

**5<sup>TH</sup> STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS  
OF THE HONORABLE QUEZON CITY  
MAYOR HERBERT M BAUTISTA**

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Carlos Albert Hall, Quezon City Hall  
October 7, 2014

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**PREPARING QUEZON CITY FOR A NEW ERA OF GOVERNANCE**

*Ngayon, hindi na kasalanan ang maging maka-mundo. Kung hindi, karapat-dapat tayo maging maka-mundo, upang lumago at umasenso.*

From my first day as mayor here in Quezon City, I had one over-riding aim – that is, to put Quezon City at center stage in the world map. *Hindi lang pang-yabang ito. Ito ay adhikain kritikal sa ating lungsod.* It is important that we are taken as a serious player in world affairs, that we can hold our own among other cities of the world. This will require preparing Quezon City for a new era of governance. The time has passed when our city is just dependent on tax collections for its income; our pioneering efforts are moving us towards new sources of revenues. The effective harnessing of technology is also making possible new efficiencies in public service.

If we are realistic in pushing for the dynamism and growth in our city, we must adapt these new paradigms of governance. *Dati, basta may lupa ka, papasok na ang negosyo.* Competition for businesses, jobs and investments has become much more complex, but we must be on-board. It is no longer a choice.

**Growing our economy**

*Ano ba ang pinakamalaking problema ng mga tao sa Quezon City na kinakailangan nila ng tulong?* A just concluded Pulse Asia survey has determined that the number 1 concern of people in Quezon City is employment; they want more opportunities to earn income. *Paano ba natin silang tinutulungan sa problemang ito?*

Our solutions: Create more microentrepreneurs, educate and train more for entrepreneurship and employment, expand access to markets, further improve ease in doing business, and lay bigger and more enticing avenues for investments.

***Small business incubation***

Through our Sikap Buhay Pangkaunlaran program, we have disbursed an accumulated Php 3.40 billion worth of loans to capitalize the businesses of 75,813 borrowers. We have even gone to the extent of going to households to source skilled labor for companies, through the B2B and B2H programs of SBECO, which has been operationalized in barangays Apolonio, Holy Spirit, Project 4, Commonwealth and Payatas.

Access to markets is facilitated through Annual Trade Shows for our micro businesses, and networking has been institutionalized through the Quezon City Entrepreneurship Congress which had its first run last July.

Moreover, through the painstaking effort of the late SBECO head Marlyn Siapno, our City Government was able to forge a partnership with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to put up the Quezon City Credit Surety Fund. This program provides surety cover for entrepreneurs who cannot produce acceptable collaterals for bank loans. *Sa tulong ng mekanismong ito, ang mga maliliit na nangangalakal ay madali nang makaka-utang sa bangko para umunlad ang kanilang negosyo.*

There is a measure pending at the City Council to further help micro and small enterprises. It seeks to create a micro and small business development and promotions office, which will be designed as a one-stop shop for all their needs – from registration , to access to common service facilities, to marketing assistance to link with venture capitalists for financing. We urge for its immediate passage and fully appreciate Vice Mayor Belmonte’s tireless efforts in shepherding this proposed ordinance, together with Councilors Bobby Castelo and Bayani Hipol.

### ***Employment facilitation***

We have an award-winning Public Employment Services Office headed by Carlo Magno Abella, which has been winning awards for its employment facilitation programs since 2011. This year, our PESO was awarded by the Department of Labor and Employment as the Best Performing PESO in 2013, elevating them to the Hall of Fame for having garnered this award for three straight years. From 2013 to August 2014, this Office has been able to directly assist 24,718 job seekers, out of whom 19,891 are now in gainful employment.

### ***Business expansion***

We have been laying down the development directions of the city by updating the city’s Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Comprehensive Development Plan, the Amended Zoning Ordinance, the Tourism Development Plan, and the Economic Development Incentives Code of Quezon City. These are intended to fully rationalize the appropriate developments throughout the city.

