

Cybercrime agency plans crackdown on online scams

THE Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center (CICC), which recently opened a cyber-crime laboratory in Quezon City, said it will expand its operations to online fraud after initially focusing on addressing online sexual abuse and exploitation of children (OSAEC).

CICC Executive Director Cesar O. Mancao II said at a June 17 briefing that the opening of the facility, known as the Digital Forensics Platform and Laboratory (DFPAL), "will allow the CICC to monitor and coordinate with other law enforcement agencies in conducting thorough digital and forensic investigations and assist them in prosecuting cybercriminals nationwide."

"We have acquire powerful state-of-the-art technology, which will improve the success rates of investigators and policing operations in the ongoing pursuit to identify, apprehend, and convict individuals and networks associated with online child sexual exploitation," he added.

Mr. Mancao noted that the agency is taking "one step at a time" in addressing cybercrimes.

"We are also concerned with other cybercrimes that are now rampant. We have... (other) agencies that can best address those kinds of cybercrimes. For the CICC's part, in a week or in a few days, we will launch our 'E-Scam Alert PH' app as well as our hotline and our websites," he said.

CICC Deputy Executive Director and Assistant Secretary James A. Layug said: "Scams are second (in importance after) online sexual abuse."

"The e-scam alert... is intended to address (the problem of) scams because they also victimize many of our countrymen."

CICC is an arm of the Department of Information and Communications Technology.

"OSAEC is a tragic and growing problem in the Philippines, but it does not need to be a permanent one. We will do everything that we can to protect Filipino children. We have to act now and fight against these predators. We need to help each other to protect our netizens," Mr. Mancao said.

"The opening of this new facility will provide law enforcement agencies with updated data and intelligence that can lead to the arrest and prosecution of these predators," he added.

The agency said that the pandemic has aggravated the problem of online child exploitation via pornography and other forms of child online sexual abuse, specifically with children from low-income families.

"To support this advocacy, we have child online protection programs and initiatives in partnership with various civil society organizations and many stakeholders," Mr. Mancao said. — Arjay L. Balinbin

Curbs on plastics output seen needed

By Alyssa Nicole O. Tan

LEGISLATION that will hold plastics producers accountable for managing the life cycle of their products will make companies conscious of the possible legal fallout from acting irresponsibly, but curbs on imports and production may ultimately be needed, environmental advocates said.

"If properly and fully implemented the law has significant potential to reduce plastic waste leaking into the environment," Antonio Gabriel M. La Viña, a lawyer, educator and environmental expert, told *BusinessWorld* in a Viber message.

"However, there needs to be equal focus on upstream measures to reduce plastics used and put into the market to have a long-term dent on the Philippines' plastic footprint," he added. "Right now, the law does not have strong provisions on upstream measures and policies."

Congress has ratified a consolidated version of a bill seeking to promote sustainability by holding enterprises responsible for the life cycle of their plastic products.

Senator Cynthia A. Villar, primary sponsor of the bill, has said that the reconciled bill focused on "waste reduction, recovery and recycling, and the development of environment-friendly products that advocates the internationally accepted principles on sustainable consumption

and production, the circular economy, and producers' full responsibility throughout the life cycle of their products."

The act compels large or obliged enterprises to establish or phase in extended producer responsibility (EPR) programs for the plastic packaging of their products to efficiently manage waste and reduce the production, import, supply, or use of plastic packaging deemed low in reusability, recyclability or retrievability; and to achieve plastic neutrality through efficient recovery and diversion schemes.

"Obligated companies need to make sure the processes, methods and schemes they

choose, to meet the diversion or collection targets, are environmentally sound and won't cause equal harm to the environment," Mr. La Viña said.

