

# TPB spotlight

A Quarterly e-Magazine of the Tourism Promotions Board Philippines

APRIL - JUNE 2020

## BOUNCING BACK BRAVELY: TPB THRIVES AMID COVID-19 CRISIS

**BANGON  
TURISMO:**  
THE PHILIPPINE  
DOMESTIC TOURISM  
GAME PLAN

**EXPLORE  
PALAWAN:**  
THE "LAST FRONTIER"

**PHITEX AND  
MICECON 2020**  
GO VIRTUAL

**WTTC  
OUTLINES**  
THE "NEW NORMAL"  
FOR FUTURE  
TRAVEL

# spotlight

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COVER PHOTO:  
Mt. Apo Peak at Sunrise  
Photo by: Rhonson Ng

# On The Spot

*"I don't measure a man's success by how high he climbs, but by how high he bounces when he hits bottom."*

- GEORGE PATTON

**D**id you notice that our e-magazine has a new name?

Welcome to the inaugural issue of **SPOTLIGHT**. While this is the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter issue of TPB's e-magazine for the year, we decided to launch this refreshed publication in this issue, signaling how we changed from HEADLINES to SPOTLIGHT and also reflecting our paradigm shift in keeping you updated on travel and tourism events, programs and developments. As TPB's new COO, I took "Headlines" to lean more towards sharing news, and discussed with the TPB team how news can stay relevant when we release the e-magazine every three months. And so, after a series of virtual discussions and polls through the community quarantine period, SPOTLIGHT is here to hopefully feature updates and share information in a "more fun" format.

This space is also renamed **"On the Spot"** (from COO Corner) to depict my personal and our team's collective renewed commitment to fulfil our tasks with a greater sense of urgency and be at the scene of tourism and travel action and events. In doing so, we aspire to fill the e-magazine's pages with current, fresh and destination-focused articles to inform, inspire and ignite community collaboration to promote tourism.

In this Issue, we put the spotlight on our resilience as a people, as a tourism destination, and also TPB as an organization. The adverse impact of this health pandemic is felt across the world, but our spirit of perseverance and faith strengthened our resolve to carry out our mission, do our share of contributions to mitigate darkness around us, and consciously exert efforts to focus on the possibilities ahead of us.

The pages in this Issue honor our narrative of grit and growth through the time of COVID-19. The question frequently asked of me as TPB's COO in the time of COVID is "so how do you promote?" My usual top-of-head reply points to adopting innovation, creativity and technology. But my authentic deep-in-my-heart unsaid answer is the essential point that fuels my continued commitment to promote our country as the preferred fun destination in the world: "so long as I am clear and I honestly believe in my WHY, then I will always find the how..."

Our places and our people make the Philippines more fun. That honest belief, coupled by my trust in the TPB team, constantly leads me to the countless ways by which to promote our country.



*Maria Anthonette C. Velasco-Allones*  
**MARIA ANTHONETTE C. VELASCO-ALLONES**



## Bouncing back bravely: TPB THRIVES AMID COVID-19 CRISIS

**W**hen President Rodrigo Duterte placed the Philippines under a State of Calamity on 16 March 2020 in response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the declaration entailed a nationwide travel ban and the enforcement of community quarantine. As a result, the tourism industry took a massive blow as travel came to a standstill.

Despite the seemingly bleak portrait of the tourism industry, “It’s More Fun in the Philippines” temporarily made way for “We Heal As One,” encouraging all Filipinos to unite in battling the dreadful disease and the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) made sure to heed the clarion call.

In support of Republic Act No. 11469 (or the “Bayanihan to Heal as One Act”), a law created under President Duterte’s Administration to combat the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the TPB redirected current program thrusts to fully support efforts and initiatives in response to the crisis.

TPB has committed the total amount of PHP 278,973,056.35 to the Department of Finance (DOF) / Department of Budget and Management (DBM), sourced from various sources including its 2019 Corporate Operating Budget (COB) savings, as its contribution to the Bayanihan Act pool of funds to finance the national government’s stimulus package and social amelioration program.

As of this writing, the agency has also utilized PHP 23,287,460.00 of its PHP 87, 000, 000 2020 Special Contingency Fund (SCF) in support of the various initiatives of DOT such as the sponsorship of 18 sweeper flights, provision of 5,000 travel essential kits to stranded tourists and OFWs, facilitation of 1,877 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and vitamins for Frontline Tourism Airport Personnel, and the procurement of the services of a research / survey company to conduct market and stakeholder research studies on travel and tourism during and after the pandemic, among others.

Meanwhile, to convey support to the private sector, TPB waived participation fees for industry partners joining in selected international trade, MICE and consumer fairs and business missions this year.

The much-awaited solution to COVID-19 has yet to surface but despite the disease’s repercussions, TPB’s operations remain unhampered as the agency continues to conduct dialogues with stakeholders, hold virtual meetings and roll out programs related to recovery and adaptation in post-COVID-19 conditions.

TPB will also continue to provide updates on its social media channels and ensure that its personnel are well-compensated to face the daily challenges stemming from this disease. All these while the world awaits a cure.

## PHITEX AND MICECON 2020 GO VIRTUAL

**H**uman interaction is an important aspect of life. But the emergence of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) limited its capacity to virtual means, resulting in great challenges for the tourism industry that significantly values actual communication.

Despite this setback, the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines has vowed to proceed with two of its biggest institutional events this year, though in a virtual environment.

The Philippine Travel Exchange (PHITEX) 2020 will hold its first virtual edition this 22-24 September 2020, allowing local suppliers to engage with foreign buyers through a digital platform. The travel trade event will also feature webinars tackling marketing strategies during a crisis and interviews with key tourism players.

Meanwhile, The Philippine MICE Conference (MICECON), initially scheduled this October in Davao City, will also be converted into a virtual conference.

The virtual MICECON or MICECONline will continue to feature plenary and breakout sessions focused on revitalizing all sectors of the MICE industry and provide industry updates relevant to the “new normal” scenarios faced by the industry.

Both events are expected to draw hundreds of international participants despite the absence of face-to-face meetings, and TPB is set to exhaust all efforts while upholding health and safety measures for their success.



## TPB WAIVES MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM REGISTRATION FEES

**T**he Tourism Promotions Board (TPB), as approved by the Department of Tourism (DOT), has waived its Membership Program registration fee of Php 10,000.00 for Fiscal Years (FY) 2020-2021.

