



# 2023 POST SONA DISCUSSIONS

## PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC BRIEFING

9 AUGUST 2023 | DAVAO

Grand Ballroom, dusitD2 Davao  
Davao City

### PROGRAM

<p>2:00 PM</p>	<p><b>Keynote Message</b></p> <p><b>BENJAMIN E. DIOKNO, PhD</b> <i>Secretary</i> Department of Finance</p>
<p><b>Panel Discussion 1: A Fast-Growing and Forward-Looking Economy</b></p> <p>Amid a challenging global environment, the Philippine economy has successfully navigated through challenges and posted record-high growth in 2022. Sustained high levels of growth is a necessary condition to meet the economic objectives of economic and social transformation to reach upper middle-income country status by 2025, reduce poverty incidence to between 8 to 9 percent by 2028 and attain the Filipino people's aspiration of a Philippines that is a prosperous, predominantly middle-class society by 2040.</p>	
<p>2:10 PM</p>	<p><b>Panel Discussion</b></p>

	<p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <p><b>BENJAMIN E. DIOKNO, PhD</b> <i>Secretary</i> Department of Finance</p> <p><b>AMENAH F. PANGANDAMAN</b> <i>Secretary</i> Department of Budget and Management</p> <p><b>FRANCISCO G. DAKILA, JR., PhD</b> <i>Deputy Governor</i> Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas</p> <p><b>JOSEPH J. CAPUNO, PhD</b> <i>Undersecretary</i> National Economic and Development Authority</p> <p><b>ARTURO M. MILAN</b> <i>Area Vice President for Mindanao</i> Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <p><b>MARGAUX MARIE V. SALCEDO</b> <i>Undersecretary</i> Department of Budget and Management</p>
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### Panel Discussion 2: Building Better and Smarter for the Future

The establishment of sustainable, resilient, integrated, and modern infrastructure systems is crucial for driving economic transformation. With the Build Better More program, the Marcos, Jr. Administration aims to create a solid foundation for the future by implementing diversified and strategic infrastructure all throughout the country. In the medium term, the government will maintain infrastructure spending at 5 to 6 percent of GDP, encourage infrastructure investments, and explore viable funding methods to supplement public resources for financing crucial infrastructure initiatives to improve the lives of the Filipino people.

<p><b>3:00 PM</b></p>	<p><b>Panel Discussion</b></p> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <p><b>JAIME J. BAUTISTA</b> <i>Secretary</i> Department of Transportation</p>
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	<p><b>IVAN JOHN E. UY</b> <i>Secretary</i> Department of Information and Communications Technology</p> <p><b>MARIA CATALINA E. CABRAL</b> <i>Undersecretary</i> Department of Public Works and Highways</p> <p><b>SHARON S. GARIN</b> <i>Undersecretary</i> Department of Energy</p> <p><b>MA. CYNTHIA C. HERNANDEZ</b> <i>Executive Director</i> Public-Private Partnership Center</p> <p><b>SAKAMOTO TAKEMA</b> Chief Representative to the Philippines Japan International Cooperation Agency</p> <p>Moderator: <b>ATTY. MARIA LUWALHATI C. DOROTAN TIUSECO</b> <i>Undersecretary</i> Department of Finance</p>
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### Panel Discussion 3: Reinvigorate. Accelerate. Transform.

The government will build on the game-changing reforms pursued in the past and complement these with policies to enable open and competitive markets. The Philippines is open for business as it seeks to be among the most dynamic economies in Asia and the world. The goal is to make it easier for companies to compete and innovate and assure investors of lower transaction costs and a healthy regulatory environment. Key strategies to transform the economy include revitalizing industry, reinvigorating services, and agriculture, and promoting and improving lifelong learning and education which are imperative to increasing the capacities and income-earning ability of the Filipino workforce

