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The 2017 MCPI Annual Conference: Embracing New Milestones and Challenges in Microfinance



DTI Secretary Ramon Lopez (center) led the oath taking of the newly-elected MCPI Board of Trustees for 2017 - 2018. (From left) Mr. Rolando B. Victoria, Mr. Gadwin E. Handumon, Mr. Angelo B. Solarte, Mr. Nilo Cellon (representing Mr. Kamrul H. Tarafder), Fr. Jose Victor E. Lobrigo, Dr. Jaime Aristotle B. Alip, Mr. Eduardo C. Jimenez, Ms. Marilyn M. Manila, Ms. Corazon Hernares (representing Dr. Cecilia del Castillo), and Mr. Jonar Dorado (representing Ms. Ma. Theresa Catipay), and Mr. Allan Robert I. Sicat.

The Microfinance Council of the Philippines, Inc. (MCPI) held its 2017 Annual Conference with the theme *Embracing New Milestones and Challenges in Microfinance* on July 27-28, 2017 at the Century Park Hotel, Manila. The conference convened more than 450 microfinance practitioners, funders, government institutions, donors, investors, private sector representatives, and other development organizations to discuss milestones in regulation, products and services, partnerships, and investments in the Philippine microfinance sector and how microfinance players have responded to challenges in serving poor and low-income households.

In his keynote speech, Secretary Ramon Lopez of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) talked about the current administration's goal of ensuring inclusive growth and addressing income inequality by empowering those at the bottom of the pyramid and marginalized sectors with the right mindset and know-how to be able to move up in life. To achieve this goal, the DTI has come up with the 7Ms for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) – Mindset Change,

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Mastery, Mentoring, Money, Machine, Market Access, and Models of Negosyo. MSMEs should be empowered so they can share the benefits of the ongoing economic growth, and improve the quality of their lives by engaging in vibrant entrepreneurial activities.

During the opening plenary, presenters discussed key milestones in microfinance including expanding and deepening of outreach of microfinance providers, establishment of industry networks and associations, expansion of services

overseas, landmark regulations such as circulars by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) and Republic Act No. 10693 or the Microfinance NGOs Act, and enhancement of microinsurance regulations. In this session, challenges were highlighted including high cost of reaching remote communities, issues in peace and order, provision of more services to reduce vulnerability of the poor, and adoption of digital financial services. Other plenary sessions discussed the importance of credit information systems, implications of data privacy, and the implementation of RA10693 through the Microfinance NGO Regulatory Council (MNRC).

The two-day conference was devoted to the following session tracks: Innovations in Products and Services; Partnerships and Investments; and Improving Internal Systems. Breakout sessions expounded on these session tracks including discussions on energy financing, enterprise development, housing finance, risk management, social performance management, partnerships with the government, and alternative sources of funds for MFIs. Separate breakout sessions were also allotted for the consultation on the draft governance, financial performance, and social performance standards as part of the accreditation of Microfinance NGOs under RA10693.

Prior to the conference, a Finance and Audit Committee Orientation workshop was held in partnership with the Institute of Corporate Directors (ICD) while a Housing Finance training was conducted in partnership with Habitat for Humanity International-Terwilliger Center for Innovation in Shelter.

New members and officers of the MCPI Board of Trustees were also elected during the Annual General Meeting of Members held on July 26, 2017. The Board members who will serve MCPI from August 2017 to July 2018 are: Fr. Jose Victor Lobrigo of SEDP-Simbag sa Pag-asenso, Inc. (Chairperson); Mr. Eduardo C. Jimenez of Kabalikatan para sa Maunlad na Buhay, Inc. (Vice-Chairperson); Ms. Marilyn M. Manila of CARD, Inc. (Corporate Secretary); Mr. Kamrul H. Tarafder of ASA Philippines Foundation (Treasurer); Mr. Angelo B. Solarte of Taytay Sa Kauswagan, Inc. (Internal Auditor); and Dr. Cecilia D. del Castillo of Negros Women for Tomorrow Foundation, Inc., Ms. Ma. Teresa G. Catipay of RAFI Microfinance, Mr. Gadwin Handumon of Paglaum Multi-Purpose Cooperative, and Mr. Rolando B. Victoria of Alalay Sa Kaunlaran, Inc. (Members).