The move was made to extend marketing and promotional support to private sector stakeholders and aid them in controlling costs and mitigating economic losses as the industry recovers from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The TPB Membership Program is open to DOT-accredited members. First time registrants will be granted a waived registration fee starting June 2020 until December 2021. Charging of the annual membership and renewal fees will only begin in January 2022.

Meanwhile, the 103 existing members who have paid the registration fee for FY 2020-2021 will be exempted from paying the annual fee in 2022 to offset their previous payment.

The TPB Membership Program aims to provide marketing services and benefits to its members through various areas of activities that promote, advocate, and represent the interests of its members for the benefit and sustainable development of their businesses and the tourism industry as a whole. The program also supports DOT’s progressive accreditation scheme for tourism-related establishments.

To know more about the TPB Membership Program, please visit [www.tpb.gov.ph/membership/](http://www.tpb.gov.ph/membership/). For other membership inquiries, interested parties may get in touch with the Industry Relations and Services Division of the TPB Domestic Promotions Department at [tpbmembership@tpb.gov.ph](mailto:tpbmembership@tpb.gov.ph).

# DOT REGIONAL OFFICES STAND UNITED AGAINST

# COVID-19



If it is any consolation to the Filipino people, the COVID-19 pandemic has reignited the human spirit of unity and camaraderie. It has given birth to unsung heroes and courageous souls who have been toiling to keep the nation on its feet since day one.

Within the tourism sector, the regional offices of the Department of Tourism (DOT) have become the torch bearers in assisting distressed tourists. No time was wasted from the moment President Rodrigo Duterte announced that the entire Philippines would be put under a state of calamity due to the pandemic. With flights cancelled and borders closed, the women and men of DOT quickly gathered their resources to assist each and every tourist that needed their help.

Within a week of the announcement, safety information as well as notices, bulletins and emergency hotlines were released for tourists to address their questions and to receive updates. Accommodations and essentials were provided in partnership with local government units (LGUs) and tourism stakeholders, and repatriation flight schedules were posted online.

By May 22, approximately 35,502 tourists, of which 26,550 are foreign and 8,952 are local, have been assisted by the DOT. Sweeper flights were arranged from various islands and cities such as Tacloban, Siargao, Puerto Princesa, Davao and Iloilo. Philippine Coast Guard boats were used to ferry tourists stranded in the islands of Negros, Bohol and Siquijor to Cebu City. Special international flights to Los Angeles, San Francisco, Canada, New Zealand and Australia were also provided.



In an uploaded Facebook video, a stranded German national in Buguey, Cagayan was all praises for the DOT after being safely ferried to Manila for his repatriation flight back to Germany. "I'm very impressed because they helped me from the very beginning," he said. "They never left me alone."

The Netherlands Embassy also relayed a message saying, "We are immensely grateful for the dedication that these Philippine organizations have shown to getting people on their way to their homes in Europe."

Apart from ground assistance, DOTs regional offices have also been busy promoting online initiatives that encourage viewers to stay home. DOT Eastern Visayas, for one, has been releasing videos with a

*"Choose to stay @ Home"*

message that emphasizes viewers to remain in their homes and travel once the pandemic is over. DOT Region III also released a cooking video while DOT Region 6 posted a webinar for the Western Visayas tourism industry to learn about adapting to the new normal.

As COVID-19 enters the second half of the year, the DOT regional offices remain steadfast in their quest to ensure tourist safety. The tasks at hand coupled with daily challenges may seem daunting for these unsung heroes, but they soldier on and stand by their mandate, with a smile. Kudos!



# The Philippines Tops Japan's Marine Diving Award

The Philippines bagged the top spot as the "Best Diving Area, Overseas" in this year's "Marine Diving Awards", based on votes by subscribers of The Marine Diving Magazine, one of Japan's leading dive magazines.

The Marine Diving Awards started in 2000 and since then, the Philippines has always been a favorite, landing within the top three every year. But this year marks the first time that the country was able to grab the top spot.

Tiki Tiki Divers in Moalboal, Philippines also took the top spot as the "Favorite Dive Operator, Overseas" while the Emerald Green Diving Center in Malapascua, Good Dive Shop in Bohol, Sea Lion Cebu, Marine House Seasir Cebu

and Blue Coral in Malapascua landed on the 11th, 14th, 15th, 17th and 18th spots respectively.

Marine Diving Magazine is published by the Marine Arts Center, Ltd., the organizer of Japan's largest consumer event for diving enthusiasts and beach lovers – the Marine Diving Fair. This year's diving fair, originally scheduled on 3 to 5 April, was postponed to 10 to 12 July due to the current pandemic situation.

Blessed with unspoiled natural wonders, the Philippines has so much to offer as a premier dive destination. Without a doubt, the country will capture divers from all over the world once we are ready to travel again, post-pandemic.

## BANGON TURISMO: The Philippine Domestic Tourism Game Plan

The unprecedented challenges brought about by COVID-19 imposed a transformative change on a global scale. In the tourism sector, this means that every destination must rethink its strategies and find an opportunity to restart. Read on to know how TPB will stage recovery-oriented programs intended not only to encourage travel but also to assist local tourism stakeholders to bounce back from the losses brought about by the crisis.

### SMARTourism

*Strengthen digital platforms, ensure data-driven planning, and expand other tools for promotions and marketing.*

#### Travel Bingo Challenge

Aug to Dec 2020

Complete a required number of destinations in a Bingo card within a specific time frame and win a free full-board domestic travel from TPB! This program aims to engage travelers in various transformative activities and encourage them to participate in tasks such as identifying photos and answering trivia on the different regions.

#### Local Guides Community - Google Maps

Oct 2020

Share your Philippine travel experience! This project aims to enable a dynamic partnership with travelers as strategic partners by capitalizing on the popularity, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of digital technology in travel.

#### Online Tourism Marketing Educational Seminar

Nov 2020

A 3-day webinar with this year's theme, "Negotiation Principles and Pitching Tour/Destination Packages in the New Normal," highlights the skills integral to the promotion and presentation of a product offering.

#### The Ultimate Bucket List Adventure

Dec 2020

Complete a series of tours in-circuit destinations within Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao by following the Bucket List and get an individual incentive tour package from TPB! This incentive program aims to encourage domestic tourists to travel within the country.

