

32nd VISAYAS AREA BUSINESS CONFERENCE REPORT

➤ **27-28**
JULY 2023

➤ **HENANN RESORT
ALONA BEACH
PANGLAO BOHOL**

➤ **THEME:**
Exploring New
Economic Frontiers
in Technology,
Governance, and
Innovation

Organized by:



**PHILIPPINE
CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE AND
INDUSTRY**

Hosted by:



**BOHOL CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE AND
INDUSTRY**

In partnership with:



**PROVINCE OF
BOHOL**



**CITY OF
TAGBILAR**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bohol Chamber of Commerce and Industry hosted this year's 32nd Visayas Area Business Conference on July 27-28, 2023 at The Bellevue Pavilion, Doljo, Panglao Island, Bohol with the theme: **"Exploring New Economic Frontiers In Technology, Governance, And Innovation"**. The event's main objective is to bring together business leaders, entrepreneurs, government officials, and industry experts from across regions in the country, mainly to discuss current economic issues and explore new business opportunities; find solutions through technology, innovation and digitalization; and the chance to network with other businesses and industry professionals.

The 32nd VABC was strategically curated to traverse the intersections of technology, governance, and innovation, and to tap into the latent potential of thriving industries within the Visayas region. By spotlighting the critical role of digitalization in reshaping local businesses, the conference sought to uncover insights that could empower stakeholders to navigate the dynamic economic landscape effectively.

The Day Two of the 32nd VABC was the main highlight of the two-days event wherein the conference proper commenced. Sen. Mark A. Villar, Chair, Committee on Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship & Chair of Committee on Banks, Financial Institutions and Currencies gave a keynote message together with Sen. Sherwin T. Gatchalian, Chair of Basic Education, Wages and Means & Vice Chair of Committee on Energy who gave a special plenary with the topic, "Powering Visayas' Industries" followed by a Fellowship Dinner hosted by Hon. Erico Aristotle C. Aumentado, Governor of Bohol.

The event brought together an impressive array of influential figures from the public and private sectors, uniting industry titans, distinguished government officials, policy shapers, prominent media voices, and more. This dynamic amalgamation of thought leaders fostered dynamic discussions and collaborative knowledge-sharing sessions, pivotal for holistic regional growth. Leading and respected businessmen from all over the Visayas gathered to listen to speakers from the government, local government units (LGUs), national and local business communities, and foreign investors and organizations who shared their insights on local business, analyzed trends and potential opportunities in this thriving region.

Significant highlight of the 32nd VABC was its focus on enhancing enterprise competitiveness through digitalization. The discussions also emphasized the role of capital formation and comprehensive support mechanisms in enabling SMEs and start-ups to flourish. Enlightening discussions on sustainable tourism and the region's energy prospects threw light on the intricate equilibrium between economic expansion and ecological conservation. Proposed measures for energy sustainability and emissions reduction presented by Senator Sherwin Gatchalian underscored a robust commitment to conscientious development practices.

32nd VISAYAS AREA BUSINESS CONFERENCE

THEME: Exploring New Economic Frontiers In Technology, Governance, And Innovation

HOSTED BY: Bohol Chamber of Commerce & Industry

July 27 - 28, 2023 | The Bellevue Pavilion, Panglao Bohol

PRE-CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

- **Opening of Trade Exhibit**

The 32nd Visayas Area Business Conference started with the ribbon cutting and opening of the trade exhibit. The event was graced with the presence of Governor Erico Aristotle C. Aumentado of Bohol Province together DOST Provincial Director Ms. Vina R. Antopina, DTI OIC Ms. Vierna C. Ligan, PCCI



Area Vice President for Visayas Frank A. Carbon, PCCI Regional Governor for Region 7 Ms. Melanie C. Ng, Bohol CCI President Mr. Dominic Butalid, PCCI Honorary Chairman and Committee-in-Charge for Membership Ms. Bing Simbal-Limjoco and PCCI Vice President for Regional Affairs Engr. Enunina V. Mangio.



CHAMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

As a pre-conference and supporting activity of the **32nd Visayas Area Business Conference (VABC)**, the **Philippine Chamber Development Institute (PhilCDI)** in partnership with **Bohol CCI** conducted the **Chamber Chamber Forum** which seeks to enhance the operational capacity of local chambers of commerce in the Visayas. The event was supported by the **Philippine Business for Education (PBed)**.

