



PARTICIPATE DEMOCRACY SUMMIT

PARTICIPATE DEMOCRACY SUMMIT: Strengthening Spaces for Democracy

Summary of Proceedings

11 – 12 May 2023

Novotel Cubao, Quezon City, Philippines

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Acknowledgement

The **Political Participation for Greater Electoral Integrity (PARTICIPATE)** would like to express its gratitude to its institutional partners for significantly contributing to the success of the **PARTICIPATE Democracy Summit: Strengthening Spaces for Democracy** held last 11 – 12 May 2023 at the Novotel Araneta City, Cubao, Quezon City. **PARTICIPATE** acknowledges British Embassy, Galing Pook Foundation, Hirayang Kabataan, International Center for Innovation, Transformation, and Excellence in Governance, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, United States Agency for International Development, and Youth Leadership for Democracy.

PARTICIPATE would like to thank individuals and experts whose names are mentioned in this report for generously sharing their knowledge and experiences which greatly enriched summit sessions and discussions.

PARTICIPATE would like to thank hosts, moderators, and facilitators in the Summit who made it possible to have vibrant and engaged yet orderly discussions as well as clarity in communicating the messages brought forth during the event.

PARTICIPATE would like to thank summit documenters for their diligent reporting of the various summit sessions.

PARTICIPATE would like to thank the Project Management Office staff who with full faith and commitment, tirelessly labored to ensure that the **PARTICIPATE Democracy Summit** will be momentous, unforgettable, and successful.

Lastly, **PARTICIPATE** would like to thank its Consortium – Ateneo School of Government (ASOG), La Salle Institute of Governance (LSIG), National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL), Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE NGO), and Initiatives for Dialogue and Empowerment through Alternative Legal Services (IDEALS) - for their consistent, active, and full cooperation in realizing the program objectives.



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Acronym

ABI	Ateneo Policy Center Bangsamoro Initiative
AI	Artificial Intelligence
ALERTayo	Action for Electoral Reform and Transparency
ANSA – EAP	Affiliated Network for Social Accountability in East Asia and the Pacific
APC	Ateneo Policy Center
ASOG	Ateneo School of Government
BARMM	Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
BAKS	Being a Knowledgeable Society
BEC	Bangsamoro Electoral Code
BEO	Bangsamoro Election Organization
BOL	Bangsamoro Organic Law
BOSES Pilipinas	<i>Boses, Opinyon, Siyasat, at Siyensya para sa Pilipinas</i>
BRAC	Bangsamoro Registration and Accreditation Committee
BSKE	Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan Election
BTA	Bangsamoro Transition Authority
BWC	Bangsamoro Women Commission
CAB	Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro
CCS	Canvassing and Consolidation System
COC	Certificate of Canvass
CODE - NGO	Caucus of Development NGO Networks
COMELEC	Commission on Elections
CoP	Chief of Party
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSV	Comma Separated Value
DepED	Department of Education
DLSU	De La Salle University
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
EMS	Election Management System
EML	Election Markup Language
ER	Election Returns
FASTrAC	Fully Automated System with Trans and Count
GAD	Gender and Development
GoP	Government of the Philippines
IDEALS	Initiatives for Dialogue and Empowerment through Alternative Legal Services
INCITEGoV	International Center for Innovation, Transformation and Excellence in Governance
IP	Indigenous Peoples
LENTE	Legal Network for Truthful Elections
LSCR	Local Source Code Review
LSIG	La Salle Institute of Governance
MBHTE	Minister of Basic, Higher, and Technical Education
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
MOH	Ministry of Health
MSSD	Minister of Social Services and Development
NAMFREL	National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections

OFW	Overseas Filipino Worker
PARTICIPATE	Political Participation for Greater Electoral Integrity
PCW	Philippine Commission on Women
PDP – LABAN	<i>Partido Demokratiko Pilipino – Lakas ng Bayan</i>
PWD	Person with Disability
QR	Quick Response
SGA	Special Geographic Area
SK	Sangguniang Kabataan
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAD	Voters’ Assistance Desk
VAW	Violence Against Women
VCM	Vote Counting Machines
VVPAT	Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail

Introduction

The **Political Participation for Greater Electoral Integrity (PARTICIPATE)** is a non-partisan, non-political program implemented by a consortium composed of Ateneo School of Government (ASOG), La Salle Institute of Governance (LSIG), National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL), Caucus of Development Non-government Organization Networks (CODE-NGO) and Initiatives for Dialogue and Empowerment through Alternative Legal Services (IDEALS).

PARTICIPATE aims to increase and enhance political participation and constituent development with its three interrelated objectives: 1) Bolster citizen oversight of electoral processes; 2) Increase the availability and accessibility of information to promote informed voting; and 3) Support constituency-building for electoral reforms. It started its operations in August 2020 and after almost three years, despite the CoVID 19 pandemic, has achieved significant steps in further democratizing the political environment in the Philippines and in reforming political and electoral processes to be more relevant.

The **PARTICIPATE Democracy Summit: Strengthening Spaces for Democracy** is a momentous gathering of democracy stakeholders to engage in broader and more inclusive discussions on developments and issues affecting political participation and the pursuit of democratic reforms. The Summit aims to achieve convergence among democratic advocates and stakeholders by talking about what has been happening to the democratic environment in the Philippines, what are the threats currently challenging its foundation, and what can be done together despite differences in political beliefs and agenda. It is a venue where political polarization takes a back seat and stakeholders will find a middle ground so that genuine talks on democracy can flourish anew. It is a starting point for continuing dialogue where there is a genuine spirit of democracy that is inclusive, deliberative, and participatory.

The Summit also takes stock of gains, good practices, as well as lessons learned of the PARTICIPATE and shares it with stakeholders.

Summit Objectives

Specifically, the **PARTICIPATE Democracy Summit: Strengthening Spaces for Democracy** has the following objectives:

1. Provide space for political and electoral stakeholders from government, academe, international groups, think tanks, and civil society organizations to discuss, debate, and exchange views in order to move forward the agenda of greater political participation and democratic as well as electoral reforms regardless of political affiliation.
2. Make available a venue that will further strengthen stakeholders' network and agenda in pushing and advocating for citizen empowerment through political and electoral reforms.
3. Identify ways and means, through discussions, plenary sessions, exhibit, and other activities how to navigate and deal with challenges that affect the integrity of the election system such as political dynasty, misinformation / disinformation, and political party development.
4. Layout the framework for the sustainability and expansion of PARTICIPATE-initiated ideas including partnerships on strengthening citizens' political participation and pursuing democratic reforms.
5. Provide the public with firsthand access to studies, survey results, policy briefs, advocacy materials, technology, and other knowledge products produced by PARTICIPATE.
6. Present draft policy reforms to the public on election automation, campaign finance, voter's education, and political party development which resulted from the consultations and forums conducted by PARTICIPATE.
7. Disseminate gains, good practices, and lessons learned in implementing the PARTICIPATE.

PARTICIPATE Democracy Summit: Strengthening Spaces for Democracy

11-12 May 2023 | Novotel Manila Araneta City, Cubao, Quezon City

Program of Activities

Summit Day 1 11 May 2023 (Thursday)				
8:00 AM – 9:30 AM	Registration			
9:30 AM – 10:00 AM	Opening of the summit exhibit Ang Ambag Ko: Toward an Inclusive Democracy			
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Opening ceremony and plenary session: Strengthening Spaces for Democracy			
12:00 PM – 01:30 PM	Lunch			
1:30 PM – 3:00 PM	Breakout Session 1: Building Democratic Institutions in the Bangsamoro: Key Lessons from the Political Transition	Breakout Session 2: Populism, Polarization, and Disinformation Post - 2022 Elections	Breakout Session 3: Strengthening Democratic Spaces through Stronger Civil Society	Breakout Session 4: Reforming the Philippine Electoral System
3:00 PM – 3:30 PM		Break		
3:30 PM – 5:00 PM		Breakout Session 5: Proposed Standards for an Alternative Automated Election System	Breakout Session 6: Strengthening Democracy through Youth Participation in Local Governance Processes	Breakout Session 7: Strengthening Local Democracy through Barangay and Youth Initiatives
5:00 PM – 6:30 PM	Exhibit Viewing			
6:30 PM – 8:00 PM	Reception Dinner			
Summit Day 2 12 May 2023 (Friday)				
8:30 AM – 9:00 AM	Registration			
9:00 AM – 10:30 AM	Plenary Session: Gender Equality and Online Political Participation			
10:30 AM – 11:00 AM	Break			
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Closing Plenary Session: Beyond the Ballot: The Priority Political and Electoral Reforms for Strengthening Democratic Spaces			
12:00 PM – 12:30 PM	Closing Ceremony			
12:30 PM – 02:00 PM	Lunch			

PARTICIPATE DEMOCRACY SUMMIT DAY 1
MAY 11, 2023

Opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony of the Exhibit
Ang Ambag Ko: Toward an Inclusive Democracy

9:30 AM – 10:00 AM | Monet Ballroom 1 and 2 Walkway

The Summit opened with the official launching and opening of the PARTICIPATE Democracy Summit Exhibit with the theme, ***Ang Ambag Ko: Toward an Inclusive Democracy***. **Dr. Julio Teehankee**, Chief of Party (CoP) of PARTICIPATE, gave the opening remarks and welcomed the participants. He shared that in more than two years, PARTICIPATE has been committed in advocating for access to information and supporting advocates for democracy. He recognized the Summit as a first step towards a better and brighter Philippines with electoral integrity. Officials of the PARTICIPATE Consortium, together with Dr. Teehankee, led the ceremonial ribbon cutting to signify the opening of the summit exhibit to the public.

Part of the ceremony was the signing of the Call-to-Action Panel by the consortium officials symbolizing commitment to a deliberative, inclusive and participative democracy. It was followed by a walkthrough of the exhibit while the emcee was giving a quick tour of the exhibit contents which was presented digitally. Each digital stand set-up in individual kiosks was introduced wherein the public can access informative and advocacy materials.

The exhibit showcases knowledge products from initiatives and outputs of the PARTICIPATE Consortium and was divided into the following sub-themes:

- ***Boses at Boto***: A Look at the Citizen Oversight in Philippine Election
- ***Share Mo 'Yan***: Policy Briefs for Improving Electoral Systems and Increasing Citizen Participation
- ***What the Fake***: Ang Fake News Challenge ng Bayan
- ***ALERTAYO***: Ang Ultimate Anti-*Marites* Guide
- ***#AngGustokonglider***: Capacitating Emerging Leaders in The Bangsamoro
- ***Kasama sa Pagbabago***: Understanding the Development Reform Agenda

The exhibit opening emcees was **Ms. Michelle Ong** of the ABS-CBN News Channel and was streamed via the PARTICIPATE Facebook page as well as the consortiums respective Facebook pages. Participants who were already inside the main plenary session hall were able to share experience of the ceremony as the whole proceeding was also streamed inside the hall.

Opening Ceremony and Plenary Session

Strengthening Spaces for Democracy

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM | Monet Ballroom 1 and 2

Time	Activity	Speaker
10:00 AM - 10:05 AM	National Anthem	
10:05 AM- 10:10 AM	Invocation	
10:10 AM - 10:20 AM	Welcome Message	<p>Br. Bernard Oca, FSC University President, De La Salle University</p> <p>Fr. Roberto Yap, S.J. University President, Ateneo de Manila University</p>
10:20 AM - 11:45 AM	Plenary Discussion: Strengthening Spaces for Democracy	<p>Representative Jose Alvarez President Partido Demokratiko Pilipino – Lakas ng Bayan (PDP-Laban)</p> <p>Atty. Neri Colmenares Chairperson, BAYAN MUNA Partylist</p> <p>Ms. Rafaela David President, Akbayan Party</p> <p>Mr. Ernest Ramel Jr. Chairperson, Aksyon Demokratiko</p> <p>Representative Joey Sarte Salceda Second District of Albay</p> <p>Honorable Sitti Djalía Turabin – Hataman Mayor, City of Isabela, Basilan</p>
11:45 AM - 12:00 PM	Synthesis and Overview of the Breakout Sessions	
<p>Moderator</p> <p>Mr. Christian Esguerra Information Specialist, PARTICIPATE</p> <p>Emcee</p> <p>Ms. Michelle Ong News Anchor, ABS-CBN News Channel</p>		

Opening Ceremony

As the activities moved inside the main plenary ballroom, the emcee prepped the participants by asking them some of their expectations from the Summit. One participant expressed interest in finding out what to do with our current situation and actions that can be taken in response to the situation. Another participant would like to find, through the Summit, how to deal with fake news and disinformation.

Welcome messages were delivered by **Br. Bernard Oca, FSC**, President of the De La Salle University and **Fr. Roberto Yap SJ**, President of the Ateneo de Manila University.

Br. Oca FSC delivered his first welcome message with a recorded video. After acknowledging members of the opening panel, government institutions, academic community, civil society organizations, media partners and champions of democracy, he introduced the role of the De La Salle University (DLSU) through LSIG in the PARTICIPATE Consortium and how it contributes to the PARTICIPATE objectives. He reflected on the works of PARTICIPATE which include producing research and knowledge products on political participation, strengthening election oversight and engaging electoral stakeholders. He emphasized the timeliness of the Summit with the present threats on disinformation, human rights abuses, weakening of institutional checks and balances, and shrinking spaces of participation that are shaking our democracy. He encouraged participants to find ways in navigating through the challenges and to formulate and discuss initiatives in reforming democratic institutions and in exploring ways to promote women and sectoral participation in politics.

He further stated that DLSU through LSIG is dedicated to a just, peaceful, and progressive nation with a pledge to work closely with stakeholders in promoting and safeguarding democracy, good governance and civil participation through research, technical assistance and direct community engagement.

Fr. Yap, SJ welcomed the participants as they strengthened spaces in democracy. He reiterated the purpose of the Summit which is to exercise civil discourse as they engage, exchange ideas, and recommit themselves to upholding democracy. He recalled the birth of PARTICIPATE in August 2020 with the cloud of then upcoming elections and the decline of civic and political engagement of Filipinos. He recounted how ASOG sought to rethink ways of driving the participation of Filipinos through PARTICIPATE which served as a platform in discussions and research of democratic governance and processes, producing research papers and policy briefs, and generating advocacy and information campaigns to engage Filipinos. He recalled the strategies of PARTICIPATE in combating misinformation and disinformation while collaborating with government institutions in fostering democratic governance.

Fr. Yap gave a context on the state of democratic spaces, how it has been extremely challenged due to factors such as disasters, poverty, inequality, and disinformation. He emphasized the influence of fake news as a threat to democracy and called to find solutions to these challenges while ensuring solid public trust in democratic solutions and processes. He shared the mission of Ateneo de Manila University (ADMU) as an institution to cultivate an inclusive, diverse, and sustainable society which recognizes the need for opportunities to collaborate, engage in meaningful conversations, and prioritize a whole-of-nation approach to combat disinformation and renew civic participation. In closing, he called for a reversion of the erosion of democratic foundations by establishing a clear and

well-defined agenda as well as by taking deliberate steps to build a more accountable and responsive political environment.

Dr. Julio Teehankee followed with an opening message. After expressing appreciation to the summit organizers and acknowledging some friends who came to the event, Dr. Teehankee mentioned the tedious preparation for the Summit given that it is the first ever gathering of advocates for democracy. He recognized the different individuals and organizations attending which signifies a consolidation of democracy in the society. According to him, the attendance of participants serves as an inspiration and hope to sustain the efforts for advancing genuine democracy. On the two-day summit, he said it will discuss issues essential to the Philippines and its collective future and reminded them to be sensitive to the struggles of ordinary Filipinos in extraordinary times.

Given the partisanship and the division in the recent elections, Dr. Teehankee emphasized the need to rebuild a common ground. He urged participants to listen and learn from each other and that conversations must include how to strategically engage institutions, sustain the reform agenda, and achieve the desired development outcomes. He related that PARTICIPATE conducted consultations with various groups in the Philippines, publication of researches, policy briefs and learning materials, and knowledge sharing activities as well as training in support of strengthening democracy and engaging stakeholders. Even during the lockdown, PARTICIPATE launched discussions and provided policy recommendations on Covid-proofing the elections which underscored the importance of empowering citizens to be able to make informed decisions on election day.

Dr. Teehankee expressed gratitude as he cited the efforts of each PARTICIPATE implementing team such as the Communications Team, Research / Inclusive Democracy Team, and Ateneo Policy Center Bangsamoro Initiative (ABI) as well as the members of the PARTICIPATE Consortium.

In closing, Dr. Teehankee defined democracy as something that has meanings and nuances. He said that the Consortium aims to push for greater transparency and accountability of the electoral process and that It is necessary to establish clear guidelines to ensure political equality and level the political playing field. He reaffirmed their commitment in doing what they can and what they had to do. He expressed hope that the summit participants will value the learnings from the practices of the consortium partners in promoting democracy and active citizen engagement.

