

## **Moving Davao de Oro**

Secretary Silvestre H. Bello III

3<sup>RD</sup> De Oro Business and Investment Conference

March 4, 2019 Dhusit Thani Resort, Compostela Valley

Governor Jayvee Tyron Uy and the local officials of the gold-rich Compostela Valley which will soon be renamed Davao de Oro; stakeholders, fellow workers in government, a pleasant day!

Thank you Governor Uy for inviting me to your 3<sup>rd</sup> De Oro Business and Investment Conference. I am also pleased to join you in celebrating Compostela Valley's founding anniversary and Bulawan Festival.

I congratulate the provincial government for climbing from the 67 ranking in 2016 to 30 in 2017 in terms of business competitiveness. Your fete for the abundant natural resources makes you the only Mindanao local government to land in the ten richest provinces in terms of assets, at a comfortable second spot.

I know this is very important to Governor Uy who is calling on all of you to vote "Yes" on the measure renaming Compostela Valley to Davao de Oro in a plebiscite scheduled middle of this year.

Once renamed, the province will be able to proudly claim it belongs to the Davao region with natural wealth that has long attracted business and investments, particularly the corporate mining world.

You will be able to take advantage of the positive image that the region is getting particularly since President Rodrigo Roa-Duterte comes from here.

This Business and Investment Conference (Biz Icon) is a big help to the local government in managing and promoting your rich natural resources and major industries.

The numerous business establishments, vast gold and silver mines, banana plantations, and modern infrastructures brought the province to its current status. You ensured responsible stewardship of your natural resources so that the constituents will truly benefit from the wealth of the province.

Thanks to Governor Uy's good governance. The competitiveness of the investment climate was enhanced and resulted to a reduction in poverty while ensuring with respect the needs of the community and the environment.

Among the opportunities to be generated out of this Conference are thousands of jobs not just for the people of Compostela Valley but the entire Davao region. Jobs to be created will have a ripple effect in the local economy. More jobs mean more money circulating in the community.

The Philippines is faced with a dilemma that, if it cannot export more goods, it will end up exporting more people. Of course, we would rather export more goods than people.

No less than President Duterte gave the assurance that the government is striving to improve conditions in the country so that working abroad will only be an option for Filipinos. This is his ultimate dream for the country's greatest export for decades, the OFWs.

Although he won't be able to realize this dream during his term, the President is working very hard in taking the first step.

Let me salute the provincial government of Compostela Valley in partnership with the municipal governments and line agencies like

DTI, DA, BFAR, DENR, DILG, and of course DOLE for this successful Biz Icon.

We are confident that as industry players come together to match with potential investors, Compostela Valley's potentials are again showcased as an investment destination. We hope that more investments for new and expansion projects will be generated.

Speaking of more investments, it's time that economic zones be established in the province. As one of the key strategies pushed by DTI and the Compostela Valley Investment Board, it would be best if Economic Zones are finally realized here.

Finally, while the peace and order situation in Mindanao made some businesses wary, the local government takes pride in the generally stable condition in the province. We note the decreased crime rate reported by Governor Uy himself.

I therefore encourage entrepreneurs and investors to remain steadfast and share in getting the economy going. Invest and make Compostela Valley a prime capital destination in Davao region.

I look forward to seeing the future Davao de Oro contribute immensely to the economy of the region and the rest of the country.

Mabuhay ang bagong Davao de Oro!