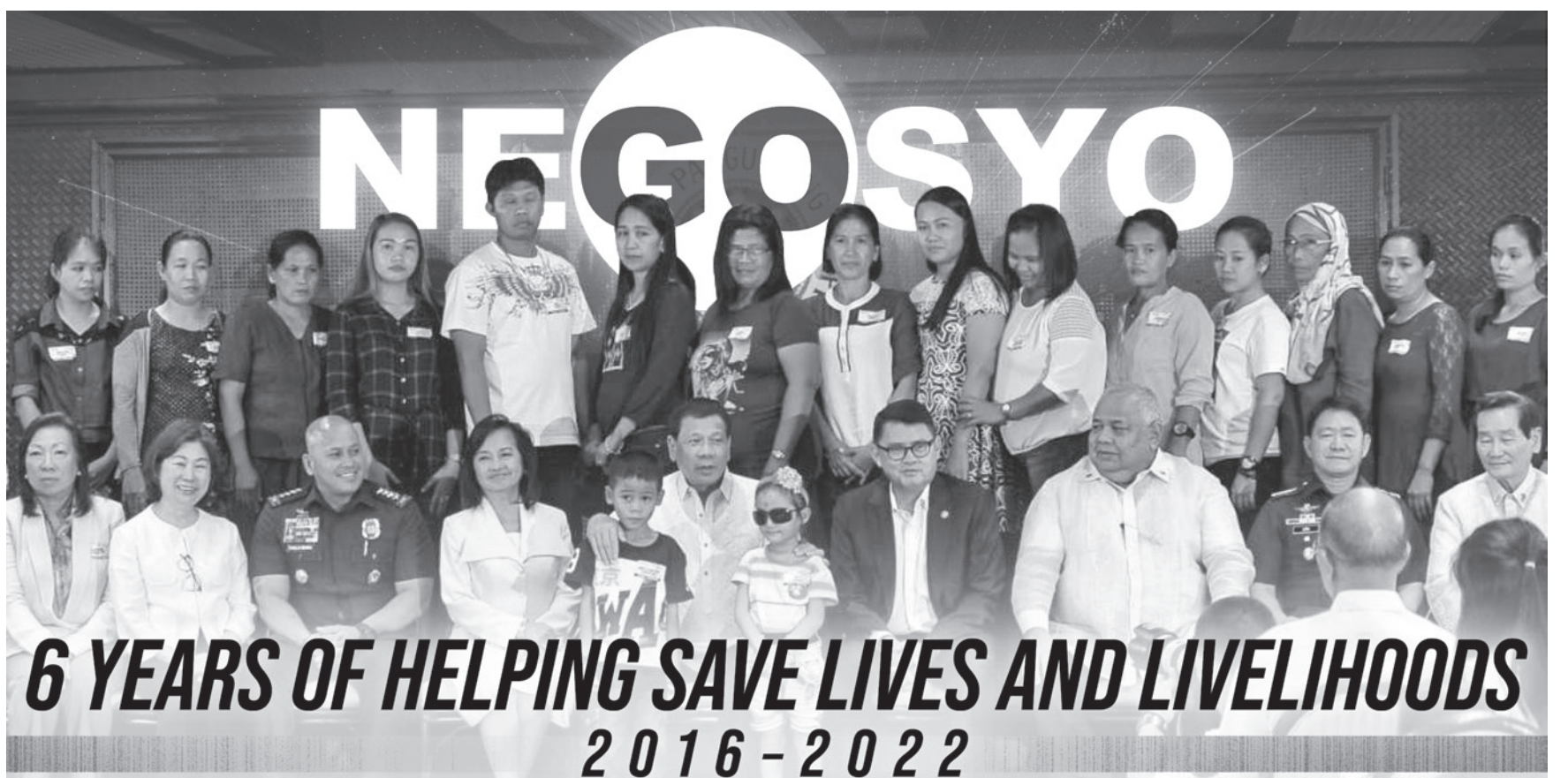
"There needs to be investment in facilities and infrastructure which will reuse and recycle as much of the plastic as technologically possible," he added.

He called it a "good start" to focus on large companies to kick start the initiative, since they have the biggest market share, but said the government must make a clear plan on how to eventually cover micro, small, and medium enterprises as well.