Guided by these plans, we are stimulating business entry in many ways. Through reforms in ease of doing business and improved economic environment, we have been able to increase the number of businesses formally registered in our city to 64,987 – the biggest number among all local governments in the Philippines. While micro and small businesses are a number of significance in this city, 48 percent of registered businesses are corporations, indicating a larger propensity to create jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities through subcontracting. The number of businesses increase by an average of 3,000 each year.

We also expect the final construction of MRT 7 to perk up commerce and real estate values in the areas along its 23-kilometer path. With the final approval of the performance undertaking obtained from the Department of Finance, this rail transport link of Quezon City to San Jose del Monte, Bulacan can expect the rise of businesses especially along its stations in Tandang Sora, Don Antonio, Batasan, Manggahan, Doña Carmen, Mindanao Avenue, Regalado Avenue, Quirino and Sacred Heart. The city government also expects the MRT stations to be the source of new revenue infusions, with the recent amendments to the Revenue Code clearly affirming their taxability. To ensure that our city government is assured of what is due in terms of taxes, and to avoid future litigation, I have instructed that no permits be issued unless an agreement is signed by the proponent accepting this obligation.

Finally, through the help of both Houses of Congress, we are set to have our own local government corporation, the Quezon City Development Authority. QCDA shall be our vehicle for entering into income-generating business ventures for the city; it shall be our personality for entering into joint ventures and other public private partnership arrangements.

A complementary initiative is the enactment of Quezon City’s Public Private Partnership ordinance. The city’s PPP Code shall provide the operative principles of the city government’s participation in the various PPP modalities. Last August 4, 2014, the City Council passed the PPP Code on second reading and duly confirmed it on third and final reading last August 11.

Already, two big ticket business ventures are waiting as candidates for QCDA and PPP arrangements. One is the waste-to-energy project, that is just awaiting guidelines emission standards from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources as well as amendments to

the Clean Air Act, sponsored in Congress by Rep. Edgar Erice and at the Senate by Senator Loren Legarda.

### **Transforming a problem into a gold mine**

At this time when the entire Philippine Government is worried that the country may be plunging into an energy crisis, Quezon City has awakened to the fact that we are sitting in what could be the equivalent of a gold mine.

It used to be that the nearly 2,000 tons of waste generated by our residents was simply a huge problem. Now, technology has created a new paradigm for trash. Our waste will soon be our treasure, once we begin the business of significantly transforming waste into energy. We are actually doing it now, on a small scale, by selling about Php 1.2 million worth of electricity to Meralco, from our biogas emission reduction plant, and by selling more than 15,000 tons of refuse derived fuel to La Farge Cement factories for their use as fuel for cement production

But Asian and European companies in the waste management business are convincing us that technologies are available to transform our trash into energy, possibly 100 percent. By being able to generate fuel and electricity from trash, Quezon City will be an energy producer, possibly capable of producing 36 megawatts of electricity per day for the 2,000 tons of garbage that we collect. That can be used to energize not only our offices and our parks, but also the businesses we choose to venture into, making our self-generated electricity our key competitive edge.

This is not just a dream. Technologies already exist; we are pressing the National Government to release their emission standards and amendment to the Clean Air Act soon, to open wide the door to our new energy resource.

### **Creating unprecedented infrastructure**

The other project that could be a candidate for investment by the Quezon City Development Authority would be the Philippine Diamond Tower. Our vision is a 612-meter telecommunications tower right here in Quezon City. The Department of Science and Technology has confirmed that we need such a structure to vastly improve the country's communications capabilities especially in Luzon. It would also be a reliable center for disaster risk communications and greatly boost broadcast capabilities of the companies in this city.