BSP, Citi and MCPI launch 15th CMA

Nominations now open nationwide for outstanding micro business owners

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Governor Nestor A. Espenilla, Jr. and Citi Philippines CEO Aftab Ahmed led the launch ceremony of the annual Citi Microentrepreneurship Awards (CMA) held during the annual conference of the Microfinance Council of the Philippines, Inc. (MCPI) on July 28, 2017 at the Century Park Hotel Manila.

Now on its 15th year, the awards program has been successful in recognizing entrepreneurs who have overtaken poverty with support from microfinance institutions as partners in financial inclusion and enterprise development. Funded by Citi Foundation, this nationwide search for outstanding Filipino microentrepreneurs is a partnership among BSP, Citi Philippines and MCPI.

In his keynote speech, Governor Espenilla said: "The democratisation of technology, the digital finance policy package of the BSP, and the intensified focus of this government on rural development are just some of the opportunities that the industry should not overlook as it aims to take microfinance to the next level."

Governor Espenilla together with Ahmed serve as co-chairpersons of the CMA National Selection Committee that select the winners. Other members include industry and community leaders such as former Monetary Board member Antonino Alindogan, Jr., Ayala Corporation President Fernando Zobel de Ayala, RFM Corporation President and CEO Jose Ma. Concepcion III, GMA Network Chairman Atty. Felipe Gozon, Philippine Daily Inquirer Chairperson Marixi Rufino-Prieto, Voyager Innovations President Orlando Vea, and University of the Philippines-Diliman Chancellor Dr. Michael Tan.

In his remarks, Ahmed said: "Citi has been very committed in supporting financial inclusion through working with a broad cross section of microfinance institutions such as: Bayan Academy



Citi Philippines CEO Aftab Ahmed (leftmost) and BSP Governor Nestor Espenilla, Jr. (2nd from right) led the launch ceremony. They were joined by (from left) CMA national winner Honie Navor, Philippine Daily Inquirer chairperson Marixi Prieto and MCPI chair Fr. Jovic Lobrigo.

that provides entrepreneurship training; RIMANSI whose mandate is to grow the microinsurance base in the country; and MCPI with the Citi Microentrepreneurship Awards which is a great platform for providing success stories to motivate other potential microentrepreneurs to pursue their dreams."

The national winner of the Citi Microentrepreneurship Awards will receive PhP200,000 while the three regional awardees, the youth awardee, and special awardees will each get PhP100,000. The loan officers and MFI branches of each awardee are also entitled to a cash incentive of PhP10,000 while semi-finalists will receive a cash incentive of PhP10,000.

Beyond the award ceremonies, the CMA also ensures that awardees receive access to supplementary tools that can help them take their businesses to new heights. Aside from receiving microinsurance coverage and an entrepreneurship training at the Citi Microenterprise Development Center, CMA winners will also be entitled to one laptop and basic computer training. They also gain automatic membership to the CMA Alumni Network to build their market connections and participate

in a mentoring program that will help them further improve their businesses.

The CMA started on Citi's centennial year of operating in the Philippines and in wider Asia. Three years later in 2005, the CMA was adopted as a global program by Citi and introduced to over 30 other countries. Over the last decade, it has recognized 100 Filipinos, a number of whom have grown their businesses significantly in terms of profits and assets.

The closing date to submit nomination documents to MCPI is on **September 1, 2017**. Nomination forms can be downloaded here: <http://www.microfinancecouncil.org/citi-microentrepreneurship-cma-awards>

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Address all correspondence and inquiries to:

MCPI Secretariat

Unit 1909 Jollibee Plaza Condo.

F. Ortigas Jr. Road, Ortigas Center

1605 Pasig City.

Tel. Nos.: (+632) 631-5920, 631-6184

Email:

secretariat@microfinancecouncil.org

Facebook: Microfinance.Council

Twitter: MFCouncilPHL