<p>4:00 PM</p>	<p><b>Panel Discussion</b></p> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <p><b>BIENVENIDO E. LAGUESMA</b> <i>Secretary</i> Department of Labor and Employment</p> <p><b>ALFREDO E. PASCUAL</b> <i>Secretary</i> Department of Trade and Industry</p>
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	<p><b>MAE ELAINE T. BATHAN</b> <i>Undersecretary</i> Department of Tourism</p> <p><b>MARLO L. IRINGAN</b> <i>Undersecretary</i> Department of the Interior and Local Government</p> <p><b>MERCEDITA A. SOMBILLA, PhD</b> <i>Undersecretary</i> Department of Agriculture</p> <p><b>JOHN CARLO B. TRIA</b> <i>President</i> Davao Chamber of Commerce and Industry</p> <p>Moderators: <b>MARGAUX MARIE V. SALCEDO</b> <i>Undersecretary</i> Department of Budget and Management</p>
<p><b>5:00 PM</b></p>	<p><b>Closing and Thank Yous</b></p>

## SPEAKERS AND PANELISTS

### Panel 1: A Fast-Growing and Forward-Looking Economy

**BENJAMIN E. DIOKNO, PhD**

Department of Finance

Dr. Diokno is the current Secretary of Finance. Prior to his appointment, he served as Governor of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) from 2019 to 2022. Under his leadership, the Philippine central bank was among the first to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and deploy decisive measures to cushion its adverse impact and pave the road to recovery.

Before taking charge of monetary affairs, he served as Budget Secretary under three presidents, where he pursued an expansionary fiscal policy to finance investments in human capital development and public infrastructure.

As Finance Secretary, Diokno seeks to rally the economic team to achieve three broad development goals by 2028: reduce the deficit-to-GDP ratio to pre-pandemic rates, bring down poverty incidence to single-digits, and achieve upper middle-income economy status by the end of the Marcos Jr. administration. Diokno seeks to go beyond headline economic expansion and achieve a brand of inclusive and sustainable growth with equity.

Diokno's policy expertise and research contribution extend to various areas of public economics, such as the structure and scope of government, tax policies and reforms, public expenditure management analysis, fiscal decentralization, national budget, and public debt, among other topics. He has vast experience in formulating and implementing public sector reforms, having also served as Budget Undersecretary from 1986 to 1991 and Budget Secretary from 1998 to 2001 and from 2016 to 2019.

He is Professor Emeritus of the University of the Philippines-Diliman. For over 40 years, he taught the following courses: Public Sector Economics, Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Development Economics, and Special Topics (e.g., Public Enterprises Investment and Pricing Policies; Public Sector Reforms; Local Government Finance). He was also Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the *Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila* (City University of Manila).

He served as Fiscal Adviser to the Philippine Senate. He also served as Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Philippine National Oil Company and Chairman of the Local Water Utilities Administration.

Some of his major policy reform contributions include: formulating the 1986 Tax Reform Program, which simplified the income tax system and introduced the value-added tax in the Philippines; helping design the 1991 Local Government Code of the Philippines; initiating a What-You-See-Is-What-You-Get policy to streamline the release of funds; and sponsoring the internationally lauded Government Procurement Reform Act to modernize, regulate, and standardize government procurement activities in the Philippines.

He served as an adviser and consultant to various multilateral agencies like the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Commission, and US Agency for International Development for work in the Philippines, China, and transitioning economies like Vietnam, Cambodia, and Mongolia.

He has also participated in numerous international conferences hosted by the International Monetary Fund, Asian Development Bank, World Bank, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, and United Nations, among other international organizations. He authored numerous publications and discussion papers regarding his research interests that have been published in academic journals and policy reports.

He finished his Bachelor's Degree in Public Administration (1968) and his Master's Degree in Public Administration (1970) and Economics (1974) at the University of the Philippines-Diliman. He also holds an MA in Political Economy (1976) from the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, USA and a PhD in Economics (1981) from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University in Syracuse, New York, USA. In 2017, he received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from the University of the Philippines—the highest academic rank and honor conferred by the university.

**AMENAH F. PANGANDAMAN**

Department of Budget and Management

Amenah F. Pangandaman is the incumbent Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM). She is the first Muslim Budget Secretary and the only female member of the Philippines' economic team.

She carries with her 20 years of government service, having worked in the legislative and executive branches, and the Central Bank. Thus, her unparalleled expertise in the areas of policy governance, economics, and public fiscal management.