Our dream of the Philippine Diamond Tower is that it would be the third highest tower in the world, 200 storeys high! If the Tokyo Skytree and the Eiffel Tower can attract more than 6 million tourists a year, imagine how many millions we can attract to the Philippine Diamond Tower, which would be a major attraction not only in Metro Manila, but in the entire Philippines! The offer of companies, both foreign and local, have inspired this dream and have confirmed that it can be done within the next three years! This will be a job generator and business catalyst of exponential proportions.

There is another property development that can create another major attraction for Quezon City. In 2012, the Supreme Court ended a 20-year old court dispute regarding the 34-hectare property portion of the Piedad estate in Capitol Hills, Quezon City after private claimants failed to prove their ownership. The Supreme Court has ruled that the ownership of the property remains with government. May we request Speaker Belmonte and Congressman Bolet Banal to help us have this property conveyed to the city government. We can transform this into a showcase of a modern Green Recreation Park and Sports Complex, an environmentally sustainable entertainment and tourist attraction right in the middle of the metropolis.

We have the Ateneo School of Government as a partner in our efforts to enhance our City's economic and investment viability. They are making an assessment of our policies and organizational capabilities, to resolve weaknesses and buttress strengths. The objective is to make Quezon City a strong investment and business location, with a clear framework of policies

and programs that will nurture a steady stream of enterprise activities that will catalyze three G's: generate employment, grow more businesses, and galvanize our economic advantages.

### **Addressing more needs of inclusive growth**

Why are we so focused on business and economic growth? Because we want to be sure that Quezon City will be able to provide the resources needed for inclusive growth. This means that we should be able to provide the stimulus and assistance needed so that our people can more easily earn incomes, whether from jobs or from their own businesses. We should be able to give our constituents the capacity to be able to attain their basic needs and more.

### ***Shelter***

Aside from employment, what is the next biggest problem that our constituents have? The Pulse Asia Survey confirms that a major worry is housing.

Our solution thus far produced is 2,415 housing units, with 8,179 more to go. The success of our socialized housing program has been recognized by the Galing Pook Foundation, and it is one of two Quezon City programs that won the Galing Pook Awards this year. Also because of the effort of our housing team, the Quezon City Government has been chosen by the Pag-Ibig Fund as one of its Top 20 Developers to be given an award this October 15. Congratulations to Secretary to the Mayor Tadeo Palma, Housing head Ramon Asprer and the Housing, Community Development and Resettlement Department, Jack Jacutin and Copriss and all those who have worked together to make our award-winning housing program possible.

Our housing program lets us recall the original intent of Manuel L. Quezon when he established this city. In 1935, Quezon said, "We shall encourage the formation of small land-ownership, which is the bulwark of democracy, the guarantee of public order, and a stabilizing force. It is our desire that every Filipino shall own his own land, the house in which he lives..." In 1939, he founded Quezon City to be that place where the lowly income-earner can finally build his own house.

Our dream, like Quezon's dream, is to have 100% slum-free communities. But reaching our aspiration is 190,000 families harder than it was during Quezon's time -- because that is the number of informal settler families that have risen now in the city, and who are in need of decent shelter.

We cannot attain that 100%, but we can do that one blighted area at a time. We cannot provide homes for all the homeless, because the sheer number would eat up all our city's resources; and we do not aim to do so because that would encourage squatting. But we are working to provide safer homes for the poor who live in areas at risk to floods and earthquakes.

Our city executives have developed three types of financing packages, including our own inhouse financing program -- to address different levels of capacity to pay among our poor. Those who cannot afford to pay thru any of these 3 financing options are referred to NHA housing projects.

Thus far, our Housing, Community Development and Resettlement Department reports collection rate for housing amortizations of 100% because our Housing department has a unit dedicated to collecting all amortizations, including those due to Pag-Ibig and SHFC, at least for the first 2 years.