### PARTNERSHIPS AS PATHWAYS

*Cultivate partnerships with stakeholders and customers in jointly conducting promotions and marketing activities. These activities will run from June to December 2020*

#### Sustainable Community-Based Tourism for Indigenous People

Promotion of cultural tourism with two major components namely, the production of a coffee table book highlighting the journey of the Indigenous People of the Philippines and their communities and product market development and enhancement focusing on ecotourism, health and wellness, culinary tourism, sustainable tourism, and pilgrimage tourism tour programs.

#### TPB Membership Program

This program aims to provide DOT-accredited tourism enterprises with marketing services and benefits through various programs and activities that promote their interests.

#### Support to Tourism Associations

TPB will provide marketing support to travel trade associations in conducting travel fairs and other marketing initiatives, including institutional events such as the 31st Philippine Travel Mart (virtual and physical).

#### Support to DOT Regional Offices and LGUs

Funding support will be extended to implement marketing plans and programs that support the rebuilding of tourism in the regions and promote the increase of consumer confidence in the destination as a safe place to visit.

#### Balik-Bayan Promotional Campaign

This campaign is designed to encourage Filipinos residing in the country and abroad to visit their hometown province to participate in homecoming activities such as alumni homecomings, fiestas, Rotary reunions, and others.

### SAFE BANGON TURISMO

*Roll-out the Bounce Back PH Tourism Program and re-establish the Philippines as a preferred destination for identified customer interests*

#### Motorcycle Tourism Caravan (MOTORISM)

Oct 2020 to Mar 2021

Every motorcycle club and organization has its existing motorcycle tourism program, and TPB will integrate these in one collaborative and cohesive motoring program this October 2020 to March 2021 covering the three main islands, Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. For this year, this adventure will take some 150 motorcyclists on a 10-day, 1,530-km, epic long-haul on-road and off-road adventure through North Luzon featuring remote areas with tourism interests and community-based tour activities including culinary events, fiesta atmosphere, mini trade fairs, and more.

#### Philippine Tourism Destination Inventory / Caravan

Aug to Dec 2020

Baguio City & Benguet (Aug Week 2)  
Cagayan de Oro & Camiguin (Sept Week 3)  
Samar & Leyte (Oct Week 1)

This program series serves as a dry run for the running tour programs that comply with the new normal safety protocols in existing and emerging tourism products.

#### 6th Regional Travel Fair Virtual Edition

3-6 Dec 2020

For the first time, this year's RTF will be conducted via a digital platform to provide tourism stakeholders an opportunity to experience innovative ways of developing new business connections and update local industry partners with the latest Philippine tourism offerings.

# TPB ENGAGES MICE EXPERTS TO DISCUSS BUSINESS CONTINUITY AMID PANDEMIC

In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, technology has become a lifeline that keeps business partnerships and transactions afloat. It has also been a vital tool in the MICE sector, wherein practitioners are upgrading and bolstering their digital initiatives to keep clients engaged now and in the future.

This key point was underscored during the Global MICE Situationer in the Time of Pandemic, a free webinar organized by the Department of Tourism (DOT) and the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines in partnership with the Philippine Association of Conventions and Exhibitions Organizers and Suppliers, Inc. (PACEOS) on 28 April 2020.

About 1,300 viewers attended the webinar wherein key industry speakers discussed the effects of the pandemic on the global MICE industry and provided relevant insights on business continuity, best practices and new strategies as well as shared recommendations on response and recovery measures to both Philippine MICE players and tourism stakeholders alike.

The panel of industry experts included Mr. Noor Ahmad Hamid, Regional Director of Asia Pacific, International Congress and Conventions Association (ICCA); Mr. Mark Cochrane, Regional Manager, Asia Pacific of the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry (UFI); Ms. Jennifer Glynn, CIS, CITP, President of the Society for Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE); and serving as the



PHOTO: MICE events

10 | June 2020



moderator was Mr. Gary Grimmer, Executive Chairman of GainingEdge, a global consulting company that offers advisory services in relation to destinations, convention bureaus and convention and exhibition centers.

As the industry is gradually adapting to the new normal, businesses are expected to embrace technology, and face-to-face interactions will be combined with virtual elements, therefore increasing the number of hybrid meetings where digital advancement is incorporated as an integral part of live events.

Apart from leveraging on technology - hygiene, cleanliness, safety and security were also highlighted as prerequisites for business travelers. Moreover, incentive trips will be incorporating CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) programs that will engage participants in meaningful activities and community interaction.

"Now, more than ever, we must all close ranks and intensify our collective efforts to once again position the Philippines as the premier leisure and MICE Destination," said DOT Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat in her welcome message.

Once travel restrictions loosen, national meetings are predicted to resume first as global conventions will take longer to recommence. On the other hand, exhibitions with strong domestic markets are eyed to bounce back faster than those targeting international markets.



# GLOBAL TOURISM INDUSTRY EXPERTS WEIGH IN ON THE FUTURE OF TRAVEL

The face of travel, as we know it, is now changing fundamentally. This was the focus of the latest webinar entitled "The Future of Travel: A World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) Exclusive Panel" hosted by the Department of Tourism (DOT) and the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines, in partnership with the WTTC, held on May 19, 2020.

Moderated by Ms. Anita Mendiratta, Founder & President of Anita Mendiratta & Associates, the webinar featured experts from major tourism segments of aviation, tourism investments, and accommodations who discussed the current challenges in the international travel and tourism arena and how the industry stakeholders can respond, recover and prepare for the future of travel.

In her opening remarks, DOT Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat expressed her confidence in rebuilding the local tourism industry with the help of WTTC. This was supported by Ms. Gloria Guevara, President and CEO of WTTC, who discussed a globally coordinated approach to re-establish effective operations, remove travel barriers and re-open borders. Guevara also noted that it is imperative to combine health components with the latest technology, necessary protections, and protocols to help rebuild travelers' confidence.

Bouncing back, however, may take time, as expressed by Mr. Gary Chapman, President of the Group Services and DNATA - Emirates Group, who forecasted a three to four year recovery period for the aviation industry.

Ms. Shirley Tan, CEO of Rajawali Property Group also saw major uncertainties in global capital flows and reminded investors to secure new investments while ensuring asset management, capital preservation, and liquidity management at the same time.