Opening Plenary Discussion

The opening plenary session gathered political leaders and representatives from political parties to discuss the current state of politics and democracy in the Philippines and share ideas on how to address political polarization as well as ways forward for unity and harmony despite differences in political views and beliefs.¹

¹ In 29 April 2023, PARTICIPATE gathered representatives from major political parties including LAKAS-CMD, PDP-LABAN, BAYAN MUNA, LIBERAL PARTY, AKBAYAN, LABOR PARTY, AKSYON DEMOKRATIKO, and PARTIDO REPORMA in the first ever multi-party dialogue on political party development. The representatives agreed to pass a law penalizing party switching, acknowledged to strengthen linkages between political parties and civil societies, and support women's political participation.

The opening plenary was moderated by **Mr. Christian Esguerra**, PARTICIPATE Communications Specialist and an award-winning journalist as well as 2020 Marshall McLuhan Awardee. Shifting between casual Filipino language and English, he introduced the members of the opening panel pane composed of:

1. **Representative Jose Alvarez** of the 2nd District of Palawan and President of PDP-Laban Party
2. **Atty. Neri Colmenares**, Chair of Bayan Muna Partylist and former Bayan Muna Partylist Representative
3. **Mayor Sitti Djalía Turabin-Hataman** of Isabela City, Basilan
4. **Mr. Ernest Ramel Jr.**, Chairperson of Aksyon Demokratiko
5. **Ms. Rafaela David**, President of Akbayan Citizens' Party
6. **Representative Joey Salceda** of the 2nd District of Albay

Focus questions were posed by the moderator to serve as discussion triggers and a way to exchange and share ideas and experiences among the panelists.

The initial question was whether Filipinos are more united or divided now after the 2022 elections given that the narrative used by the winning national candidates was that of unity.

Among the responses of the panelists are:

Representative Salceda: *With the 85 percent trust rating of the President, we cannot be called divided people. The Filipino people are more unified after 2022 but not in the direction that we would want it to be. There has been no massive polarization and the people are more unified around certain consensus. The key is to rebuild economic opportunities and efficiency of institutions because authoritarianism thrives in economic and political frustration.*

Ms. Rafaela David: *The allure of unity is strong but we still believe that political divisions are not necessarily bad in a democracy. They can be healthy with the diversity of ideas and pluralist systems where healthy discussions can thrive. But we have to guard against two things when talking about unity and polarization, silences dissent and political divisiveness that enables violence against others. It is important to note that the opposition, which is a crucial part of democracy, is threatened. This results in silencing and polarization which in turn results in sorting, organizing life by political affiliations. We must not crystalize differences but nurture our similarities.*

Representative Jose Alvarez: *The 31 million who voted for Marcos Jr. is more than 50 percent of the electorate. The unifying factor is the candidate himself and we have to give him a chance to perform. In any political combat, there is no such thing as unity.*

Atty. Neri Colmenares: *The 2022 elections are different. It transcended beyond the personalities of candidates. Critical issues surfaced such as Martial Law and stands on the previous administration's policies. It all became issue-oriented. After the elections, more issues contributed to the divisiveness, discourses on charter change, Maharlika funds, and among supporters of Duterte and Pres. Marcos Jr. It is important to point out that divisiveness is a vibrant process of democracy. The problem arises when it is polarized into hate speech, curtailment of academic freedom and expression, red-tagging,*

etc. It compromises the integrity and essence of the right to suffrage and participation of the people. In this sense, there are still divisions when issues before the elections persist after the elections.

Mayor Sitti Djalila Turabin - Hataman: *(Recalling her personal experience of divisiveness in Isabela) The people of Isabela City of Basilan Province has consistently voted no during plebiscites to the inclusion of Isabela in the BARMM. It was a difficult process campaigning for the Bangsamoro Organic Law. We lost in our Yes stand in the plebiscite but I proceeded to run for mayor during the 2022 elections. The whole process opened wounds inflicted by the past, with the massacres and the pains of families. I won the elections even if the locals think they will have to subscribe to certain beliefs under my leadership. I was left wondering why the people opposed the BOL but supported a Moro woman to lead them. In the 2022 national elections, I had endorsed a presidential candidate who did not win in the locality. This taught me a lesson to be more open, learn to listen, and create more democratic spaces that are inclusive given that they are a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious community.*

Mr. Ernest Ramel Jr.: *Every after election, there are those who will gravitate towards the winning side. Meanwhile, the electorates learn to accept the results and give chances for the winners to perform. In a way, there is unification. However, polarization is more prevalent. There is a distinction of political colors especially in social media. But they are forgetting those in the middle. Issues remain the same regardless of who is elected. It is interesting to pay attention to those in the middle, those who believe that the government will do more for them. We should not be comforted in our echo chambers where the same discussions occur.*

The next question was addressed to the representatives in the panel. Specifically, what was asked was about those who did not vote for President Marcos Jr. and what they were missing from the 31 million people who voted for him.

Representative Joey Salceda commented that what should be discussed is how to move forward rather than be talking about what has been missed.

The moderator clarified the question is about people who make noise about moving on from defeat in the 2022 elections but the conversation is missing more important issues like the economy.

Among the panelists' comments are:

Representative Jose Alvarez: *Those who have voted for President Marcos Jr. are those who are not affected by martial law. Since the president presented to change the country, we should give him a chance. Politicians listen to their surroundings. If the president is performing his promises, the Filipinos should rally behind him instead of the other losing candidate. Polarization is present even after the elections because there will be differences in political party and candidates. We will not be unified as a country if we don't have a leader who was elected by the majority given that the President was voted by the majority of electorates. If we see that the president did not perform his duties, then we should see what we can do.*

Mr. Ernest Ramel: *There has been a discourse with the return of the Marcoses during the elections. But since the electorate experienced someone who has been in power, they tend to perceive the winning candidate as without experience or power. Despite that, we must continue to find a common ground to help forward the plans of the current administration.*

Ms. Rafaela David: *Finding the common ground is important in finding progress and development in the country. But moving forward can only be done if we have ensured justice on previous sins. The lack of accountability is an invitation to future violations and abuses. A citizenry that cannot hold those in power accountable redirect their dissatisfaction to their fellow citizens.*

The next question was how to move forward from disinformation during the electoral campaigns.

Ms. Rafaela David: *Disinformation and making contents that outrages the citizens turned into a business. It somehow shaped our electoral terrain. We should look into the reforms that we can do so access to information will not be a business monopolized by few people.*

Mayor Sitti Djalia Turabin - Hataman: *The generations before us passed down the narratives that shaped our beliefs in the present day. She was able to move on (from the loss of her presidential candidate), when she realized she was missing something about the narratives and that she had to understand why. Although I lost the battle of narratives, as part of the government, I redirected my focus on sustaining peace and economic gains in the region. We took a more active role in countering the existing crisis of disinformation. We got three channels in our local television network to counter and present more factual narratives. However, we had to innovate our (e.g. cooking show) approach because people are more attracted to entertaining contents.*

Atty. Neri Colmenares: *Disinformation threatens democratic processes. It is a global phenomenon that campaigns to distort the truth. It is more challenging and inaccessible for ordinary people to counter massive disinformation. It is easy for other people to tell the victims of martial law to move on. However, the calls to move on and unity must be substantiated by actions for justice and accountability. In fact, the lack of accountability from the government was used to proliferate disinformation and attacks to the victims of martial law.*

Open Forum

A representative from the Labor Party of the Philippines contextualized unity, democracy, polarization and moving forward saying it is fantasy to speak of unity and democracy since what will unify the country are issues affecting Filipinos living below poverty. Politicians are unable to address these issues because of the political dynasty system and even as (we) move forward and help the President, he should be opposed when not doing right.

Mr. Ernest Ramel Jr.: *We should focus on justice and accountability but also focus on the gut-level issues. With disinformation, we may have to pass legislation to regulate the spread of disinformation as used in business because it also propagates lack of accountability.*

Representative Joey Salceda: *There is a theory of countervailing powers that could make disinformation disappear. He cited their practice in the local government where they hold Regional Development Council meetings where there is training and enabling of those who will counter disinformation. There are enough provisions in the present constitution to address disinformation. There are enough institutions in mainstream and alternative media to have training including accessing information. Disinformation has become the norm but our institutions are strong.*

Mayor Sitti Djalia Turabin - Hataman: *Despite the divisiveness and polarization, what matters is to continue doing our jobs as shown with us being recognized as the 3rd most improved city in the country*

and other developments. This shows that attention must also be given to local governments to take actions against disinformation. The future may be with the local communities.

Atty. Neri Colmenares: *One factor of divisiveness and polarization is economic inequities. This is a valid issue looking at the minimum wage in Metro Manila and other regions. We cannot tell people to move on after the elections with the issue of wage increase when they are struggling in their daily expenses which must first be addressed before we tell them to move on. A major judgement factor for any administration is whether they have fulfilled their promises during the elections. This is where policymakers should focus because they can make or break any administration.*

A participant from Affiliated Network for Social Accountability (ANSA) brought up three matters before the panelists and audience: 1). Continue political education and voter's registration even after elections; 2) Address to the issue of populism and autocratic tendency which is a global phenomenon not just in Asia; 3) Issue of no matter how much effort is put in campaigning on the ground if the system is corrupted at the same time the playing field is not levelled, then all efforts are but wasted. A challenge was thrown to promote convergence since each one has an obligation in uplifting poverty and in helping with electoral programs.

An academic professor opined that the unity campaign slogan was used because of our divisive political history. To use as an indicator the 31 million who voted for the President is not reliable in identifying unity. The majority in congress who ally themselves with the winning party is a bad indicator of unity. There are still issues that divide us because that is what democracy is all about. How can we have unity when we could not agree on basic issues like human rights and democracy.

A representative of 1521 Solidarity for Truth and Justice threw a challenge on how democracy can work when we have no honest and clean elections, have weak opposition, and have political dynasties dominating congress and local governments.

Representative Jose Alvarez: *The mere fact that people gathered for the Summit tells that we still have democracy. We should ask for accountability if disinformation is perpetuated by the winning candidates or the parties who benefitted from them. But it is also important to look at those who live in far-flung areas. For example, in Palawan, the primary issue is livelihood and jobs. If we first address poverty, then we can impose policies to the electorates. Therefore, we must proactively participate first in discussions to improve the lives of Filipinos and uplift them from poverty before we enjoin them in an electoral combat.*

Representative Joey Salceda: *The unity that we are referring to is the 31 million voters if they help us achieve our goals as a nation. When I was governor in our province, I brought down the poverty rate, achieved all the Sustainable Development Goals, brought up literacy ranking, and lowered maternal deaths. Democracy can work. We can use democracy to enable the necessary structural changes and make them work for the ordinary people. Some LGUs are doing excellent performance in governance, making the lives of Filipinos better. Thus, unity can be defined by its impact on ordinary lives of the people.*

Mr. Ernest Ramel Jr: *We have to remind our government that economy and democracy are mostly controlled by political elites. We could not move forward as a nation because only a few control our politics and economy.*

Ms. Rafaela David: *As long as our election is expensive, it will never be fair. Only a few families or businesses can participate. In our party, we recognize that ordinary citizens can also participate. Party-building or political parties can be a vehicle for citizens to organize and claim political power. If we do not have the money, we can have power in solidarity.*

A professor from the Department of Political Science - San Beda University commented that there is disrespect to the word 'unity,' that history taught us that to say 'move on' is empty and hollow rhetoric if there is no transitional justice and that there is a need to unite under the timeless principle of democracy, truth, fight against disinformation, and justice.

Representative Joey Salceda: *I suggest we add love of country, patriotism, and sacrificing self on behalf of the country.*

Mr. Esguerra followed up about transitional justice with a question on why it is hard to hear sorry from the Marcoses to which Representative Joey Salceda replied, *"There is a rule of law and other elements in the justice system to ensure that justice is served."*

A youth representative from Akbayan Youth inquired about encouraging youths to participate in the upcoming *Sangguniang Kabataan* (SK) elections and urging them to lead in their communities. In particular, the question is, "how young people can begin the journey given the political divisions and dynasties."

Representative Joey Salceda: *The Bam Aquino Law ensured to cut the dynasty in local elections. The new SK reform act gives provision for salary allowance to elected officers. These laws demonstrate hope by beginning at the bottom.*

Representative Jose Alvarez: *There is still no law addressing political dynasties. Practically, barangay elections involve a tight-knit community that can account for only hundreds of votes. The barangay elections are usually polarized between incumbent officers and the new candidate. Meanwhile, it is a different case for the SK elections but there are still chances to win because of the small number of electorates.*

Ms. Rafaela David: *The Akbayan Party was the proponent of the first draft of the anti-dynasty law. This is an opportunity for ordinary citizens, especially the youth, to do extraordinary things. This Summit is even a sign for young audiences watching to run in the SK elections. Lastly, if anti-dynasty can be implemented in the youth sector, it can be done in other agencies.*

Mayor Sitti Djalia Turabin - Hataman: *As a part and victim of a political dynasty, the position is often misinterpreted. In my case, only their dynasty can fight against another dynasty. Regardless, it is critical to capacitate everyone and provide equal opportunities to all.*

Mr. Ernest Ramel: *There will be no enabling law regarding political dynasty unless we change the constitution. However, we must push the political parties forward, building parties, enlightening youth about politics, and building leaders from grassroots so we can break the cycle of dynasties.*

Atty. Neri Colmenares: *As the main author of the Anti-Dynasty Bill, we encourage the youth to participate in any election particularly at the barangay. No matter how small the number of electorates, they can make a dent. The other question about creating democratic spaces is*

acknowledging the immediate spaces we have. There are several types of spaces such as invited space, popular space, and electoral space. The young people should be encouraged to go into these spaces, especially in all electoral battles because it is their future that is at stake.

A young student leader asked the last question on how the youths can prepare for the issues raised in the discussion, especially when there is pressure from the government on the youth to which Representative Joey Salceda replied that, *“economic empowerment is the answer so that youths can have access to all information,”* while noting that there is little focus on economic empowerment.

End of Session

PARTICIPATE DEMOCRACY SUMMIT

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Breakout Session 1
Building Democratic Institutions in the Bangsamoro:
Key Lessons from the Political Transition

1:30 PM - 4:00 PM | Monet Ballroom 1

Organizer:

Ateneo Policy Center Bangsamoro Initiative (ABI)

Time	Activity	Speaker
01:00 PM - 01:30 PM	Registration	
01:30 PM - 01:35 PM	Preliminaries and Prayer	
01:35 PM - 01:40 PM	Welcome Message	Philip Arnold P. Tuaño, PhD Dean, Ateneo School of Government
01:40 PM - 01:45 PM	Message of Support	Honorable Ahod B. Ebrahim Chief Minister Bangsamoro Transition Authority
01:45 PM - 02:30 PM	Part 1: Gains and Challenges of the BARMM Transition	Atty. Raissa H. Jajurie Deputy Floor Leader Bangsamoro Transition Authority Minister Ministry of Social Services and Development – BARMM
02:30 PM - 03:15 PM	Part 2: The Bangsamoro Electoral Code and the 2025 Parliamentary Elections	Atty. Sha Elijah Dumama-Alba Majority Floor Leader Bangsamoro Transition Authority
03:15 PM - 03:45 PM	Open Forum	
03:45 PM - 04:00 PM	Closing	
<p>Moderator</p> <p>Mr. Jefry “Jeff” Canoy Chief of Reporters, ABS-CBN News and Current Affairs</p>		

Objectives

The developments in the ongoing transition in the Bangsamoro should be a matter of national concern and not only of those residing in BARMM. For one, it allows us to better assess how a parliamentary form of government will work in the Philippines. More importantly, the ongoing transition will have implications on the peace agreement affecting the entire Philippines. There is a need to bring the discourse on a national level to educate and engage more people.

Specifically, breakout session 1 intends to:

- Update participants with developments in the ongoing BARMM transition and in the preparation for the 2025 BARMM parliamentary elections.
- Orient participants on the Bangsamoro Electoral Code especially on its special provisions.
- Discuss the impacts of the ongoing BARMM transition to Philippine national development.

Summary of Proceedings

Dean Philip Arnold P. Tuaño of ASOG delivered a welcome message and provided a background on the topics of the sessions including its value in national discourse. He cited that the BARMM transition has exemplified both hurdles and potentials of a parliamentary government. He explained that the Covid-19 pandemic led to the signing of RA 11519 which extends the transition of BARMM to three years so that the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) will be able to enact legislation mandated under the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL). After the passing of the Bangsamoro Electoral Code (BEC), the BTA is now formulating the BARMM Local Government Code for a more responsive and accountable local government in the region to allow for a more inclusive and participatory decision-making process as well as active citizen engagement. He emphasized that progress and movements in BARMM holds national significance because it allows us valuable insights on the functioning of a parliamentary government and affects the social, economic, and political state of the Philippines.