She rose through the ranks from being a research assistant to becoming Chief of Staff to the late Senate President Edgardo J. Angara. Prior to her appointment as Secretary of the DBM, she served as DBM Undersecretary and Assistant Governor at the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

As the country's Budget Secretary, she is committed to supporting President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s administration towards a broad-based and inclusive economic recovery. She continuously champions financial inclusion and key budgetary reforms, such as Digitalization, Climate Change and Green Public Procurement, and Open Government Partnership to further promote fiscal transparency.

Secretary Pangandaman currently chairs the Development Budget Coordination Committee, which developed the Medium-Term Fiscal Framework and the country's 8-Point Socioeconomic Agenda. She also co-chairs the Intergovernmental Relations Body, strengthening relations for lasting peace and economic development in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao.

Under her leadership, the national government has enacted the fastest national budget in recent history. She has been bestowed the Rising Tigers "Woman of Substance" award, the "Philippines' Women Leaders Award," and the "Tanglaw ng Bayan" award from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines. She dons the rank of Rear Admiral (two-star general) of the Philippine Coast Guard Auxiliary. Her weekly column, "Beyond Budget" keeps the public informed on the national budget and the country's economy.

**FRANCISCO G. DAKILA, JR., PhD**

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

Dr. Francisco G. Dakila, Jr. is the Deputy Governor of the Monetary and Economics Sector. Prior to this, he was the Assistant Governor of the Monetary Policy Sub-Sector, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. He provided highly technical advisory support on matters relating to the formulation, implementation and assessment of policies and programs in his areas of specialization, which include the monetary, external, real, and financial sectors.

Before joining the BSP, he worked at the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and at the Agricultural Credit Policy Council. He also previously taught at the University of the Philippines School of Economics and at the De La Salle University in Manila.

He received his Ph. D. and MA in Economics and B.S. in Economics (magna cum laude) from the University of the Philippines-School of Economics. He is a lifetime member of the Philippine Statistical Association (PSA) and the Philippine Economics Society (PES), wherein he also served as Secretary and Board Member from 2005-2006. He is also a member of the International Input-Output Association (IIOA). He is currently an Associate Editor of the Philippine Review of Economics. He has published papers at the Philippine Review of Economics, Philippine Statistician, Bangko Sentral Review, and BSP Working Paper series, as well as chapters in several publications of the BSP, including *Money and Banking in the Philippines: Perspectives from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas*, and *Philippine Central Banking: A Strategic Journey to Stability*.

**JOSEPH J. CAPUNO, PhD**

National Economic and Development Authority

Joseph J. Capuno serves as the Undersecretary for Investment Programming at the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA).

As Undersecretary for Investment Programming at the National Economic Development Authority, he is tasked to oversee the formulation of strategies for efficiency in linking the government's planning, programming, and implementation of projects. He is also tasked to provide policy guidance in the project appraisal, monitoring and evaluation of big-ticket infrastructure projects of the national government, formulation of development plans and policies, and programming of the official development assistance (ODA), among others.



Before his Secondment to NEDA, Dr. Capuno is a professor at the School of Economics, University of the Philippines Diliman. He has published research works on fiscal decentralization, health care utilization and financing, impact evaluation, and subnational growth and development.

**ARTURO M. MILAN**

Philippine Chamber of Commerce, Inc.

A graduate with a Master's Degree in Business Administration (MBA) from the University of Chicago, Graduate School of Business, in 2002, Mr. Milan is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA).

In college, he graduated with a degree of Bachelor of Arts major in Economics and Bachelor of Science in Commerce major in Accounting.

Mr. Milan has been in the corporate scene since 1998. He has worked in large companies such as Union Cement Corporation, Holcim Philippines, Inc., Davao Light and Power Co., Cotabato Light & Power Co., and Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc.

Currently, he is the Adviser for Mindanao of Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc. after retiring from Davao Light and Power Co. as Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer in 2017. In the Chamber movement, he is the Area Vice President for Mindanao of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), Past Regional Governor for Southeastern Mindanao and served as President of the Davao City Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc. (DCCCCI) in 2018 and 2019.