Our housing program has attracted the participation of many private partners. Habitat for Humanity is contributing to housing construction in Housing Projects 1 and 4. Our city government also signed an agreement with Meralco so that its One Meralco Foundation takes care of the electrical connections of the housing units in Housing Projects 1 and 2, as part of their corporate social responsibility. The Foundation's outlay has been almost Php 4 million for the energization of Housing Project 2 and Php 2 million for Housing Project 1. In return, Meralco will have avoided the problem of illegal connections and will have gained 1,412 new customers.

To ensure a steady source of income, the beneficiaries receive training in livelihood projects by the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), which ties up the micro-producers with their member companies, which assures a sure market for the products. Our LGU's Sikap Buhay office also provides additional skills training. Beneficiaries' children entering college are offered scholarships thru the city's Scholarship Youth Development Program, as long as they pass the college entrance exam.

The 8 ongoing housing projects occupy an aggregate of 11.67 hectares and are designed to provide 2,415 housing units. Thus far, 1,034 units are completely constructed and 670 are already occupied, with the rest of the beneficiaries completing their documentation for housing financing.

The next wave will consist of 7 more new housing communities covering 21.98 hectares, and will be able to provide 8,179 units more.

When I first campaigned for mayor, I vowed to provide 10,000 houses for the poor. It is becoming clearer that this Administration will soon reach that goal and even surpass it.

All of the 15 housing sites are in-city. This is one of our strategies for social inclusion; we must take care of our own. Onsite relocation is very difficult because of the denseness of squatted areas. We also have to deal with syndicates and the resistance of those renting out units and those making money out of the ISFs. *Napakahirap!* But this is the only way we can reduce blight in the city, and minimize dislocation of families.

### ***Safety from disaster***

We are also engaging in a relentless coordination with other agencies for poor families living along waterways. Huge volumes of rains have become a certainty, underscoring the risk that these people face every day. We are determined to move families out of danger zones. We are no longer compromising on those insisting on living in easements. The solution is resettlement, as quick as we can.

The Quezon City Government participates in the Local Interagency effort to resettle families living along waterways, in coordination with the Department of Interior and Local Government, the MMDA, the Department of Public Works and Highways and the National Housing Authority. A Php 3 billion continuing appropriation has been approved for families living along Tullahan River, Php 100 million of which has been bid out, with another Php 100 million in the pipeline. The housing units will be provided by NHA.

We are also coordinating with the Pasig River Rehabilitation Program to resettle families along the Pasig River. This effort has started the resettlement of informal settlers along waterways from Del Monte to Masambong High School. Another area that needs to be targeted for relocation are the 700 – 800 families along Talayan River.

I thank the City Council, especially Councilors Marivic Co Pilar, Godofredo Liban, Precious Hipolito-Castelo, Eufemio Lagumbay, and Victor Ferrer, for their many legislative initiatives in facilitating the provision of socialized housing for the poor.

### ***Education***

Another significant concern of our constituents is education, which is a major foundation of our quest for higher economic growth. Coping with the large school public school population is being eased with the construction of 20 new school buildings, 13 for elementary and 7 for high school, with the help of the Department of Education. Altogether, these buildings have added 208 new classrooms to our public school facilities.

Aside from the construction of additional classrooms and school buildings, our City Government has responded to the capacity requirements of the National Government's K+12 program by engaging the Quezon City Polytechnic University to begin offering senior high school education from years 2016 to 2021, thereby maximizing use of facilities not otherwise used by the university for this purpose. This amendment to the QCPU charter was authored by Councilor Aly Medalla, who also authored the ordinance providing for the conduct of a comprehensive assessment of public schools in the city. This is complemented by the ordinance authored by Councilor Jesus Suntay, establishing the Basic Education Enhancement Program of Quezon City.

The implementation of these measures will help us objectively and systematically determine the gaps that must be filled and the solutions that must be put in place, to enable our public school system to improve its capability of training and educating our youth to acquire the knowledge and skills relevant to those demanded by modern socioeconomic needs not only of our country, but also of Asia. We must aspire to make our human resources capable of competing in the age of ASEAN integration; otherwise, they will be the bottom-dwellers in the job ladder, easily replaced, lowly paid and incapable of higher value output. We must address the causes of the poor performance of our public school students in national achievement tests, not with band aid solutions, but with programs that can truly and consistently upgrade the quality of public school education in this city.