FULL STORY



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"Go Negosyo's 16th year was the year its role evolved and expanded. From the beginning, when President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo appointed me Presidential Adviser for Entrepreneurship, the focus has always been the MSMEs as they make up 99.5 percent of businesses and are responsible for 62.7 percent of jobs in the country. With the help of our big-brother corporations, we strived to create a more inclusive economy and bring prosperity for all through job creation. It is a mission we fulfilled under President Rodrigo Duterte, and one we intend to continue in the next six years under President Marcos Jr. As Go Negosyo stayed the course of providing money, market and mentorship to the entrepreneur, the past six years saw it rise to the challenge of saving the lives and livelihoods of millions of Filipinos. The mobility restrictions proved to be an opportunity to reach farther across the country using the boundless potential of technology. As we begin another chapter in our journey, we celebrate as the seeds we have planted are now growing into a bountiful harvest that promises to bring Prosperity for All."

JOEY CONCEPCION, Presidential Adviser for Entrepreneurship and Go Negosyo Founder



The past six years saw leaps and bounds for Go Negosyo. With the re-appointment by President Duterte of its founder Joey Concepcion as Presidential Adviser for Entrepreneurship, the government was able to quickly address the rebuilding of Marawi City. It was a period that widened the scope of its efforts to give entrepreneurs access to money, markets and mentorship, through programs like **Mentor ME**, **Kapatid Agri Mentor ME**, and **Mentor ME on Wheels** and public events like the **Prosperity for All Summit** and the **Women's Summit**. With Concepcion's chairmanship of the ASEAN Business Advisory Council in 2017 came the seed for the ASEAN Mentorship for Entrepreneurs Network, which today facilitates the exchange of mentorship lessons between the Philippines and its ASEAN neighbors. Growth into the digital space began in earnest. Go Negosyo's Facebook page is now the most followed NGO page in the Philippines and its in-person mentoring programs have found new audiences online and reached out to more aspiring entrepreneurs across the country. Further, seminars were created to assist MSMEs adapt to the digital economy.



Go Negosyo responded swiftly when the Covid-19 pandemic threatened both lives and livelihoods. Early in 2020, it sought to make testing accessible through innovative technologies, organizing the private sector through **Project ARK** to procure antigen rapid-test kits and later on, testing machines. As vaccines became available, it spearheaded **A Dose of Hope**, a world's-first tripartite agreement for vaccine procurement, and later on helped put together shared vaccination sites. It organized webinars to inform and educate the private sector on how to prevent infections and to promote vaccinations, especially among economic frontliners. These were later widened to public-private sector dialogues via monthly townhall meetings. Throughout the pandemic, it sought medical and data experts to help come up with solutions on the safe reopening of the economy. These resulted in breakthrough solutions, including the strategic lockdown in the NCR that later on contributed to fourth quarter economic growth.

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PHL has chance to maximize WTO deal to make vaccines

By Revin Mikhael D. Ochave Reporter

THE PHILIPPINES should maximize the opportunities on offer from a deal reached at the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) of the World Trade Organization (WTO), particularly in the areas of vaccines and fisheries, analysts said.

George N. Manzano, University of Asia and the Pacific economist and former tariff commissioner, said in a mobile phone interview that the ministerial decision on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) waives patent protections on the production of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) vaccines, providing opportunities for the incoming Marcos administration to boost domestic vaccine output.

President-elect Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr., is set to take office on June 30.

"The incoming administration can use the TRIPS waiver to boost local production of vaccines by... invit(ing) foreign partners to set up production facilities in the country. By doing so, the vaccine rollout will be carried out faster," Mr. Manzano said.

"The partial patent waiver is the right step in forging a collective response to the pandemic. The challenge for the Philippines... is to upgrade the capacity to produce the vaccine. This may involve investment in productive resources. In short, implementation and securing partners are now part of the challenge for which the private sector is a key actor," he added.

During the MC12 held in Geneva, which ended on June 17, the 164 WTO members agreed to

limit the patent rights on COVID-19 vaccines by allowing the use of patents "without the consent of the right holder to the extent necessary to address the COVID-19 pandemic," subject to certain conditions.

FULL STORY



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