

## AI TAKES CENTER STAGE AT 2024 NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY CONFERENCE



DOLE Secretary and NWPC Chairperson Bienvenido E. Laguesma (top right) and NWPC Executive Director Maria Criselda R. Sy (bottom right) deliver their speeches at the 2024 National Productivity Conference.

The NWPC conducted the 2024 National Productivity Conference (NPC) with the theme "Harnessing Technologies. Mainstreaming Productivity. Building the Future." in Ortigas Avenue, Quezon City on 14 October 2024.

The conference gathered experts and industry practitioners who emphasized the crucial role of digital technology, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), in enhancing the productivity, capacities and competitiveness of enterprises for progress and development.

In her welcome remarks, NWPC Executive Director Maria Criselda R. Sy highlighted the need to unlock AI's potential for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), as they require practical solutions to leverage the evolving digital landscape.

"There is significant potential for growth and further optimization of digital technology. However, we need more advocacies [...] in our local industries. Our conference today seeks to contribute to this advocacy. I sincerely hope that the insights we gain will spark greater interest and democratize the use of AI and other innovative tools," NWPC Executive Director Sy said.

"I encourage everyone to embrace technological innovation, not just as a trend, but as a practical tool to enhance productivity," she added.

Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Secretary and NWPC Chairperson Bienvenido E. Laguesma, in his keynote message, emphasized that AI will be beneficial if accompanied by competent human resources, with adequate knowledge in using technology in ethical and accountable manner.

"MSMEs persist because resilience, adaptability, creativity, innovation and the ability to continuously learn as they go are their inherent characteristics. This conference will help unlock the potential of MSMEs in the use of technology and artificial intelligence," Secretary Laguesma said.

He also highlighted DOLE's implementation of its Information Technology and Digitalization Plan which was approved by the Department of Information and Communications Technology. He mentioned that DOLE is redesigning its processes and service delivery systems to facilitate the integration of human functions with technology. This includes operationalizing online portals for submitting the annual establishment report on wages, registering unions, applying for alien employment permits, and facilitating job matching through PhilJobNet.

### Five-part framework

The conference was divided into five segments: Approach, Awareness, Adoption, Application, and Action, each addressing different aspects of AI and technology.

Dr. Sebastian Ibañez, Deputy Chief AI and Data Officer of the Department of Trade and Industry Center for AI

# NWPC presents PH gainsharing practices at APO conference



Delegates from 18 countries, including the Philippines, attend the Conference on Productivity Gainsharing for Rural Development, held in Vientiane, Laos. NWPC Director Jerome Yanson was among the resource speakers during the conference.

**The NWPC presented the country’s gainsharing policies and practices at the international Conference on Productivity Gainsharing for Rural Development, held in Vientiane, Laos, from 2 to 3 October 2024.**

The two-day conference, organized by the Asian Productivity Organization (APO), Lao National Productivity Organization, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise Promotion Agency, and Ministry of Industry and Commerce, aims to understand productivity gainsharing policies, frameworks, and models; learn about innovative gainsharing approaches for rural development; and share effective gainsharing practices in the context of rural development.

NWPC Director Jerome P. Yanson presented the policy and regulatory framework on gainsharing in the Philippines, espoused in Republic Act No. 6971

or the Productivity Incentives Act of 1990.

He shared best practices and case studies on the implementation of gainsharing scheme in the Philippines through the Productivity-Based Incentive Scheme (PBIS). He also shared first-hand experiences in assisting enterprises to develop and implement PBIS in rural areas.

Atty. Queen Therese D. Espinas and Franz Allan A. Visitation of the NWPC-Wage Policy and Research Division attended the conference.

The conference brought together over 120 participants from the Philippines, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, China, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Türkiye, Vietnam and Laos.

# NWPC recognized as Outstanding Accounting Office



NWPC Executive Director Maria Criselda R. Sy (center), accompanied by other NWPC officers and staff, receives the 2023 AGAP Outstanding Accounting Office Award in a ceremony in Cebu City.

**The NWPC was recognized as one of the Outstanding Accounting Offices for FY 2023 by the Association of Government Accountants of the Philippines (AGAP), Inc.**

NWPC Executive Director Maria Criselda R. Sy received the award during the opening day ceremonies of the AGAP convention-seminar on 9 October 2024 at the IEC Convention Center Cebu, Cebu City.

