

SPEECH OF SENATE PRESIDENT FRANKLIN M. DRILON

Launch of the Whistleblowing Web Portal

Governance Commission for GOCCs

April 28, 2016

BOOSTING THE ANTI-CORRUPTION CAMPAIGN

Chairman Cesar Villanueva, Commissioner Angela Ignacio, Commissioner Rainier Butalid, GCG staff, friends, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

It is a great honor and privilege to be with you today and witness the launching of the Governance Commission's Whistleblowing Web Portal. I commend the GCG for coming up with this remarkable project that will boost good governance. Congratulations!

Corruption impedes development. Its cost to humanity is incalculable. Public funds that can be used for education, health care, infrastructure, disaster relief and procurement of modern military equipment are salted away in personal bank accounts by unscrupulous individuals.

Corruption robs our children and the generations yet unborn of a bright future. It deprives people of choices and opportunities.

Fighting corruption requires passion, unwavering commitment and more importantly, political will. For the past six years, this Administration has been dealing with this scourge, with an iron hand and firm resolve.

The 15th and the 16th Congresses supported the Aquino administration's good governance agenda. Among the significant laws that were enacted to promote transparency and accountability were:

- 1) the Amendments to the Anti-Money Laundering Law which expanded the list of entities required to report transactions to the Anti Money Laundering Council, or AMLC, and allows courts to inquire and freeze bank accounts ex-parte;
- 2) Republic Act 10660, which strengthened the functional and structural organization of the *Sandiganbayan* by creating two new divisions, and redefining its jurisdiction to hasten resolution of cases in the anti-graft court;
- 3) The Tax Incentive Management and Transparency Act, or TIMTA to foster transparency and accountability in government transactions and the present system of granting fiscal incentives;
- 4) And of course, the GOCC Governance Act, which I authored, that made state owned enterprises

instruments of national progress, instead of milking cows of abusive and corrupt GOCC officials.

However, we know that without the cooperation of our citizens, these laws are not enough. Due to its clandestine nature, corruption will never be uncovered if there are no individuals who will bravely alert the authorities. According to Transparency International, whistleblowers play a critical role in converting a vicious cycle of secrecy into a **virtuous** cycle.

Whistleblowing is an essential tool in the prevention and detection of corruption. By having concerned individuals who are not afraid to expose or disclose the wrongdoing, our fight against corruption will have a better chance of succeeding. Their disclosure will prompt the authorities to take action through investigation and prosecution, thus, saving resources and preventing damage to the organization.

The main obstacle to blowing the whistle on corruption is the fear of retaliation. It is therefore important to ensure that our citizens are comfortable with the process and that the government has an adequate system that would protect them.

I have great hopes and expectation that this web-based reporting system that GCG is launching today will foster trust and confidence to the whistleblowing system.

With the creation of the Governance Commission's Whistleblowing Web Portal and its "easy-to-understand" and "easy-to-follow" procedures, I anticipate that citizens will come forward and report a wrongdoing or provide crucial information, therefore boosting our campaign to institute transparency and good governance in the GOCC sector.

To have an effective system however, we must not only provide for a "user-friendly" procedure, but the government must also ensure that they are adequately protected once they become a whistleblower.

At the Senate, there are pending bills that seek to protect and ensure the welfare of whistleblowers. The proposed measures guarantee confidentiality of the whistleblower's identity and penalize retaliatory acts against any whistleblower.

Indeed, the adequate protection of whistleblowers is an integral part of the good governance agenda.

As the Aquino administration draws to a close, we can proudly say that the relentless pursuit of good governance

in the past six years yielded spectacular results. We have restored pride among our countrymen. We have changed the mindset of our bureaucracy. We now have the confidence of the international community. We leapfrogged forty-nine notches for the past five years, and nine last year, 85th out of 175 countries, in the latest Corruption Perception Index survey done by Transparency International.

While we celebrate our gains, we must also commit to safeguard the reforms we have painstakingly put in place, so that neither force, nor personality, can reverse these, even beyond 2016. We must ensure that the fruits of good governance will be enjoyed by this generation, and the generations yet unborn.

Once again, my heartiest congratulations on your noteworthy project.

Thank you very much.