



Department of Justice

Message for National Competition Day



LEILA M. DE LIMA
Secretary

December 5, 2014 marks yet another milestone in the country's economic landscape. As we commemorate National Competition Day, we join the rest of the world in observing World Competition Day with the aim of raising awareness about the benefits of free and fair competition and the role of competition policy and law (CPL) in promoting consumer protection and attaining economic justice.

The Department of Justice, through our Office for Competition (OFC), guided by the principles of fairness, accountability and transparency, seeks to advance economic justice through an effective competition regime across all sectors of the Philippine economy. We envision a country where consumers are given better choices or alternatives at lower cost while businesses, big or small, are allowed to thrive, thus, propel economic growth and development.

We have thus focused our programs and initiatives on introducing reforms in sectors that impact consumer welfare the most - energy, telecommunications, transport, and commodity. This year, we investigated the alleged collusion in the garlic industry which resulted in

unwarranted price increases. We also pushed for the liberalization of our harbor pilots industry to increase ports' competitiveness by lowering the cost of transporting goods. We will continue to investigate and prosecute offenders and advocate for reforms in order to achieve effective competition in our markets.

Through CPL enforcement, we can put an end to the anticompetitive practices of greedy businesses. Competition in markets is supposed to be free and fair. Hence, the theme "Advancing Economic Justice through Competition Policy and Law (CPL)" for this year's NCD celebration is fitting.

Notably, the country's ranking in the 2014-2015 Global Competitiveness Report of the World Economic Forum has leaped to the 52nd spot out of 144 economies, compared to the 59th spot out of 148 last year. According to WEF, the country's gain of 33 places from 2010 is the largest over that period among all countries. Indeed, economic reforms are making headways.

The international community has also recognized our initiatives in promoting competition in view of our strong and widespread advocacy efforts, one of which is the previous 4th ASEAN Competition Conference (ACC) hosted by the DOJ-OFC and attended by global competition experts as well as international partners.

As we continue to promote a culture of competition and level the market playing field, we commit to renewing our collaborative efforts with the stakeholders. In the years ahead, the DOJ-OFC will remain steadfast in its mandate to investigate all cases involving violations of competition laws, prosecute offenders and enforce competition policies and laws to protect consumers.

We invite everyone to join us in the week-long activities we have planned for the NCD celebration which includes the conduct of the first ever National Competition Conference (NCC) at the Philippine International Convention Center, which will serve as a platform for discussion of the most relevant competition issues facing the country and the world.

Let us all work together in advancing economic justice for all.

Thank you.