At the same time, we are proud of our young students, who have been able to match skills and knowledge with other students in Asia, and emerged winners. All are students of Novaliches High School. They are: John Jeffrey Bo who obtained the bronze price in the 10<sup>th</sup> International Math Competition in Singapore last August 2014; Aldrin Reyes and Donald Ericson Macabulos who won third place in this year's 4<sup>th</sup> e-ICON World Contest in Seoul, Korea. We also commend Angelo James Bahlio of the same school who won first place, two years in a row, in the 2013 and 2014 Metrobank-Mtap-DeEd Math Challenge.

### ***Health***

Significantly improving our city government's health services are another of our strategies for social inclusion. Our own medical center, the Quezon City General Hospital, which was once dependent on surgical missions, now has the capacity and equipment to do surgical operations on cataracts, hernia, thyroid diseases and correct harelip conditions.

The city's second winner for this year's Galing Pook Awards is the city's Men's Sundown Clinic at Bernardo Park, focused on HIV and AIDs awareness, counselling and testing. Congratulations to Dr. Verdades Linga and the doctors tirelessly running the Sundown Clinic.

It has been designated by the Department of Health as its Satellite HIV treatment hub, and thus ensures that the facility will have the needed supply of anti-retroviral drugs. The ordinance establishing Klinika Bernardo as a Comprehensive Sexual Health Care Clinic under the Quezon City Health Department, was authored by Councilors Jessica Castelo Daza and Dorothy Delarmente.

The Computerized Health Information Tracking System or CHITS is also a finalist in this year's e-Gov Awards of the National ICT Confederation of the Philippines and the DILG.

Of the city government's 65 health centers, five have dialysis clinics, of which three have completed the requirements to obtain their respective licenses to operate, particularly at Kamuning, Dona Nicasia and Toro Hills. These new dialysis centers will be ready to serve our indigent diabetics this October.

### **A helping hand to others**

Disaster risk is a major concern. Calamities hit everyone, no matter what their status in life is, no matter where they are in the country or in the world. We all know how typhoon Yolanda devastated provinces in Leyte and Eastern Samar. Through Council Resolution No. 5977, the

City Government obtained the authority to grant more than Php 21 million to help the municipalities of Palompon, Tolosa and Sta. Fe, first to immediately recover from disaster and then to restore their key services to normalcy.

Financially and physically, we helped them through a humanitarian mission to provide relief and rehabilitation, and followed this up with an engineering and construction brigade. Quezon City teams reconstructed the municipal hall complex of Sta. Fe, and constructed houses in Tanauan, Leyte, with little publicity but with much heroism and passion for others.

Even our 142 barangays initiated their own program to adopt a barangay in Leyte and provide help in recovery and reconstruction.

Let us thank our Quezon City team, from our barangays to our city officials, especially the Social Services Development Department, Department of Public Order and Safety, the Engineering Department, the Environmental Protection and Waste Management Department and the City Health Department, for spreading the LGU's assistance to other local governments in need.

### **Environment and resiliency**

We are actually an active global player in the environment field. About two weeks ago, I was in New York because Quezon City was the only Philippine city to take part in two important global efforts to combat climate change. One, was the Climate Summit called by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and participated in by world leaders in government, business and civil society, where our Philippine president Benigno Aquino III was present and gave the Philippine perspective. The other was the People's March, which is a people power effort among 40,000 people to push countries to adopt more ambitious policies to combat practices and policies that contribute to global warming.

I was privileged to be invited to this world summit because Quezon City has been recognized to be at the forefront of efforts to combat climate change! In this particular challenge that all countries of the world are finding difficulty with, our city is now widely recognized to be a teacher of best practices.