Honorable Ahod B. Ebrahim, Chief Minister of BTA, delivered a videotaped message of support to the Summit. He mentioned that the Bangsamoro people ratified the BOL four years ago paving the way to attaining long-held aspirations for self-determination. For him, the PARTICIPATE Democracy Summit is a venue for stakeholders such as academe, CSOs, and political parties, to be updated on key points on Bangsamoro and work together to enhance knowledge, policies, and studies for electoral and political reforms. The approval of the BEC in March 2023, will aid the Government of the Day to prepare the electorate for the first parliamentary elections in 2025 and ensure honest, credible, just, free, and democratic elections. In its final years of transition, the Government of the Day will also ensure the passage of remaining priority codes, Bangsamoro Local Government Code and Revenue Code to guarantee that the bureaucracy framework of the Bangsamoro reflects the genuine identity of the people in BARMM. In closing, Chief Minister Ebrahim reiterated that the Bangsamoro government remains committed to building a stronger bureaucracy through moral governance and working democratic institutions in the region.

Part 1: Gains and Challenges of the BARMM Transition

Atty. Raissa H. Jajurie, Deputy Floor Leader of the BTA and Minister of Social Services and Development (MSSD) – BARMM, presented the gains and challenges of the BARMM transition. She

started with a background of Mindanao conflict. The traditional homeland of a group of people in Southern Mindanao is collectively known as the Bangsamoro today.

- From several sultanates and areas covered by different Bangsamoro political entities, BARMM is now comprised of provinces of Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Maguindanao del Norte, Maguindanao del Sur, Lanao del Sur and cities of Marawi and Cotabato as well as the Special Geographic Area (SGA) composed of 63 *barangays* which used to be part of North Cotabato.
- During the Spanish colonization, native inhabitants of Muslim Mindanao who are long occupants of the land did not register their lands and lost ownership, rights, and control.
- With the American occupation, land laws that went against the interest of Muslims were introduced that were discriminatory in promoting resettlements, which became a pattern of land law in Mindanao. As an effect, native inhabitants were dispossessed of their lands, migrants came from Luzon and Visayas, big businesses entered the region, property system was changed, and capitalists took over the land tenure of Moros and indigenous peoples. These resulted to native inhabitants fighting against the military and communal violence among the different groups in Muslim Mindanao. It was considered as dark years in Muslim Mindanao.
- BARMM resulted from a 17-year formal negotiation between the national government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) as a result of the peace process. The Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) was signed on March 27, 2014 as a compromise between two parties addressing the struggles and aspirations of the Bangsamoro with the BTA as the parliamentary form of government.
- BTA serves as a ministerial and parliamentary entity and has governance functions devolved to the Bangsamoro. It is tasked to set up institutions and mechanisms so that the regular Bangsamoro government can function after the transition which was originally for three years (2019-2022) but was extended from 2023 to 2025. The BTA has 80 members and the Chief Minister will be the head of the government as appointed by the MILF. Out of the 80, 41 are MILF nominees and 38 are government nominees.

Atty. Jajurie enumerated why the BTA have been showing an exemplary performance.

- Records the second highest economic growth in the country while registering a decrease in poverty incidence rate even during the COVID-19 pandemic, from 52.6 percent in 2018 to 29.8 percent in 2021.
- The Bangsamoro Board of Investments reported that it has generated PHP 8.1B worth of investments in the first three years of the BARMM as it attracts more investments and entrepreneurs especially in the agriculture sector particularly, the banana industry.
- Biggest contributor to fisheries production in the Philippines with 346.42 metric tons or 26 percent of the fisheries production in the entire Philippines.
- Reforms in governance and bureaucracy saw the abolition of ARMM and the new organization of almost all the ministries except for three.
- To establish moral governance and improve public service, BTA created 15 ministries, 14 offices and agencies, and 4 commissions in 2019.

- As of November 2022, BTA has created 50,467 positions across ministries and executive offices as part of its human resource development. There is a job portal announcing job openings in the Bangsamoro government.
- As of March 2023, BTA has enacted four of the seven priority bills which include Administrative Code, Education Code, Civil Service Code, and Electoral Code. Up until 2025, the identified priority laws are Local Governance Code, Revenue Code, IP Law, districting, IDP Law, Law for PWDs, Labor Code, and Investment Code. In addition, the 63 *barangays* (SGA) will be constituted into municipalities with district representatives.
- In order to strengthen the justice system, there have been engagements with the Supreme Court to establish Shari'ah high court and appellate court since this is beyond the authority of the BTA parliament but is under the BOL
- The Bangsamoro Government has forged partnerships with development partners, even providing financial and technical support to civil society groups.
- Enhanced social services and ensured greater accessibility
- Increased investment in human capital with the Ministry of Basic, Higher, and Technical Education (MBHTE) recording a total of 1,038,662 enrollees in both public and private schools. Subsidy was given to the Madaris Educational System through 4,868 Asatidz and 117 Madaris subsidized to ensure inclusive education. The education agenda reflects significant focus on technical-vocational education and training. MBHTE has equipped skilled workers for the competitive job market.
- To make social services accessible to every Bangsamoro, the poor and vulnerable, particularly displaced communities are provided relief assistance, seed capital assistance, and stipends especially to Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) who are not under the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) programs. This service is aimed at promoting long-term sustainable human capital development
- The Ministry of Health (MOH) has given significant subsidies to private and public hospitals. Many laws that were passed during the first parliament sought to upgrade the facilities of hospitals, including support for rural and barangay health stations.
- Road connectivity networks were expanded and infrastructures upgraded to boost economic growth including inter-island connectivity as well as new routes for planes and boats that would connect the mainland to the islands.
- Implemented 1,650 housing and resettlement programs to provide sustainable, culturally-sensitive housing options for vulnerable communities including homeless and conflict-affected families.
- The number of armed encounters or conflict is lower compared to before signing of peace agreement and ceasefire
- Efforts of traditional leaders in resolving family conflicts have yielded positive results. While there are still family feuds and conflicts, the Bangsamoro has exerted efforts in resolving some of the disputes.
- BARMM intensifies support to law enforcement agencies to ensure peace and security with 14 constructed municipal police stations and 21 police vehicles along with 10 fire trucks provided.

- After 17 years, it has come to a point where actors of those involved in violent conflicts have come to live with the government, compromised their positions, and arrived at a diplomatic resolution, after 17 years. It is important to support the whole process.

Atty. Jajurie shared learnings from their BTA experience.

- The parliament has become a venue for convergence of parties such as MILF and Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) that were once against the government and with each other.
- The parliamentary form of government is a lot of work, especially for parliamentary members who are taking on many roles at the same time.
- The concept of a parliamentary form of government was closer to what was culturally available to the Bangsamoro in the early days, making accountability both vertical and horizontal. In the past, only those who had the 'blessings' of Malacañang were able to get seats in the ARMM government but not anymore in these times.
- The design of the parliament based on the BOL means that there is more representation from political parties. Of the 80 parliament members, 50 percent would be elected through proportional representation when people vote for political parties.
- Geographical representation is ingrained in the BARMM parliament. For example, Tawi-Tawi, even if the farthest from the government center would have its representatives (eight seats) just like Cotabato which is the center of BARMM government.
- Financial resources and political powers with responsibilities are necessary for a genuine autonomy. Without the Block Grant, the BTA will never be able to implement programs.
- There should be assertion of asymmetric relations because sometimes some national government agencies assume their counterparts in the parliamentary structure even if the parliament is a different entity with its own set of powers and structure.
- Inter-governmental relations is an important provision of the BOL that was not in the ARMM law. It allows for jointly fleshing out issues and even anticipate problems between BTA and national government.

Atty. Jajurie identified the priorities of the BTA in the transition.

- Enactment of remaining legislations.
- Building and strengthening of the bureaucracy.
- Ongoing processing, recruitment, and training of staff.
- Setting up systems for better governance and services including legislation.
- Vertical coordination with national government and local governments.
- Prepare for fair, honest elections which entails empowering the people, building political parties, and educating voters.¹
- Establish accreditation processes for political parties that will ensure credible candidates.

Overall, BARMM should be able to exercise all of its functions and succeed. It should be able to conduct elections that will vote for the best leaders that will take care of the constituents of the region.

Part 2: The Bangsamoro Electoral Code and 2025 Parliamentary Elections

Atty. Sha Elijah Dumama-Alba, Majority Floor Leader of the BTA highlighted technicalities and rationale of the BEC and explained for better appreciation and understanding its implementation in BARMM and its impact in the national arena.

Atty. Dumama-Alba started by providing the history of the parliamentary-ministerial form of government where the BEC is one of the priority legislations of the BTA which was unanimously passed last March 2023. This ministerial form of government in BARMM is part of the framework agreement between the Government of the Philippines (GOP) and the MILF as appended in the CAB. Both parties agreed to have an electoral system suited to a ministerial form of government contained in the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL). The electoral system shall allow democratic participation, ensure accountability of public officers, primarily to their constituents, and encourage the formation of genuinely-principled political parties. The principles and limitations in the BES have been the ultimate guide of the BTA in enacting the BEC. The BOL provisions that relate to Bangsamoro elections include a democratic political system, electoral system, classification and allocation of seats particularly party representative seats, parliamentary district seats, and reserve seats for sectoral representatives.

Atty. Dumama-Alba presented the salient features of the BEC.

Bangsamoro Electoral Office (BEO) with the Bangsamoro Registration and Accreditation Committee (BRAC)

BOL provides that there shall be a BEO to be established by the COMELEC in BARMM. The COMELEC shall determine the appropriate organizational structure and staffing pattern of BEO.

The BRAC will be composed of the Regional Election Director, Assistant Regional Election Director, and Provincial Election Supervisor of the province where the regional political party is located in BARMM or where the election matter is filed.

Establishment of Regional Political Parties

Regional political parties shall be established by at least 10,000 members who are residents and registered voters in BARMM. The members shall be distributed throughout the different provinces and cities in the Bangsamoro territory. They shall establish provincial and city chapters in all provinces and cities, and municipal chapters in each province

Mandatory Bodies and Mechanisms in the Party

This shall be composed of the General Party Committee, Executive Committee, Membership Committee, Nomination Committee, Finance Committee, Arbitral Committee, Women and Youth Committee and Local Chapters that serve as the grassroots of the political party.

Mandatory and Continuing Party Activities

The activities include General Assembly, Party Convention, Voters' Education Program even if they fail to win seats in the previous elections. Failure to comply with this requirement shall prevent the party from participation in the next elections.

Prohibition on Financing or Alliance with National Parties

A regional political party applying for registration shall receive no financing from national parties nor have any alliance with national parties. The rationale behind this prohibition is to insulate the parliamentary elections from national politics and avoid unnecessary influence over regional political parties

Coalitions

As defined in the BEC, "coalition" means an alliance based on the agreement of two or more registered and accredited regional political parties, local political parties, and sectoral organizations either for election or political purposes. A coalition of two or more regional political parties can only field nominees and candidates for parliamentary elections, except for the sectoral representatives. They must ensure that everybody plays on a level-playing field. One of the more important requirements for a political party to be registered is 10,000 memberships. But the local political parties don't require that to be established as a political party

Party Representatives and Manner of Allocation of Seats

Party representatives are members of registered regional political parties that are able to receive at least four percent of the total valid votes cast for the party system election. Registered political parties, if participating in the parliamentary elections, shall list their nominees ranked from 1 to 40. The names of those who will be part of the party will already be disclosed. At least 30 percent of nominees of the party or coalition must be women to ensure that they are represented even at the level of nomination.

Parliamentary District Seats

Not more than 40 percent of the members of the parliament shall be elected from single-member parliamentary districts, apportioned for the areas and in the manner provided by the Parliament. District representatives shall be elected by direct plurality of the vote by the registered voters in the parliamentary districts. For the party seats, voters will be voting for the party. For the district seats, voters will be voting for the individual or the candidate

Sectoral Representative Seats (Women, Youth, Settlers, Non-Moro IPs, Traditional Leaders, and 'Ulama')

Except for non-Moro IPs, 'ulama', and traditional leader representatives, sectoral representatives shall be elected by direct plurality of votes cast for the respective sector. The candidates for sectoral representatives shall be members of a regional political party or a sectoral organization duly accredited by the COMELEC after being certified by the appropriate ministry or regional agency / office on the basis of their track record in their advocacy for their respective sectoral concerns. A rotational arrangement shall be mandatory for traditional leaders and 'ulama' to give a chance to each royal house in the provinces of the BARMM, or the provincial 'ulama' as the case may be to be represented in the parliament. This rotational arrangement, however, is not mandatory for non-Moro IPs. In order to ensure that everybody gets a chance to be represented in the parliament and to address the sentiment of those from islands feeling left out by the people from the mainland., they will have to abide by the rotational arrangement

Proof of Membership in a Sector

Certification attesting to the membership of a voter to a sector shall be acquired from: 1) Ministry of Indigenous Peoples (IPs) Affairs for members of the non-Moro IPs; 2) Office of Settler Communities for members of the settler communities; 3) Bangsamoro Darul Ifta' for the 'ulama'; and 4) Bangsamoro Commission on the Preservation of Cultural Heritage for traditional leaders

Atty. Dumama-Alba shared key innovations introduced in the BEC.

Nominations of Candidates (30 percent women and anti-political dynasty)

Regional political parties shall ensure that at least 30 percent of their nominees are women. Violation of this provision shall disqualify one of the nominees in a manner to be determined by the party

Turncoatism

This has been expressly provided for in the BOL, such that changing of political party affiliation during the party representative's term of office shall *ipso facto* forfeit the seat in the parliament. The elected party representative who changes political party affiliation within six months before an election shall not be eligible for nomination as party representative under the new party or organization.

Ballot Structure

It is a necessary consequence that the official ballot of the BARMM shall be unique and different from the rest of the country. It is required under the BOL that the ballot structure for BARMM elections shall include the names of all of the candidates, each candidate's photo/ party logo, and a "none of the above" option. The "none of the above" option safeguards and protects the integrity of that ballot by avoiding the possibility of someone shading the ballot of another who does not want to vote for anyone among the candidates.

Assistance to Illiterate or Person with Disability (PWD) Applicants

The BEC now prohibits any person acting on behalf of any incumbent elective official from assisting an illiterate or a PWD in registering.

Review and Annulment of Book of Voters

Within 120 days of the enactment of the BEC, the BEO election officers shall conduct a thorough review of the book of voters to check for patent irregularity and statistical improbability data contained therein.

Voters' Assistance Desk

- a) COMELEC established a Voter's Assistance Desk (VAD) that was adapted in the BEC.
- b) The VAD would have to be administered by any duly accredited citizen's arm under the supervision and control of the Ministry of Basic, Higher, and Technical Education.
- c) The only function of VAD is to assist voters in ascertaining their precinct number, sequence number, and directions to their polling place.

Holding Area and Order of Voting

A holding area is used by voters waiting for their turn to vote. Voters will sit and arrange themselves on a first-come-first-serve basis and they will vote according to the sequence of their arrival. In cognizance of Muslim religion, there is a provision on gender segregation to protect women voters.

Additional Election Offenses

In addition to those already listed in the Elections Omnibus, COMELEC issuances on election offenses, and other laws, the BEC lists innovative additional election offenses: 1) Nailing or hanging any election paraphernalia or campaign material on trees and plants; 2) Printing and reproducing campaign paraphernalia using plastics and other non-biodegradable materials; and 3) Using scandalous, inflammatory, foul, abusive, and derogatory language in speeches, interviews, and on social media in the course of the campaign or during political rallies and meetings.

Prosecution of Vote - buying and Vote - selling

A complaint supported by affidavits of complaining witnesses attesting to the offer or promise by or acceptance of voters of money or other consideration shall be sufficient basis for an investigation to be immediately conducted by the Commission, directly or through its duly authorized legal officers.

Special Registration for Sectoral Voters

The BEC requires that COMELEC conducts a special registration for sectoral voters.

BARMM Political Party Subsidy Fund

The parliament has not included this in the BEC because there is a felt need to really discern and determine what is our motivation or purpose for putting up the political party subsidy fund since it is government money. There are political party subsidy funds in other parliamentary systems that incentivize a party that has more than 50 percent women or give subsidies to losing parties to ensure that they do not let go of the cause or advocacies and also for them to be able to continue.

Preparations for the 2025 Parliamentary Elections

The BEC is consistent with the Constitution and the BOL. It reflects the parliamentary form and autonomous nature of BARMM as a government and it ensures the free participation of the Bangsamoro people in a democratic political system. Following the Bangsamoro parliamentary process, the Committee on Rules conducted public consultations, hearings, and welcomed position papers from stakeholders and election watchdogs from the region as well as the entire Philippines for the enhancement of the bill. The Bangsamoro government consulted with the national and regional COMELEC. Election experts were consulted including former COMELEC Commissioners in fine-tuning the bill. The BEC was unanimously approved by the BTA parliament on almost midnight of March 2023 after rigorous deliberation, debate and amendments.

There has been positive reception of the people on the BEC. They also anticipate the birth of genuinely-principled political parties that would likely participate in the 2025 parliamentary elections. Inclusivity and participation, not only of ethnic groups, but of women and youth are strengthened in

the BEC. There is a healthy and competitive culture of party politics which can give rise to a more active and participative citizenry, giving them more motivation to vote and make better choices. Innovative electoral reforms send a signal of readiness of the Bangsamoro for change, which can be used as a model for other electoral systems. Enacting a Bangsamoro Political Party Subsidy Fund can also promote access to voters' information and exercise of their right to vote. Leveraging our government resources towards these purposes would support electoral reforms and address issues in election administration, including voter protection and safety.