He is currently serving as the Co-Chair of the Regional Development Council (RDC) XI as a Private Sector Representative of the Energy and ICT Sector. He also served as the Chair of the Infrastructure Development Committee of RDC XI in 2020-2022. He was also a member of the National Board of the Technical Vocational Education Development Authority (TESDA).

Outside of his involvement in the Chamber and RDC, he is the President of Our Lady of Victory Training Center (OLVTC), a center for the rehabilitation and training of indigent physically challenged children. He serves as the Head of the Partnership Management Group of Gawad Kalinga – Davao and as Director of the Philippine Red Cross-Davao Chapter.

Aside from being a high-ranking corporate official, he is a loving husband to Brenda Pacana, and a caring father to Dominique.

## Panel Discussion 2: Building Better and Smarter for the Future



### **JAIME J. BAUTISTA**

Department of Transportation

The Secretary of Transportation has a solid grounding in transportation having spent more than three decades in the aviation sector, culminating in being president of Philippine Airlines.

He has a strong financial management background, allowing him to steer PAL through its most turbulent times.

He took on various posts at different companies. He succeeded at turning the University of the East financially stable when he sat at the UE Board of Directors for more than two decades.

He is more of a professional manager rather than a technocrat.

He dislikes to be praised. He endears himself to anyone at any time. He is known for his humility and disarming smile. He is soft-spoken with a fantastic memory.



### **IVAN JOHN E. UY**

Department of Information and Communications Technology

Secretary Ivan John E. Uy has an extensive career in the ICT industry and in public service. He specializes in information technology and its impact on law, justice, and governmental institutions.

He was a Hubert Humphrey Fellow under the Fulbright Program in University of Minnesota and a graduate of the College of Law, University of the Philippines. As a public servant, Secretary Uy served as Chairman of the Commission on Information and Communications Technology, the predecessor of the Department of Information and Communications Technology. From 2011 to 2016, he led the formulation of the Philippine Digital Strategy. He also served as Chief Information/Technology Officer of the Judicial Branch, responsible for the overall technology strategy and implementation of the courts.



**MARIA CATALINA E. CABRAL, Ph.D., CESO I**  
Department of Public Works and Highways

If there is a model for “woman infrastructure” in an organization dominated by male officials and employee, it is Undersecretary MARIA CATALINA E. CABRAL, who made history when she became the first female rank and file employee who reached the level of Undersecretary in the hierarchy of officials in the engineering and construction arm of the government.

A licensed Civil Engineer, Undersecretary Cabral has three (3) master’s degrees and two (2) doctorate degrees in the field of Business Management, Economics and Public Administration. At present she is finishing another Doctorate Degree on Urban and Regional Planning at the University of the Philippines.

2021 Professorial Chair in Engineering, Science and Technology in Polytechnic University of the Philippines; Undersecretary Cabral is a registered ASEAN and APEC Engineer and has been conferred as an Honorary Fellow by the ASEAN Federation of Engineering Organization. She is the 2017-2018 National President and first female highest leader of the Philippine Institute of Civil Engineers (PICE); and the 2019-2021 National President of the Road Engineering Association of the Philippines; She is also a Commissioned Reserve Force in the Armed Forces of the Philippines with the rank of LIEUTENANT COLONEL in the Philippine Army.

Her competence, excellence, and commendable track record earned her various awards and recognitions like the 2021 PEZA Galing Pinas Ecozone Partnership Award; the 2020 Excellence Awardee from the Philippine Federations of Professional Associations; the 2018 Most Outstanding Alumni Awardee, College of Engineering and 2021 Most Outstanding Alumni by the University of the East; as 2021 Outstanding Professional of the year in the field of Civil Engineering by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC). She was recently awarded by the JCI Senate Philippines as one of the Five Outstanding Filipino Awardees (TOFIL) Laureate for Government and Public Service for the year 2022.