Last July, I was again privileged to be a presenter at the Understanding Risk conference in London, which was organized by the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, the World Bank and the University College London. I was asked to speak on the socioeconomic implications of risk management, mainly because our housing and resettlement program is anchored on a disaster-risk minimization approach, and that is unique among other cities of the world.

Quezon City is invited to participate in these the global movements, because we are, as ICLEI President David Cadman says, one of the "ambitious and pioneering local governments...who have reiterated their commitment to serve for low-carbon, low-emissions, climate-resilient, sustainable urban developments worldwide."

I thank the City Council for formulating the first ever Environment Code for a Philippine local government. Through the efforts of Councilor Gian Sotto, all the ordinances of the city were consolidated and updated to be most responsive to recent knowledge and solutions to environmental issues and concerns.

Our city is well recognized as an innovator in environment advocacy. Last April, Quezon City led five other LGUs in "Meralco Luminaries" Awards, an annual event honoring outstanding organizations and groups in the country for their exemplary contribution to nation building and helping the country achieve world-class stature.

Quezon City was cited for our carbon footprint reduction initiatives and our pioneering strategies in waste management.

Let me present to you the results of our city's efforts to lessen our carbon emissions:

- Systematized recycling activities at the Payatas Landfill has resulted in greenhouse gas avoided of 31,385 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO<sub>2</sub>e) in 2014, in addition to the 47,127 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e avoided in 2013. This means is that just by the good recycling practices of our residents, we have contributed to less pollution equivalent to the gas emissions of 15,000 cars for the first 9 months of 2014 and more than 23,000 cars for 2013.
- Last September 21, we had our own People's March. I instructed that we mark Barangay Day with a citywide planting of trees, an effort which planted 15,000 new trees, as facilitated by our Parks Administration Department and the Barangay Operations Center. This should be an annual event undertaken by all residents of Quezon City. By expanding our green space, we are increasing our carbon sink with more plants absorbing our carbon dioxide, filtering the pollution from the air.

On a bigger scale, the Road Board has adopted the Quezon City Government's proposal for the greening of Quezon City, from the type of plants to be used and the areas for re-greening, which include two areas of Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon Avenue and C-5, from Capitol Hills to Katipunan Avenue. This will add to the EDSA re-greening program that MMDA has already implemented.

- Total carbon credits sold by the city government's Biogas Emission Reduction Project amounts to about Php 11 million, based on validations made by the United Nations Conference on Climate Change and Pangea Green Energy. Aside from reducing air pollution by the equivalent of 466,740 tons of carbon dioxide, our city government has been able to earn from selling electricity to Meralco equivalent to more than Php 1.2 million.

We have also set the pace for the adoption of green architecture, not only among local governments but also nationally. In 2009, when I was Vice Mayor, we passed the Green Building Ordinance; in 2011, we mandated full compliance. In 2013, we began the study to implement the retrofitting our government buildings, for environmental sustainability and disaster resiliency. In 2014, the National Government is now following our example. A bill has been filed in Congress by Reps. Juan Pablo Bondoc and Karlo Nograles, to be known as the "Green Building Act," which will require that all government buildings be set, designed, constructed, operated, maintained and retrofitted using environmentally responsible materials, sustainable architecture techniques and other green building practices.

The Climate Change Commission and USAID also chose to partner with Quezon City to cascade to other local governments, learnings from our Green Building Ordinance and for them to use it as a template for formulating a similar ordinance. Quezon City will also spearhead an NCR-wide summit on climate change adaptation.

*Pag nauna tayo, talagang madami ang sumusunod.*

### **Efficient, transparent and convenient public service**

In 2011, several reform-minded governments in the world, including the Philippines launched Open Government Partnerships or OGP, to provide an international platform for domestic reforms designed to make governments more open, accountable, and responsive to citizens.

In support of OGP and as an overall strategy to put our house in order, we are likewise pursuing the principles of greater efficiency, transparency and convenience in public service. We must encourage public trust in our systems.

