



## CASH PRIZES, TROPHIES AWAIT MSMEs IN '23 PRODUCTIVITY OLYMPICS



(Left) RTWPB-13 Chairperson Atty. Joffrey Suyao (left) launches the 2023 Regional Productivity Olympics (PO) campaign in Butuan City on April 19, 2023. The campaign is meant to encourage more MSMEs in the region to join the biennial competition. (Right) Chairperson-designate DOLE Undersecretary Benedicto Ernesto R. Bitonio Jr. and NWPC Executive Director Ma. Criselda R. Sy attend a Commission Meeting at the DOLE main office in Intramuros, Manila on February 16, 2023. During the meeting, the criteria, mechanics, and guidelines for the 2023 PO were approved.

**Winning micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) will have another chance to reap awards and incentives this October.**

NWPC Executive Director Ma. Criselda Sy made this remark as she invited all MSMEs to join the 2023 Productivity Olympics, a national competition of the productivity programs and practices of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) nationwide.

With the theme “From Striving to Thriving: Reset and Reposition for Impact”, the national competition will be open to all MSMEs nationwide.

“The Productivity Olympics aims to elevate national awareness towards quality and productivity by highlighting exemplary productivity improvement programs and practices that have been skilfully designed and effectively executed,” Executive Director Sy said.

She said the biennial competition is open to all MSMEs that are duly registered with the appropriate government agencies; compliant with general labor and occupational safety and health standards; and registered in the Annual Establishment Report on Wages (AERW) online system.

Winners each have a chance to win a cash prize of PHP120,0000, a trophy, and priority endorsements to NWPC and DOLE agency training programs and services, she added.

### Regional Productivity Olympics

Several RTWPBs, including RTWPB-10 and RTWPB-13, already launched their Regional Productivity Olympics campaigns in April this year.

RTWPB-13 Chairperson and DOLE Regional Director Joffrey Suyao enjoined enterprises to continue to adopt productivity practices and motivate workers to be productive and competent.

According to him, taking good care of workers is the “best means” to make a company productive.

Edgar Allan Aquino, RTWPB-13 Board Member representing the Labor Sector, underscored how the competition would help build a stronger relationship between labor and management.

“By joining this competition, you are giving importance to how good the labor-management relationship in your

# NWPC resumes F2F Learning Sessions



BWC Supervising Labor and Employment Officer Emilia T. De Guzman (third from left) and participants pose for a photo after the first face-to-face Learning Session since the COVID-19 pandemic at the NWPC Conference Room in Malate, Manila on April 12, 2023.

## Business owners and employers must comply with general labor standards.

Bureau of Working Conditions (BWC) Supervising Labor and Employment Officer Emila T. De Guzman made this appeal during the face-to-face NWPC Learning Session on April 12, 2023 at the NWPC conference room in Malate, Manila. This was the first face-to-face NWPC Learning Session after two years of virtual sessions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. De Guzman also held a virtual session on the same topic on April 27, 2023.



Ms. De Guzman discusses the rules in determining compensable working hours.

During the session, De Guzman underscored how properly compensating workers leads to higher workers' morale and productivity. She said this would increase business efficiency, profitability, and harmonious business relationships.

"Compliance is good for business because in case a labor inspector visits a company and the employer is compliant, employees are happy and inspired to work," she said in a mix of English and Filipino.

According to De Guzman, many business owners continue to violate or fail to observe labor standards.

"There are actually many issues, not just three," she said when asked to name at least three labor standards that were usually violated by employers.

"It starts with the non-payment issue on minimum wages. There are also other issues like underpayment of minimum wage, holiday pay, 13th-month pay, etcetera. Some employers are not aware of existing Occupational Safety and Health Standards (OSH). Hazardous areas must regularly be checked," she added.

She urged business owners to check the DOLE and BWC websites to stay updated on the Department of Labor and and Employment (DOLE) Handbook on Workers' Statutory Benefits and related issuances.

The Learning Session tackled general labor standards, computation of monetary benefits, compliance with procedures, etc.

Around 50 and 80 participants composed of business owners, employers, HR practitioners, legal officers, union officers, and workers attended the in-person and virtual training event, respectively.



A participant registers her name at the first face-to-face Learning Session since the COVID-19 pandemic.

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own respective companies in terms of showcasing the collective efforts of workers and management in productivity improvement,” he said.

**Confident boost**

Aside from getting a trophy and over a hundred thousand pesos richer, winning in the Productivity Olympics will also serve as a confidence boost to winning micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

Jackilyn Borja, RTWPB-NCR focal person and trainer, said winning the Productivity Olympics gives MSMEs “bragging rights” for their achievements.

“You can use this award to show clients that you support and follow the Department of Labor and Employment. We gain a new kind of confidence when we know that we adhere to the mandates of the government,” Borja, who is also Supervising Labor and Employment Officer, said in Filipino.

Nine MSMEs will be named Productivity Olympics national winners from the nine categories – micro, small, and medium enterprises for agribusiness, service, and industry sectors. They will be judged by the following criteria—business excellence (30 percent), employee engagement and expansion (50 percent), innovation and green initiatives (15 percent), and corporate social accountability (5 percent).