Open Forum

Questions and answers during the open forum have been summarized in five parts.

Q: On safeguards against failure of election

A: BTA conducted public consultations to reflect the possible reforms accommodated in the BEC where comments and recommendations from the BEC have been considered by COMELEC in their major revisions of the Omnibus Election Code.

A: The BEC and setting up the legal infrastructure to support free and democratic elections is a good experiment that the national government could learn from. If we could sustain the interest and support for BARMM during this period, there are a lot of provisions in the BEC that COMELEC and national government electoral systems could adopt, namely the women's agenda for political party lists and the anti-political dynasty provision.

A: Constructing political units for the 63 *barangays* under the SGA is also a priority law of the BTA's legislative agenda to ensure their participation in the 2025 parliamentary elections. It is also stipulated in the BEC that carrying arms within a certain proximity of a polling center is strictly prohibited, and citizen's arms or poll-watching are encouraged to ensure that the electorate is able to vote.

Q: On sustainability of good or "moral" governance after the BTA parliament

A: It is the BTA's responsibility to build the structures of bureaucracy

A: We need to make sure that the people who are running the office imbue the moral governance, the values that we want them to bear, whether it is in the transition or beyond that.

Q: On updates on the peace process, specifically normalization and decommissioning

A: A large factor in the extension of the BTA is the ongoing normalization, which was expected to end by 2022. It is taking longer than anticipated due to lack of funds from the national government.

Congress has deliberated on an amount to be provided, but there hasn't been a final decision and it has been reduced. The sentiment is that the BARMM could utilize the Block Grant but that is not allocated for normalization efforts but for the entire BARMM government. For example, in the package for decommissioned combatants, there is still no agreement as to what composes the package. Only Php 100,000.00 cash which is given outright.

Even if you do the decommissioning, at least the ceremonial part, registration, etc. - nobody has completed the whole package.

A: Normalization also involves redeployment and regular security assessments jointly done by the MILF and the government but it hasn't been as regular as they should have been.

A: There is a need for an exit agreement to formally signify the end of the normalization and that both parties, MILF and national government, have delivered on their agreements.

A: In terms of ensuring that due benefits are given to women combatants, we have to engage the leadership of the MILF to ensure that the different phases, the women auxiliary brigade or other combatants that are part of the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF) would also be part of the plan on the decommissioning and the other benefits of the peace process.

A: There are women leaders in the BTA parliament who are strong in this position. As for the Ministry of Social Services (MSS), they also ensure that benefits and social welfare are provided for women.

Q: On participation of traditional leadership in BARMM governance

A: BARMM has a ceremonial or figurehead, recognized as the *Wal'i*, who is separate from the Chief Minister. The *Wal'i* is recommended by the council of leaders, and confirmed through a consensus and resolution by the parliament.

A: Last April 2023, the Chief Minister was named the majority of the sectoral representative in the council of leaders. The BOL also mentions the political composition of the council of leaders headed by the Chief Minister.

Q: On participation of sectors (women, IPs, youth) in BARMM governance

A: The Bangsamoro government has the Bangsamoro Youth Commission with a vibrant set of youth commissioners. They go around and out of the Bangsamoro youth territory and share news about the Bangsamoro government.

The educational system has launched a program that incorporates learning about the parliamentary system of government and parliamentary elections in partnership with Legal Network for Truthful Elections (LENTE). They have a program called Bangsamoro Junior Parliamentarians where the youth get to immerse themselves in parliamentary work and also have a voice in governance. They are able to give their insights and opinions on how the BARMM is doing and how the BARMM can best improve its services.

Laws to protect the rights of IPs as well as ensure their representation and participation in the BARMM government, is a priority in the legislative agenda of the BTA. It is stipulated in the BEC that women must be represented in all of the committees. There's even a separate women and youth committee. The BEC mandates that the political party must ensure that women are represented in all of the committees. It is provided in the BOL and BEC that women should be part of the nomination process. While being part of the nomination committee, there should be participation from the women and youth in identifying the nominees.

A: I think we are taking steps towards greater women's participation. If you think about it, not even the national laws have any policy requiring women's representation, participation in the nomination process, and even requiring political parties to have a women's agenda.

End of Session

Breakout Session 2
Populism, Polarization, and Disinformation Post-2022 Elections

1:30 PM-3:00 PM | Monet Ballroom 2

Organizer:
Ateneo Policy Center

Time	Activity	Speaker
01:30 PM - 01:35 PM	Preliminaries and Introductions	Ms. Ivyrose Baysic Head, Ateneo Policy Center
01:35 PM - 02:05 PM	Situationer: Political Economy of Evidence-Based Policymaking and Democratic Governance	Ronald Mendoza, PhD Senior Research Fellow and Senior Economist Ateneo School of Government
	Attitudes on Authority: What gave rise to Populism	Ma. Rosel San Pascual, PhD Associate Professor College of Mass Communication University of the Philippines, Diliman
02:05 PM - 02:35 PM	Panel Discussion: Populism, Political Participation, and Accountability in the Age of Mis / Dis / Mal - information	<p>Imelda Deinla, PhD Convenor Boses, Opinyon, Siyasat, at Siyensya para sa Pilipinas (BOSES Pilipinas) Associate Professor Ateneo School of Government</p> <p>Ronald Holmes, PhD President, Pulse Asia Professor, De La Salle University</p> <p>Ms. Yvonne Chua Co-Founder, VERA Files Associate Professor College of Mass Communication University of the Philippines, Diliman</p> <p>Mr. Gregory Kehailia Country Director, Internews Philippines Chief of Party, Initiative for Media Freedom</p>
02:35 PM - 03:00 PM	Open Forum	
Moderator Mr. Ed Lingao Chief Correspondent, News5		

Objectives

This session will delve deeper into the key factors that gave rise to populist politics in the Philippines and the spread of fake news.

Summary of Proceedings

Dr. Ronald U. Mendoza, Senior Research Fellow and Senior Economist of ASoG presented a situationer, “Political Economy of Evidence- Based Policymaking and Democratic Governance.”

Dr. Mendoza discussed that data and evidence generation combined with widespread access of stakeholders and its translation to political action and policy reform will dramatically alter development and governance outcomes. However, for the past decades there is malfunctioning and is not translated to policy reforms. The problem about data and evidence has been a problem even in countries with emerging economies. The broader challenge is also related to lack of studies and research that takes place in geographic areas (countries) where it is difficult to generate data and evidence. Most studies are concentrated in areas with political institutions, international tourist arrivals, English as an official language, and population size.

He added that, “data evidence is so political that as an advocate, they would strategically not want data and evidence where they expect that data and evidence would counter-act what they are advocating for, a strategic commitment to ignorance. Many programs are unevaluated because they are either prevented or no initiative conducted.”

Dr. Mendoza cited challenges that connect to the situation are populism, anti-intellectualism, and mis / disinformation. Populist waves sweeping across the world in the last few years are associated with two deep trends: 1) deep anti-expertise and anti-evidence bias; and 2) the proliferation of dis - and mis -information usually amplified by wide dissemination in both traditional and social media. In many countries where both of these exist, the public’s trust weakened, and both undermined the public’s appreciation for data and evidence, exacerbating confusion and political polarization. He presented examples of corruption and ineffective programs that were stopped because of data and evidence. Examples, he mentioned, were CoVID-related response programs.

In conclusion, Dr. Mendoza stressed the need to make data, evidence, and science accessible and meaningful for people’s lives. He identified that need to: 1) invest in data transparency and evidence generation; 2) popularize and improve the accessibility of research findings; 3) mobilize citizens’ coalitions and youth groups to champion data, evidence and democratization advocacies; 4) invest in education to counter mis / disinformation and improve the appreciation of data, evidence, and science; and 5) strengthen multi-discipline in policy discussions (e.g. economics on inequality, psychology on fake news and on communications; political science / political economy on more effective citizens’ mobilization and empowerment).

Dr. Ma. Rosel S. San Pascual, Associate Professor in the College of Mass Communication, University of the Philippines, Diliman discussed, “Attitudes on Authority: What gave rise to Populism.”

Dr. San Pascual talked about democracy and authority. Authoritarianism is the enforcement of strict obedience to authority at the expense of personal freedom. It is in tension with democracy where citizens are expected to exercise judgement and hold agency and power over decision-makers who

are elected to represent a broader population. Support for strongman-types of leaders is apparent among some citizens and attitudes or cultural norms may skew less toward support for liberal democratic forms of governance. She cited political beliefs in the Philippines that suggest more deference to authority: 1) allegiance to authority; 2) dislike of criticizing authority; and 3) beliefs that elected political leaders are connected to authority.

Dr. San Pascual presented results of a survey conducted in October 27, 2021 to November 12, 2021 that was participated in by a diverse group in sex, age, residence, education, and monthly income.

- **Allegiance to Authority.** This is the belief on one's duty to support persons in authority. While over 40 percent agreed that it is the duty of citizens to always support the administration, they are fairly divided on their sense of unquestioning obedience to authority and are leaning towards neutrality and disagreement when it comes to their sense of obligation or refusing to openly criticize the administration no matter what. Computing an overall measure for allegiance yielded an almost moderate level of allegiance to authority.
- **Criticizing the government is disrespectful and harmful.** A substantial portion of Filipinos are against criticism of the administration and that a large portion is also neutral and are possibly open to swing in either agreement or disagreement. In particular, results show that Filipinos tend to be in agreement that it is the duty of citizens to support the administration at all times but criticizing an incumbent official is not good for the country and that criticizing the president is criticizing the will of the people. Also, criticizing how well the administration is performing their jobs is actually disrespectful. This could actually imply that hearing criticisms against a powerful figure potentially alienates a third of voters which could make them want to defend their authority, since they feel protective of their leader and will come to their defense which could then spire up into further solidifying their views.
- **Beliefs that elected political leaders are connected to authority.** This means that politics and faith are willed by some higher force such as God, the divine or luck. Results show that more Filipinos agree that the president was elected because it is the will of God and that God appointed Duterte to cleanse the Philippines of its social ills. Given the context of the extent of religiosity of Filipinos, individuals would have an intuitive dislike of criticism against authority since they believe that a higher power has already ordained the power of an elected authority figure to lead. This is connected to the report that Filipinos have faith in the elected authority. They overwhelmingly agree on the benevolence of the President, that he extends all these efforts and hard work to help the Filipino people and that he has '*tunay na malasakit*', and that he has only the good of the people in mind when he makes decisions.

Dr. San Pascual identified factors associated with the belief, drivers of citizen disapproval of criticizing authority and drivers of allegiance to authority. The implications of these for strengthening democracy is giving critical importance to civic education throughout the education cycle; identifying approach to civic education as part of values formation to build a sense of individual agency over governance and politics, develop mechanisms for community-building, and opportunities for civic participation; working with religious organizations to enable democratic values and participation with and through

religious leaders; and working with media to reach and help engage with adult voting populations for civic and democracy education.

Panel discussion

A panel discussed, "Populism, Political Participation, and Accountability in the Age of Mis / Dis / Mal-information," followed the presentations.

The panelists were **Ms. Yvonne Chua**, Co - founder of VERA Files and Associate Professor at the University of the Philippines, Diliman, **Dr. Imelda Deinla**, Convenor of Boses, Opinyon, Siyasat, at Siyensya para sa Pilipinas (BOSES Pilipinas) and Associate Professor at ASoG, **Dr. Ronald Holmes**, President of Pulse Asia and Professor at the De La Salle University; and **Mr. Gregory Kehailia**, Country Director of Internews Philippines and CoP of Initiative for Media Freedom.

Ms. Yvonne Chua: Any populist leader knows that one key objective is to control the narrative. He or she has to push his or her version even at the expense of truth. In the case of the media, among the tactics used are to bully or demonize independent media or co-opt the media. Former President Rodrigo Duterte did all of that. The Philippines was then ranked 147 in the World Press Freedom Index out of 180 countries.

Ferdinand Marcos was not hostile unlike Duterte, but very early on, the Marcoses used social media in order to control the narrative for the benefit of running for a national office. Pro-Marcos accounts in social media were busy in 2009 in portraying a good image of Ferdinand Marcos Sr. On the other hand, historical distortion and fake news against Robredo escalated. Media were accused of not covering BBM's activities. In 2023, the Philippines improved its ranking in the World Press Freedom Index from 147 to 132. Disinformation lowers trust in social media.

Dr. Imelda Deinla: Pointed out three points in the discussion: 1) The phenomenon of disinformation needs urgent solution; 2) This (phenomenon) affects the trust and performance of our various government institutions as mentioned by earlier presenters; 3) There is a need for us to understand the context of how this phenomenon operates.

Dr. Holmes: Through a recorded video, presented surveys related to mis / disinformation about Marcoses and politics. The surveys were awareness of news about politics and government that were not true in the past three months, statements that most accurately describes the Philippine economy during the administration of President Ferdinand Marcos from 1965 to 1986, rating how the Philippine economy was doing during the presidency of Ferdinand Marcos from 1965 - 1986, and comparative survey of former and current presidents' performances.

Mr. Gregory Kehailia: Disinformation is not new, but what is new is its amplification. What's also new is that it becomes a strategy to forward authoritarian forces and to

provoke the collapse of democratic systems in two ways: (1) delegitimizing the model or democratic systems, and (2) polarizing society.

Open Forum

Q: The position of the speakers on artificial intelligence (AI)

A: (Mr. Kehailia) He is convinced that it is creating new means of generating credible information and pictures, although he does not have to say much about it.

A: (Dr. Mendoza) Some prototypes of AI draw on the internet, while others are credible information sources.

Q: What accountability should be asked from big social media companies? What can CSOs do about it?

A: (Dr. Chua) Civil society has to take advantage of social media but should, of course, be more knowledgeable of the platform.

Q: How to respond to red-taggers and what to do when the law is weaponized against them?

Q: What is the value of data and evidence in combating misinformation in the Philippine setting if most people don't believe in data and evidence?

A: (Dr. Mendoza) Transmittal of information and how to handle bias should be considered.

Breakout session 2 was moderated by **Mr. Ed Lingao**, Chief Correspondent at News5.

End of Session

Breakout Session 3

Strengthening Democratic Spaces through Stronger Civil Society

1:30 PM - 3:00 PM | Versailles Tent, 6th Floor

Organizers:

**Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO) and
International Center for Innovation, Transformation and Excellence in Governance (INCITEGov)**

Time	Activity	Speaker
01:30 PM - 01:40 PM	Preliminaries and Introductions Opening Remarks Overview of the session Activity - Line Game	
01:40 PM - 01:50 PM	Agenda Building in the 2022 National and Local Elections	Mr. Lenbi Laborte Executive Director Central Visayas Network of NGOs (CENVISNET)
01:50 PM - 02:20 PM	Role of Civil Society in Democracy, Governance, and Politics	Ms. Mardi Mapa - Suplido Chairperson International Center for Innovation, Transformation and Excellence in Governance (INCITEGov)
02:20 PM - 02:50 PM	Open Forum	
02:50 PM - 03:00 PM	Closing Remarks	
Moderator: Mr. Roy Calfoforo Project Manager Affiliated Network for Social Accountability in East Asia and the Pacific (ANSA-EAP)		

Objectives of the session

The session will look at the role of civil CSOs in the current state of Philippine democracy and how it can amplify that role with a stronger agenda and a direction to be more effective in contributing to a genuine democracy and good governance.

Specifically, the breakout session will:

- Discuss the challenges of CSOs in terms of decline in being a counter-bearing voice, including polarization within CSOs' groups.
- Inform participants of the politics, governance, and development (PGD) framework.
- Showcase experiences of non-partisan agenda in the election and post-election.
- Discuss recommendations on defining roles of CSOs through political participation.

Summary of Proceedings

The session was moderated by **Mr. Roy Calfoforo**, Project Manager of Affiliated Network for Social Accountability in East Asia and the Pacific (ANSA-EAP). The panel includes **Mr. Lenbi Laborte**, Executive Director of Central Visayas Network of NGOs (CENVISNET) and **Ms. Mardi Mapa-Suplido**, Chairperson of INCITEGov.

Mr. Lenbi Laborte first presented the “Agenda Building in the 2022 National and Local Elections”. He discussed the various activities conducted by the over 50-member organizations of CENVISNET, a network of NGOs and CSOs operating in Central Visayas. One of their priorities is asking young people what they want to achieve and experience. They consulted with CSO leaders to develop an agenda and advocacies that can be shared with the communities. Despite not yet knowing who would win the elections, CSOs were preparing how they would participate with the incoming administration. After the elections, the CSOs gathered to reflect on the results, the events that occurred during the elections, and how they could improve the electoral process.

The second presentation by Ms. Mardi Mapa-Suplido is about the Role of Civil Society in Democracy, Governance, and Politics. She surveyed the participants in the session about their organizations’ involvement in the previous elections, including endorsing local and national candidates. She also asked them to share anecdotes as to why they or their organization chose to do so or not to endorse candidates. This then transitioned to discussing the politics, governance, and development framework. While talking about the effects of the recent elections, she pointed out the burnout or disillusionment experienced by voters, especially young voters, after increased participation and community-organized events such as house-to-house campaigning. She recommended that in the future, there should be focus on forming reform-oriented political leaders and bridging the divide of cultural and political values.