I have instructed the development of clear manuals of operation for processing of business taxes and for the auction of properties. Procedures manuals for bidding, to guide officials from the barangay to the city level, must likewise be produced, so that we are sure to avoid the sad



experience of other local governments whose bidding procedures are questioned. At the same time, these manuals will provide clear guides for our employees so that they are fully aware of their responsibilities and accountabilities.

In addition, with the help of the City Council, we would like to introduce policies that would clearly institutionalize guidelines and frameworks, especially in areas related to revenue generation and collection.

One is in the setting of presumptive levels of income. The Commission on Audit has advised that this principle must be clearly defined and officially adopted, so that the legal bases are clear. Therefore, I propose the enactment of an ordinance that would define and set minimum presumptive income level assessments, per industry. We have a working draft ready for endorsement.

I am also pushing for executive – legislative coordination in the matter of setting policy mechanisms for the settlement of persistent real property tax delinquencies. The records of our Information Technology Office show properties with delinquency taxes as old as 18 years. How can we encourage property owners to pay up? It seems we have been using the ‘stick’ all these years, yet the delinquencies remain.

I propose that the City Council support me in passing an ordinance that will grant incentive and relief to real property taxpayers who may have incurred more than five years of real property tax delinquencies. The incentive will enable them to wipe out past dues of six years or more, by full settlement of five years’ past dues within the first semester of next year. This could be a nice Diamond Jubilee gift to our taxpayers.

At the same time, we expect the measure to generate about Php 1 billion in RPU collections. This will be a significant contribution to our city’s budget of Php 14.5 billion, to promote inclusive growth in our city.

I consider these measures urgent because we want the city government to be able to properly implement these policies come business renewal and tax paying time beginning January 2015.

A convenience that we introduced in 2013 for our real property collection effort was the program on Scaling Innovations in Mobile Money or SIMM, which enabled our taxpayers to pay their RPU dues through their cellphones.

The project is a finalist in the e-Gov Awards given by the National ICT Confederation of the Philippines and the Department of Interior and Local Governments for technology innovations that empower businesses. We have been invited to the awarding ceremony in November.

Our Mobile Money project will also be presented as a technology innovation at the World e-Governments Organization of Cities and Local Governments (WeGO) conference in Chengdu, China in November. WeGo is an international cooperative body for cities and local governments dedicated to enhanced use of technology in governance.

Increasingly, we are harnessing technology and process innovations to introduce further governance improvements. With national laws and Commission on Audit circulars guiding us, our mobile money systems are moving towards the issuance of electronic receipts, so that we can interact with our real property taxpayers, let them pay taxes and receive the receipts without even having to set foot in City Hall. This is a first for any local government in the Philippines!

We are also laying the foundation for online systems for paying taxes and fees, including for business taxes. We are harnessing computerization and automation not only to produce convenience, but also to introduce greater transparency and predictability in city government transactions with the public we serve. Moreover, if we are aspiring for global positioning, we

must harness technology for much greater governance efficiency and ease in dealing with the public.

Aside from its websites for the local government and for business, Quezon City is also launching today its own software application, QC4Me. Today, you can download the app on your android phone; those with iphones will be able to download it in two weeks' time because Apple has more restrictive requirements to pass through. With this app, you will have on your fingertips information on key places and contacts all over the city.

In the area of providing public convenience, we have constructed a new office for our much-visited Civil Registry Office, which is now in Civic Center C. The public is now able to process their applications for marriage, birth and death certificates in much greater comfort. The bigger office facilities provide an 80-seat reception lounge, an upgrade for storage systems for the registry records and better organized work spaces, raising the expectation of faster and more efficient service from CCRO personnel. This building will also house the satellite office of the Bureau of Immigration and TESDA in its other floors.