Moreover, Mr. Craig Smith, President and Managing Director of Asia Pacific for Marriott International who lauded the bullish travel and tourism industry in the Philippines for the past five years, shared his optimism that the industry will "certainly recover", and that Asia will recover faster than any other part of the world so long as strong collaboration remains between private and public sectors as the world heads toward the new normal.

"The concept of tourism is deeply embedded in our consciousness," said Secretary Puyat. "And I would like to believe that this is what makes our industry resilient from all the challenges, even the toughest one that we are about to overcome."

It will take time, yes, but the tourism industry will recover.





## WTTC outlines what “the new normal” will look like as we start to travel

**L**ondon, UK: The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) has outlined what the “new normal” will look like as countries begin to end their COVID-19 lockdowns and ease travel restrictions.

“Travelling in the New Normal” is part of WTTC’s plan which includes critical steps and coordinated actions, including new standards and protocols, which offer a safe and responsible road to recovery for the global Travel & Tourism sector as consumers start planning trips again.

For the last few weeks, WTTC, which represents the global Travel & Tourism private sector, has been marshalling the efforts of the private sector, sharing best practices from different regions around the world to work on the path forward.

Public-private collaboration between business and governments is vital to develop new health protocols which will form the travel experience and also provide people with strong reassurances when travelling.

WTTC says the sector will face a gradual return to travel over the coming months as a “new normal” emerges before a vaccine becomes available on a mass scale, large enough to inoculate billions of people.

Travel is likely to return first to domestic markets with staycations; then to a country’s nearest neighbours before expanding across regions, and then finally across continents to welcome the return of journeys to long-haul international destinations.

WTTC believes younger travellers in the 18-35 age group, who appear to be less vulnerable to COVID-19, may also be among the first to begin travelling once again.

Gloria Guevara, WTTC President & CEO, said: “It is vital for the survival of the Travel & Tourism sector that we work together and map out the road to recovery, through coordinated actions, and offer the reassurance people need to begin travelling once again.

“We have learned from past experiences that when the protocols from the private sector are taken into account and we have a coordinated approach the recovery time frame is significantly reduced, so the private-public sector collaboration is crucial.

“We should avoid new, unnecessary procedures that create bottle necks and slow down the recovery. However, a quick and effective restart of travel will only happen if governments around the world agree to a common set of health protocols developed by the private sector, such as those we’ve outlined.

“These must provide the reassurance travellers and authorities need, using new technology, to offer hassle-free, pre-vaccine ‘new normal’ travel in the short term.”

The new protocols and standards are being defined following feedback and multiple conversations with WTTC Members, as well collaboration from associations who represent the different travel sectors.

This includes the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the Airport Council International (ACI), Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), United States Travel Association (USTA), Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Travel Commission (ETC) and the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO).

IATA, ACI and ICAO are pooling their crucial expertise and are working closely to define the best protocols to keep travellers and employees safe to enable the aviation sector to recover. The World Health Organisation (WHO) and other health experts have also contributed by providing their experience from various global medical crises.

To offer world-class cleanliness, improved hygiene standards and ensure guest safety, hotels are developing protocols based on learnings from offering free rooms to frontline healthcare workers during the COVID-19 crisis.

There will be new protocols for check-in involving digital technology; hand sanitiser stations at frequent points including where luggage is stored; contactless payment instead of cash; using stairs more often than lifts where the 2 meter rule can be harder to maintain; and fitness equipment being moved for greater separation among other examples.

Cruise operators will take further measures to ensure ships are free of COVID-19 including staff wearing gloves at all times which are then frequently changed; and more frequent room cleaning.

Travellers at airports will find themselves tested before they fly and upon arrival at their destination airport. They can expect to see social distancing measures at the airport and during boarding, as well as wearing masks while onboard.

Aircraft will also be subject to intensive cleansing regimes. These measures will be combined with contact-tracing, via mobile app, that will allow flights to leave airports COVID-19-free.

The protocols, which have been developed using experience from China’s initial recovery and from new successful standards used by retailers, will be fully announced in the next two weeks and shared with governments globally, so there is a coordinated approach to travelling within the COVID-19 world.

There are positive signs of the first green shoots of recovery. Research by travel data and analytics expert Cirium shows that over 30% of domestic capacity has returned to the Chinese aviation market in the last two months.

Domestic flights have also resumed in some countries, such as in Vietnam between Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, with Vietnam recording relatively few coronavirus fatalities.

To speed up the global recovery WTTC will continue to work closely with the G20, EU, international organisations and governments around the world to help translate the new protocols into easily adopted public policies by each country while adhering to common global standards.

WTTC says the Travel & Tourism sector is now facing over 100 million job losses worldwide due to the coronavirus pandemic, at a cost of up to US\$2.7 trillion of GDP.

In 2019, Travel & Tourism contributed 10.3% of Global GDP, was responsible for generating one in four of the world’s new jobs and, for nine successive years, had outpaced the growth of the global economy.

*Article from the World Travel and Tourism Council*



## TOURISM INDUSTRY UP TO TOUGH CHALLENGES ON PATH TO RECOVERY

Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat said the tourism industry is ready to face the reality and daunting challenges of the "new normal," referring to new standards and protocols for safe and responsible tourism that will direct its path to recovery.

To guarantee the visitors' primary concern for safety, the DOT Chief said measures will be implemented including: re-training of tourism practitioners, reducing the capacity of air and land transport units, the distribution of hygiene kits to tour participants, mandatory temperature checks at airports, hotels, and other attractions, and ensuring food safety, among others.

The DOT is also proposing the following measures: a) Regular sanitation/ disinfection of tourism accommodation and transport services; b) provision of sanitation/ disinfection devices, including PPEs for tourism workers; c) regular inspection of tourism establishments by agencies in relation to health and safety standards; d) development of online systems that can facilitate tourism-related transactions such as applications for accreditation, training modules, and even retail.

"There is no going back to the way things were and we have to accept the tourism landscape that will emerge after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Unless a vaccine is developed, the threat of another outbreak is always a possibility so safety will be the paramount concern of most of our visitors," said Puyat.

She also took the opportunity to appeal to the public for support as the tourism industry adapts the stringent measures required to survive, thrive and stay resilient under the new normal.