Open Forum

Q: How do we sustain burnout from doing advocacy work?

A: (Mr. Laborte) Remind ourselves that we are breathing. Sometimes, we shell out our own resources just to make things happen. We have to be strategic in our engagement. We have

to spend our resources and energy wisely. And lastly, please rest. I understand that as CSOs, we are very energized until 2 AM just to make things work.

Q: Democracy and development are not necessarily correlated with each other but how do we navigate that reality?

A: (Ms. Mapa-Suplido) Hierarchy of priorities and values. For the short - term, people will be satisfied. But we know the kind of sustainable change that we want. We continue to push for a democratic form of governance.

A: (Mr. Calfoforo) Freedom of speech was circumvented and until now, we are paying for the debt then.

Q: Reflecting about discussing development in very esteemed rooms, but we do not invite the poor into those rooms; they cannot see beyond what is immediately attainable; emphasis is talking with them and not to them.

Q: Since there is so much that students can do, how can we, from the academe, help and how can we partner with you better?

A: (Ms. Mapa-Suplido) The academe can help by casing the questions more accurately. There are a lot of dilemmas but are all hanging.

A: (Mr. Calfoforo) We need human resources. Intellectual resources are very important to educate, empower and organize them. There are communities in Visayas that was changed by community organizations.

Q: If the government is oppressing the people, how can CSOs fight against the repression?

A: (Ms. Mapa-Suplido) If you have a CSO that wants to influence a change in local government, you have to organize. When you have the numbers, eventually the government will listen.

End of Session

Breakout Session 4
Reforming the Philippine Electoral System

1:30 PM – 3:00 PM | Degas Meeting Room

Organizer:

Initiatives for Dialogue and Empowerment through Alternative Legal Services (IDEALS)

Time	Activity	Speaker
1:30 PM - 1:40 PM	Introduction	
1:40 PM- 2:00 PM	An Overview of the Country's Experiences on Electoral Reform	Atty. Rona Ann Caritos Executive Director Legal Network For Truthful Elections (LENTE)
2:00 PM - 2:20 PM	Trends in Electoral Reforms Proposed in Congress and Senate	Atty. Donatello Justiniani Senior Legal Human Rights Consultant IDEALS
2:20 PM - 2:40 PM	Electoral System: What Works for Women	Dr. Socorro Reyes, PhD Regional Gender and Governance Adviser Center for Legislative Development
2:40 PM - 2:55 PM	Open Forum	
2:55 PM - 3:00 PM	Closing Remarks	Ms. Valerie Padagdagan Project Manager, IDEALS
Moderator Ms. Sandy Añonuevo Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, IDEALS		

Objectives of the Session

The breakout session discussed electoral reforms post-2022 national and local elections through the Action for Electoral Reform and Transparency (ALERTayo) which responds to legal and technical needs of marginalized, disempowered, and vulnerable groups. The current major activities of the initiative cover human rights, economic rights, and rights in crises and emergencies. Among the focus of the session are proposed reforms in congress and senate as well as electoral reforms for women.

Summary of Proceedings

The session was moderated by **Ms. Sandy Añonuevo**, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer of IDEALS. The panel includes **Atty. Rona Ann Caritos**, Executive Director of Legal Network for Truthful Elections (LENTE), **Atty. Donatello Justiniani**, Senior Legal Human Rights Consultant of IDEALS, and **Dr. Socorro Reyes, PhD**, Regional Gender and Governance Adviser of the Center for Legislative Development.

Atty. Rona Ann Caritos presented “An Overview of the Country’s Experiences on Electoral Reforms” The discussion was about the electoral reforms in Philippines including challenges and wins that have been encountered in pushing for reforms as well as opportunities for moving forward in time for the mid-term and *barangay* elections. In the past two congresses, *barangay* elections have been postponed. Electoral reform is more than just changing the electoral system and includes removing political dynasties.

Atty. Caritos mentioned two major election laws that have been passed in recent congresses, the Political Party Development Bill and the Election Service Reform Act. The Election Service Reform Act was passed in April 2016 and gives public school teachers the option whether to serve as poll workers or not in elections. There are also provisions on legal indemnification for teachers, establishing accessible voting centers, and requirement for political parties and candidates to report official online accounts.

Part of the discussion of Atty. Caritos are the following:

1. Mandatory requirement to report official online accounts
2. Creation of the vulnerable sector office and engagement of PWDs and senior citizens
3. Reasonable corporate donations since before corporations were not allowed to make contributions to any politicians and candidates
4. Voter transportation of vulnerable population which was allowed in 2022
5. BARMM approval of the BEC
6. Partnering with the MBHTE of BARMM to integrate the history and basics of parliamentary government in specialized subjects taught to public school students.

Atty Caritos added that the reforms are results of their patience, networking, and being okay with working in the government. What they have learned in electoral reform through the years is that, “you win some, you lose some.”

Atty. Donatello Justiniani presented the “Trends in Electoral Reforms Proposed in Congress and Senate”. He discussed election-related bills in the 18th and the 19th Congress. Based on his research,

there are 170 election-related bills in the House of Representatives and 51 in the Senate during the 18th congress. In the 19th Congress, there are 141 election-related bills in the House of Representatives and 30 in the Senate. He mentioned that during the 18th Congress there were more laws regarding the postponement of election and online voting system because of the pandemic. In the 19th Congress, the House of Representatives mostly filed bills about election postponements, strengthening COMELEC and special voting arrangements.

Atty. Justiniani revealed that in the House of Representative, Representative Rufus Rodriguez has passed the Electoral Reform Bill while in the Senate, Senators Marcos, Villanueva, and Revilla have passed the bill for deliberation in January 2023. He also shared about the following bills:

- Election-related law passed
 - postponing of the 2022 *Barangay* and *Sangguniang Kabataan* Elections (BSKEs)
 - extension of voters' registration for the 2022 national and local elections
 - rescheduling of the first BARMM regular elections
 - postponement of the May 2020 BSKEs
 - upgrading the salaries of COMELEC employees

- Bills that reached third reading
 - HB 09785: Increasing COMELEC Manpower Complement in its Field Offices, Providing Office Spaces Separate and Independent from Local Government Units
 - HB 09786: Providing for the Manner of Election of Elective Members of the *Sangguniang Panlalawigan* of Laguna Representing the Cities of San Pedro, Sta. Rosa, and Binan
 - HB 10022: Providing for the Election of Sectoral Representatives to Local Legislative Bodies and Manner of Election
 - HB 10579: Strengthening the Field Offices of COMELEC by Upgrading and Creating Certain Positions

Atty. Justaniani emphasized that a filed bill remains just a filed bill unless a lawmaker is 'pressured' to work on its passing. If such is the case, a bill is approved even if it is not a priority.

The last topic about "Gender and the Electoral System: What Works for Women" was presented by Dr. Socorro L. Reyes. The main objectives of the presentation are to: 1) understand the different electoral systems and how it works for women; 2) provide gender equality advocated research-based information; and 3) have an analysis of a gender sensitive electoral system and discuss its linkage with political parties. According to her, the lowest point of Congress was when the House Committee on Human Rights and Justice, rather than conducting a hearing, harassed and humiliated former Senator Leila De Lima.

For Dr. Reyes, the electoral system is how your votes turn into seats. She cited three types of proportional representation: plurality majority system, combined system, and even proportional representation. In proportional representation, a party based on voting seats in congress or parliament or whatever body it is, will be in proportion to the number of votes they received.

In describing the party list, Dr. Reyes gave the distinctions below.

- Closed List – candidates who are in sequence, whether you are a woman or man.
- Large District Magnitude – Based on research, a large number of districts is equal to a large or proportional representation.
- High Legal Threshold – A small partylist means a small threshold. A large threshold is needed to win a position. The larger is the district magnitude, the higher is the legal threshold, and the more chance of winning a position.
- Quotas – refers to the reserved seats by a specific number.

She stated that there is a need for strong, stable, and institutionalized political parties as well as gender representation balance with having more than 60 percent or less than 40 percent political parties. Unfortunately, in the Philippines political parties are not the basis for political recruitment but political families. She mentioned that election in the Philippines is such an agony to go through with its process and the number of individuals who want a position. She closed the conversation by saying that, “it is not what one writes about gender equality in laws and constitution but in what can be done.”

Open Forum

Q: What opportunities exist for electoral reform groups when it comes to lobbying and the availability of voting centers and polling places for absentee voters and the issue of false advertisement on party systems?

A: Answers to the questions were provided highlighting the advantage of accessible voting centers which do not require people to travel long distances to the center of towns or municipalities. Additionally, steps are being taken to address false advertisement on party systems.

A conversation ensued on the need for more organizations to push for accessible voting centers and separate polling places, as well as the development of a stronger political party system within the Philippines. It was noted that the parliamentary system needs a strong political party system to work, hence, the first parliamentary elections in BARMM is so important. It was also discussed that there are bills in place that are pushing for reform within the electoral system and that organizations can create noise and pressure to help push for these reforms. It was mentioned that left-leaning parties are more focused on ideological beliefs rather than being opportunistic or self-serving and that party development is a key factor in creating a stronger political party system in the Philippines.

The next discussion is on the importance of winning an election. There was a comment that winning an election requires resources, which are funded by political families and dynasties. In order to break such practice, it was suggested that practical experience and academic experience can be used in combination to create change. It was further suggested that gender equality should be taken into consideration when selecting candidates. There was a comment for the need to be realistic and to strengthen the opposition as well as to wake up the church and academia to the issue of politics.

End of Session

Breakout Session 5
Proposed Standards for An Alternative Automated Election System

3:30 PM - 5:00 PM | Monet Ballroom 2

Organizer:
National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL)

Time	Activity	Speaker
3:30 PM - 3:35 PM	Opening Remarks	Mr. Angel S. Averia Jr. National Chairperson, NAMFREL
3:35 PM - 3:50 PM	Proposed Automated Election Standards (AES)	Mr. Fernando D. Contreras Jr. Systems Committee Head, NAMFREL
3:50 PM - 4:05 PM	The 2022 Automated Election System	Mr. Eric Jude O. Alvia Secretary General, NAMFREL
4:05 PM - 4:25 PM	The Comelec TOR for the 2025 AES and Bills filed in Congress for a Hybrid Election System	Atty. Emir-Deogene V. Mendoza Legal and Outreach Consultant NAMFREL
4:25 PM - 4:40 PM	Improving the AES and the Proposals for an Alternative Election System following Proposed Standard	Mr. Angel S. Averia Jr. National Chairperson, NAMFREL
4:40 PM - 4:55 PM	Open Forum	
4:55 PM - 5:00 PM	Closing Remarks	Mr. Eric Jude O. Alvia Secretary General, NAMFREL
Moderator Mr. Fernando D. Contreras Jr. Systems Committee Head, NAMFREL		

Objectives of the Session

The session defines an alternative automated elections system which requires the adoption of automated election standards that support the principle of “secret voting and public counting,” including standards on system auditability and protection of votes. The presenters presented proposals that will improve the election process and experience.

Summary of Proceedings

The session moderated was **Mr. Fernando D. Contreras Jr.**, Systems Committee Head of NAMFREL. He presented as well the ‘Proposed Automated Election Standards (AES)’ from NAMFREL that will improve or enhance the transparency of the AES.

The proposed standards are:

1. Open source from proprietary license to open License
2. Use of Election Markup Language (EML) as standard for data interchange between and among Automated Election System
3. Adoption of a standard ballot design
4. Append a Quick Response (QR) Code to Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) and Election Return
5. Properly implement digital signing of Election Returns (ERs), Certificates of Canvass (CoC), and Statement of Votes

The next discussion was on, ‘2022 Automated Election System’ presented by **Mr. Eric Jude Alvia**, Secretary General of NAMFREL. In his presentation, he revisited the whole election process of transmission, the technologies responsible for the counting and transmission of votes for canvassing and consolidation. He mentioned the four components for the Automated Election System Automated Election System: 1) Election Management System (EMS); 2) Vote Counting Machine (VCM); 3) Electronic Results Transmission System; 4) Canvassing and Consolidation System (CCS).

Mr. Alvia recounted that the Automated Election System performed an average overall accuracy rate of 99.95 percent but some VCMs and secure digital cards malfunctioned. There was no observation of any anomalies in the automated counting of votes and electronic transmission result. The local source code review (LSCR) and the random manual audit were put in place to ensure integrity of the voting process. However, the LSCR was limited to certain groups and restrictions were imposed using automated tools to test the accuracy of the software. The transmitted election results were converted to files in comma separated values (CSVs) format using programming scripts. This resulted in loss of metadata in such instances as polling place / clustered precinct, voting center, location, time transmitted, and digital signatures of electoral board members. Many voters endured long queues. Some VCM malfunctioning are ballot paper jams and sudden shutdowns. Some needed to be replaced which prolonged voting hours. The quickness of transmission without the corresponding transparency and validation measures raised some doubts on the results and integrity of the elections.

Atty. Emir-Deogene Mendoza, Legal and Outreach Consultant of NAMFREL discussed ‘The Comelec TOR for the 2025 Automated Election System and Bills filed in Congress for a Hybrid Election System.’ He discussed the proposed machine to be purchased for the 2025 elections. He explained the lease

with the option to purchase an integrated Automated Election System. He relayed that COMELEC Chair Garcia bundled Automated Election System functions in one provider for the machines such as ballots, stamping pens, software except transmission which has a separate TOR. The system is to be called Fully Automated System with Trans and Count (FASTRAC).

The last topic was on, 'Improving the Automated Election System and proposals for an Alternative Election System following proposed standard' and was discussed by **Mr. Angel Averia Jr**, National Chairperson of NAMFREL. He shared NAMFREL's proposed 10 automated election standards although during the session, he focused on the two standards, privacy and transparency. He opined that the democratic election principle that secret voting and public counting must be observed is there but the challenge is how to operationalize secret voting and public counting in an Automated Election System. Mr. Averia also proposed the advantages and disadvantages of identified AES alternatives including hybrid election system, alternative Automated Election System (voter verified ballot), and ballot printing device.

Open Forum

Q: There are allegations that if the mark is reflected at the back of the ballot, the vote will not be counted. Is this true?

A: The ovals in front and back pages of the ballot are not parallel to each other. Even if the ink passes through the back of the paper, the machine covers the shaded area. Regarding the amount of shade, the instruction is to fully shade the circle. There is also a term we refer to as threshold mark where the machine won't read any shade less than 25 percent.

Q: Regarding the grassroots, usually they are the ones who are deprived, what are the projects of NAMFREL in the voter's education of the grassroots?

A: As the organization works closely with grassroots organizations, NAMFREL tries to veer away from technical terms and communicate in layman's language. They also work with COMELEC to make the whole process user-friendly to everyone.

Q: What is the implication of compatibility to correct under-voting?

A: There is an opportunity to correct the vote when the machine does not recognize the shade. The assumption now is only to correct undervotes.

Q: It will be expensive if COMELEC will purchase new machines. Can NAMFREL intervene in changing the source code?

A: They don't have to buy new machines. Our position is a simple but standardized machine. NAMFREL did not mention that there is new source code, but rather there is a system crash.

Q: How trustworthy do you think COMELEC is? Do you trust COMELEC?

A: We must rely on the system, not just on the persons running the system. It should not be personality based.

Q: Is manual audit enough? What kind of transparency is needed to gain the trust of the people?

A: Technically speaking, we are not happy in the process because there is bias when humans are involved in the manual processing. Unlike in other countries, there is a separate machine from other independent sources.

Q: In your proposal, have you taken into consideration successful and best democratic practices? Is the proposal local or outsourced? University elections are a microcosm of elections and there is no glitch in the conduct. Can this be a basis?

A: The proposals are based on other countries. We prioritize local technology as much as we can.

Q: Can you confirm again that if we ever find just one discrepancy, we already have a case against COMELEC?

A: If ER and transparency servers do not match, you can file a case against COMELEC.

Q: Some people asked COMELEC to release the transmission log. Last March 23, they released it on the pretext that it was transmitted. But when they analyzed it and matched it with the reception logs, all these 33 ERs did not match.

A: The process is too complex but we did not see any difference with regard to the votes.

End of Session

Breakout Session 6
Strengthening Democracy through Youth Participation in
Local Governance Processes

3:30 PM – 5:00 PM | Versailles Tent

Organizers:

Youth Leadership for Democracy (YouthLed) and Hirayang Kabataan

Time	Activity	Speaker
3:30 PM - 3:45 PM	Introduction	
3:45 PM - 4:45 PM	Activity Proper and Processing	<p>Atty. Carlo Africa Executive Director, Hirayang Kabataan</p> <p>Ms. Iya Gamboa</p> <p>Ms. Johanne Arceo – Pascua</p> <p>Mr. Ferdinand Del Carmen</p> <p>Mr. Vince Perez</p> <p>Mr. Jesam Jimenez</p> <p>Mr. Miguel Karlo Abadines Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan</p>
4:45 PM - 5:00 PM	Synthesis on Youth Political Participation on Local Governance Mechanisms	
<p>Moderator</p> <p>Atty. Carlo Africa Executive Director, Hirayang Kabataan</p>		

Summary of Proceedings

Atty. Mildred Ople, Senior Program Officer of Youth Leadership for Democracy (YouthLed) opened the session by introducing YouthLed as a program started by the United States Agency International Development and implemented by the Asia Foundation. It aims to “increase civic engagement to strengthen youth participation in democratic governance.” She went on to outline projects initiated by or affiliated with the YouthLed such as the National Youth Survey, National Youth Summit, Lead Fellowship, and local youth assemblies and youth coalitions.