Also this October, the new Disaster Risk Reduction Building will be inaugurated. Once fully operationalized, it will be fitted with a command center that will be the central monitoring, processing center for CCTV, traffic and disaster risk-related communication. Equipping the command center will include a fully linked CCTV system in key areas of the city. I commend the barangays that have installed their own CCTVs which have been proven critical to crime solution efficiency in the country. The business establishments have been complying with the CCTV installation requirements related to business permitting. The BPLO promises to enforce an even more stringent 'no cctv, no permit' policy next year. The ordinance regulating motorcycle riders will be another complementary measure for peace and order, given the rising number of criminals who uses motorcycles in their commission of theft and murder.

The organizational complement of our DRRM operating unit has been assured through the ordinance authored by Councilor Ranulfo Ludovica, creating the Quezon City DRRM Office and defining its functions. Complementary DRRM ordinances designed to increase citizens' capacity to respond effectively to calamities have similarly been authored by Councilor Don de Leon and Godofredo Liban II.

Another building ready for occupancy and to be turned over this November is the New Justice Hall. A memorandum of agreement with the Department of Justice, for the use and maintenance of the new building will be signed on November 21.

The new Quezon City Museum, on the other hand, will open its doors in December, an interesting, educational facility that will add to the tourism attractions in the city.

### **Rewards and incentives**

As we formally open our Diamond Jubilee year this October, we are rewarding the hard working personnel of this city with an anniversary bonus ranging from Php 3,000 to Php 5,000 for both elective officials and city-paid regular plantilla personnel and those with contracts of service.

We are also doubling the longevity pay of permanent personnel in service five years or longer, from Php 100 a month to Php 200 a month.

For the senior citizens, our gifts are free anti-pneumonia immunization for all Quezon City-residing seniors registered with our health centers. These are aside from the benefits emanating from the ordinance authored by Councilor Don de Leon providing special cashier lanes for seniors, the disabled and pregnant women in shopping malls.

We highly encourage policies and programs that provide added benefits to other vulnerable sectors like persons with disabilities and solo parents, such as the proposed ordinance authored by Councilor Delarmente firmly making compliance with the Accessibility Law mandatory among all establishments in Quezon City, the resolution authored by Councilor Roger Juan urging all barangays in the city to designate focal persons for persons with disabilities in their respective areas, and the proposed ordinance authored by Councilors Karl Edgar Castelo and Donato Matias, providing discount privileges to solo parents who make purchases for their children who are five years and younger.

In addition, in line with the gender-fair thrust of our city, we are gifting our constituents with the first Philippine ordinance providing for a Comprehensive Anti-discrimination Policy on the basis of Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, the result of a long-series of debates in the City Council. This was authored by Councilor Lena Marie Juico.

For our poor constituents, our programs with each Congressmen will ensure medical missions reaching all six districts of the city on October 11. Also, on that day, our young graduates and other job-seekers will find opportunities waiting for them in job fairs all over the city held simultaneously.

### **Conclusion**

These are only some of our long roster of events until 2015 all over the city. I thank our Congressmen, Councilors, officials and staff, and the Diamond Jubilee Executive Committee headed by Mr. Tadeo Palma, for all these preparations that will give the public a greater appreciation of the history of the city, as well be involved in the excitement of so many events that are guaranteed to be the first time in such grand scale in this city.

Let our track record of accomplishments show that Quezon City is pioneering, it has not been afraid to take risks and be first in areas where other local governments fear to tread. It is also capable of spreading the benefits of its program in a scale that few other Philippine cities can match. Let us continue to be proud that we are from Quezon City!

In ending, permit me to humbly quote the words of our founder, Manuel Luis Quezon, in his Inaugural Address as President in 1935. He said, "I face the future with hope and fortitude, certain that God never abandons a people who ever follows His unerring and guiding Hand. May He give me light, strength, and courage evermore that I may not falter in the hour of service to my people!"

May his words continue to inspire all of us, public servants, to lead our city with greater commitment and courage through the next 75 years!

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