PHILIPPINE COUNCILORS LEAGUE

MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL CHAIRMAN

On the 35th year founding anniversary of the PCL

To my dear fellow councilors,

Let me take this great opportunity to extend my warmest greetings to each and every councilor in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao on this very special milestone in the history of the Philippine Councilors League: the 35th year anniversary of our league and our yearly PCL Week Celebration from September 1-7 by virtue of Proclamation No. 212 issued by then President Fidel V. Ramos.

Since its establishment in September 1990, PCL has gone a long way and has become the leading, if not the best, local league in the country in terms of its programs, projects and activities as well as the active participation and involvement of its more than 17,200 members in the affairs of the PCL in 82 provincial federations and 37 city chapters nationwide.

In our last term, we have implemented a seamless registration system in our quarterly assemblies and national convention by using modern technology to ensure that everyone is assured of their hotel accommodations and other needs through the pre-paid registration system. Gone are the days when councilors complain of lack of accommodation in the venue due to overwhelming number of members attending our quarterly events. A Data Director was appointed to ensure that this vital reform is put in place.

We have also revitalized the Continuing Local Legislative Education Program (CLLEP), a capacity-building program held quarterly to upgrade the competency of our members as local legislators and to guide them to enact model ordinances and resolutions that redound to the general welfare of our respective constituents. Our resource persons in this CLLEP program are home-grown, veteran former and incumbent councilors who share their knowledge and experience in local legislation for the benefit of our members. Reforms in the CLLEP include the holding of break-out sessions in a classroom-type environment with specific and targeted topics and with model ordinances presented that can be replicated in our respective LGUs. We are no longer holding our sessions in a large assembly which is not conducive to learning. Attendance is a must and this is closely supervised by the DILG. We are also holding a training-the-trainors program for our Advocacy Committee composed of veteran councilors and new members to make our CLLEP a sustainable program moving forward.

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We are the only league in the country with our own PCL Legislative Academy where members can enroll to finish their high school or college education and pursue either a masteral or doctoral degree. PCL has successfully partnered with various universities to implement this program and to date, we have more than 10,000 graduates who have availed of this program, ensuring a brighter future for our members, even to a life after politics. Some of our members who are graduates of the PCL Academy have since been appointed in the national and local governments or have become lawyers and/or masteral/doctoral degree holders.

In terms of the benefits given to our members, we have initiated and defended in Congress the passage of the "Eligibility Law" (Republic Act No. 10156) which grants professional civil service eligibility to sanggunian members who have been elected for three terms and who are college graduates and sub-professional eligibility to those who have been elected for two terms and who have at least earned 72 units in college. While it was initiated by PCL, the other sanggunian members such as the vice governors, provincial board members and vice mayors were also benefited by this PCL program. Qualified members can apply for eligibility in the Civil Service Commission at any time after the completion of the required terms. Many of our members have used this eligibility law for appointment in the national and local governments.

Another huge benefit for our members is the "Salary Step Increment for Elective Officials" under DBM-CSC Circular No. 1, series of 2016, dated January 27, 2016, which grants salary increases to all elective officials based on the number of their elected terms. While it is again initiated by PCL, the beneficiaries include all other elective officials from the Vice President, Senators, Congressmen, Governors and Vice Governors , Provincial Board Members, Mayors and Vice Mayors and, of course, our councilors. This benefit was not given to us on a silver platter. It was originally implemented by the DBM and CSC only for the benefit of appointive officials but thru the persistent appeal and determination of PCL via a motion for reconsideration filed before the Department of Justice, the latter issued an opinion that elective officials should also be included in the grant of Salary Step Increment based on their election and reelection. Those who benefited from this PCL initiative include all elected officials from the Vice President down to the councilors and this was made retroactive to the election of the year 2010.

In terms of financial management of the PCL funds, we are proud to declare that we have prudently used our resources with transparency and accountability. The PCL is the local league with the most liquid funds, generated from the membership and term dues as well as from our quarterly assemblies.

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Members in good standing receive death and medical financial assistance. Any member who dies while being an incumbent is entitled to P50,000 death benefit while those who are hospitalized get a maximum of P20,000 medical assistance depending on the total amount of the bill.

On top of this, provincial federations or city chapters may seek calamity fund assistance from PCL in case of calamities or disasters in their areas based on a resolution declaring their LGU as in a state of calamity.

