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PHILIPPINE COMPETITION BULLETIN

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**PHILIPPINE
COMPETITION
COMMISSION**

Ensuring businesses compete and consumers benefit

PCC TAKES CENTERSTAGE IN 21ST ICN ANNUAL CONFERENCE

by Leanne Croisette N. Gorosin

The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) recently participated in a forum session in this year's International Competition Network (ICN) Annual Conference. With the theme, "By Younger Agencies for Younger Agencies – Tips and Experiences", the session enabled members to share their experiences in implementing ICN work products and projects within their respective jurisdictions, enabling access to leadership positions within the network, and optimizing valuable resources provided by the ICN to its members, among others.

Officials from various regulatory bodies who joined the session included PCC Executive Director Kenneth Tanate, Denar Biba of the Albanian Competition Authority, Mexican Federal Economic Competition Commission International Affairs Executive Director Heidi Sada Correa, Trinidad and Tobago Fair Trading Commission Executive Director Bevan Narinesingh, and Competition Authority of Kenya Policy, Research and Quality Assurance Director Adano Wario Roba. Costa Rican Commission for the Promotion of Competition Chairperson Viviana Blanco Barboza moderated the session.

Tanate explained that the PCC's vision of becoming a world-class competition authority served as the agency's reminder to continuously acquire knowledge and expertise on competition law and policy and improve its operations and management to be at par with international standards set by more mature competition agencies. He also recognized the PCC's involvement and participation in the ICN which significantly aided the agency in equipping its personnel with key learnings and tools, through exposure to actual experiences shared by other jurisdictions via various platforms provided and conferences organized by the network. "Participating in annual ICN conferences is a great source of reference materials and

guidance in making decisions and setting directions for young competition agencies like PCC", he said.

The turning point in PCC's commitment to the ICN, Tanate said, was during the agency's participation in the 2020 Bridging Project. The said project aims to encourage young and small agencies (YSAs) to take a leap forward regarding their involvement within the network, through improved leadership, engagement, advancement, and participation (LEAP). "The support offered by the Bridging Project was key in PCC's decision to take on a leadership role in the ICN Advocacy Working Group (AWG) as its co-chair. It addresses most of the challenges to increase involvement of young agencies with the ICN", Tanate said.

During PCC's leadership of the AWG, Tanate likewise shared that the ICN has also learned from the agency's experience, as PCC took on challenges typical among YSAs in developing jurisdictions. These involved expediting the approval of the Philippine Competition Act's Implementing Rules and Regulations, enabling the PCC to hit the ground running for merger reviews and enforcement cases, including a landmark investigation on the heavily-concentrated telecommunications sector in the Philippines, conducting flagship advocacy projects,

such as the PCC's Manila Forum on Competition in Developing Countries meant to raise stakeholder awareness on competition policy, and conducting capacity-building activities and knowledge-sharing sessions among fellow young ASEAN competition agencies, especially on reviewing M&A transactions.

Facilitating frequent exchange of ideas and best practices between the ICN and competition authorities, Tanate said, helps ensure that ICN activities are responsive to the needs of both mature and young agencies. On the part of YSAs, such participation provides them with tacit knowledge on industry practices and with opportunities to benefit from mentorship by ICN working group co-chairs. While recognizing the perennial difficulties faced by YSAs in developing jurisdictions due to resource constraints, Tanate emphasized the importance of competition authorities having their own International Affairs Unit to further sustain the delivery and management of ICN projects.

The 21st ICN Annual Conference was held last May 4 to 6 in Berlin, Germany. It was attended by 140 competition agencies from 130 jurisdictions and provided a platform for all member-agencies to raise and address competition policy and

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PCC LEADS ICN SESSION ON COMPETITION ADVOCACY

by Leanne Croisette N. Gorosin

The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) facilitated a forum session last May 4 as co-chair of the International Competition Network (ICN) Advocacy Working Group (AWG), discussing competition advocacy in this year's ICN Conference. Led by a distinguished panel of experts, the session enabled ICN members to share their experiences on the role of competition advocacy as a tool for enabling effective international enforcement cooperation. The results of the session will serve as inputs in developing a guide for competition authorities in using advocacy for strengthening cross-border collaboration in enforcement.