The topics and speakers of the said workshop were the following:

- **Session 1:** Charting a New Frontier: Redefining the Role of Business Chambers and Associations in the Local



Economy by **Ms. Justine B. Raagas**, Executive Director of PBED

- **Session 2:** Best Practices for LCCIs by **Ms. May Elizabeth S. Ybanez**, Executive Director Emeritus of Cebu CCI

- **Session 3:** PCCI Services for SMEs (PCCI Website and DOST

Collaboration) by **Mr. Ferdinand A. Ferrer**, PCCI VP for Industry and Director for Innovation, Science and Technology and Digital Transformation Cluster,

- **Session 4:** The PCCI Manual, MOCA and PET Program by Dr. Alberto P. Fenix.

There were also panel discussions on LCCI Best Practices and Workforce Development where the LCCI representatives shared their insights and experiences on the topic at hand.

PCCI Area Vice President for Visayas Frank Carbon delivered the Welcome Remarks while Vice President for Regional Affairs Enunina V. Mangio gave a brief Opening Statement.

The workshop was attended by 130 local chamber members from regions 6, 7, and 8.





- **TAGBILARAN CITY MAYOR'S NIGHT**

The 1st day of the conference was capped with a Welcome Dinner which was held at Bohol Tropics Resort and hosted by the City government of Tagbilaran. Tagbilaran City Administrator Katherine Torremocha delivered



the welcome remarks followed by the video message of Tagbilaran City Mayor Hon. Jane Yap who also welcomed all delegates, visitors, and guests and inspired them with her insightful message. Delegates were also entertained by various local performers.



32nd VISAYAS AREA BUSINESS CONFERENCE

The 32nd Visayas Area Business Conference was held last July 28, 2023 at the Bellevue Pavilion, Doljo, Panglao Bohol. Organized by the **Philippine Chamber of Commerce & Industry**, hosted by **Bohol Chamber of Commerce & Industry** in partnership with the **City Government of Tagbilaran** and the **Provincial Government of Bohol** under the theme: "**Exploring New Economic Frontiers In Technology, Governance, And Innovation**"

The event's main objective is to bring together business leaders, entrepreneurs, government officials, and industry experts from across regions in the country, mainly to discuss current economic issues and explore new business opportunities; find solutions through technology, innovation and digitalization; and the chance to network with other businesses and industry professionals. The 32nd VABC was strategically curated to traverse the intersections of technology, governance, and innovation, and to tap into the latent potential of thriving industries within the Visayas region. By spotlighting the critical role of digitalization in reshaping local businesses, the conference sought to uncover insights that could empower stakeholders to navigate the dynamic economic landscape effectively.

Plenary Session Topics and Speakers were the following:

- **Plenary 1: “Enhancing Enterprise Competitiveness Through Digitalization”** with panelists: **Mr. Vicente C. Catudio** of USAID SPEED, **Mr. Jonathan Luzuriaga** of Spring Valley Tech and **Mr. Eldirdge “Blue” Aldridge** of Converge ICT Solutions Inc.
- **Plenary 2: “Enhancing Government Efficiency Through Digitalization”** were highlighted with the presentations from **Usec. Jocelle Batapa-Sigue** of the DICT, **Mayor Jane Censoria Yap** of the Tagbilaran LGU and **Mr. John Alison B. Uy** of the Vehicle Inspection Center Operators Association of the Philippines (VICOAP)
- **Plenary 3: “Sustainable Tourism : How to Transform Visayas Tourism Sector into a Highly Dynamic Industry”** by **Usec. and Concurrent Regional Director Shahlimar Hofer Tamano** of Department of Tourism – Region 7
- **Plenary 4: “ Capital Formation for SMEs and Start-Ups”** with **Ms. Charmaine Co** of Round One and **Mr. Aaron Giberson**, Department Head and Vice President –Digital Channels of RCBC
- **Special Plenary: “Powering Visayas’ Industries”** with **Senator Sherwin T. Gatchalian** and **“Visayas Transmission Development Plan”** from **Mr. Michael Baylosis** of the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP) were presented.