"With your support, open-mindedness, and cooperation, the tourism industry can once again prosper while setting the bar with new standards for hospitality, sustainability, health and safety, and guest satisfaction," Sec. Puyat added.

The tourism chief stressed the government's inclusive approach to finding solutions to the challenges identified as the most pressing, such as: the need for soft loans for working capital; payment of loans; deferment of tax payments; wage subsidies; and health and safety of tourism workers.

She said the DOT, in cooperation with national government agencies and stakeholders through the Tourism Congress of the Philippines (TCP), is currently formulating the Tourism Response and Recovery Plan (TRRP), which will serve as the masterplan to get the industry back on its feet.

*Article from the Department of Tourism*



# Thank You

SEC

# MON

### *A Man of Integrity, Creativity and Innovation*

The Philippine tourism industry suffered a great hit when the country was struck with the COVID-19 pandemic early this year, and it took another blow with the passing of former Tourism Secretary, Ramon Jimenez Jr.

Sec. Mon was considered to be one of the pillars of the Philippine tourism and advertising industries. He was the visionary behind the viral "It's More Fun in the Philippines" campaign, which showcases the wonderful destinations of the country and the fun-loving heart of the Filipino people. Under his leadership, the Philippines set foot on the global travel stage and welcomed six million tourists by the end of his term.

As the "It's More Fun in the Philippines" campaign continues today, we will forever be grateful to Sec. Mon for his incomparable contribution to the Philippine tourism industry and, most importantly, for leading the people behind the promotion of the Philippines with integrity, creativity and innovation. His passion and commitment as a public servant as well as the legacy he left behind are testaments to his love for country.

Thank You, Sec. Mon. It was a great honor and privilege to have worked with you. You will be greatly missed.



## DOT, ATTACHED AGENCIES PROMOTE DIGITAL TOURISM

With the hampered travel movement brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic situation, work and play are inevitably done online. The evolving crisis and in anticipation of other challenges, the Department of Tourism (DOT) and its attached agencies are making sure that Philippine tourism remains competitive, adapts well and takes advantage of the digital revolution.

"The DOT will continue to optimize the role of technology to promote tourism and digital learning to provide new opportunities across the tourism sector," Puyat said.

The DOT joins the international trend in going digital; utilizing inspirational strategies to maintain market presence worldwide.

A series of promotional videos encouraging tourists and non-tourists alike to "Stay at home, dream, and wake up in the Philippines" featuring breathtaking sceneries and memorable activities in the country were recently released by the Department. One-minute videos highlighting the different regions including Central Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula, Cordillera Administrative Region, Bicol and MIMAROPA Region were also produced, accessible at [philippines.travel/wakeupinph](http://philippines.travel/wakeupinph).

The DOT furthermore encourages the public to "travel from home" by providing virtual backgrounds of some of the most popular travel spots in the country for video conferencing platforms. The photos for morning, afternoon, or night video calls can be downloaded from [philippines.travel/fromhome](http://philippines.travel/fromhome) for free.

Meanwhile, the Intramuros Administration (IA), an attached agency of the DOT responsible for the restoration and redevelopment of the historic Walled City of Manila, also turned to technology operating an online museum, and managing Visita Iglesia Tours and online learning sessions.

The DOT earlier launched DOT Online Learnings, a series of free online training via video-conferencing as an alternative to the regular training programs being conducted by the Office of Industry Manpower Development (OIMD). All webinars are recorded and may be accessed through the DOT Facebook page: DOT Trains ([tinyurl.com/y8vvqkff](http://tinyurl.com/y8vvqkff)).

The Tourism Promotions Board (TPB), on the other hand, mounted a webinar in partnership with the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) to apprise local and international tourism stakeholders with the current trends and updates on the industry. The DOT through the TPB, is also keen on exploring the possibility of virtual Meetings, Incentive, Conventions, and Exhibitions (M.I.C.E.) events.

Moreover, the DOT also launched the online leg of the Philippine Harvest trade fair in partnership with Stores Specialists Inc. (SSI) in an effort to continue promoting and giving access to fresh produce and local food products. Interested consumers may support this endeavor through the official Facebook page at [facebook.com/PhilippineHarvest](https://facebook.com/PhilippineHarvest).

Today, the DOT introduced its online virtual presser to keep the media partners, tourism stakeholders, and general public abreast of the latest updates in the industry.

*Article from the Department of Tourism*

## DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM LAUNCHES “WAKE UP IN THE PHILIPPINES”

*Article from the Department of Tourism*

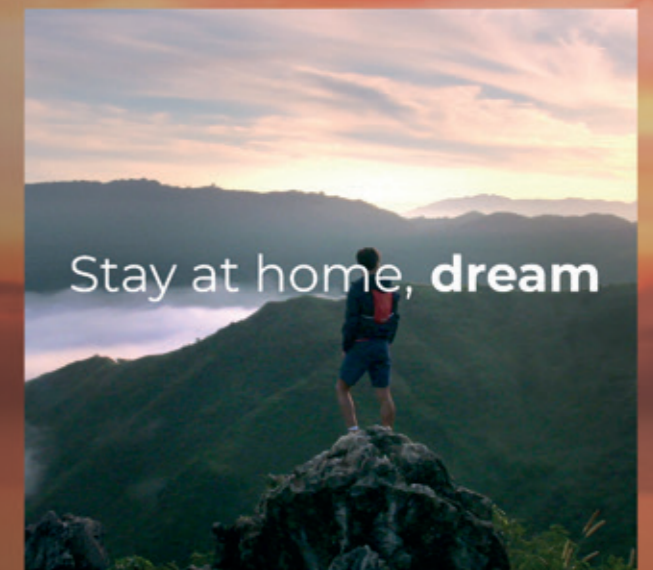
The Philippine Department of Tourism (DOT) recently unveiled its “Wake Up in the Philippines” online campaign targeting foreign tourists. This initiative seeks to maintain the Philippines as a top-of-mind travel destination in light of the limitations on international and domestic travel as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Through [www.philippines.travel/wakeupinph](http://www.philippines.travel/wakeupinph) the DOT continues to promote the country's top tourist spots and unparalleled travel experiences to maintain global interest in the Philippines. The site is also Philippine Tourism's response to stand united with other countries in the call for citizens to temporarily stay at home and flatten the curve, as exhibited by the United Nations World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO) #TravelTomorrow and World Travel and Tourism Council's (WTTC) #TogetherInTravel campaigns. When global travel is determined to be safe, the country will be ready to warmly welcome tourists with our signature Filipino Brand of Service once more.