Officials from different competition authorities and partner agencies participated in the said session, including Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) Deputy Director Antonio Gomez, Superintendencia de Industria y Comercio (SIC) of Colombia Superintendent Andres Barreto, Kenyan Competition Authority (KCA) Director General Francis Kariuki, Hellenic Competition Commission (HCC) President Ioannis Lianos, and Ukrainian Antimonopoly Committee (UAC) Chairperson Olha Pishchanska. The said session was moderated by PCC Commissioner (now Officer-in-Charge Chairperson) Johannes Benjamin Bernabe.

OECD

OECD Deputy Director Gomez shared findings from OECD's joint 2021 Report with the ICN on International Cooperation in Competition Enforcement and the Report on the Implementation of OECD's Recommendations on International Cooperation. The reports illustrate that, despite several challenges, national competition authorities must have the ability to cooperate with each other on cross-border matters in achieving the economic and welfare goals of a sound competition policy.



Source: International Competition Network (ICN)

Stakeholder segmentation in competition advocacy was likewise emphasized by the OECD. For the government segment, Gomez recognized the need to improve domestic laws that can facilitate information exchange between or among different jurisdictions and encourage investigative assistance. For the agency staff segment, lack of awareness must be addressed regarding opportunities and tools for cooperation. Finally, for the business community segment, advocacy towards cross-border knowledge sharing must be optimized, especially in conducting investigations, merger reviews, and leniency applications.

Kenya

Since the focus of Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) is on strengthening regional integration through promotion of cross-border trade and investment, KCA Director General Kariuki centered on the use of trade negotiations as a platform for advocating competition disciplines and policies on a regional level. With this, advocacy efforts for common or coordinated analysis through COMESA-wide studies of competition issues in regional value chains have been conducted. These advocacy efforts aided in the analysis

of competition in COMESA member-states.

Greece

Aside from strengthening collaboration between the government and business community, HCC President Lianos acknowledged the need to build a broader alliance with civil society to ensure effective enforcement. He shared their experiences in engaging with the European Consumer Association (ECA) in streamlining competition advocacy among consumers. These include facilitating capacity-building activities for consumer associations across Europe, engagements with trade unions as part of market scoping initiatives, development of tools in educating micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) about competition law, and building connections with the academe, such as research institutions and universities, in developing evidence-based policies.

Colombia

Membership to international and regional networks such as the OECD, the ICN, and the Andean Community, greatly helped Colombia in bolstering cross-border cooperation. SIC Superintendent Barreto further

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AMENDED, ENHANCED PUBLIC SERVICE ACT A BOON FOR MARKET COMPETITION

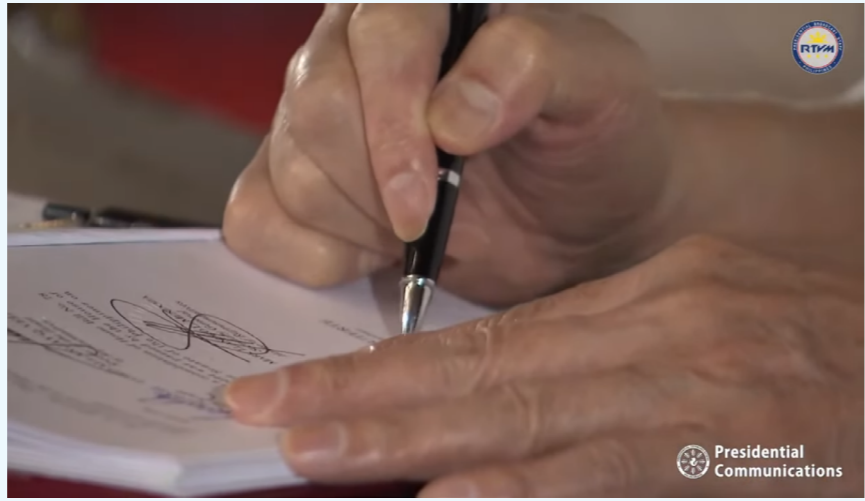
by Lea Marie F. Diño

The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) welcomes the signing of Republic Act (RA) No. 11659 or the amendments to the Public Service Act (PSA), a game-changing reform that is expected to aid the country as it pushes for economic recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Signed into law by President Rodrigo R. Duterte on March 21, 2021, RA 11659 or “An Act Amending Commonwealth Act No. 146 otherwise known as the Public Service Act” updates the decades-old law that regulates public services and public utilities. A landmark reform in RA 11659 allows for the easing out of foreign equity restrictions, which is expected to attract foreign investors and improve sectors of public service.