“We are deeply honored to receive the Outstanding Accounting Offices award for FY 2023 from the Association of Government Accountants of the Philippines (AGAP), Inc. This recognition is a testament to our unwavering commitment to excellence and integrity in government accountancy. We will continue to strive for the highest standards in our work, inspired by this prestigious acknowledgment,” Executive Director Sy said.

Outstanding Accounting Office awardees were recognized for their accurate and timely submission of financial reports for the year covered.

The annual awarding ceremony aims to emphasize the importance of financial reports in management decision making at the agency level and ultimately at the oversight level. The Commission on Audit is requested annually for assistance in submitting nominees to AGAP Inc.

The AGAP is a professional organization dedicated to promoting the interests of government accountants and improving the practice of government accountancy in the country.

## RTWPBs IX, X, XIII commence consultations on minimum wage adjustments



RTWPBs IX, X, and XIII engage with workers and employers in various consultations to discuss potential minimum wage adjustments in their respective regions.

### The RTWPBs IX, X and XIII commenced their respective wage consultations this October 2024.

The consultations were organized with support from the DOLE Regional, Provincial and Field Offices. Employers and workers representatives participated in the event. Following are the highlights of the regional public consultations:

#### RTWPB-IX (Zamboanga Peninsula)

The RTWPB-IX conducted a region-wide consultation for the review and adjustment of the minimum wage of workers in private establishments on 02 October 2024 in Zamboanga City.

Workers and employers shared their insights and inputs on minimum wage adjustment for consideration of the Regional Board. According to Board Secretary Joel M. Ijirani, inputs will be reviewed thoroughly during the wage deliberation.

#### RTWPB-X (Northern Mindanao)

The RTWPB-X conducted its first provincial wage consultation for the province of Bukidnon on 11 October 2024 in Malaybalay City, Bukidnon.

Representatives from NEDA-10, DTI-10, and Department of Agriculture (DA)-10 discussed updates on the region's socio-economic situation and outlook, prices of basic goods and prime commodities, and the prevailing prices of agricultural products in the province.

#### RTWPB-XIII (Caraga)

The RTWPB-XIII conducted wage consultations on 21 and 23 October 2024 in Agusan del Sur and Butuan City, respectively.

The October 21 consultation was intended for the provinces of Surigao del Sur and Agusan del Sur, while the October 23 consultation was intended for the provinces of Dinagat Island, Surigao del Norte, and Agusan del Norte.

Regional Director Joffrey M. Suyao, Board Chairperson, expressed his appreciation to the resource persons and participants for their insights on adjusting the minimum wage in the region.

Wage consultations allow stakeholders to express their positions on minimum wage adjustment and help shape the decision of the Regional Boards.

## RTWPB-V and RTWPB-VIII board members take oath

Atty. Kenneth B. Fabila, newly appointed board member of the RTWPB-VIII, and Mr. Dante L. Encinas, re-appointed board member of the RTWPB-V, took their oath of office before Secretary Bienvenido E. Laguesma during the 2024 National Productivity Conference on 14 October 2024 in Quezon City.

Atty. Fabila represents the employers' sector in RTWPB-VIII while Mr. Encinas represents the workers' sector in RTWPB-V.

Atty. Fabila currently serves as the Vice President for Externa Affairs at the Philippine Chamber of Commerce

and Affairs at the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry Tacloban – Leyte Inc. (PCCITL). He is also actively engaged in the chamber movement and serves as a dedicated legal counsel for the chamber.

Mr. Encinas is a veteran trade unionist and has been serving the RTWPB-V since 2019.

Pursuant to Republic Act No. 6727, also known as the Wage Rationalization Act, the Regional Boards shall consist of the DOLE Regional Director as Chairperson, the NEDA and DTI Regional Directors as Vice Chairpersons, and two representatives each from the employer and labor sectors.

# Productivity Olympics winners receive DOLE-AMP grant



Representatives of enterprises that won in their respective regional Productivity Olympics receive their checks as part of the assistance under the DOLE-AMP. The beneficiaries are from CALABARZON (inset) and Caraga region.

**Eight Productivity Olympics winners from CALABARZON and CARAGA received over P2.7 million financial assistance from the DOLE Adjustment Measure Program (DOLE-AMP).**

In CALABARZON, CCMG Food Hub, a two-time Productivity Olympics regional winner and an active Productivity Toolbox participant-beneficiary, received a check of P400,000 on 7 October 2024. The check was presented by DOLE-Laguna and RTWPB-IVA officials.