**SHARON S. GARIN**

Department of Energy

Overseeing the Department of Energy's Financial Services Bureau, Legal Services Bureau and Nuclear Energy Program Interagency Committee, and as the Department Legislative Liaison Officer – Undersecretary Sharon S. Garin, a CPA-Lawyer by profession addresses legal issues and concerns pertaining to downstream and upstream conventional energy, renewable energy, electric power, nuclear power, and other areas within the energy sector; as well as overseeing the budgeting and accounting operations of the agency improving its financial stability and overall effectiveness.

Usec. Sharon graduated in Accounting at the University of the Philippines-Iloilo; and Law at Ateneo de Manila School of Law and International MBA at Escuela Superior de Administracion y Direccion de Empresas, Spain. She has spearheaded several monumental changes and improvements on the implementation of existing processes that had fostered transparency, prudence, and efficiency in the Legal and Financial operations of the Department, as well as the timely formation of the amendment of Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001, the Comprehensive Nuclear Regulatory Act, the Philippine Downstream Natural Gas Industry Development Act, the Waste-to-Energy Act, and the amendment of Republic Act No. 9367, otherwise known as the "Biofuels Act of 2006".

**MA. CYNTHIA C. HERNANDEZ**

Public-Private Partnership Center

Cynthia's area of expertise is in corporate finance, transaction advisory and financial modeling and valuation. Prior to assuming her position at the PPP Center, she was a Principal at the Deal Advisory practice of KPMG in the Philippines. She was also the sector lead for Energy and Infrastructure, where she assisted corporate and multilateral clients.

Her technical background as a licensed engineer is a significant factor in her chosen career. In addition to her degree in Metallurgical Engineering from the University of the Philippines, she also acquired a Masters in Development Economics from the same institution.

In a career spanning 23 years, Cynthia has been involved in significant deals and transactions as an advisor. As the head of the lead Philippine

government agency for PPPs, she hopes to help drive economic growth through the development of inclusive and sustainable infrastructure projects.



**SAKAMOTO TAKEMA**

Japan International Cooperation Agency

Mr. SAKAMOTO Takema has held various leadership positions in the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for more than 30 years. He was the Chief Representative of JICA Iraq and India offices since 2011 and 2015 respectively. Prior to his appointment in the JICA Philippines Office, Mr. SAKAMOTO held strategic key positions at the JICA Headquarters in Tokyo, such as Director General for South Asia, Director General for MENA (Middle East and North Africa) and Europe, Group Leader for Transport Infrastructure and ICT, and Director for Media Division. He also demonstrated strong leadership on developing economic foundation and social development under the concepts of "Sustainable, Resilient and Inclusive Growth" and "No One Left Behind." Mr. SAKAMOTO was also a visiting professor in the University of Tsukuba, one of Japan's leading universities.

## Panel Discussion 3: Reinvigorate. Accelerate. Transform.



**BIENVENIDO E. LAGUESMA**

Department of Labor and Employment

Bienvenido Estudillo Laguesma is the current Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), committed to provide responsive support interventions for Filipino workers, especially those in rural and far-urban areas.

Secretary Laguesma has a long track record of protecting and promoting the welfare of Filipino workers, having previously served the labor department in various capacities for over 25 years. He started his public service career as a mediator-arbiter at the Bureau of Labor Relations – Department of Labor (now DOLE) in 1976 and rose from the ranks until he was appointed as labor secretary in 1998 under the Estrada administration.

He was a part of the Social Security Commission as Commissioner from 2011 to 2016, during the administration of the late President Benigno Aquino III.



Secretary “Benny,” as he is commonly called, obtained a Bachelor's degree in political science from the Lyceum of the Philippines University in 1971. He then attended the Ateneo de Manila University where he graduated with a law degree in 1975. He was a member of Session XIX of the Career Executive Development Program of the Development Academy of the Philippines in 1985.

**ALFREDO E. PASCUAL**

Department of Trade and Industry

Fred Pascual is the Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). At the time of his appointment to DTI in June 2022, he was the President of the Management Association of the Philippines (MAP).