In a press statement released on April 8, 2021, the PCC expressed its support to the PSA amendments: “The enactment of these amendments, which encourage investments, promote job growth, and accelerate technology transfer, at this time and after more than 80 years, became more urgent as a post-pandemic response to hasten our economic recovery.”

Under the amended PSA, distinctions between public services and public utilities are made, and the scope of what can be considered as a utility is narrowed down. A public utility is therefore defined in the amended PSA as a public



service that operates, manages, and controls the following for public use: (1) distribution of electricity, (2) transmission of electricity, (3) petroleum and petroleum products pipeline transmission systems, (4) water pipeline distribution systems and wastewater pipeline systems, (5) seaports, and (6) public utility vehicles.

The markets for such sectors are considered natural monopolies, where a single firm can serve the market at a lower cost than having two or more firms. In consequence, they are covered by the 60%-40% ownership restriction, meaning 60% of the business must be owned by a Filipino citizen while the other 40% can be owned by a foreign investor.

As such, key public services will be liberalized through the

relaxation of foreign ownership restrictions. Previously considered public utilities, telecommunications and other vital services that may be identified in the future will be considered public services and can thus be owned and managed by foreign entities.

The amendments include provisions that allow the President to suspend or prohibit any investment in a public service in the interest of national security. For cases of mergers and acquisitions among public services, RA 11659 points to the PCC as the agency that may act as consultant. Moreover, restrictions are imposed on foreign state-owned enterprises (SOE), the equivalent of the Philippines’ government-owned or -controlled corporations or GOCCs, to prevent them from owning capital stock in a public utility or critical infrastructure such as telcos. Other safeguard provisions include the requirement for telcos to meet relevant ISO standards and the prevention of foreign nationals from owning 50% of capital in critical infrastructure unless their country of origin grants similar privileges to Filipinos.

The entry of new players through the removal of foreign ownership restrictions and equity limitations is seen to greatly aid in fostering competition in markets and

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ANTITRUST-TECHNOLOGY NEXUS IN FOCUS DURING PCC-DICT-USAID TIKTALKS

by Paul Jeffrey M. Ballentos

A whole-of-government approach and stakeholders’ efforts contributed to fostering competition in the Philippine technology space. In the past, the country suffered from a relatively uncompetitive telecommunications industry. However, through joint efforts and public support, the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) pushed for a more competitive telecommunications sector, thereby benefiting the public.

“Through no small effort, reform-minded advocates within and outside of government have made significant progress towards opening the sector up to greater competition, resulting in faster speeds and better connections as consumers—that is, all of us—benefit from greater choice,” PCC Chairperson Arsenio Balisacan said in his keynote speech during the webinar titled Technology, Innovation, Knowledge Talks (TIKTalks).

In the digital age, connectivity plays a quintessential role not only in business, but also in education, labor, health, and finance, among others. “Information and communications technology (ICT) is an enabling tool with a multiplier effect on opportunities that can result in numerous development dividends,” Balisacan said.

ICT also enables other technological ideas, tools, and practices to bolster the efficiency of key economic sectors. The speakers talked about technology’s impact on political economy and sciences. They highlighted how ICT played a role in efficient and effective governance, easier payments through block chain technology, improved agricultural yield through artificial intelligence, increased accessibility for persons with disabilities through voice recognition technology, and enlarged reach of medical consultations through telemedicine.

Technology also plays a role in promoting arts and culture. Speakers shared how Philippine cuisine was highlighted on social media, as well as ways for artists to earn through non-fungible tokens under blockchain technology.

Because of ICT’s limitless application and impact across key Philippine sectors, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Philippines Office of Economic Development and Governance Chief Jeff Goebel noted the country’s potential as a leader in the digital economy landscape.

“We have witnessed the unprecedented growth of the digital economy and the positive

impact of digital technologies across all sectors of the economy. This is a global boom, but one wherein the Philippines can certainly position itself to be a true regional and even global leader,” Goebel said.

