



# PRESS RELEASE

## PSA with DICT commences the 31<sup>st</sup> National Statistics Month

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October 2020, Philippines – Organized by the Philippine Statistical System (PSS) and spearheaded by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), this year's celebration of the 31<sup>st</sup> National Statistics Month (NSM) carried the theme "Bridging Digital Gaps: Making Information Available to All" which recognizes the importance of digitalization but emphasizes the need to address the social inequality in terms of access, and use of information, and communications technology (ICT).

Pursuant to Presidential Proclamation No. 647, "Declaring the Month of October of Every Year as the National Statistics Month," the annual NSM aims to: (a) promote, enhance, and instill awareness and appreciation of the importance and value of statistics to the different sectors of the society; and (b) elicit the cooperation and support of the general public in upgrading the quality and standards of statistics in the country.

Hosted by the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), the 31<sup>st</sup> NSM kicked off with the Opening Ceremony last 01 October 2020 via Zoom and Facebook (FB) live. Informative messages were delivered by the heads of the PSA, the DICT, and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA).

Undersecretary Dennis S. Mapa, Ph.D of the PSA, welcomed the participants to the virtual conduct of the 31<sup>st</sup> NSM Opening Ceremony. He emphasized the significant role of ICT statistics and digitalization in creating informed policy decisions towards full digital transformation and addressing digital gaps to empower both the public and private sectors.



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The importance of ICT in providing comprehensive statistical data was also highlighted in the inspirational message delivered by Acting Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Karl Kendrick T. Chua. He underscored how the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic brought enormous challenges to the PSS as the demand for timely and useful statistics for policymaking, and decision-making has become greater.

As the host of the 31st NSM Opening Ceremony, DICT Secretary Gregorio B. Honasan II delivered the keynote message where he underscored the importance of data, and ICT statistics in formulating policies that are effective to the needs of the people. He also emphasized that the need for policies and programs on digitization has never been as urgent as it is now.

Atty. Diana May Cabrales of DICT, and Ms. Carole Blanco of PSA then presented the results of the 2019 National ICT Household Survey (NICTHS), and 2017 Survey of Information and Communications Technology (SICT), respectively.

Mr. Stephen Bereaux of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) stressed the importance and relevance of open, interoperable, timely and reliable data for policy- and decision-making especially for the tough choices required during the pandemic. He accentuated that statistics are critical to enable appropriate responses, and ensure optimal allocation of resources towards better connectivity for all.

Mr. Paul Rene Padilla of the Local Government of Quezon City, Mr. Jean Paolo Lacap of City College of Angeles, and Ms. Ernestine Amper of the Nielsen Company served as guest reactors. Through an open forum, guest panelists Director Maria Teresa Magno-Garcia of DICT, Executive Director Josefina V. Almeda, Ph.D. and Ms. Jessa S. Lopez of the Philippine Statistical Research and Training Institute (PSRTI) responded to questions from the guest reactors, and participants.

Formally closing the 31st NSM Opening Ceremony was OIC-Deputy National Statistician Minerva Eloisa P. Esquivias who thanked the speakers, guests, and participants for making the ceremony a success

despite the current situation. She also invited the participants to join the PSS for the 31st NSM Closing Ceremony on 20 October 2020 which will be highlighted with the announcement of the 30th NSM Awards winners and celebration of the 3rd World Statistics Day (WSD).

In this month-long celebration, the PSS invites all government agencies, local government units, academic institutions, state universities and colleges, private sector, and the media at the national, and local levels to actively participate, and support the 31st NSM activities.

For more information/updates on the 31st NSM and its opening ceremony, kindly visit the following pages:

- NSM webpage - <https://psa.gov.ph/nsm/announcements/31st>
- NSM FB page - <https://www.facebook.com/NSMPhilippines>
- NSM twitter page - <https://twitter.com/NSMPhilippines>

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