A set of resolutions gathered from the consultations with the 22 Visayas local chambers were approved and adopted by the conference participants. These include the following:

DIGITALIZATION

Resolution urging the government to accelerate the entry into and the roll-out of ICT infrastructure projects to support the digitalization of enterprises by:

- Immediately passing and enacting the Open Access in Data Transmission bill which aims to lower the barriers to entry for data-only service providers by removing the requirement for a Congressional franchise and National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) authorization for a provider to build and operate a network,
- Standardizing and harmonizing the rules for infrastructure for the entry of emerging internet technologies, i.e. the issuance of a policy by DICT to help harmonize tower build and rules for pole attachment with the NTC tasked with regulation and enforcement,
- Streamlining of the permit processes.

POWER

Resolution urging the Energy Regulatory Commission to act on the action agenda raised by the local chambers in the Visayas area to address the high cost and reliability of power.

Further resolved urging the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) Board - Visayas Area to recommend to the Department of Energy (DOE) the organization of the Visayas Electric Power Industry Coordinating Council comprised of the Government Electric Power Industry Regulatory Bodies, the Industry Players, and the Consumers/Users in the Visayas to ensure that the mandate of the DOE is implemented.

CREATIVE INDUSTRY

Resolution urging the government to establish a Creative Entertainment Industry in Cebu City with the aim of making the city the Creative Entertainment Hub in the country. Resolved further urging the chambers, relevant government agencies, educational institutions, and the community to support this vision.

CARBON CREDITS

Resolution urging Congress to immediate passage and enactment of the Senate Bill entitled: "AN ACT PROMOTING A LOW CARBON AND GREEN ECONOMY, ESTABLISHING THE FRAMEWORK STRATEGY AND ELECTRONIC TRADING PLATFORM FOR CARBON CREDITS".

RESOLUTION ON TRADE, TOURISM, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Resolution urging all the chambers in the Visayas to actively support the **ONE VISAYAS** initiatives of the NEDA Regional Development Council-Visayas Area Committee by:

- a. Sharing of resources and activities to promote Visayas, particularly in trade, tourism, and infrastructure.

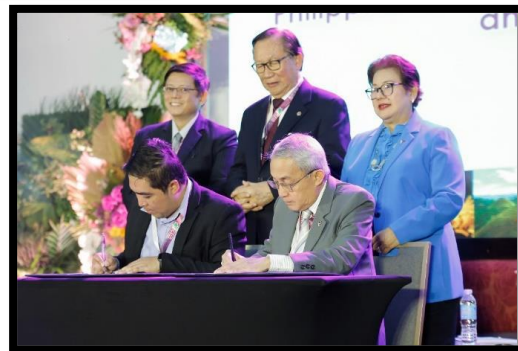
- b. Holding of an annual One Visayas Festival that will be staged around the Visayas region as well as a grand trade convention to feature agricultural and other products from the three regions.
- c. Establishment of the Visayan tourism highway, crossing from east to west that will interconnect the fragmented geographical feature of the Visayas for shared economic development.

Further resolved to compliment the initiatives of the government by harmonizing the efforts of the various chambers in the VISAYAS to further collaborate and promote companies and industries, as well as projects and activities, especially involving its members, in the areas of tourism, trade, industry, and agriculture.

ENHANCING COMPETITIVENESS AND SUSTAINABILITY OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES (SMES)

Resolution urging the relevant government agencies, local government units, and policymakers to allocate additional financial resources to support Visayan businesses in accessing finance, capital, and investment opportunities; strengthen entrepreneurship training programs in the Visayas, focusing on management, technology adoption, and digital literacy; develop customized initiatives to address the unique needs and challenges faced by Visayan businesses; enhance support for market expansion, domestically and internationally, through market research, trade promotion, and participation in trade events; streamline bureaucratic processes and reduce regulatory burdens for Visayan businesses and establish dedicated platforms or marketplaces to showcase and promote Visayan products and services.





GOVERNOR'S NIGHT

After a full-packed discussion during the conference, participants were treated to a dinner at the Modala Beach Resort hosted by the provincial government of Bohol led by Hon. Erico Aristotle C. Aumentado.