TIKTalks was organized on April 5 via Zoom by the USAID-Better Access and Connectivity, in partnership with the PCC and the Department of Information and Communications Technology. It was aimed at presenting ideas and perspectives on various ICT trends to inform the government’s ICT policy and legislative agenda. Over 900 people attended the virtual event. ■

TECHNOLOGY. INNOVATIONS. KNOWLEDGE.

TIK Talks

An Online Conference on ICT-related Trends
April 5, 2022 | Tuesday | 1:00-5:00 PM
Via Zoom, Manila Time

Register here to join: bit.ly/TIKTalksPH

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Manny Nepomuceno Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialist (CAMS) Technology and Anti-Money Laundering: An Economic Opportunity for the Philippines	Luis Buenaventura Philippines Country Manager, World Golf Services How to Start with NFT Art	Kate Wilson CEO, Digital Impact Alliance Harnessing Digital Data for More Efficient and Trusted Governance	Joel Marciano Jr. Director General, Philippine Space Agency Why the Philippines Has a Space Agency
Gina Chua Executive Editor, Reuters The Promise and Perils of Technology for Journalists	Chef Tatung Culinary Heritage Advocate How I Promote Philippine Cuisine and Culture on Social Media	Emmanuel Lallana CEO, Misocorp Laying the Foundation for Data Driven Governance	Alaina Percival CEO and Co-founder, Women Who Code Closing the Gender Gap in Tech Careers

HOSTED BY: **James Deakin**, Acting Secretary, Department of Information and Communications Technology

WITH SPECIAL MESSAGES FROM:

Emmanuel Caintic, Chairperson, Philippine Competition Commission
Arsenio Balisacan, Chairperson, Philippine Competition Commission
Jeff Goebel, Deputy, Resident Director, USAID/Philippines
John Garrity, Chief of Party, USAID's BRACON Activity

ADVOCACY ROUNDUP

FRANCHISING SECTOR BRIEFED ON COMPETITION PRINCIPLES

The Philippine franchise industry offers an opportunity for stimulating economic activities and at the same time poses a challenge for antitrust regulators. Although the Philippine Competition Act (PCA) prohibits restrictions on contracts for sale of goods or services, the same law acknowledges franchising as one of the permissible business practices. Hence, there is a need for both the competition authority and the sector regulator to explore the rights and limitations set by competition law.

On April 1, the PCC met with the Philippine Franchise

Association (PFA) to discuss the fundamentals of competition law and policy through the “Webinar on the PCA and its Implementing Rules and Regulation.” Resource persons were PCC Executive Director Kenneth Tanate, PhD, mergers and acquisitions lawyer Katherine Baldos, competition enforcement lawyer Danna Jeen Ingaran, senior economist Claudine Timola, and PFA Chairperson Sherill Quintana.

During the event, the PCC noted that franchisees are required to follow a limited set of formats or supplies offered by franchisors to retain the standards of a

brand. However, there may be anti-competitive provisions in franchising contracts such as those that strictly impose the prices or geographic market of franchisees—practices that PCC monitors as part of its enforcement activities.

The PFA is a self-regulating organization of over 1,000 franchise brands in the Philippines. The webinar with the PFA is part of the continuous initiative by the PCC to work with trade associations in increasing awareness of competition law and policy.

-P. Ballentos ■

OECD TAPS PCC MERGERS CHIEF FOR WORKSHOP ON DIGITAL PLATFORMS

PCC Mergers and Acquisitions Office Director Krystal Lyn T. Uy shared the Philippines’ experience and expectations in dealing with competition in digital markets during the “Virtual Workshop on Competition for Digital Platforms.”

Uy narrated the structural change in consumer pattern, which was leaning toward digitalization. “Due to the pandemic, we’ve seen that

consumer behavior in the Philippines is shifting. You have e-commerce, digital retail payments, digital banking, digital advertising,” Uy said.

The PCC has been preparing for the advent of digital cases by bolstering the capacity of its competition enforcers and investigators to handle such cases. “We expect that there will be an uptick in cases involving digital markets, and we are actively capacitating ourselves

as competition authority on how to assess these issues in these markets,” Uy said.

Uy served as one of the resource speakers during the second day of the three-day workshop organized by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Korea Policy Centre on April 19-21.