Atty. Carlo Africa, Executive Director of Hirayang Kabataan, introduced Hirayang Kabataan as an organization that “develops spaces for young people in order for them to increase their civic and political participation through structured learning experiences.” He then divided the participants into two groups, each with its own activity to participate in and evaluate from.

The first group formed a circle around a taped grid on the floor. One participant at a time, the task was to make it from one side of the grid to the other side by stepping on the cells of the grid. The facilitators have a guide unseen to the participants who showed the path that could be traversed. If the participant is on the path, they may set foot on it. If the participant is not, the group must start over. If the group makes an error the second time, the group must go back and let another participant attempt to traverse the grid.

The second group was given a long plastic twine to hold on to. The task was to form a perfect triangle with their eyes closed and their hands not letting go of the rope. The task was time bounded for the group to strategize and execute the task.

Whether successful or not with the task, both groups sat down, discussed, shared their learning experiences from the activities.

Afterwards, the participants were divided again into groups but this time there were four groups. Each participant was given a piece of bond paper. The objective was for everyone to reach one part of the room to the other, marked by two lines of masking tape on the floor. However, there were rules to be followed when crossing the two marked points. The pieces of paper must be touching each end. One foot must be on each piece of paper. The pieces of paper cannot be slid. All members must be able to cross. If a rule was broken as observed by a facilitator, the group must restart. Immediately, the participants had forgotten about the groupings and executed the task as one group. After several attempts, all participants completed the task.

The underlying message of the activities was that to strengthen local democracy, youth empowerment and collective action are important in building a stronger nation. It promotes inclusive and collaborative approach in achieving positive and enduring change in communities. Programs that are developed at the grassroots level are more likely to be effective and have a greater impact.

End of session

Breakout Session 7
Strengthening Local Democracy through Barangay and Youth Initiatives

3:30 PM – 5:00 PM | Degas Meeting Room

Organizer:
Galing Pook Foundation

Time	Activity	Speaker
3:30 PM - 3:35 PM	Session Overview	Ms. Georgina Hernandez-Yang Executive Director, Galing Pook Foundation
3:35 PM - 3:55 PM	Mapanagutang Pamamahala: The Barangay Graceville Experience	Mr. Melencio Garcia 2015 Galing Pook Awardee and Former Punong Barangay Barangay Graceville San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan
3:55 PM - 4:15 PM	Building a National Network of Youth Organizations	Mr. Carlo Borja Former Sangguniang Kabataan Official and Operations Director Positive Youth Development Network
4:15 PM - 4:35 PM	Bagong Sangguniang Kabataan: Making the <i>Sangguniang Kabataan</i> an Effective Vehicle for Change	Mr. John Lester Pangilinan Hall of Fame Awardee Philippine Sangguniang Kabataan Awards and Sangguniang Kabataan Chairperson Barangay Payatas, Quezon City
4:35 PM - 4:50 PM	Open Forum	
4:50 PM - 5:00 PM	Closing	Ms. Georgina Hernandez-Yang Executive Director, Galing Pook Foundation
Moderator Ms. Georgina Hernandez-Yang Executive Director, Galing Pook Foundation		

Objectives of the Session

Youth empowerment, participatory governance, and collective action are crucial in transforming a better society. The session discussed program strategies that enhanced the lives of every individual in the communities. It showcased best practices of youth organizations and barangay initiatives in transforming the political landscape and strengthening local democracy in the country.

Summary of Proceedings

Mr. Melencio Garcia, former Punong Barangay of Graceville San Jose Del Monte Bulacan and 2015 Galing Pook Awardee, shared their experience about “*Mapanagutang Pamamahala: The Barangay Graceville Experience*”. Mr. Garcia provided a brief overview of the program he implemented during his term as a Barangay Captain at Barangay Graceville, City of San Jose del Monte in Bulacan. He shared the interventions that helped improve the lives of his constituents through programs in health, education, livelihood, environment, and disaster risk management. One of the major interventions was to provide educational assistance to help the students continue their basic education. They supported the Alternative Learning System of the Department of Education (DepEd) to cater out-of-school youths and adults who are willing to learn basic and functional literacy skills, knowledge, and values.

In livelihood, Mr. Garcia established opportunities to develop the skills of his constituents by conducting training on baking, automotive, basic hair and makeup, and regular workforce training. The *barangay* also offered one-stop-shop services, paralegal assistance, and *Klinika sa Bisikleta* to provide consultation and medication to every household in the community. Apart from these, Mr. Garcia highlighted their partnership with private sectors and individuals to help them in implementing the programs. They collaborated with Coca Cola Philippines for the *sari-sari* store training program, partnered with Generika drugstore to provide medicine discounts for senior citizens, engaged active and retired professionals within the *barangay* to help them with trainings, and signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the private hospitals to provide a 50 percent discount to the community.

Through these projects, Mr. Melencio Gracia bagged the *Galing Pook* Award in 2015, an annual nationwide search for most outstanding and innovative local governance programs.

The next topic was about “Building a National Network of Youth Organizations” discussed by **Mr. Carlo Borja**, Operations Director of Positive Youth Development Network and a former *Sangguniang Kabataan* (SK) Official. Mr. Borja discussed the contribution of the SK in local governance and in nation building. Mr. Borja emphasized that SKs can create sustainable solutions and innovative programs in communities instead of being a breeding ground for future corrupt politicians. One of the highlights of the program as presented by Mr. Borja was the *Boto ko, Ambag ko!*, an election-related campaign aimed to educate and empower eligible youth voters to secure a better future for the country. The campaign was able to register 20,000 Filipino youths to bring positive change during the last election. Mr. Borja also mentioned projects that promotes meaningful participation of youths and communities through the following:

- *PlastiKaisahan* – a household community initiative to reduce waste and recyclable materials in the *barangay*. It was able to engage 50 households and collected more than 300 kgs. of recyclable materials.

- *EduKaisipan* – an education initiative aimed to assist parents in teaching their children and helped the youth about mental health and psychosocial support as a way of coping with the pandemic.
- Capacitated the youth sector in developing and implementing programs in the *barangay*.
- Encouraged youth involvement on budget allocation by holding consultations with the youth sector in the community.

Mr. Borja was able to implement 45 major projects and 174 sub-projects that empowered the youths and the community during his term. He launched the Outstanding SK to recognize the commitment of the younger generation in building a better nation through honest leadership and service. Mr. Borja acknowledged that being a public servant and a non-government organization worker greatly helped in developing various initiatives that create progress in the community.

The last topic presentation was on, “*Bagong SK: Making the SK an Effective Vehicle for Change,*” as discussed by **Mr. John Lesther Pangilinan**, SK Chairperson of Payatas, Quezon City. He shared how he managed to overcome adversities when he was the SK Chairman in Payatas, Quezon City. He helped increase youth involvement and drew awareness on the importance of youth empowerment at the grassroots level. Before he became an SK chair, the youths in their community were active in sports activities such as basketball and volleyball leagues. They lack awareness of sustainable programs that can support youths and communities. Mr. Pangilinan established the initiative, “Being a Knowledgeable Society (BAKS)” in Payatas, Quezon City to increase youth engagement and participation. Through BAKS, the number of active youth organizations increased through community building, leadership, and project implementation. By 2020, there were 14 youth organizations engaged, 49 youth projects were implemented, and youth leaders were capacitated to continue the work and legacy of a servant leader in the community.

Open Forum

From the presentations, session participants recognized the important roles of SK and the *barangay* in strengthening community initiatives. One of the questions raised is how to encourage youths to participate and encourage them to become progressive leaders in the community despite political divisions, affiliations, and existing dynasties in the *barangay*. The reply was that there is no need to come from a prominent family to win a political seat since what the Filipino is looking for are young and progressive leaders based on the current political trajectory of the country.

There was another question on how the youths will be able to identify the advocacy to promote either as a volunteer or when they enter a local position. In reply, Mr. Borja shared his personal situation of coming from a broken family and having been born out of teenage pregnancy which became his inspiration to become a youth volunteer. His experience made him realize that a person can be an instrument in educating youths despite personal situations. Mr. Pangilinan, who was a scholar, shared that despite being poor there is still an opportunity to help others.

Mr. Garcia highlighted the importance of participatory governance in implementing *barangay* programs. He encouraged every individual to volunteer and collaborate with the *barangay* for the successful rollout of community projects.

End of Session

Reception Dinner
PARTICIPATE Democracy Summit Reception Dinner

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM | Monet Ballroom 1 and 2

Organizer:

**Ateneo School of Government – Political Participation for Greater Electoral Integrity
 (ASOG -PARTICIPATE)**

Time	Activity	Speaker
6:00 PM - 6:30 PM	Welcoming of Guests	
6:30 PM - 6:45 PM	Launching of the <i>Ang Ambag Natin: Isang Koalisyon para sa Demokrasya</i>	
6:45 PM - 6:50 PM	Intermission	
6:50 PM - 7:10 PM	Keynote Message	Dr. Edilberto C. De Jesus PhD Former Secretary Department of Education and Professor Emeritus Asian Institute of Management
7:10 PM - 7:15 PM	Intermission	
7:15 PM – 8:30 PM	Dinner	
<p>Host</p> <p>DR. CLARISSA DAVID PhD Professor, Ateneo School of Government</p>		

Summary of Proceedings

Dr. Edilberto de Jesus, Former Secretary of the Department of Education and Professor Emeritus of the Asian Institute of Management, was the keynote speaker of the PARTICIPATE Democracy Summit reception dinner.

Dr. de Jesus highlighted the violence against democracy and ways to learn from the decline to recovery of democracies in other countries. He pointed out contributors to democratic deterioration such as colonial legacies, ill-conceived laws, bureaucracy, and technological change. These pose corrective actions that are complex and affect multiple stakeholders with widely varying perspectives and concerns. Even when agreement on policy has been achieved successfully, implementation will depend on many variables that are difficult to predict and will often require contentious consultations with stakeholders, and strategic or tactical changes.

He said there should be a greater demand for a more rigorous problem analysis looking at risks that magnify division of areas rather than consolidate ranks. He compared the situation to other countries where anti-democratic forces are eager to encourage and exploit those opposed to them. Promoting polarization is a cardinal principle of the authoritarian populist framework.

For Dr. de Jesus, the alternative is to give up and accept a process that will take time and will also mean pain. To embrace the genetic or values mutation that will allow us to breathe under authoritarian waters. With this, he emphasized on the kind of votes that have to be built. There cannot be one massive market to carry the entire community nor one design to carry out the mission. There is a need for a different design of democracy to survive.

Dr. de Jesus mentioned the extent that the front lines in the battle for democracy argues and allows for coordinated but decentralized strategy. There is no need to agree on a single issue together. There are open and anti-democracy assaults that come in tidal waves - extrajudicial killings, red-tagging, and censorship. There are moderate offenses against critics. The atrocities of authoritarian rule continue with corruption, transportation, and peace problems.

Dr. De Jesus calls for a more deliberative process in exercises of democracy. Information can be received as there is learning from experts and fellow advocates, bringing together a representative sample of citizens. Dealing with die hard supporters include practicing deliberative democracy as conversations expand democratic space with different perspectives.

End of Session

PARTICIPATE Democracy Summit Day 2
May 12, 2023

Plenary Session
Gender Equality and Online Political Participation

09:00 AM – 10:30 AM | Monet Ballroom 1 and 2

Organizer:
La Salle Institute of Governance (LSIG)

Time	Activity	Speaker
9:00 AM - 9:05 AM	Opening Ceremonies	
9:05 AM - 9:15 AM	Misogyny in Politics: A Gendered Fight for the Philippine Presidency 2022	Dr. Ruth Angelie Cruz Andrew L. Tan Data Science Institute - De La Salle University
9:15 AM - 9:25 AM	Digital Activism and the Safe Spaces Act in the Philippines	Ms. Dominique Reario Department of Political Science and Development Studies De La Salle University
9:25 AM - 9:35 AM	Gender and Development in BARM	Ms. Paramisuli Aming Gender and Development / Women, Peace, and Security Coordinator Bangsamoro Women Commission
9:35 AM – 10:05 AM	Reactors / Discussants	Dr. Socorro Reyes Regional Gender and Governance Adviser Center for Legislative Development Dr. Jean Encinas-Franco Associate Professor University of the Philippines, Diliman Ms. Ella Oplas Fellow, La Salle Institute of Governance
10:05 AM - 10:25 AM	Open Forum	
10:26 AM- 10:28 AM	Awarding of Certificates	
10:28 AM - 10:30 AM	Closing Message	Dr. Ador Torneo Director, La Salle Institute of Governance
Moderator Ms. Dionesa Bustamante Department of Political Science, De La Salle University		

Objectives

The session featured results of research programs that highlight the perception of women within the realm of Philippine politics and how gender is shaping today's environment, especially in BARMM. The present landscape of digital media was also presented as it relates to Safe Spaces in the Philippines. The forum serves as an avenue for presenting and discussing policy briefs supporting increased participation of women in Philippine democracy. Each presentation included policy recommendations directly to the government and non-government advocates to enable a more gender responsive environment for women's political participation.

Summary of Proceedings

Ms. Dionessa Bustamante, lecturer at the Department of Political Science in De La Salle University, was the moderator for the session.

Dr. Ruth Angelie Cruz, affiliate faculty of the Andrew L. Tan Data Science Institute of the DLSU gave the first presentation on Misogyny in Politics: A Gendered Fight for the Philippine Presidency 2022. Her research areas are on using social media data for creating business insights and using open government data in establishing new services to increase transparency and accountability. The research focused on gendered disinformation, which is the intersection between sexism, misogyny, and online falsehoods. The objectives of the research are to: 1) look into how a female candidate has been treated online in the last national elections in order to expose how women are targeted in the Philippine political arena and its impacts electoral processes; 2) contribute to a deeper understanding of how gender information is used in false narratives on misogyny; and 3) open the discussion on how to gather online information and abuse against women in politics. The research used content analysis to analyze posts from Twitter using hashtags or keywords.

The research showed evidence of how women in politics are being treated. The impact is beyond specific targets to frighten other women and even women who are already politically active to deter them from engaging in politics as well as to send a message that women should not participate in public life, in any capacity.

Policy recommendations include training women and vulnerable members of society to defend themselves and protect their data, especially those engaging in politics. There should be uniformed institutional policies among organizations on harassment, misinformation and disinformation as well as organizational support for women who are victims of these acts.

Ms. Dominique Reario, researcher at the Department of Political Science and Development Studies - DLSU gave the second research presentation on Digital Activism and the Safe Spaces Act in the Philippines. The research aims to explore possibilities and limitations of digital activism and political participation and explore how netizens express opinions online. Even if the Philippines is relatively faring better on gender equality compared to other Asian countries, it is important to discuss the matter. Last year, the Philippines ranked 19th in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index. Still, the ranking does have a disconnect to reality as Filipino women still face discrimination, sexism and gender-based violence.

The online space is accessible yet it enables one to remain anonymous and not be identified even as the digital space is a good venue to come together about certain concepts like hashtag campaigns

(#*BabaeAko* and #*HijaAko*) where common experiences of women across the world are discussed. Philippines is more relaxed on gender equality. When people use hashtags, there is a hope for awareness and engagement in advocacy work. Ultimately, usage of social media is seen as a call for the government to push for actual reforms. With the Safe Spaces Act, the government must ensure that its agencies are doing its part. The research hopes to empower and inform communities and the public, engage with and support existing political and civic participation, collaborate with stakeholders, and call for learning opportunities, informational materials and frameworks in implementing the Safe Spaces Act.

The third presenter **Ms. Paramisuli Aming**, representative from the Bangsamoro Women Commission (BWC), shared about 'Pushing for the Empowerment of Women in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao'. Ms. Aming shared the experiences of the BWC in gender mainstreaming gender development. She discussed gains and challenges faced by BWC since 2019. BWC is the BARMM counterpart of the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) and has advocacy and capacity building roles to ensure political participation and economic empowerment of women in BARMM.

Among the accomplishments of BWC is the drafting of the BARMM Gender and Development (GAD) Code. Ms. Aming recognized the importance of mainstreaming gender and development in every part of the government and its partners. The current GAD code is now part of the priority agenda of the BTA. It has provisions on discouraging early child marriages and stricter penalties for violators. Ms. Aming recognized that in order for an advocate to move forward, there should be compromise. The BWC was able to work around the male-dominated members of BTA where there are only 18 women out of 80 seats. BWC is now lobbying for more women representation which it has been able to increase from initially 10 percent to 30 percent nominees.