Over the past four decades, Mr. Pascual has contributed to society serving at four esteemed national and international institutions, viz.: Institute of Corporate Directors (ICD) as President and CEO in 2018 and 2019; University of the Philippines (UP) System as President and Co-Chair from 2011 to 2017 and as Alumni Regent in 2009 and 2010; Asian Development Bank (ADB) for 19 years (1989-2008) in several positions including as Director for Private Sector Operations, Director for Project Finance, and Advisor for Public-Private Partnership; and Asian Institute of Management (AIM) as a finance professor in the 1980s.

He was an independent director on the board of publicly listed companies (e.g., SM Investments, Megawide Construction, and Concepcion Industrial). His past board memberships included non-profits and other organizations, such as the Philippine Institute of Development Studies (PIDS), International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), ICD, Institute for Solidarity in Asia (ISA), FINEX Academy, UP Foundation, UP CIFAL Philippines, Philippine Council for Foreign Relations (PCFR), and US-Philippines Society (USPHS).

Mr. Pascual finished his MBA and BS in Chemistry (cum laude) at UP. He attended the EC-ASEAN Program on Strategic and Organizational Change at the Euro-Asia Centre, Campus INSEAD, France. His awards included Honorary Doctorates from UP and four other universities, Presidential Lingkod Bayan Award from Malacanang, Rotary Golden Wheel Award for Higher Education.

**MARLO L. IRINGAN**

Department of the Interior and Local Government

Marlo L. Iringan is a distinguished public servant who has made significant contributions to the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) throughout his career. His journey began in 1989 when he joined the DILG as a Barangay Government Operations Officer (BGOO), demonstrating his commitment to serving his community and making a positive impact at the grassroots level. He is currently serving as the Undersecretary for Local Government of the Department since 2021.

Despite starting at an entry-level position, Undersecretary Iringan's dedication, expertise, and strong work ethic propelled him through the ranks. With a background in civil engineering, he harnessed his design and systems thinking skills to assist local governments and contribute to the realization of the mandate of the Department.

His exceptional abilities and potential were duly recognized, leading to a series of promotions and increased responsibilities within a relatively short span of time. He held various Director-level positions within the department, including LGOO VIII from 2010 to 2011, Director III from 2011 to 2015, and Director IV from 2015 to 2021. This rapid progression reflects both his exceptional capabilities and his unwavering commitment to delivering excellence in field operations and program implementation.

Given his extensive experience in field operations and program management, Undersecretary Iringan plays a crucial role in shaping responsive policies and strategic direction as the Department continues to help develop our local communities. His journey exemplifies the transformative power of dedication, hard work, and a genuine desire to serve the public.

**MAE ELAINE T. BATHAN**

Department of Tourism

Atty. Mae Elaine Tantengco Bathan is a lady lawyer from Mandaue City, Cebu and a proud Cebuana. She is the Chief of Staff and Undersecretary for Legal and Special Concerns of the Philippine Department of Tourism.

Atty. Elaine has always seen working in the government as an honor, which is a perspective formed by her professional life that is profoundly defined by her years in legal practice and public service since she passed the bar in 2005.

Prior to her stint in the Tourism department, she served as a legal consultant for Talisay City, Municipality of Lilo-an, the 5th Congressional District of Cebu, and for the League of Municipalities Cebu Chapter and also as the General Legal Counsel of Ako Bisaya Partylist. She also stood as the Chief of Staff of the City Government of Mandaue from 2016 to 2019.

Atty. Elaine was a finalist for the Woman Lawyer and Young Lawyer of the Year of the Philippine Law Awards. In 2013, she became the President of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines- Cebu City Chapter. She then became the youngest and the first lady Governor of the IBP Eastern Visayas Region in 2015. Aside from public service, Atty. Elaine found her passion in teaching. She conducts Department of Interior and Local Government- sponsored trainings on Ethics, Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, Code of Conduct for Public Officials, and Legal Forms in government Transactions. As a recognized feminist, Gender Sensitivity and VAWC law are one of her expertise. She also conducts lessons on Cybercrime and Data Privacy Law.

Anyone in Cebu probably knows who Atty. Elaine is. As a natural problem solver, she hosts a pro-bono radio show called “Kini ang Akong Suliran” which gives free legal advice and service especially to the underprivileged. But aside from her duties in the government, she never forgets her first love—lawyering.