Another program that we are proud of is the implementation of the Local Legislative Awards (LLA), a term-based recognition of the best sanggunians in the country based on a set of criteria set by the National Awards Committee led by the DILG. The awards look into the processes and outputs of the Sanggunians and grade them accordingly as an institution or legislative body. We have already awarded the winners for the 2019-2022 term and we are now preparing for the regional and national awards for the 2022-2025 term. The winners are categorized into highly urbanized cities, first to third class municipalities and fourth to sixth class municipalities.

We have added another award under the LLA starting this term and we call it the "Gawad Galing Lokal na Batas", a search for model ordinances nationwide based on the criteria set by the National Awards Committee led by DILG which recognizes the author or authors of these model ordinances that have made a positive impact on the people in the LGU where it was implemented. This award recognizes the main function of the councilor under the New Local Government Code of 1991 which is to enact ordinances and resolutions for the benefit of their respective constituents. The first awarding ceremonies for this "Gawad Galing na Lokal na Batas" shall be done in March 2026 to coincide with the awarding of the Local Legislative Awards for the term 2022-2025 during our National Assembly.

Lastly, we have made great strides in our advocacy to amend the GSIS Law to allow voluntary contribution in monthly premiums for our members to complete the minimum 15-year requirement under the existing law to enjoy retirement benefits from GSIS. The PCL advocacy is being pursued as there is a disconnect between the constitutional term limits and the existing GSIS law on the number of years in government service. So far, the House has passed the bill in August last year but the Senate failed to act on it. We are assured by the House that it will again pass the bill and return the same to the Senate for its approval then for the final approval of the President.

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My dearly beloved fellow councilors, we have gone a long way in our 35 years of existence and the best is yet to come. I urge you to be active in PCL matters and get involved in its many programs and projects.

In the pipeline is the creation of the PCL Economic Enterprise that will take over the funds generated by the PCL Cooperative to make our league more financially viable.

Also in the pipeline is the establishment of the PCL Lawyers Club to organize the growing number of councilors who are members of the legal profession to assist in the administration of justice nationwide.

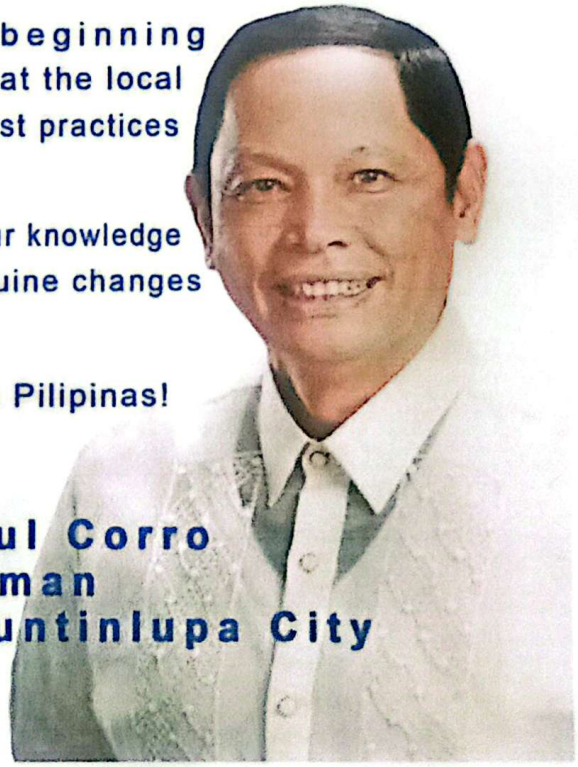
Thirty-five years ago, our founders have envisioned our role as local legislators who believe in "public service above self as the guiding principle of my official acts".

I call on every councilor in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao to do our best and perform our duties and responsibilities with competence, integrity and dedication. We have so much to do and share in the development and progress of our respective local government units given our wide mandate under the New Local Government Code. I remain optimistic that we can change this country for the better beginning with every local government unit.

Yes our country can be great again, beginning with the reforms and innovations we implement at the local level. We have so many LGUs which have many best practices that can be replicated nationwide.

PCL is one platform where we can share our knowledge and experience and in the process implement genuine changes in our respective LGUs nationwide.

Mabuhay ang mga Konsehal sa buong Pilipinas!
Mabuhay ang PCL!



Councilor Atty. Raul Corro
National Chairman
PCL Chapter President Muntinlupa City

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