-P. Ballentos ■

RETURN TO IN-PERSON ADVOCACY KICKS OFF WITH CAR REDUX

A multisectoral forum on the Philippine Competition Act (PCA) and the National Competition Policy (NCP), organized in partnership with the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Regional Office in Cordillera, was held last April 28 in Baguio City.

The forum marked the PCC’s return to in-person advocacy since the pandemic began in 2020 and was the Commission’s second for the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) after mounting an online Regional Roadshow in 2021. Attended by members of the Regional Development Council (RDC) and representatives from the business sector, academe

and the legal community, this year’s forum started the rollout of the NCP, pursuant to Administrative Order No. 44 (s.2021), directing government agencies to adopt and implement the competition policy.

Assistant Regional Director Stephanie Christiansen of the NEDA-CAR and PCC Executive Director Kenneth Tanate delivered the welcome messages. PCC Communications and Knowledge Management Office Director Arnold Tenorio gave a brief refresher of the PCA, PCC’s role, and the benefits of competition, while Lenvic Elicer Lesigues of PCC’s Investigation Division discussed competition

enforcement, with emphasis on anticompetitive behaviors and agreements, and abuse of dominance.

In line with the rollout of the NCP, PCC Economics Office Director Benjamin Radoc discussed the new competition policy contained in Joint Memorandum Circular 01-2020, which aims to ensure that government interventions follow competition principles. To help government agencies diagnose their competition policy-readiness, Radoc presented PCC’s Competition Impact Assessment (CIA) tool.

-L. Gomez ■

APEC HELPS DEVELOP DATA SCIENCE TOOLKIT FOR COMPETITION REGULATION

The COVID-19 pandemic hastened the process of digital transformation among businesses and consumers. Acknowledging the need for regulations to adapt to the rapidly rising digital economy, the PCC partnered with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) to develop a guide or toolkit in analyzing antitrust data, especially those from digital platforms.

“Big data can be the silent witness of competition authorities in uncovering cartels and abuses of dominance. By

analyzing aberrations and trends in price points and other factors, we reinforce our capacities for evidence-based case building and litigation,” PCC Chairperson Arsenio Balisacan said.

The Data Science for Competition Policy Toolkit aims to guide analysts and investigators on the empirical techniques for competition assessments in identifying possible collusive behavior, assessing market power, predicting outcomes of mergers, and determining appropriate penalties for anti-competitive

conduct, among others.

As part of the PCC-APEC project, the Commission organized an event titled “APEC-PCC Capacity Building Workshop on Data Science Tools for Sector Regulators and Competition Authorities amidst the New Normal,” on March 23 via MS Teams, where the toolkit was presented. More than 300 took part, including representatives from competition agencies in the APEC region.

-P. Ballentos ■

ANTITRUST AGENCY WEIGHS IN ON PRICE REGULATION, COMPETITION IN PHARMA INDUSTRY

Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) Commissioner Johannes Benjamin R. Bernabe served as a panelist in a webinar on the Philippine pharmaceutical industry titled “Gastos sa Gamot” on March 31.

The special program, hosted by DZMM TeleRadyo, cast a light on the issues that both manufacturers and consumers face, particularly the price of medicines and other pharmaceutical products.

The PCC’s issues paper on the country’s pharmaceutical industry, which looked into the challenges in the industry and its regulation, set off the discussion. The paper noted the decrease in the number of manufacturers despite the growing demand for healthcare products, as well as the high prices of drugs in the Philippines compared with those in neighboring Asian countries. (The paper can be read at <https://www.phcc.gov.ph/pcc-issues-paper-ph-pharma-2020-02/>.)

Bernabe underscored the commitment of PCC to not just push for lower prices of medicines but also improve citizens’ access to affordable drugs. According to him, generic drugs have increased in market share, i.e., there are more choices for consumers. However, the value of such generic drugs

is overshadowed by that of more well-known brands and by bigger pharmaceutical companies either through advertising or through sponsorship of physicians who prescribe their products.

