



RURAL BANKERS ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES

23 January 2023

Dear Fellow Rural Bankers,

Greetings of a happy new year!

Despite the challenges we faced in the past year, there are many things that we are thankful for: 1. The success of the Symposium and the many federation invitations speak greatly of the trust and confidence of our members in seeking refuge to our mother organization. It likewise showed the more proactive stance of the RBAP in providing necessary support in accordance to the needs of the members and industry through the Angel Network; 2. The synergy brought about by "One team. One vision" allowed for institutional reforms across committees and the board of both RBAP and RBRDFI, all of which with the end in view, of promoting sustainability, continuity, and smooth transitions in between terms; 3. We have also been blessed with professionalism and talent to run our daily affairs, thereby ensuring that we constantly stay in touch and deliver better services to our members; and 4. The biggest challenge brought about by Circular 1151 also had the effect of bringing members to work closely with each other, promoting sharing of sound practices and collaborating in ways that will lead to a stronger rural banking industry. With a robust organization and highly relevant and strong industry, we hope that our regulators and partners will eventually help create a more conducive environment whereby we can all flourish and prosper.

January is usually a lean month for the RBAP as we allow member banks to complete year-end reports as well as lay out plans for the new year. The office, however, remains in full throttle, wrapping up unfinished business and preparing for an even more efficient conduct of business in this new year. Arising from the BOD and BSPC meeting held in December, several position papers are being written to settle issues on the following: a. ACPC booking of accounts, including the vital issue of ACPC-funded loans being treated as Agri-Agra compliance; b. simpler rules on rural bank equity contribution to other rural banks, as well as c. reasonable concessions in relation to Philguarantee "speedy" disposition of claims, and d. talks with Dep. Ed. regarding the possibility of RBAP acting as onboarding point for RBs wishing to engage in Dep.Ed. salary lending.

In accordance with the Angel Network plans and schedule, and in relation to Circular 1151, RBAP directors have also been deputized to conduct a wellness check of all banks within their respective regions. Expect therefore, a call from us, where we will be inquiring into your self-evaluation exercises, your current state, chosen track and your needs especially those which you expect to get from the organization.

I am also pleased to announced that our Pairing Platform (a registry of potential third-party investors and merger partners) is already up and running. Feel free to visit our website, under Angel Network or Members' corner and please refer all potential investors and partners to register and be included in the platform.

On the social media front, two video entries have also been submitted showcasing "Rural Banks touching lives"; while they are only initially available in our FB Page, it will soon be posted in an RBAP Youtube channel and eventually linked in our website. Let me then encourage you, to participate, submit your amateur video and start showcasing them as standby looping videos prior

to any virtual meeting you hold. Let us show how relevant we are especially in the many lives we touch.

Let me also inform you that your RBAP is in close coordination with government agencies on how to further improve the quality of life in the countryside. This February, no less than an Assistant National Statistician from the Philippine Statistics Authority will be joining us in Davao to promote the possibility of the PSA deploying in rural bank offices in support of the National ID Program as well as the government's various cash card programs.

Speaking of Davao, this brings me to the upcoming National Convention of Compliance Officers (COs) and Internal Auditors (IAs), under RBAP's COIAG. I am wholeheartedly endorsing the Convention to be held on February 8 and 9 at The Ritz Hotel @ Garden Oases in Davao City. This convention, the first and only one of its kind is designed to provide an avenue of learning in order to capacitate our COs and IAs, and thereby strengthen and prepare our banks for the next steps beyond the March 22, 2023 deadline, when we are called to submit our chosen tracks. The RBAP board is offering this convention and CO/IA capacity-building exercise on a non-revenue, purely service basis; the choice of venue is also largely impelled by our desire to keep costs manageable for even smaller RBs. We announced this event early in order for banks to book flights early and at cheaper costs. Rest assured, the content will far exceed the investment we put on our key officers.

Thank you very much and more power to you, **your Rural Bank**, and to our RBAP. May we all be blessed and prosper in 2023!

Very truly yours,



ATTY. MARY ANN TUPASI-SADDUL

President, FY 2022-2023