurisdictions. While it continues to lobby for the passage of the FOI bill, the FOI-PMO hopes to replicate the legal framework of the CIC, which led them to become a Commission.





FOI Commemorates Women's Month through Bridging Government Information

by Strategic Partnerships Unit

The Freedom of Information-Project Management Office (FOI-PMO), through its Strategic Partnerships Unit (SPU), honored Women's Month on March 30, 2022, by holding an in-person FOI Bridging Program for Women in Conflict with the Law (WICL) in Quezon City.

The FOI Bridging Program is part of the FOI-PMO's outreach to grassroots organizations and other related sectors in order to equip them with knowledge and skills about their right to access government information.

With theme, **"Rising Up to the Challenges, Raising Inclusive Awareness through FOI,"** the program laid out the overarching issues and challenges that hinder the aforementioned sector's equal access to justice; expanded the knowledge of the women sector; most especially groups and organizations directly engaging with the WICL community in acquiring the right government information, records, and other data that are relevant to the said sector through the FOI Program and the Electronic FOI (eFOI) portal; and enabled a safe space for public dialogue between women groups and organizations and other concerned groups through the presentation of available information and records that select government agencies hold.

Topics from the program range from "Understanding the Women

in Conflict with the Law Context in the Philippines," "Legal Aid and Opportunities for WICL," and "Creating an Enabling Environment for Women's Access to Justice."

Resource speakers from the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), Commission on Human Rights (CHR), Public Attorney's Office (PAO), Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), Bureau of Corrections (BuCor), UP Women Lawyer's Circle, Inc. (UP-WILOCI), and the Partnership of Philippine Support Service Agencies (PHILSSA) participated in the panel session and provided key insights and updates on the current state of affairs in the program's target sector.

Thirty-nine (39) representatives from women groups and organizations, civil society organizations (CSOs), people's organizations, student organizations, prison and corrections sector, urban poor groups, academe, local water districts, national government agencies, and civilians attended the said program.

The program also paved the way for SPU to engage and secure seven (7) new CSO partners such as the Urban Poor Associates (UPA) Women's Initiative for Social Development and Freedom (WISDOM), PILIPINA - Ang Kilusan ng Kababaihang Pilipino, AKKMA National Coalition Pilipinas, Philippine Jesuit Prison Services Foundation, Inc. (PJPS), Philippine Center for Islam and Democracy (PCID), and Deprive, Inc.

Following the success of this installment's FOI Bridging Program, the FOI-PMO intends to conduct follow-up activities in the coming months, inviting new sets of local women's groups and organizations to engage not only within the WICL community, but also with other grassroots and marginalized communities.



Face-to-Face FOI Receiving Officers Hangouts Kicks Off

by Dianne M. Gammad



The Freedom of Information (FOI) Philippines, through its Compliance Monitoring Division (CMD), after two years of meeting the Receiving Officers online, successfully conducted its first face-to-face 2022 FOI Receiving Officers' (FROs) Hangouts on June 7, 9, 14, and 16, 2022 at the City Garden Suites, Malate, Manila.

The annual FROs Hangouts aims to echo the importance of an overall review of the major accomplishments, critical challenges, and innovative solutions to improve the implementation of the FOI Program.

The event also aims to provide updates on the implementation status of the FOI Program and to present the criteria for the 2022 FOI Awards.

Senior Compliance Officer Ma. Danica Orcullo presented a quick refresher and updates on the implementation of the FOI Program, in which the two (2) FOI Program modalities, the types of information disclosure, the request timeframe, and the latest FOI policies were discussed.

Meanwhile, Compliance Monitoring Division Chief Eden Darlene A. Mendoza took advantage of the event and introduced the two (2) new activities of FOI Philippines — the FOI Bootcamp and the FOI Mentoring Program — to be conducted later this year to continue with the efforts

to capacitate FOI officers in advancing the right to access public information in the country.

"I hope we could still see more of you until the next term because I believe we have a wonderful time working together. We have always been grateful and appreciative of your diligence and dedication to facilitate every Filipino's right to access public information. All I ask is that we do not fall wary of uncertainties, instead let us stand tall and continue to soldier on as we do our work," PCOO Undersecretary and FOI Program Director Kristian R. Ablan said while addressing the FOI Receiving Officers.

The FOI Receiving Officers serve as the frontliners of government agencies in engaging the public while strengthening and promoting the constitutional right to access public information.

"Ultimately, at the end of the day, ang sarap ng pakiramdam na may natulungan ka sa pagbibigay ng impormasyon," Department of Public Works and Highway (DPWH) FOI Receiving Officer Andro Santiago emphasized during the event.

A total of 107 government agencies participated in the conduct of the 2022 FROs Hangouts.

For Your Information (FYI) is the public service television program of the FOI-PMO providing Filipino citizens with up-to-date information on the latest government projects, policies, and programs that are available to the public. The program is aired every Sunday from 8:30PM to 9:00PM on IBC 13 and is live streamed on the FOI Philippines official Facebook page.

Here are the highlights of our previous FYI episodes:

February 27, 2022: Philippine Judicial Academy of the Philippines (PHILJA): PHILJA General Manager Romulo Abancio Jr. discussed the functions of the Philippine Judicial Academy of the Philippines (PHILJA); and highlighted the various capacity development activities and programs it offers to eligible government employees.

March 6, 2022: National Housing Authority (NHA): NHA Corporate Planning Chief Antonio O. Mercader emphasized the mandate of the agency, which is developing and producing houses, relocation, and resettlement sites, to set it apart from the other housing-focused government agencies. Chief Mercader also shared information on the processes and requirements needed in availing their housing programs.