The program also included a brief feature on the work of the PCC’s Pharmaceutical Technical Advisory Group (PTAG), whose experts recommended

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FORUM ON WOMEN AND COMPETITION HELD FOR PBCWE

In observance of Women's Month, the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) conducted a webinar on competition for the Philippine Business Coalition for Women Empowerment (PBCWE) on March 29, one of a series of online forums that the Commission is holding for trade associations this year

The webinar with PBCWE promoted awareness and understanding of the benefits of competition, the Philippine Competition Act (PCA) and the role of the PCC, anti-competitive agreements, and abuse of dominant position. Challenges

faced by women in the workplace and opportunities for economic recovery for women in micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) were also discussed.

PCC Commissioner Marah Victoria S. Querol, opened the forum. "If we are to speak of any meaningful recovery, this should necessarily include discussions of the opportunities and challenges faced by women in their respective workplaces. Today, the [PCC] would like to contribute to that discussion... by advocating fair market

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IN THE NEWS

Anti-competitive arrangements by property developers and internet service providers

With the entry of additional ISPs and the recent amendments to the Public Service Act allowing 100% foreign ownership of public services such as telecommunications, the proactive stance by the PCC in the issuance of a joint circular expressly prohibiting anticompetitive exclusivity arrangements by property developers and internet service providers is a welcome development. *(Luke Morgan B. Codilla, Business World Online, 05 April 2022)*

PCC pushes pro-competition practices in franchising sector

The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) said there is a need to promote pro-competition practices in the franchising sector, which is becoming an important contributor to the economy, as some contracts may have anti-competitive provisions. *(Louella Desiderio, Philippine Star, 07 April 2022)*

PCC: Proper PSA implementation key to PH growth

Proper implementation of the amended Public Service Act (PSA) will improve public services and enhance the prospects for the country to join the ranks of dynamic and prosperous economies in Asia, the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) said. *(Bernie Cahiles-Magkilat, Manila Bulletin Online, 08 April 2022)*

ASEAN ANTITRUST CHIEFS PUSH FOR COMPETITION POLICY IN POST-PANDEMIC RECOVERY

Emphasizing the importance of retaining competition policies in post-pandemic economic recovery, the ASEAN Heads of Competition Agencies (AHCA) issued a joint statement last April 14, in support of the ASEAN's pandemic recovery efforts as directed by the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF). In attendance were heads of competition agencies from Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Myanmar, and Thailand.

In the Joint Statement, competition policy's contribution to the objectives stated in the ACRF was recognized, alongside

the increased governmental collaboration in facilitating economic recovery. It also reaffirmed the AHCA's statement on adopting certain actions to maintain and improve competition, which include focusing enforcement activities on markets and industries that are important for economic recovery and ensuring that anti-competitive activities do not take place under the guise of economic recovery, among others.

The ACRF is a five-point strategy that enumerates the ASEAN's "response through the different stages of recovery, by focusing on key sectors and segments of society that are most affected

by the pandemic, setting broad strategies and identifying measures for recovery in line with sectoral and regional priorities."

The Joint Statement can be accessed through the PCC website at <https://www.phcc.gov.ph/press-releases/pcc-asean-competition-policy/>. The ACRF can be viewed and downloaded at https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/ASEAN-Comprehensive-Recovery-Framework_Pub_2020_1.pdf.

-K. Capati ■



2nd ASEAN Heads of Competition Agencies (AHCA) Meeting

PCC Takes...continued from page 2

enforcement issues, including the AWG plenary session on enforcement cooperation through advocacy in which PCC Commissioner Johannes Benjamin R. Bernabe served as moderator.

The PCC, represented by Commissioner Bernabe and Exec. Dir. Tanate, sits as Co-Chair of the ICN AWG. Together with the Superintendencia de Industria y Comercio

(SIC) of Colombia, the PCC is taking the lead on ICN AWG's project, "Optimizing Advocacy to Enhance International Cooperation towards more Effective Enforcement". The objective of this project is to identify best practices and possible issues in advocacy efforts geared towards enforcement of competition law and policy and to formulate guidelines which can aid competition agencies for such efforts.

The AWG plenary session moderated by the PCC during the 21st ICN Annual Conference served to jump start the said project and the discussion on advocacy efforts between and among competition agencies. Competition agencies were invited to share their experiences to the AWG both in writing and through participation in webinars for the working group to be able to come up with the output guidelines for the project. ■

mentioned that Colombia has signed 11 memoranda of understanding with stakeholders and partner authorities, adopting bilateral and regional approaches in competition advocacy. He likewise described that working with other international authorities has facilitated discussions on the best practices of various regimes being adopted by different jurisdictions.