To pique the interest of travelers and inspire them to visit the Philippines once the global health crisis has abated, a gallery of enticing photographs, exciting videos, and in-depth articles on the best-known destinations as well as undiscovered gems from the country's various regions will share the spotlight on the dynamic, regularly updated website.

Also in the site are information on various tourism-related experiences across the regions. Complementing this will be original content sourced from travel writers and vloggers who have experienced first-hand what it means when we say “It's More Fun in the Philippines”; sharing their fun escapades, delicious food trips, and unique cultural experiences around our 7,641 islands on the website.

Until we can all travel again, let us share the wonderful experiences in the Philippines to our friends and family abroad at [www.philippines.travel/wakeupinph](http://www.philippines.travel/wakeupinph).



# BUCKET LIST PALAWAN

## Explore the “Last Frontier”

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to restrict travel, we find ourselves constantly dreaming of breathtaking beaches and exhilarating adventures. One destination that evokes these experiences is Palawan. With its fine white sand beaches, towering limestone cliffs sprouting out of turquoise waters, enchanting lagoons, and exotic wildlife, it's no wonder why we all look forward to visiting or experiencing once again this “Paradise on Earth.”

Let's take a closer look at the Philippines' Last Frontier, and we hope you'll find yourself delighting in its beauty soon.

### PUERTO PRINCESA

Puerto Princesa is the capital of Palawan, a bustling sea and land port just 1.5 hours from Manila by plane. Although most tourists arrive via the Puerto Princesa Airport en route to other Palawan destinations, Puerto Princesa stands on its own with its vibrant food scene, numerous resorts and natural attractions.

- Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park is an 8.2-kilometer underground river and one of the longest navigable underground rivers in the world. The National Park houses remarkable karst formations and intact complex mountain-to-sea ecosystems, considered to be one of the most important in Asia, making it a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the New Seven Natural Wonders of the World.

- Tubbataha Reef is a 97,030-hectare marine and bird sanctuary located in the Sulu Sea. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Tubbataha Reef is composed of the North and South Atoll and a relatively small Jessie Beazley Reef. The reef contains one of the highest biodiversities of marine flora and fauna and is a popular diving spot in the world.

- Ugong Rock is a 23-million-year-old, 75-foot karst limestone located in the far-off barangay of Tagabinet, an hour and a half north of Puerto Princesa. Tourism in this area is manned locally, with farmers serving as tour guides during the farming off-season. Hike, trek, spelunk and climb your way to the top of the rock to enjoy the pastoral view of the surrounding rice fields and rappel or take a zip line down from Ugong Rock.

### EL NIDO

More than five hours away from Puerto Princesa lies one of Palawan's tourist gems.

Named after the edible nests of swiftlets found in the area, El Nido boasts not only of exotic cuisine but also of luxurious private resorts and stunning islands and seascapes.

- One of the most visited places in Palawan, the Bacuit archipelago is composed of 45 limestone islands and islets. Its sprawling beaches, alluring lagoons, karst formations shooting out of the sea and teeming marine life make the Bacuit archipelago a popular island-hopping destination for tourists.

- El Nido Marine Reserve Park is a wildlife sanctuary covering an area of 96,000 hectares of land and 54,000 hectares of water. Its lush forests and coral reefs support various ecosystems and are habitats to endangered and endemic wildlife.

### CALAMIAN ISLANDS

Calamian Islands, composed of Busuanga, Coron, Culion, Calauit, Malcapuya, Banana, Pass, Calumbuyan, and several minor islets, occupy almost 1,800 square kilometers of crystal waters northeast of Palawan.

- Coron is famous for its stunning geological features, beaches, lagoons and dive sites filled with wildlife and sunken shipwrecks best explored by island-hopping. Coron is also famous for its brackish lakes. Kayangan Lake is considered to be the cleanest lake in the Philippines and can be accessed after a 10-minute climb. On the other hand, Barracuda Lake is not brimming with marine creatures. But its allure comes from its thermocline - cold fresh water on the first 4 meters and warm to hot saltwater as you go deeper into the lake.

- In Busuanga Island, a 30-minute tricycle ride away from Coron town proper is Maquinit Hot Springs. Best visited after an exhausting day of exploring, relax your adventure-wearied bones in one of the few saltwater hot springs in the world.

- Calauit Island - Calauit Wildlife Sanctuary-the entire island of Calauit is a 3,700-hectare nature reserve with endemic and foreign wildlife creatures. Visitors will encounter South African animals like giraffes, antelopes and zebras. Local animals are also cared for at the sanctuary including the Calamian Deer, Palawan Bearded Pig, Philippine Crocodile, Philippine porcupine, Binturong (bearcat), and the Philippine mouse-deer.

## REDUCING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF QUARANTINE:

### A TRAVEL BLOGGER'S JOURNAL

BY LEVY AMOSIN OF HUGGING HORIZONS

As a travel blogger and a news socmed writer for AM radio, I've always been living a productive lifestyle. But the COVID-19 pandemic and the implementation of the Enhanced Community Quarantine led the Philippines to adapt to the stress of confinement.

Suddenly everything stopped, causing everyone to bid their old lives goodbye. The local travel industry got extremely affected, especially bloggers whose lives revolve around traveling.

The stress of confinement is real. In the first week of quarantine, I cried myself to sleep. And just like everyone else, I had a hard time focusing too. But I eventually took hold of my emotions when I did these three major steps:

#### ACCEPT

By opening my mind and understanding the circumstances, I have learned to 'accept' our current reality.

#### ADAPT

I embraced a routine, such as:

1. Praying and meditating: The moment I wake up, I make it a point to pause and thank God. I also end the day with a prayer as it reminds me that Someone greater is in control.
2. Making my bed: Making my bed immediately after waking up makes me feel accomplished and focused.
3. Cooking and preparing meals: I experiment with different types of ingredients for various dishes to keep my creativity flowing.



4. Yoga and staying fit: Staying fit is one way of staying sane. My daily exercises include cardio, arm workouts and yoga. I do yoga in the morning or at night to help me focus and boost my mood.
5. Planting and gardening: Being surrounded by plants and nature improves my mood, prolongs my attention span and removes anxiety.
6. Decluttering: Clearing overcrowded places reduces stress and improves sleep.
7. Finding my work space: There will always be a part of our home where we'll feel the most productive.
8. Taking long baths: This improves the health of my heart as it makes breathing easier and balances hormones.