March 13, 2022: Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA): MinDA Sec. Mabel Acosta introduced the recent developments they have been working on to promote socio-economic development in Mindanao. One of the key developments mentioned is the new airbus route to Sanga-Sanga airport in Tawi-Tawi, expected to be operationalized by June 2022.

March 20, 2022: Philippine Textile Research Institute (PTRI): Hailed as the premier textile research and development arm, PTRI Director Celia Elumba laid down the different initiatives and capacity building activities implemented by the agency to promote the textile industry of the country.

March 27, 2022: Philippine Statistical Research and Training Institute (PSRTI): As the research and training arm of the Philippine Statistical System, PSRTI Executive Director Josefina Venegas-Almeda featured a line-up of non-degree training programs the agency offers to capacitate and expound the statistical knowledge of government personnel.

April 3, 2022: Design Center of the Philippines (DCP): An attached agency of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), DCP is mandated to improve the quality, range, and competitiveness of the Philippine goods and services by promoting and strengthening the country's design industry. DCP Executive Director Maria Rita O. Matute talked about the importance and relationship of design and successful business industries in the country.

April 10, 2022: Procurement Service-Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PS-PhilGEPS): PS PhilGeps Internal Audit Division Chief Rosalinda "Bheng" Dapito discussed the different procurement programs and services the agency provides to government agencies. Procurement is an integral component in acquiring government assets and supplies.

April 24, 2022: Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA): SRA Administrator Hermenegildo Serafica, an agency under the Department of Agriculture, pointed out the key role of sugar industry in the prosperity of the economy as well as the programs and service initiatives it offers promoting the well-fare of sugar industry farmers.

May 1, 2022: Bureau of Domestic Trade Promotion (BDTP): BDTP Director Marievic Bonoan explained its objective of helping micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises become more competitive through their diverse programs and services. BDTP Director Bonoan also urged the need for a modernized way of promoting Filipino-made products.

May 15, 2022: Local Government Academy (LGA): An agency under the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), the LGA, according to Assistant Director Daphne Purnell, is the agency responsible for capacitating the local government officials and department personnel.

May 22, 2022: Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BWSM): BWSM Director Pablo Montalla shared that the agency is mandated to formulate measures and guidelines for the effective utilization of soil and water resources. She also talked about the efforts of the agency in educating and assisting the Agricultural Sector in implementing proper soil and waste management.

May 29, 2022: Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC): AMLC Executive Director Mel Racela emphasized the importance of integrity, and confidentiality of bank accounts to ensure that the country will not be subjected to money laundering sites and other unlawful activities.



FOI SA RADYO: SPECIAL SERIES

by Armand Frederick V. Gatpayat & Valerie Valenzuela

TALAKAYAN with the 2022 Presidentiables and Vice Presidentiables



The right to suffrage is one of the guarantees of a democratic state. With the May 2022 elections, the Filipino people were again faced with choices. For the people to aptly choose their leaders, it is essential that they be armed with the right information.

The FOI sa Radyo produced Talakayan Special Series and invited candidates vying for the two top positions in government. The candidates were given a chance to introduce themselves, present their accomplishments and their respective aspirations should they be elected in their target seat, and describe methods of promoting transparency in public service.

On enriching Filipinos' lives

Labor rights activist **Leodegario "Ka Leody" De Guzman** emphasized on the need to advance the agricultural sector. He believed that farmers and laborers in the field must be properly subsidized so they can access a variety of crop species and machinery. This is a crucial step to fostering a self-sustaining food economy.



Former Presidential Spokesperson **Ernesto "Ernie" Abella** also reiterated the importance of partnering with agriculture pioneers and integrating their practices in the Philippines.



Meanwhile, former Defense Secretary **Norberto Gonzales** asserted that bridging the gap amongst sectors plays a vital role in economic development and public welfare improvement, which require political will.

As part of his agenda on political reform, lawyer, doctor, and economist **Jose "Joey" Montemayor, Jr.** underscored the significance of ending dynasties in Philippine politics.

Similarly, Vice Presidential candidate **Manny S. D. Lopez**, an economist, wished to prioritize the education sector. This move will be a pivotal investment as this would open more opportunities to the youth.



Pro-life advocate **Rizalito David** vouched on the establishment of a Commission on Moral Renewal to instill the values of the catholic faith.

On choosing Cabinet members

For an administration to fully function, it needs people working closely toward a common goal. Gonzales stood by this principle and pointed out that he needs his Cabinet members to be aligned with his goals and objectives.

On the other hand, Abella mentioned expertise and integrity are at the top of his list of qualifications for a Cabinet member. Ka Leody seconded



this remark and added that they should possess an awareness of the plight of Filipinos' everyday lives.

On a transparency mechanism

Gonzales stressed that the use of people-centric and streamlined procedures to access information is essential to successfully implement and promote a transparent and open government.

Abella, on the other hand, commented on the advantage of both the national and local governments collaborating with civil society organizations to humanize the reporting of fiscal reports.



About The Cover

To institutionalize FOI through establishing an information commission: this is the main goal of FOI Philippines' technical cooperation visit in the Central Information Commission of the Republic of Indonesia. The delegation was in Jakarta to learn about CIC's legal framework and organizational structure.

The FOI Philippines is committed to continuously improve the FOI Program implementation through the conduct of study visits to keep abreast with global access to information policies and mechanism.



PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS OFFICE
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION PHILIPPINES