Today, she still stands as the Assistant Dean in the University of San Jose Recoletos School of Law for 17 years now. She is also a Resident Partner on leave for Divina Law.



**MERCEDITA A. SOMBILLA , PhD**

Department of Agriculture

Dr. Sombilla joined the Department of Agriculture as the Undersecretary (*i.e., deputy minister*) for Policy, Planning, Research, and Regulations in 2022. Prior to her stint at the Department, she was Undersecretary for the Regional Development Group at the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), the country's premier socioeconomic planning body.

Before rejoining the government in 2012, she was a full-time researcher and affiliated with various international research organizations, such as the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) based in USA, International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) based in the Philippines, and the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) based also in the Philippines.

Undersecretary Sombilla obtained her Bachelor's degree in Mathematics and Master's degree in Economics from the University of the Philippines, Diliman. She earned her Doctor of Philosophy in Agricultural Economics at the University of Minnesota, USA.

**JOHN CARLO B. TRIA**

Davao Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Mr. Tria is a graduate of the University of the Philippines - Diliman and obtained a Graduate Diploma in Management at Ateneo de Manila. He is currently serving his 2nd term as President of Davao City Chamber. He is a Davao-based writer who writes a column for the Manila Bulletin. He runs an environmental consultancy company based in Metro Manila and Davao City and owns several other businesses such as coffee and vegetable farms.

He is also the President of Iligan-based Mapalad Energy Generating Corporation and once served as Director of Iligan Light and Power, Inc. For several years he served as program head and in 2018 was the Chair of the 20th Davao Agri-Trade Expo (DATE), the flagship event of Davao City Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc., and Conference Director of the 2020 Mindanao Business Conference.

## MODERATORS



**MARGAUX MARIE V. SALCEDO**

Department of Budget and Management

Margaux Salcedo is the Undersecretary for Communications and Stakeholder Engagement of the Department of Budget and Management. She heads the Functional Group for Advocacies, Communications, and Training Services or DBM-ACTS.

She was Communications Consultant for the Department of Budget and Management under the Duterte Administration; editor of Core, the economic analysis book series authored by Finance Sec. Benjamin Diokno; a media strategies and crisis management consultant for 10 years; spokesperson of former President Joseph Estrada; and former news anchor of GMA News Live.

She is also a food critic of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, with a column entitled First Class, published on Sundays in the Business Section. She is also the founding editor-in-chief of the award-winning Catholic website DominusEst.PH.

She has a Juris Doctor from the Ateneo Law School, where she was Senior Associate Editor of the Ateneo Law Journal; and an Economics degree from De La Salle University.



**ATTY. MARIA LUWALHATI C. DOROTAN TIUSECO**

Department of Finance

Alu is the Department of Finance's spokesperson and head of Climate Finance Policy Group, Information Management Service, and Political & Legislative Liaison Group.

Prior to joining the economic team, Alu served as chief legal counsel and policy head in the Office of Senate President Franklin M. Drilon and the Office of Senate President Juan Miguel F. Zubiri. She co-wrote and closely supervised the passage of landmark measures, including the Revised Corporation Code, Bangsamoro Organic Law, concurrence to the ratification of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement, and amendments to the Public Service Act and Retail Trade Liberalization Law, to name a few. She lent her expertise on various other measures and is well-regarded in the field of policymaking and legislation.



While Alu began her career as a corporate law associate at Picazo Buyco Tan Fider & Santos, one of the Philippines' leading firms specializing in corporate law and special projects, she has spent most of her career in government service. She also served as spokesperson of the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and permanent representative to the Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Presidential Cabinet Cluster, and convenor in a number of solid waste, urban renewal, traffic and international relations programs. Alu was likewise a member of the Boards of the Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA), the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), and served as board secretary of the Metro Manila Council (MMC).

She is a professor of Political Law Review, Constitutional Law I, and Comparative Environmental Law at the Ateneo Law School.

Alu graduated from the Ateneo Law School and obtained her Master of Laws in Energy and Environment from Tulane Law School as a Harry F. Stiles awardee. She is a member of the Philippine and New York State Bar associations.