

## **Opening Remarks of Undersecretary Blesila A. Lantayona**

*Creative AGE for SDGs: Accelerating Growth of MSMEs in the Philippines - Culminating Event  
17 May 2023 | Coro Hotel, 2F Function Room Annex, 8436 Kalayaan cor. Mercado St., Brgy. Poblacion,  
Makati City*

I am pleased to welcome all of you to this culminating event that celebrates the achievements of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the creative industry in the Philippines. Today, we gather to recognize the significant contributions of our local creatives in shaping our country's cultural and economic landscape.

I would like to recognize the Division for Sustainable Development Goals in the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, National Strategies and Capacity Building Branch Chief, Mr. Amson Sibanda; DTI Competitiveness and Innovation Group Undersecretary Rafaelita Adaba; Mr. Jaime Noel "Joel" Santos, our project's Consultant, our colleagues from DTI Bureaus and Offices, Regional and Provincial Offices, Local Government Units, our MSME Creative Champions, esteemed guests and partners – a pleasant morning to all.

Firstly, I would like to congratulate the Division for Sustainable Development Goals in the UN DESA and the DTI Bureau of Small and Medium Enterprise Development for successfully staging this flagship event, which brings together the country's creative minds to foster an enabling environment for the Philippine creative economy. We are always grateful for the support that the UN DESA has been offering to the Philippine government in empowering MSMEs to drive the achievement of our shared sustainable goals.

Creativity is in the Filipino DNA, quietly feeding humanity's soul and the Philippine economy. Whether we create or experience them, the creative industry improves our quality of life. The creative industry is a vital sector that encompasses various fields covering both goods and services, such as arts, design, media, entertainment, traditional cultural expressions, and cultural sites. It is a sector that thrives on innovation, imagination, and originality. In the Philippines, we are fortunate to have a wealth of talented individuals and organizations that have made a mark in this industry. Through the works of world-class Filipino creatives, we can discover, share, and recreate the story of our nation in books, galleries, halls, and theaters, as well as in our homes and public spaces.

The Creative AGE program contributes to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the Global Innovation Index, we ranked 10th out of 130 economies in creative goods exports in 2021. The creative economy's potential is enormous, and this is what many of you animate and

enliven. Hopefully through this program, we were able to contribute to their higher level of economic productivity through creativity, innovation, digitalization, and the development of an overall conducive business environment for resilient businesses to thrive by significantly reducing their vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters. Likewise, hoping that this inspired them to help boost their respective creative cities' growth, create more jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities, especially an inspiration to all the women and youth.

We can work together to build a vibrant, resilient, and strong Philippine creative economy at the forefront of the Asia-Pacific Region, driving our country's development and enriching our culture. It is an industry powered by individuals like you and enriched by platforms like the Creative AGE program.

With that said, I hope that this event will serve as a platform not only to showcase the creativity and ingenuity of our local creatives and MSMEs but also to help them strengthen their resilience to whatever uncertainties may arise. Let us celebrate their achievements and continue to support their endeavors. Thank you, and I hope you enjoy the event.