Panel Reactions

Dr. Socorro Reyes, Regional Gender and Governance Adviser of Center for Legislative Development was the first reactant. She commented on the analysis framework and suggested a clearer definition of misogyny since hashtags do not really capture the essence of misogyny. She recommended focusing more on contents of tweets on whether misogyny manifests such as in social exclusion, sex discrimination, hostility, disenfranchising women, and sexual objectification. According to Dr. Reyes, misogyny can lead to physical and psychological violence, red tagging, and weaponization of the law.

On the second research, Dr. Reyes noticed the activity-based nature of the research. She urged to look at impacts and actions from the research such as if it led to behavioral change or if cases of Violence Against Women (VAW) declined. She inquired about the intersectionality of gender in the Safe Spaces Act with other identity characteristics such as class, ethnicity and religion. Dr. Reyes acknowledged the works of PCW and women's organizations in implementing the law but recommends looking at the monitoring and evaluation of the Safe Spaces Act.

The next reactor is **Dr. Jean Encinas-Franco**, Professor and Assistant Chair at the Department of Political Science in University of the Philippines, Diliman. Dr. Encinas-Franco zeroed in on the recommendation for political parties citing how political parties can police their ranks by providing guidelines. She focused on training both men and women on how to facilitate safe spaces and how to responsibly use social media. She expressed hopes for the second paper to work closely with agencies and concerned organizations and recommended that any program related to political participation must involve the COMELEC. CSOs must also be included for a sustainable result, she further added.

Ms. Maria Ella Calaor-Oplas, LSIG fellow, synthesized the presentations and reactions in the session. She emphasized the emergence of digital space as the new arena for information saying that social media must be used as a tool to empower rather than discourage women. She recognized the capacity of the public to seek truth and demand for the right to information as well as focus must be directed empowering the public. On policy, she recommends looking at the Magna Carta of Women and revisiting its provisions about digital space. Lastly, she raised the question about the use of GAD budget and its importance in mainstreaming gender. She ended by stressing the importance of monitoring and evaluation of the GAD budget and making stakeholders part of decision-making.

Open Forum

The first comment was from a representative of the Labor Party of the Philippines who said that gender equality is not binary and should have the inclusion of the LGBTQIA+. Another participant emphasized that gender equality should be the outcome and that there is a need to talk about gender equity, which means providing ample opportunity for women to excel.

Q: About engagement and conversations that PCW sparked with women and how it led to institutional and structural change.

A: (Ms. Dominique Reario) PCW has no regional office and budget is a problem of the agency but there are mechanisms in place like the national GAD resource pool. It is important to work with grassroots organizations and other government agencies to spark conversations.

A: (Ms. Ella Calaor-Oplas) It is important to recognize that PCW is a small organization with very limited budget and resources, but was able to have the GAD resource pool and other mechanisms such as the focal GAD person in agencies. The structure and system are there waiting for application.

A; (Ms. Paramisuli Aming) In the context of BWC, there is a continuous visit to the ASH and VAW desk in each site and holds the commission accountable if it works or not.

Q: How government agencies use the GAD budget.

A: (Ms. Paramisuli Aming) There is no assurance for women to take seats in the parliament but the government must be accountable. The gender focal point person and group of people who plan gender activities of institutions must be accountable.

A: (Ms. Ella Calaor-Oplas) The use of GAD budget is mandated by law but the quality of where the budget is used must be in mainstreaming gender-related work.

Q: How to forward gender equality if the culture is not ready to fight patriarchy.

A: (Dr. Ruth Angelie Cruz) As an educator, I experienced how the educational system disempowers women at an early age. There should be educational reforms to provide equal opportunities for girls.

A representative from 1521 Solidarity for Truth and Justice shared experience as a *barangay* officer and how the *barangay* GAD budget was being used. She encouraged participation in consultations on GAD budget allocation. There should be a conscious effort to make women want the GAD budget and make the *barangay* work for women.

Q: Ways to reach the inactive youth.

A: (Ms. Dominique Reario) Utilize the media, go to communities, and activate school clubs.

Closing Message

Dr. Ador Torneo, Director of LSIG synthesized and formally closed the plenary session. He mentioned how political participation would be incomplete without discussing the political participation of women, even as there are still barriers to women's participation as discussed in the session. The session reiterated struggles in political participation of women such as gender disinformation, sexual harassment online, and gender-based issues. In closing, Dr. Torneo affirmed LSIG's commitment to continue examining issues, promoting discourse, providing recommendations for gender equity and equality, and providing safe spaces for the political participation of women and LGBTQIA+. He encouraged everyone to work together and strengthen democratic spaces with genuine and equal political participation.

End of Session

Closing Plenary Session and Closing Ceremony
Beyond the Ballot: The Priority Political and Electoral Reforms for
Strengthening Democratic Spaces

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM | Monet Ballroom 1 and 2

Organizer:

Ateneo School of Government – Political Participation for Greater Political Integrity
(ASOG - PARTICIPATE)

Time	Activity	Speaker
11:00 AM - 11:05 AM	Opening and Introduction	
11:05 AM - 11:10 AM	Introduction of Speaker	
11:10 AM - 11:30 AM	Beyond the Ballot: The Priority Political and Electoral Reforms for Strengthening Democratic Spaces	Honorable George Erwin Garcia Chairperson Commission on Elections
11:30 AM - 11:40 AM	Video Presentation of Proposed Political and Electoral Reforms	PARTICIPATE
11:40 AM - 11:50 AM	Turnover of the Alternative Bills, and Recommendations on Political and Electoral Reforms	PARTICIPATE
11:50 AM - 12:00 PM	Response from the Commission on Elections	Honorable Nelson Celis Commissioner Commission on Elections
12:00 PM - 12:15 PM	Synthesis: Building an Inclusive, Deliberative, and Participative Democracy	Julio Teehankee, PhD Chief of Party, PARTICIPATE
12:15 PM - 12:20 PM	Closing Message	Philip Arnold Tuaño, PhD Dean, Ateneo School of Government
Moderator		
Mr. Christian Esguerra Information Specialist, PARTICIPATE		

Objectives

This session aims to provide a platform to present alternative bills on key political and electoral reforms to stakeholders and reaffirm the commitment of the Consortium to a shared pathway for democracy governance which include safe, fair, and free elections.

Summary of Proceedings

In his message, **Chair George Erwin Garcia** of COMELEC talked to the stakeholders requesting them to set aside prejudices on the Commission and look at two realities challenging the management of the commission, budget and laws.

He cited that with elections happening every three years and special elections like BSKEs budget is always not enough. He further related that in 2022 elections, COMELEC asked for Php23 billion for 98 thousand new machines but were given less than 50 percent of the requested amount. He calls for a whole-of-nation approach and for the support of other agencies to enable biometrics for the 2025 elections. Aside from machines, the budget is enough for salary and structure of the organization and the office. There is also a request for an additional Php2,000 increase for the allowances of electoral board members and to allow early voting for marginalized sectors. There is a need as well to remove bias on the supplier of the voting machines. Still, Chair Garcia gave assurance that COMELEC is taking reforms with lessons from previous elections.

On how the laws are obsolete and limit reforms, Chair Garcia cited that the last revision of the Omnibus Election Code was in December 1985. He identified the need for amendments to include internet voting for Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) because of low voting turnout even if mail voting is available. Lastly, Chair Garcia said there must be a law on party list accreditation to clearly define 'marginalized and underrepresented' applicants. Amendments of law are with lawmakers and COMELEC implements them.

In concluding his message, Chair Garcia assured that COMELEC will listen to the people, make inclusive decisions and activities, and always be transparent.

A video presentation of proposed political and electoral reforms prepared by PARTICIPATE was shown and followed by the turnover of the alternative bill and recommended political and electoral reforms which was printed as the, "Beyond the Ballot: The Priority Political and Electoral Reforms for Strengthening Democratic Spaces." **Dr. Julio Teehankee**, PARTICIPATE CoP, led the turnover to COMELEC Chair Garcia. The leads of the PARTICIPATE Consortium were also formally presented each with a copy of the alternative bill.

Closing Ceremony

Commissioner Nelson Celis delivered a response on behalf of COMELEC. He first acknowledged the efforts of the PARTICIPATE consortium to actively involve COMELEC as a partner. He reminded that political engagement goes beyond elections and it is important to have voters' education. He emphasized on educating youths since they must have an active role in holding institutions accountable to ensure fair and secure elections with integrity.

Dr. Julio Teehankee, PARTICIPATE CoP, delivered the synthesis of the democracy summit anchored on, "Building an Inclusive, Deliberative, and Participative Democracy." He looked back on Day 1 of the Summit which discussed ways to strengthen democracy based on sharing of experiences. The plenary discussion presented many sides of the political spectrum and led to a heated but productive discourse, demonstrating a democracy in action.

Dr. Teehankee summarized the results of discussions in the breakout sessions:

- (Breakout session 1) There is a potential proof of concept in BARMM. If BARMM is able to pass reforms and provisions on political parties and anti-political dynasties, it can also be done at the national level. The first regular BARMM elections in 2025 is an opportunity to shape the future of the region and elect leaders and needs the support of everyone.
- (Breakout session 2) The discussion contributed to factors in the rise of populism such as media algorithm, and trust and distrust in democratic institutions which highlight the importance of promoting media literacy to counter disinformation.
- (Breakout session 3) The role of CSOs is crucial in advancing the interest of marginalized groups and providing platforms for citizen participation. It ensures that human rights are protected and upheld. Dr. Teehankee calls on CODE NGO to share and bring back passion in development work, given the vibrant dynamics of CSOs in the Philippines.
- (Breakout session 4) In reality, violence and corruption prevails during elections hence, the stronger call for electoral reforms.
- (Breakout session 5) The proposed AES aims to ensure the security of the election process including NAMFREL's proposal to address election fraud.
- (Breakout session 6) The session explored what youths can do in making local communities better through fun activities which teach about leadership. The SK in particular should reclaim their credibility after being seen as corrupt by making use of the democratic spaces that work for them.
- (Breakout session 7) The session showed that the *barangay* can be the potential space in employing democracy as unique units of governance, reflecting a microcosm of executive and judicial branches.

In the earlier plenary session on gender and online political participation, Dr. Teehankee acknowledged that women are more competent and compassionate than men and that it is high time to prioritize women in leadership and decision-making roles.

Dr. Teehankee shared his experience as part of the academe and as lead of the PARTICIPATE Consortium. Reflecting on a question he is often asked during political groundworks if democracy provides sustenance to ordinary people, he realized that democracy failed to deliver. People want

quick and easy solutions to their problems and there is prevalence of poverty and exclusion. However, democracy gives light to our collective humanity, something we have to cherish and defend at all cost. Therefore, democracy must deliver. If democracy is for the people, of the people, and by the people, we must meet the people where they are. We must protect democracy and the freedom it provides. The strength lies in collective commitment so keep the fire burning.

Dr. Philip Arnold Tuaño, Dean of ASoG, concluded the Summit with a closing message. He expressed hope that the Summit allowed participants some time to reflect, engage, and commit to political participation and democratic reforms. He referred to the various sessions which compelled stakeholders to move beyond rhetoric and toward political change. He particularly called on youths to continue the works in democratic reforms and proactively act on the change that they want. He stressed that the journey to success is an evolving process and requires unwavering dedication and continuous efforts to pave the way for a better future. Since each one holds the power to make a difference, Dr. Tuaño urged everyone to contribute to the collective task of transforming the Philippines into a culture that thrives on transparency, accountability, and genuine representation.

End of Summit

Annexes

Annex 1: Scenes from the PARTICIPATE Democracy Summit



(left) Dr. Julio Teehanke, PARTICIPATE COP, officially opens the summit exhibit together with officials from the PARTICIPATE consortium.

(right) Officials from the consortium – ASOG, LSIG, NAMFREL, CODE-NGO, and IDEALS posed in front of the PARTICIPATE call-to-action panel after signing their commitment as a show of support to the call.



(top left) Fr. Roberto Yap SJ, Ateneo de Manila University President, delivering his welcome remarks during the opening ceremony. (top center) COP Teehanke triumphantly declaring the opening of the PARTICIPATE Democracy Summit. (Top Right) Mr. Christian Esguerra served as the moderator for the opening plenary.



(right) Panelists in the PARTICIPATE Democracy Summit opening plenary posing with COP Teehankee and Mr. Esguerra, after the very candid, engaging, and insightful discussion.

(below) Ms. Michelle Ong, the emcee for the opening session asking some stakeholders about their expectations from the summit.



Interest on the Bangsamoro transition is notably high during the “Building Democratic Institutions in the Bangsamoro: Key Lessons from the Political Transition.” Atty. Sha Elijah Dumama-Alba and Atty. Raissa Jajurie (center and right) from the BTA explains how the BARM parliamentary government will work in the region as Mr. Jeff Canoy (top left) moderates the open forum as Dr. Baustista (bottom left) from ASOG asked a question.



(top photos) The session on “Understanding the Populism, Polarization, and Disinformation Post-2022 Elections,” explained the propensity and vulnerability of Filipinos towards misinformation and disinformation as experienced during the 2022 national and local elections.



(top) CODE-NGO and INCITEGoV took the lead in assessing the role of CSOs under the current state of democracy in the Philippines in, “Strengthening Democratic Spaces through Stronger Civil Society.” The importance of the topic could not have been more felt than during the session with the significant participation from CSOs and other stakeholders.



(left) “Reforms in the Philippine Electoral System tackled trends and development in the Philippine electoral systems and proposed amendments on electoral laws to the senate and congress as well as the role of women in the political system.



(top left) NAMFREL explained to summit participants their “Proposed Alternative Automated Election System” as the Galing Pook Foundation (top right) presented community and youth best practices which contributes in strengthening democracy at the local level.



The youth as valuable stakeholders in strengthening democracy enjoyed the group activities as much as the learning during the session “Strengthening Democracy through Youth Participation in Local Governance Processes.” (top left, bottom left, and top photos)



(bottom left) LSIG presented the findings of their policy researches in, “Gender equality and online political participation.”
 (bottom right) Dr. Edilberto de Jesus, a staunch advocate of a genuine and an alive democracy, gave the keynote message during the summit reception dinner.



COMELEC as an institutional partner of PARTICIPATE extended their full support during the Summit. (top left) COMELEC Chair George Erwin Garcia delivered keynote speech during the closing ceremony, while Commissioner Nelson Celis (top center) delivered COMELEC response after the turnover of recommended electoral reforms. Dean Arnold Phillip Tuaño (top right) of ASOG officially closed the PARTICIPATE Democracy Summit with a speech.

(below) Summit stakeholders were intently listening and actively engaged during the entire event.



(top left) A participant signing the call-to-action panel as a show of support to strengthening democracy. (center left) The Summit brought together representatives from various political parties in the Philippines. (top) PARTICIPATE consortium together with COMELEC officials with their copy of "Beyond the Ballot: Summary Recommendations on Political and Electoral Reforms for Strengthening Democratic Spaces." (bottom) The PARTICIPATE consortium poses for posterity after the success of the Summit.