#### SURVIVE

After learning to adapt, I became slowly immune to the situation. I became less moody, more compassionate and understanding.

"Giving up" is not an option. Feeling sad and helpless? Look for a way to donate to someone in need. Missing someone? Be the first to dial that number and ask how he/ she is doing.

Hang in there, remind yourself that the world was never under your control to begin with, yet you made it this far. Stop worrying, you're braver than you think!

## MANNY O.'s HOPE NOW PHILIPPINES FOUNDATION, INC. AND MÖVENPICK HOTEL MACTAN ISLAND CEBU DONATE FOOD PACKS TO 20,000 FAMILIES

In line with his mission to help the community amid COVID-19 crisis, Cebu-based philanthropist, Manny Osmeña (better known as Manny O.), mobilized the distribution of food donations to 20,000 families in Barangay Punta Engaño and Barangay Mactan in Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu. This "Operation Ayuda" is a banner project of Hope Now Philippines Foundation, Inc. in collaboration with Mövenpick Hotel Mactan Island Cebu, Ibiza Beach Club and Manny O. Wines—four divisions under the Manny O. Group of Companies—and with Conching Bread.

The food packages included essentials such as rice, bread and Vitamin C to help disadvantaged families. The team underwent meticulous planning and coordination meetings with barangay officials to ensure the success of their door-to-door distribution which began in April 2020.

In addition to the community drive, Mövenpick Hotel Mactan Island Cebu heeded the call to help healthcare workers by providing boxes of shower caps to be used as added Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Batches of packed lunch and other essentials are also given out to frontliners.

The team is also awaiting delivery of 500 Protective Body Suits, to be donated to medical professionals.

"We want to send a message of hope and solidarity, especially in this time of adversity. We will all rise and heal by helping others," says the hotel's General Manager, Max Huber.

All these relief efforts take after the philosophy of Manny O., who carries out his Christian mission through relentless philanthropic work and finds inspiration in a Bible passage in Matthew 25:40, Jesus said: "In as much as you did it to the one of the least, you did it to ME."

Hope Now Philippines Foundation, Inc., the charity arm of the Manny O. Group of Companies, was founded in 2014. With its vision of giving hope to people who have lost their hope due to circumstances beyond their control, the thrust of the foundation is to advance the well-being of disaster victims and vulnerable people through medical relief and community rehabilitation projects. Aside from turning over 200 homes to calamity survivors in 5 affected communities, Hope Now has also provided sustainable livelihood, as well as rehabilitation and mentoring programs.

Source: Article from the Mövenpick Hotel Mactan Island Cebu





CLOUD 9, SIARGAO



ISLAND HOPPING, CEBU



SUMILON SANDBAR, CEBU



AMANPULO



MT. PULAG



VILLA MARMARINE RESORT, SIQUIJOR

## SNAPSHOTS: WAKE UP IN THE PHILIPPINES

*NOTHING CAN STOP YOU FROM DREAMING.*

As we wait for the day to travel once again, discover the wonders that await you in our 7,641 islands from the comfort of your home. Stay at home, dream, and wake up in the Philippines.



MANILA YACHT CLUB



EL NIDO, PALAWAN



BORACAY ISLAND



VILLA MARMARINE RESORT, SIQUIJOR



BANAVE RICE TERRACES



CALAWAG MOUNTAIN RESORT, TIBID

## TPB STRENGTHENS EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AMID PANDEMIC



With the country under the State of Public Health Emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines has boosted employee welfare schemes. Improved health measures and guidelines were implemented to ensure and promote personnel well-being and workplace safety.

### LEARN FROM HOME MODULES

During the quarantine period, TPB provided employees with weekly learn-from-home modules to spur self-improvement among personnel. Module topics ranged from government administrative topics such as procurement planning to socio-political awareness like gender sensitivity. Links for tourism-related webinars as well as health and psychosocial interventions were also shared among TPB employees.

### UPPED SANITATION

Included in the precautionary sanitary measures of TPB are augmented disinfection and decontamination activities of its office. Frequently touched surfaces such as workstations, countertops and all potentially contaminated high-contact areas such as the biometric machine, door handles, telephones and toilets are sanitized routinely in an alternating schedule with pest control. Packages and deliveries are disinfected before they can be claimed by respective recipients.

### PERSONNEL SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Basic health measures are also observed such as physical distancing, frequent hand washing and proper cough etiquette. All TPB personnel as well as guests will undergo temperature checks using thermal scanners before being allowed to enter the office premises. Hand sanitizers and rubbing alcohol are placed in strategic areas to encourage frequent hand disinfection.

The Personal Care Kit (PCK), which includes 25 pieces of surgical masks, 25 pairs of surgical gloves, and 30 pieces of Vitamin C as well as a 500ml bottle of rubbing alcohol and a face shield, is distributed to all TPB personnel every first working day of the month. Aside from the PCKs for employees, TPB was also able to provide 1,877 Personal Protective Equipment and vitamins for Frontline Tourism Personnel.



## TPB SAFE WORK PRACTICES

### WHEN IN PUBLIC PLACES

- Avoid wearing jewelry and other non-essential accessories
- Always wear appropriate facemask when going out
- Maintain physical distancing of at least 1-2 meters
- When driving, use your car vents to get fresh air

### HYGIENE

- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water or use 70% alcohol-based hand rub
- Practice proper etiquette when sneezing or coughing



- Dispose used tissues and personal hygiene products in enclosed bins
- When driving, use your car vents to get fresh air

### AT THE WORKPLACE

- Provision of Personal Care Kits (face shield, mask, gloves and alcohol)
- Have your temperature checked with no-touch thermometers
- Sanitize hands before and after using biometric scanner
- Clean and disinfect work stations, office tools and frequently used areas regularly

- Opt for video or telephone conferences instead of face-to-face meetings



- Observe TPB protocols in case of confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19
- Change into clean clothes and shoes before leaving work
- Put dirty clothes in a separate bag from your personal one
- Sanitize hands after removing work clothes and before touching/changing into clean clothes

### WHEN YOU ARRIVE HOME

- Do not wear work shoes inside your house
- Wash hands after handling dirty work clothes and shoes
- Take a shower before interacting with your family/housemates

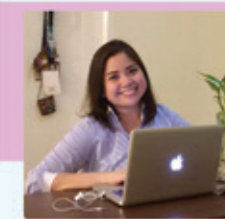
# WORK FROM HOME HAS NEVER BEEN THIS FUN!

