



PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY

STATEMENT OF PEZA DIRECTOR GENERAL CHARITO “CHING” PLAZA on PEZA’s initiatives for public health and for the Philippine economy

April 1, 2020 (Wednesday)

The COVID-19 outbreak in our country and throughout the world is a challenging test to all of us, to the government, and to all sectors and walks of life and the need to establish harmony between man, the environment and nature, as well as in building peace, understanding and cooperation among nations and world citizens. It is a test for survival, cooperation, as well as a test for socio-economic initiatives and strategies.

We at the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) are doing our best to do a “**balancing act**” of both toeing the line of quarantines to fight COVID-19 while at the same time sustaining our economy. We allow some companies in ecozones to operate provided they follow safety measures against COVID-19 set by government. Companies that continued to operate are at a minimal level as they adjust to skeletal workforce or work from home arrangements. Based on a survey conducted by PEZA as of March 26, 2020, 78% of companies are operational in Luzon, 93% in Visayas, and 100% in Mindanao. However, the survey conducted is not yet fully complete because some companies have not responded as they may also have stopped operating since the declaration of quarantines.

Through our coordination with the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) on COVID-19, DTI, concerned LGUs, PNP, and other authorities, we were able issue memorandum circulars and advisories about the continued passage of cargoes, logistics, and skeletal workforce in ecozones. All pertinent advisories are in the PEZA website for reference of the public. Clearly, PEZA is for both public health and national economy. We remain true to the fact that two non-negotiable for us are protecting the health, safety, and welfare of our workers & the protection of our environment.

As embodied in our memorandum circulars and advisories, PEZA’s strategies to address quarantine measures are work-from-home arrangement, maintaining a skeletal workforce on-site, provision of housing for the workers either inside or near the zone, social distancing, and use of shuttle services to ferry the employees. Ecozone operators and company factories, IT/BPO centers shall regularly disinfect their premises. Registered enterprises are encouraged to develop an **Infectious Disease and Response Plan or Business Continuity Plan** that will guide the management and the workers against COVID-19. This will ensure insulation from COVID and continuous operations. PEZA also requires ecozone operators and locator companies to provide drones, disinfection cubicles or chambers for workers and other equipment to disinfect the premises, equipment, roads, facilities, and the workers. These are all part of PEZA’s continual pro-active and pre-emptive response to all forms of crisis.

The COVID-19 pandemic provides health and economic lessons. This recent global crisis in our generation also bolsters our vision in PEZA to make the country fully industrialized, self-reliant and self-sustaining by: lessening import dependence; making our vast available lands productive through enhancing the industries suitable to the land and environment; completing the supply chain; enabling our farmers and SMEs to maximize their production, manufacturing, export capability; and training & transforming Filipino workers as multi-skilled, multi-knowledge and world class workers. We remain steadfast to attract foreign and Filipino investors by working closely with other agencies in addressing the efficiency factors such as stable and investor friendly policies, logistics hubs, better Wi-Fi connectivity, IT and communication facilities, lower rates and quality power utilities in order to be able to sustain our basic needs in normal and critical periods.

PEZA thanks our investors for keeping their trust and confidence in PEZA despite the odds and challenges. PEZA also appreciate its employees for their dedication and hard work to address various concerns of our locators, workers, and stakeholders.

We are still hopeful for the future and that we can preserve and continue the gains and best practices of PEZA recognized worldwide. We are faithful that we can arise from this crisis as one Filipino people and as one humanity. We dedicate our works and the fate of our people to God that we can arise from this crisis and humanity to heal as one.

Very truly yours,



BGen CHARITO B. PLAZA MNSA, PhD
Director General