CCMG Food Hub will use the grant in their Business Enhancement and People Development Project.

In CARAGA, seven micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) received checks equivalent to P2.7 million on 23 October 2024 in Butuan City. DOLE Caraga and RTWPB-XIII officials presented the checks to the beneficiaries, namely: Citrus Hill Plantation; Amparitas Integrated Farm; Trento Hillview Inn; Mangagoy Farmers Fisherfolks and Community Multi-Purpose Cooperative (MAFFISCO-MPC);

Surigao del Sur I Electric Cooperative (SURSECO-I); Tabon Secondary Teachers and Employees Cooperative (TASETEMCO); and Southway Colleges of Technology (SOCOTECH).

Two MSMEs, Andres Soriano Memorial Hospital Cooperative and La Entrada Resort and Restaurant, were also added as beneficiaries for the DOLE-AMP in Caraga after signing a memorandum of agreement with DOLE Caraga on the same day.

All MSMEs that qualified under the DOLE-AMP assistance underwent a process of document review and ocular inspection.

The DOLE-AMP was established through DOLE Department Order No. 241 series of 2024. The program is designed to enhance the productivity of MSMEs, support the welfare of their workers, and reduce and mitigate their vulnerability against economic disruptions. It is also part of DOLE's commitment towards fostering regional economic growth and enhancing worker competencies in all regions.

## **From page 6 (RTWPBs I, VI approve...)**

New monthly minimum wage rates under Wage Order No. RBVI-28 and Wage Order No. RBVI-DW-06 shall take effect on 17 November 2024.

As provided for in the NWPC Omnibus Rules on Minimum Wage Determination, retail/service establishments regularly employing not more than ten (10) workers, and enterprises affected by natural calamities and/or human-induced disasters may apply to the RTWPB for exemption from the wage increase. Registered Barangay Micro Business Enterprises (BMBEs) are not covered by the

minimum wage law pursuant to Republic Act No. 9178 of 2002.

The increases considered the various wage determination criteria provided under Republic Act No. 6727 or the Wage Rationalization Act. The RTWPBs shall undertake information campaigns to ensure compliance with the new minimum wage rates and provide assistance to enterprises in correcting possible wage distortions. Exemption applications and further clarifications on the wage order shall be coursed through the respective RTWPB.

# RTWPB-VI conducts Service Quality and Work Ethics training for LEDIP beneficiaries



Market vendors enrolled in the Uswag Negosyo Academy attend a Learning Session on Service Quality and Work Ethics of a Productive Worker.

The RTWPB-VI conducted a learning session on Service Quality and Work Ethics of a Productive Worker for market vendors in Iloilo City on 3 and 8 October 2024.

The session targeted market vendors enrolled in the Uswag Negosyo Academy, a program initiated by the Local Economic Development and Investment Planning (LEDIP) Office aimed at supporting micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

The "Service Quality" session focused on the significance of providing exceptional service to improve the overall

purchasing experience for customers.

A customer-centric approach was emphasized as a vital strategy for boosting productivity, particularly for micro and small retail enterprises. Enhanced service quality not only encourages customer purchases but also promotes customer loyalty and repeat business. By focusing on high-quality service, market vendors can broaden their customer base and create opportunities for business expansion.

In the subsequent "Work Ethics of a Productive Worker" session, participants developed essential skills and learned to foster a positive work mindset to enhance productivity.

"The topics covered are principles and disciplines that many practice in their daily transactions. These lectures categorize existing practices and values, making them easier to remember and teach others. By naming these principles and practices, we turn them into tools that can be easily accessed when needed," Atty. Mark Vernon C. Dioquino, Board Secretary of RTWPB-VI, said.

RTWPB-VI continues to collaborate with the Iloilo City government and other agencies to advance productivity improvement programs for all MSMEs in the region.

## From page 1 (NWPC puts spotlight...)

Research, and Dr. Eugene Rex Jalao, Professor of Industrial Engineering at the University of the Philippines, presented on the AI Roadmap and Infrastructure during the "Approach" session.

Ms. Mary Rose Ofianga, Program Manager at the Wadhvani Foundation, discussed the AI digital divide in the "Awareness" session.