Ukraine

UAC Chairperson Pishchanska highlighted Ukraine's emergency efforts to inform ICN member agencies about its post-war recovery. These include redefining new economic realities by reviving the country's state of business and preparing new plans to

rebuild its economy. She also described that Ukraine aims to further liberalize various business regulations to be consistent with the global goal of creating an effective market, especially introducing stimulation initiatives for domestic and external investors. In its post-war reconstruction, Ukraine takes an active part in monitoring the distribution and effective use of funds contributed to the country by international donors. Additionally, she explained that they shall conduct a full analysis of Ukraine's state of competition in post-war markets, eliminate potential barriers for market entry and information exchange, and develop an effective mechanism for cooperation with competition authorities in terms of joint investigations.

The AWG plenary session moderated by the PCC during the 21st ICN Annual Conference, held last May 4 to 6 in Berlin, Germany, served to jump-start discussions on advocacy efforts between and among competition agencies. Together with the SIC, the PCC is taking the lead in ICN AWG's project, "Optimizing Advocacy to Enhance International Cooperation towards more Effective Enforcement". The objective of this project is to identify best practices and possible issues in advocacy efforts geared towards the enforcement of competition law and policy, and to formulate guidelines which can aid competition agencies for such efforts.



competition and support of women and their empowerment in the workplace," she said.

Marilyn Romero-Ventenilla, chairperson of Teleperformance Women Philippines; Mona Celine Marie V. Yap, officer-in-charge of the Small Business Cooperatives Development Promotions Office of the Quezon City Government; and PCC's Marinella Gilda L. Gamboa, Atty. Sheryl Fortune V. Supapo-Sandigan, and Atty. Diana Jean T. Villafuerte served as resource persons.

The PBCWE is an organization of businesses established in 2017 to pursue gender equality in the workplace and women's economic empowerment nationwide.

-L. Diño ■

level the playing field. With new players, businesses are expected to be more attuned to consumer demand, thereby bringing more choices, lower prices, and higher quality of goods and services to customers.

With such benefits in tow, the measure is seen as essential in speeding up the recovery of the economy from the public health crisis and in keeping the country's economic growth on track.

Product innovation and opportunities for knowledge transfer are also seen as an effect of the relaxation on restrictions. The increase of players in the market is also expected to generate more employment opportunities and bring in more foreign investments.

Since its establishment in 2016, the PCC recognizes and welcomes legal reforms that enable competition among businesses through the entry of new players, thereby contributing to a level playing field.

To read the full statement of the PCC, visit <https://www.phcc.gov.ph/press-statements/public-service-act-psa/>. ■

pooled procurement and price regulation as the answers to drug purchase woes.

He reiterated the agency's commitment to monitoring the market and investigating the value chain to ensure that there is no abuse of dominant position, and no cartels which can harm consumers. Bernabe said the PCC coordinates with the Departments of Health (DOH) and of Trade and Industry (DTI), as well as with other stakeholders for the implementation of policies that will help control drug prices and provide better access to drugs.

Dr. Anna Melissa Guerrero, chief of the DOH Pharmaceutical Division and Dr. Beaver Tamesis, president of the Pharmaceutical & Healthcare Association of the Philippines joined Commissioner Bernabe in the webinar panel.

The special program can be viewed at the DZMM TeleRadyo YouTube page: https://youtu.be/qxNx8R_OKPQ.

-L. Diño ■

IN THE NEWS

Anti-trust chief to lead economic planning agency

The country's anti-trust agency chief Arsenio Balisacan said he has accepted an offer from incoming president Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to be his economic planning chief. (Neil Jerome Morales, InterAksyon, 24 May 2022)

PCC opens i-Station in Legazpi City; Cebu and Davao to follow

The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) has opened a new investigation and collaboration station (i-Station) in Legazpi City as part of its campaign to deliver services faster across the regions. (Revin Mikhael D. Ochave, Business World Online, 02 June 2022)

M&A

DASHBOARD

Notifications received from April to June 2022:

0

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255

OTHER PUBLICATIONS



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