As Covid-19 continues to affect thousands of people in the Philippines, work from home (WFH) has become the new norm. Various parts of our humble abodes have been turned into work spaces and most of us no longer have to don actual business clothes. It's a fact that we may still be living within our comfort zones, but there will always be struggles – and most of them end up as silly memories. So we asked different private sector professionals to submit entries of their funny “work from home” experiences and the results are hilarious!



**NAME:** Shanna Almazan  
**POSITION:** Sales Manager  
**COMPANY:** Ars Dream Corp.  
/ KNT Manila

“One time I was on a video call with our Japan Office and cooking at the same time. In the middle of the video call, I told my colleague to give me a minute since I will just check the dish I was cooking. When I returned to my work station, my youngest son and daughter were talking to my colleague about dragons, dinosaurs and unicorns. My colleague said he enjoys talking to my kids more than talking to me about numbers and strategies. From then on, every time the Japan Office calls, they ask for my kids first before talking to me.”



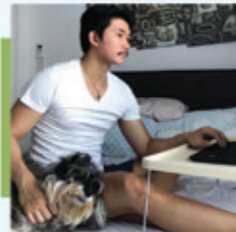
**NAME:** Melissa Ferrer-Litao  
**POSITION:** Marketing Communications Manager  
**COMPANY:** The Linden Suites

“While on a video call meeting, my little Genie and her Achie Charlie were playing shop, and I could hear their conversation in the background--  
Charlie: Pabili po!  
Genie: Yes?  
Charlie: Ano po maganda?  
Genie: Me!  
Moral of the story: In all scenarios, confidence is everything.”



**NAME:** Marky Ramone Go  
**POSITION:** Travel and Freelance Web Content Writer  
**COMPANY:** Freelancer

“A writing client asked me to document a conference on Zoom. Obviously, I had to participate. As I joined the meeting, I turned off both my audio and video so I was basically an observer. While scanning the participants, I recognized someone I knew. Before her turn to speak, I messaged her “Good luck” on the Zoom private chat feature. After her talk, we ended up chatting more. We exchanged several messages until we realized we were chatting on Zoom’s main chat board. I wanted to log off because of fear that my client will read our conversation. Good thing, the other participants started asking general questions to the speakers thereby burying our personal chat convo in the thread.”



**NAME:** Mikhail Camacho  
**POSITION:** Director of Business Development  
**COMPANY:** Makati Shangri-La

“One of the perks of working from home is that any comfy spot would be an ideal workspace. Unfortunately, I have a “roommate” that makes my work space his comfy spot.”



**NAME:** Joaquin Carlos U. de Jesus  
**POSITION:** Marketing and Communications Manager  
**COMPANY:** The Lind Boracay

“One of the experiences I always encounter is caused by our poor internet connectivity. With slow connection and three persons working from home, it cannot be helped that sometimes, my facial expressions during video call meetings are caught in rather unflattering or awkward moments. There are times when I’d speak and my face seems to be stuck, and for my officemates, it looks as if I am rolling my eyes or my mouth is left hanging open! #WhatAFace I also feel nervous because of the high volume of voices of my companions at home as well as the unending crowing of roosters of our neighbors. It’s so embarrassing! However, with safety and health as our top priorities, these small inconveniences, though stressful at first, are nothing compared to our bigger desire for us to survive and surpass this challenging time. The key indeed is to take things lightly and just find a way to look at the brighter side of things.”



**NAME:** Sharon Ross,  
Imported Accredited Tourguide  
Guide from California  
**POSITION:** Tour Guide  
**COMPANY:** DOT Region X

“Survival Mode of a Tourist guide... I am now ready to embrace the new normal and practice “safe distancing protocols” away from my refrigerator. My saving grace which came in a form of intervention away from my delicious cooking was the DOT online training. Thank god for the internet. How I miss my tours ... \*sigh\*. Til then, see you all at our learning conference forums everyone. Will make an effort to resist wearing just my pajamas and I hope that this experience can help bring us closer as one family under the DOT umbrella. Stay connected, stay healthy, and stay home. STAY STRONG ... I whispered to my WiFi signal.”



## Extending a Helping Hand in the Time of COVID-19

Bayanihan is an integral part of Philippine culture and it pertains to helping others without expecting anything in return. Filipinos are, of course, known for this trait, and it has been impressively practiced during this time of pandemic.

Despite COVID-19 putting leadership, compassion, and patriotism to the test in all parts of the globe, bayanihan has been evident in the Philippine setting with individuals, private, and public companies, including the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines and the Department of Tourism (DOT), coming together to help the country.

Strong camaraderie was mainly exemplified during the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) when stricter guidelines in movement of any form of transportation whether by land, air, or sea were imposed, resulting in a significant number of stranded tourists.

TPB and DOT responded to this ordeal by providing repatriation flights, accommodation facilities, and travel essential kits. Hygiene items including 5,000 pieces of shampoo, soap, sanitizer, toothbrush, toothpaste, alcohol, toilet paper, wet wipes, bath towel, and bottled water were also procured, packed and distributed to various hotels in Metro Manila where the distressed tourists were billeted.

A simple act of kindness is, indeed, highly appreciated in these trying times. The COVID-19 pandemic may be a colossal challenge, but it became an opportunity for each and every one of us to be heroes in our own little way.







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CALENDARS

VIRTUAL PHITEX

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**22-24**

MICECONLINE

OCTOBER  
**26-30**

Follow us for news and updates:  [tpb.gov.ph](http://tpb.gov.ph) |    @tpbphl  
#tpbgovph #WeHealAsOne

YOUR INSIGHTS MATTER TO US AS WE NAVIGATE THE PATH TO TOURISM RECOVERY.

## PLEASE JOIN THE ONLINE COMMUNITY PANEL SURVEY FOR TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS

For interested participants, download the consent form at,  
**[bit.ly/tourismstakeholders-consentform](http://bit.ly/tourismstakeholders-consentform)**



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