Annex 2: List of Participants

NO	NAME	ORGANIZATION
1	Abby Gail A. Buguis	
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5	Aira Mae Romero	De La Salle University
6	Aison Garcia	DLSU College of Law
7	Aizalou Salas	Universidad De Manila
8	Alab Cruz	1521 Solidarity
9	Albert C.Oasan	NAMFREL
10	Alberto S. Manuel	PACE PH
11	Aldren H. Hilq	YSEALI
12	Aldwin Joseph Empaces	CODE NGO
13	Aleah Orendain	DOST-PCIEERD / ASOG
14	Alen Josef Santiago	ASOG
15	Alexandra Eunice A. Manalo	PUP - College of Communication, Department of Journalism
16	Alexis Portia Eisma	NAMFREL
17	Alidatu A. Kalantungan	Active Moro Alliance for Development, Inc.
18	Amenah Rasul Natangcop	Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU)
19	Ana Rose Espiritu	LSIG
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22	Angelica Jasmine R. Rayo	CEU Political Science Society
23	Anna M. Abalahin	CODE-NGO
24	Anna Snowgale Rupa	British Embassy Manila
25	Anthony Marzan	KAISAHAN Inc
26	Antonio Carlos C. Taburnal	PUP Samahan ng mga Mag-aaral ng Kasaysayan

27	Antonnela Beatriz E. Alimad	Political Science Society
28	Apolinar S. Dichoso	NAMFREL
29	Ariadne F. Tolentino	NAMFREL
30	Ariel "Ka Ayik" Casilao	Anakpawis Party
31	Arjay P. Alingod	Polytechnic University Of The Philippines
32	Arlline A. Santos	Institute of Politics and Governance (IPG)
33	Arnaida L. Hajili	Sama-Pangutaran Empowerment Youth Organization
34	Arnel Dizon Pagcu	PACE PH
35	Arthur Franz B. Tenorio	DILG/UST Graduate School
36	Arturo S. Ciolo	Pamantasan ng Lunsod ng San Pablo
37	Arvhie Serrano Santos	Samahan ng Kabataang Boluntaryo ng Pilipinas (SKBP)
38	Ashley Nicole C. Ilanan	Polytechnic University of the Philippines - International Studies Student Assembly (PUP-ISSA)
39	Ason Q. Hipolito	1521 Solidarity for Truth and Justice
40	Aubrey Joy N. Sacopon	CEU Political Science Society
41	Aurora J. de Dios	Women and Gender Institute
42	Baday, Danica Mae	PUP Samahan ng mga Mag-aaral ng Kasaysayan
43	Badong Alonzo	ATOM/August Twenty-One Movement & 1521 solidarity for truth and justice
44	Bai Almira Faiqah Sinsuat	Philippine Commission on Women
45	Baiminang Madale	Ako Bakwit
46	Baisaman Madale	Ako Bakwit
47	Benjo G. Basas	Teachers' Dignity Coalition (TDC)
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49	Bianca Coleen B. Leones	RTU Mandaluyong Political Science Society
50	Boni Macaranas	People's Choice Movement
51	Bryan Niñal Caburnay	
52	Byron Angelo Espinosa Bravo	LGU San Fernando, Masbate
53	Caesarah Mae Sandro	University of Santo Tomas
54	Caitlyn Consebido	Polytechnic University of the Philippines International Studies Students Assembly
55	Cale Payson	PUP SMK
56	Camille Angela Zarate	PUP Journalism Guild

57	Candice B. Manalo	Hon. Ziaur-Rahman Alonto Adiong
58	Carlo Africa	Hirayang Kabataan
59	Carlos "Titus" C. Manuel	Philippine Computer Society
60	Carlos Enrico Cabalquinto Florendo	La Salle Institute of Governance
61	Catherine Torres	UN Women
62	Cathlyn Keshel G. de Raya	Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Manila
63	Caubalejo, Mary Justine T.	
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68	Cesar Ong	TINGOG
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70	Chinito Reel I. Casicas	Young Parliamentarians of Manila
71	Chris B. Cordinete	University of Caloocan City
72	Chislene Kyen M. Legaspi	UST - The Political Science Forum
73	Christian James M Gravador	Bagong Maunlad na Pilipinas Movement Inc
74	Christian Paul V. Pamadulan	Far Eastern University
75	Christoffer Adelante	YouthLed - The Asia Foundation
76	Christopher C Mantillas	College of Political Science and Public Administration - PUP Manila
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79	Clarisse Jane N. Javier	GoodGovPH
80	Clarize Kristine Nona De Guzman	Universidad de Manila
81	Claro A. Ordoñez, Jr.	Office for Social Concern and Involvement, AdMU
82	Cliford Natividad	GoodGovPH
83	Clyde Richmond Lazaro	De Los Santos Medical Center

84	Concepcion, Thea Martina	FEU Political Science Society
85	Consuelo Katrina A. Lopa	Innovation for Change-East Asia
86	Cora Cabaron	Namfrel Pasay City
87	Coun. Quin Cruz	Philippine Councilors League
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90	Czarina Dichoson	CEU PSS
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92	Dacera, Ericson A.	
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94	Dana Janelle B. Artes	Centro Escolar University-Manila
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104	Deanne Capiral	International Alert Philippines
105	Debbie Anne S. Garcia	Committee on Suffrage and Electoral Reforms of the HREP
106	Deena Ong	PACE PH
107	Deliva, Kerr Nell S.	ASoG
108	Dexter Pormento Baño	Orbital Exploration Technologies, Inc.
109	Diana Rose Pranada	History Department
110	Dianalyn Granada	Akbayan Youth Montalban
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116	Edgardo Cabalitan Jr.	Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA)
117	Edgardo O. Aparri	People Alliance for Clean Election in the Philippines(PACEPH)
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121	Edwin Bulaclac Jr	NAMFREL
122	Edwin D. Cabañero	National University
123	Efren Taborlong	NAMFREL
124	Egbert John Aniciete	Centro Escolar University
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126	Einhel Earl P. Nocum	PUP Samahan ng mga Mag-aaral ng Kasaysayan
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128	Elijah D. Cuevas	Polytechnic University of the Philippines
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130	Elvin Ivan Y. Uy	Philippine Business for Social Progress, Inc.
131	Eminel Jane M. Alvior	Ateneo de Davao University
132	Emmanuel N. Sakay	Science Boys Exclusive Group Inc.
133	Emmanuel O. Cruz	UP Kalinaw
134	Engr. Michael M. Montefalcon	Michael M Montefalcon Engineering Consultancy
135	Enha Erika T. Brondo	OSCI - ADMU
136	Erich Estrella Magsisi	Naujab Municipal High School
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151	Francis Jayco L. Dela Cruz	Polytechnic University of the Philippines
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204	Jaycel Moreno	Angat Buhay
205	Jaymark Groyon	Lipa Archdiocesan Social Action Commission, Inc.
206	Jayneca Reyes	LILAK
207	Jayvee Lobitaña	Sangguniang Kabataan (Mandaluyong City, NCR)
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211	Jeff Goebel	USAID/Philippines
212	Jemilynne S. Garcia	Far Eastern University
213	Jenica Faye Garcia	The Manila Times
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217	Jesica F. Capricho	Coalition for Bicol Development
218	Jesm Bautista	FEU Public Policy Center
219	Jessa Gene T. Oteyza	
220	Jesslie Unay	Team Diokno Manila
221	Jhaster Troy T. Limua	Jesse Robredo Institute of Governance
222	Jhon Robert B. Ruiz	NSDS YSLEP
223	Jillian Jocelyn Somera	CPED
224	Jin Danniell Villatema	Reed Elsevier Philippines
225	Jirus Patrick C. Madlangbayan	PUP Manila
226	Joey De Chavez	Philippine Rural Reconstruction Youth Association
227	John Abletis	Ateneo de Manila University
228	John Alexis F. Lirio	Manileños Youth Initiatives
239	John Arzil E. Manabat	La Salle Institute of Governance
230	John Benedict Felices	La Salle Institute of Governance

231	John Cedrick Gallanes Ellazo	SIKLAB Langkiwa
232	John Coronel	Center for Empowering Communities
233	John Daniel Torres	Manileños Youth Initiatives
234	John Dave T. Laguinday	PPSA - NCR
235	John Henry Galura Pascual	CAMP Inc
236	John Joseph Coronel	Center for Liberalism and Democracy
237	John Joseph R. Cano	Public Administration Society Earist-Manila
239	John Kenneth C. Contreras	Sulong Kabataan Philippines
239	John Kurt Tanada	Samahan ng Mag-aaral ng Kasaysayan- PUP
240	John Mark Villanueva	Mapua University
241	John Michael Flores Dela Calzada	Manileños Youth Initiatives
242	John Nery	Rappler
243	John Patrick Pineda	Far Eastern University
244	John Paul Ebe Torrecampo	RTU Mandaluyong Political Science Society
245	John Paul F. Castillote	Compass Consulting
246	John Paul L. Lozano	
247	John Reggie M. Reyes	PUP Sentral na Konseho ng Mag-aaral
248	John Rojell Y. Elizaga	PUP Journalism Guild
249	John Wendell Laniog	PUP
250	Jonathan Dominguez	The Communicator - PUP
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252	Jonathan R. Suguitan Jr.	FEU Public Policy Center
253	Joonrei Lejandro Domanais	SANDIWA PH
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256	Jose Elwin E. Andral	Far Eastern University
257	Jose Emmanuel O. Patrimonio	Politeach
258	Jose Luis C. Encarnacion	NAMFREL

259	Jose Manuel I. Diokno	FLAG
260	Jose Mendoza	USAID
261	Jose Rolando Tan Agudo	NAMFREL PASAY CITY
262	Josefa C. Aportadera	NAMFREL
263	Joseph Aaron Lara Miravalles	NAMFREL Pasig City
264	Joseph Andrew M. Jumao-as	Commission on Human Rights
265	Joseph Guinto Navarro	PHLEAD, Inc
266	Joshua Bernard Espeña	Polytechnic University of the Philippines
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268	Jovino de Guzman Miroy	ADMU; Radyo Katipunan
269	Juan Gabriel Felix	DAKILA
270	Julia Abad	FEU Public Policy Center
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273	Julius De Leon	Centro Escolar University - Manila
274	Justin M. Tee	BAJ 2-2N
275	Justin Vincent O. Altubar	
276	Justine Raphael Luis Balane	Akbayan Youth
277	Kae Kristel P. Muñoz	The Communicator
278	Karry Sison	Center for Liberalism and Democracy
279	Katrina Navarro	PHINMA Education
280	Keith Xavier C. Sazon	Ateneo de Manila University
281	Kenneth G. Cabalan	Angat Buhay
282	Kevin Angelo A. Ortiz	Cavite State University - Imus
283	Kevin Nielsen Magat Agojo	City University of Hong Kong
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297	Kristine Rosary Yuzon-Chaves	Philippine Commission on Women
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300	Kyla Vivero	PUP COC
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314	Lleanna Catherine R. Somera	Development Initiative
315	Lorena C. Navallasca	Western Visayas Network of Social Development NGOs (WeVNet), Inc.

316	Lou Vincent Lorenzana Senora	Ateneo de Manila University
317	Louis Banaga	BWI
318	Lousie June Bautista	Project Inclusion Network
319	Luis Allan Manuel S. Ferrer	PUP Samahan ng mga Mag-aaral ng Kasaysayan
320	Luis Sencio Jamili	NAMFREL
321	Luisito Miguel Caro Gepuela	Gising Barangay Movement Volunteers Inc
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323	Lyene Marie A. Darang	DZMC- Young Communicators' Guild
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328	Ma. Elena S. Lagunday	People Power Volunteers for Reform
329	Ma. Isabel Parada	YMCA Manila
330	Ma. Rosel S. San Pascual	University of the Philippines Diliman
331	Ma. Shiela Mae A. Saavedra	UST The Political Science Forum (UST-TPSF)
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333	Ma. Vhiktoria Siva	CMA
334	Macapanton, Rohaima C.	PWU Muslim Student Association
335	Maded Batara III	Computer Professionals' Union
336	Madzween Joy K. De Asis	MSU Tawi-Tawi Institute for Peace and Development in Mindanao
337	Malachi Jabez P. Lozano	SK Masagana Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) YOUTHLED Break the Fake Movement
338	Marcuz Nicollo M. Gutierrez	FEU- Political Science
339	Mardi Mapa-Suplido	InciteGov
340	Margaret Riva B. Meneses	Centro Escolar University- Political Science Society
341	Maria Corazon M. Akol	Philippine National IT Standards (PhilNITS) Foundation, Inc.

342	Maria Jevesha Villavert	Development Initiative
343	Maria Mikaela Josef	Diplomatic League
344	Maria Minerva A. Melendres	PUP COC (BAJ 2-2N)
345	Marie Hazel Lavitoria	SALIGAN
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348	Marife Joven-Dia	ADRA Philippines
349	Marinelle Gaboy	CEAP
350	Mario Ian N Mosquisa	EVNET
351	Marion Wellesley Nuqui	University of the Philippines
352	Marisol Victorioso	Sentro ng Alternatibong Lingap Panlegal
353	Marj Ibanez	INCITEGoV
354	Marjorie Ann M. Sani	PLGU-Lanao del Sur
355	Mark Angelo M. Zamora	Kabisig Kabitenyo - Kilos Ko Youth Cavite
356	Mark Anthony G. Salvador, RSW	Daughters of Charity-Marillac Center
357	Mark Devon Maitim	Young Advocates for SRHR
358	Mark Glyn B. Genodia	Polytechnic University of the Philippines- Sta.Mesa
359	Marl Craig O. Felizardo	
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362	Mary Charizze L. Josol	UP KALINAW
363	Mary Grace B. Bandin	
364	Mary Joe Abbygail B. Alforque	PUP College of Social Sciences and Development Student Council
365	Mary Joy Garces	PUP History Department
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367	Mary Ruzzel Morales	Hirayang Kabataan
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369	Maxine Tanya M. Hamada	H-Camp Consultancy
370	May Angelene Tesorero	Manileños Youth Initiatives
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372	Meanard Isma	Loyola Heights Pride Council

373	Melanie Joy Feranil	Council for People's Development and Governance
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378	Melquiades A. Acomular, Jr.	Far Eastern University-Manila
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380	Mia Kinna Angela Cantillan	FEU Political Science Society
381	Mica Angela M. Lampa	
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383	Miguel Karlo Abadines	Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan
384	Miguel Raphael Tongco	USAID RenewHealth
385	Mike Vinluan	ASOG
386	Mikko Baliad	
387	Milbert Ryan Raagas	Armed Forces of the Philippines
388	Milliesa L. Flores	Angat Pinas Inc.
389	Mnenosyne Hilary Vinarao	Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Muntinlupa
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393	Morgan Fincher	U.S. Department of State
394	Myra B. Pasa	PUP Journalism Guild
395	Nasser Salik Watamama	Active Moro Alliance for Development, Inc.
396	Natalie Christine Jorge	Youth Leadership for Democracy (YouthLed)
397	Nerissa S. Pasamba	1sambayan, mandamus
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404	Odranreb Guillermo	NU Manila
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417	Princess Balagbis	Polytechnic University of the Philippines
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440	Ricaella Mae Loro	
441	Ricamor Delos Reyes	NAMFREL
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443	Ricco Victor Ruto	Global Shapers Iloilo
444	Richar R. Talento	San Beda University-Manila
445	Rizalino Valerio	Hirayang Kabataan, Inc.
446	Roald Edubas	
447	Robi Kate Miranda	ASEAN Youth Organization
448	Rodvic D. Balanquit	NAMFREL
449	Rojanessa L. Guro	PLGU- LDS
450	Romalyn P. Habitan	PUP HISTORY DEPARTMENT
451	Ronald Jopher E. Bucad Jr.	Angat Pinas Inc.
452	Rosal, Julia N.	FEU Public Policy Center
453	Roselle A. Calima	Polytechnic University of the Philippines - Manila
454	Rosemarie B. Aparri	People Alliance for Clean Election in the Philippines(PACEPH)
455	Ross Frederick V. Castroverde	NAMFREL
456	Rosyvett Gabrielle I. Narvaez	

457	Rovin Jhon Cincollagas	Young Men's Christian Association of Manila
458	Rowena Ann Mendoza	Institute for Studies in Asian Church and Culture
459	Ruben Felipe	Liberal Party, Pi Sigma Fraternity
460	Rubenjie Cadua	YOUTHS PASCRES
461	Sabrina Victoria M. Dayao	Center for International Law
462	Salando, Jorland Mesias	PUP - College of Communication
463	Salma Pir T. Rasul	NAMFREL
464	Samantha Gayle Santos	Youth Leadership for Democracy (YouthLed PH)
465	San Juan, Joash Elarcet M.	
466	Sandino Soliman	CODE-NGO
467	Sara Jane Lopez	Center for Migrant Advocacy Philippines, Inc. (CMA)
468	Sarah Jane Fabito	WiTech Batangas
469	Seth Cledera	Ateneo Assembly
470	Shanice Espiritu	Democracy Watch Philippines
471	Shannen Bianca C. Velasco	Polytechnic University of the Philippines
472	Sharona Nicole Semilla	The Communicator (PUP-College of Communication)
473	Shebana Alqaseer	INCITEGov
474	Shey Sakaluran Mohammad	City Government of Manila
475	Shirley Gañon	St. Augustine Academy of Pampanga, Inc.
476	Sibanah D. Usman III	PUP History Department
477	Socorro Reyes, Phd	Center for Legislative Development
478	Sofronio Lingatong Jr.	De La Salle University - Office of Student LIFE
479	Stefano P. Lim	Hirayang Kabataan
480	Stephen Godfrey Oafallas	Dela Costa Youth V Organization
481	Suzanne J Zambrano	Ateneo Policy Center
482	Syra Marie Norin Petalio	Ateneo De Manila University
483	Tabucol, Mary Grace C.	
484	Tanya Irwin	University of Toronto
485	Tanya Renee Rosales	SALIGAN
486	Teodulfo Lopez	Ateneo de Manila University
487	Teodoro Lloydon Bautista	Ateneo School of Government
488	Teresita Quintos Deles	INCITEGov

489	Thea Rizz Noreen D. Rondina	Ateneo School of Government
490	Tingcap Mortaba li	UP Muslim Students' Organization
491	Tito T. Perez	ECOFWI
492	Tonette De Jesus	KAS Philipines
493	Tristan Joseph A. Cruz	Triangulo Youth Movement
494	Trixia Ysabelle R. Abad	PUP Samahan ng nga Mag-aaral ng Kasaysayan
495	Tyron Julian D. Luzon	Political Science Society
496	Van Manuel Jugueta	Political Science Society
497	Vergil John U. Victolero	
498	Victor Noel Tolentino Genuino	Angat Buhay
499	Vince Julian Quizon Manalang	Political Science Society
500	Vincent Carlo L. Legara	Ateneo de Manila University
501	Virginia Abad	ALAB Pilipinas, Inc.
502	William Barry Codera	Angat Buhay
503	Wilton John Padlan	AGOS Coalition/ AY Manila
504	Yesha Ryn Santos	PUP
505	Yusoph A. Pangadapun III	LGU-Marawi
506	Zack Lee	Innovation for Change - East Asia