Atty. Yves Gonzales, Head of Government Affairs and Public Policy at Google Philippines, and Mr. Jude Michael Teves, Senior Data Science Officer at the Asian Development Bank, addressed how AI adoption can transform MSMEs into game-changers during the "Adoption" session.

Mr. Gian Paulo Dela Rama, Chief Product Officer and Head at Sprout Solutions, presented AI's role in human resources in the "Application" session.

Three enterprise leaders—Ms. Alma Rias (Go21 Logistics), Ms. Euri Villegas-Arce (Zaphira Digital Advertising Corporation), and Mr. Lord Wally Noveno (Beppo Inc.)—shared their positive experiences of AI in their business processes during the "Action" session. An open forum followed the presentations.

## Real-world impact

Deputy Executive Director (DED) Pia Charmane O. De Jesus acknowledged concerns about AI job displacement

but emphasized its potential for creating new roles.

"There will be job losses, but definitely new jobs will emerge. The demand in the market for jobs has been evolving and the skills are evolving, which makes it crucial for everyone to upskill and reskill. There is more value placed on lifelong learning and soft skills," DED De Jesus said.

DED De Jesus also emphasized the need for inclusivity in AI development, ensuring that vulnerable sectors, including women, are involved as both beneficiaries and active participants.

In closing, Assistant Secretary Lennard Constantine C. Serrano reiterated Secretary Laguesma's statement that integrating digital technologies into existing processes will positively impact organizations.

"By restructuring and upgrading the capabilities of our MSMEs, we can empower them and unlock new opportunities to drive sustainable economic growth," Assistant Secretary Serrano said.

The NWPC also launched the 2025 Productivity Olympics as a strategy to raise national awareness and commitment to quality and productivity and to showcase successful productivity improvement programs and practices.

The NPC is one of the advocacy strategies and platforms of NWPC and RTWPBs to discuss trends and developments that affect the country's productivity and competitiveness.

# RTWPBs I, VI approve minimum wage increases



RTWPBs I and VI conduct wage deliberations for minimum wage adjustments for workers in private establishments and *kasambahays*.

**Over 360,000 minimum wage earners in private establishments in Regions I (Ilocos) and VI (Western Visayas) will benefit from minimum wage increases approved in October by the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Boards (RTWPBs) I and VI.**

This will indirectly benefit almost 650,000 full-time wage and salary workers earning above the minimum wage as a result of upward adjustments at the enterprise level, arising from the correction of wage distortion.

### RTWPB-I (Ilocos Region)

In Ilocos, RTWPB-I granted a P33 daily minimum wage increase across all sectors. This brings the daily minimum wages to P468 for the non-agriculture sector employing 10 or more employees and P435 for the non-agriculture sector employing less than 10 employees and the agriculture sector.

RTWPB-I also approved a P500 increase for the monthly

minimum wage of *kasambahays* (domestic workers) in the region, bringing the monthly minimum wage to P6,000. This will benefit a total of 99,024 domestic workers, 9% of whom are on live-in arrangements.

New monthly minimum wage rates under Wage Order No. RB 1-23 and Wage Order No. RB 1-DW-05 shall take effect on 07 November 2024.

### RTWPB-VI (Western Visayas)

In Western Visayas, the approved increase of RTWPB-VI amounting to P33-P40 brings the daily wage rates in the region to a range of P485-P513 in the non-agriculture sector and P480 in the agriculture sector.

RTWPB-VI likewise approved a P1,000 monthly increase for *kasambahays* in the region, bringing the monthly minimum wage to P6,000. This will benefit a total of 160,795 domestic workers, 31% of whom are on live-in arrangements.

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MINIMUM WAGE RATES as of October 31, 2024		
Region	Wage Order	Highest Rate
NCR	NCR-25	P645
CAR	CAR-22	P430
Region I	RB 1-22	P435
Region II	RTWPB 2-23	P480
Region III	RBIII-25	P550
Region IVA	IVA-21	P560
Region IVB	RB-MIMAROPA-II	P395
Region V	RBV-21	P395
Region VI	RBVI-27	P480
Region VII	ROVII-25	P501
Region VIII	RB VIII-23	P405
Region IX	RIX-22	P381
Region X	RX-22	P438
Region XI	RB XI-22	P481
Region XII	RB XII-24	P430
Region XIII	RXIII-18	P385



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