After undergoing regional and national screening, a tripartite body headed by DOLE Secretary Bienvenido E. Laguesma and assisted by representatives from the labor management

and government sectors and a productivity and quality expert will select the 2023 PO national winners. The awarding ceremony for national winners will be in October, in time for Productivity and Quality Month.

On February 16, 2023, the NWPC convened at the DOLE Building in Intramuros, Manila to propose the criteria, mechanics, and guidelines for the 2023 PO, including the objectives, the indicative timeline of activities, awards, and budgetary requirements.

After deliberation, the members of the Commission approved the criteria, encompassing business excellence, employee engagement and expansion, innovation and green initiatives, and corporate social accountability. The NWPC also approved the mechanics, selection process, timelines, awards, honoraria, and expenses related to the 2023 PO.

Present at the meeting were Chairperson-designate DOLE Undersecretary Benedicto Ernesto R. Bitonio Jr., Vice Chairperson NEDA representative Assistant Secretary Sarah Lynne S. Daway-Ducanes, Commissioners Arturo A. Basea and Milagros C. Ogalinda from the workers' sector, Commissioners Lucila C. Tarriela and Ranulfo P. Payos from the employers' sector, observer from the DTI, Division Chief Cynthia C. Dela Cruz and the NWPC Secretariat led by Executive Director Maria Criselda R. Sy.

The PO was first launched in 2008.

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NWPC Executive Director Criselda R. Sy reminds RTWPBs that wages and productivity go hand in hand during the "Basic Course on Labor Economics" training event.

Luzon RTWPB members representing the labor and employer sectors and NEDA and DTI regional directors who serve as RTWPB vice chairpersons participated in

the training event. The Luzon leg of the training event had the biggest delegation composed of eight regions namely NCR, CAR, Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon), Mimaropa, and Bicol.

Similar training events were also held in Visayas (Cebu City) and Mindanao (General Santos City) on April 11-13 and April 24-26, respectively.

The Basic Course on Labor Economics aims to enhance participants' appreciation and understanding of basic labor economic concepts and how these relate to the minimum wage determination function of RTWPBs.

Among the topics discussed during the training event are: Overview of Basic Economics and Key Economic Indicators; Overview of Basic Labor Economics (Labor Demand/Supply Determinants); Wage and Employment Theories (Wage Adjustment Effects); Wage and Labor Productivity Trends, Minimum Wage Criteria, and other special topics.

# Usec. Bitonio: Minimum wage determination requires reason, purposeful debate

Rather than just relying on data and formulas, determining minimum wage must also be grounded on “reason and purposeful debate.”

DOLE Undersecretary and NWPC Chairperson Designate Benedicto Ernesto R. Bitonio Jr. made this statement during the third and last leg of the “Basic Course on Labor Economics” training event organized by the NWPC in Tagaytay City from April 24 to 26, 2023.

“Minimum wage determination, especially if you equate it with productivity and income security, requires the use of all sorts of mathematical formulas,” he said in his closing remarks.

“But in the end, it would appear that these are not enough. There is an important space left for judgment that can be surfaced only by reason and purposeful debate so that we can come up with the most workable solutions.” USec. Bitonio acknowledged the weight of responsibility that comes with wage determination but expressed hope that RTWPB members do not regret the tasks assigned to them amid calls for wage adjustments.

NWPC Executive Director Criselda R. Sy, for her part, reminded RTWPBs that wages and productivity go hand in hand. While minimum wage determination has been a very



DOLE Undersecretary and NWPC Chairperson Designate Benedicto Ernesto R. Bitonio Jr. delivers his closing remarks on the last day of the “Basic Course on Labor Economics” organized in Tagaytay City April 24-26, 2023.

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challenging role of RTWPBs, let us not forget our mandate in the area of strengthening the nexus between wages and productivity,” Executive Director Sy said.

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## MINIMUM WAGE RATES as of March 31, 2023

Region's Wage Order	Highest Rate	Effectivity
Wage Order No. NCR-23	P570.00	June 4, 2022
Wage Order No. CAR-21	P400.00	January 1, 2023
Wage Order No. RB1-21	P400.00	December 1, 2022
Wage Order No. RB2-21	P420.00	January 1, 2023
Wage Order No. RB3-23	P460.00	January 1, 2023
Wage Order No. RB4A-19	P470.00	December 30, 2022
Wage Order No. RB4B-10	P355.00	June 10, 2022
Wage Order No. RB5-20	P365.00	December 1, 2022
Wage Order No. RB6-26	P450.00	June 5, 2022
Wage Order No. RB7-23	P435.00	June 14, 2022
Wage Order No. RB8-22	P375.00	January 2, 2023
Wage Order No. RB9-21	P351.00	June 25, 2022
Wage Order No. RB10-21	P405.00	December 16, 2022
Wage Order No. RB11-21	P443.00	January 1, 2023
Wage Order No. RB12-22	P368.00	September 1, 2022
Wage Order No. RB13-17	P350.00	June 6, 2022
Wage Order No. BARMM-02	P341.00	July 21, 2022



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