



DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

*On the Occasion of the Launching Ceremony of the Inmate Management  
Information System (IMIS)*

**10 September 2015  
10:30 a.m.**

**BUREAU OF CORRECTIONS  
New Bilibid Prison Reservation, Muntinlupa City**

## **INSPIRATIONAL MESSAGE**

by

**LEILA M. DE LIMA**  
*Secretary*

I wish everyone peace and joy on this day.

The country's state of corrections continues to be a challenge to us today. We continue to contend with outdated and decrepit facilities, inefficient systems, and institutional problems that have long been compounded due to long years of complacency and neglect of people who were supposed to lead. These were the very conditions that I have called the government's attention to in my visitations of jails and prisons as then Chair of the Commission on Human Rights six years ago. I have seen how our lowly inmates have been mistreated, witnessed the inhumane conditions inside crowded jails and prison cells, and commiserate with them for the injustice done while serving their sentence within the deplorable conditions of our correctional facilities.

I could not have agreed less with George Bernard Shaw when he wrote: "The worst sin towards our fellow creatures is not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them. This is the essence of inhumanity."

We cannot continue to ignore the state of our correctional system. The corrections is a vital component of the Criminal Justice System which we have been tasked to administer. And under the rule of law, everyone is to be treated equitably.

In an unexpected stroke of fate, I was appointed Secretary of Justice, and with it, I accepted the reigns of addressing the very issues and problems

that I have pointed out to government six (6) years ago as CHR Chair. I consider the task an opportunity to be able to right the wrong, and put in place a compassionate and humane administration of justice, where the offender is given a chance to rebuild his life, and once again be a productive member of society through effective corrections mechanisms.

I recall, that several months after I assumed as Secretary of Justice, I called for a corrections summit that assessed the state of the country's correctional system. Since then, we have all been witnesses to the unravelling of major correctional reforms, initiatives that are in themselves innovative in the face of the age-old problems festering the correctional system today.

First, we saw the passage of the Good Conduct Time Allowance (GCTA) Act which seeks not only to address prison congestion problems but also motivate inmates to actively participate in rehabilitation activities.

Second, Congress passed the Bureau of Corrections Modernization Act that will upgrade the positions of uniformed personnel and increase prison guard to inmate ratio for effective custody and safekeeping and rehabilitation of inmates. The increase of custodial personnel will allow the effective maintenance of peace and order within the prisons, monitor closely the activities of inmates within and ensure that prison rules and regulations are not breached.

Third, the 15-year old dream of transferring the New Bilibid Prison (NBP) and the Correctional Institution for Women (CIW) to a new and modern facility is about to be realized. The new facility in Nueva Ecija will be built through the Public-Private Partnership program of government. The project structure is a Build-Transfer-Maintain (BTM) scheme where the private partner will finance, detail-design, construct, procure security equipment and maintain structural and technical facility. The government, through the Department of Justice and the Bureau of Corrections, on the other hand, will maintain the operational custodial and reformation services of the correctional institution.

With the construction of the new prison facility and to be maintained through the PPP, the BuCor can then focus on its core tasks – the safekeeping and rehabilitation of inmates.

Fourth, we have busted the illegal drugs activities which have long operated inside the very walls of the supposed maximum security facility of the NBP. I did not have qualms in dismissing accountable prison officials and personnel who have either been remiss in their duties of enforcing the law or have easily given in to the lure of money and other luxuries in exchange of allowing illegal activities to flourish within the confines of the prison walls and under their very noses.

And today, we are about to witness the unfolding of another first, in the country's history: the biometric-based Inmate Management Information System (IMIS).

As earlier explained by Assistant Secretary Sy, the IMIS, as the corrections component of the National Justice Information System (NJIS), is a breakthrough project of the Aquino Administration. Under the enhanced framework of the criminal justice system where coordination and collaboration among justice institutions are key to an effective administration of justice, the IMIS will improve coordination of the BuCor with the Bureau of the Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), Board of Pardons (BPP) and Parole and Probation Administration. We foresee a seamless coordination in the transfer of prison records. No more lost carpetas. No more overstaying inmates in the NBP or any penal colonies. No more inaccurate inmate information. And most of all, there will be no more redundancy of records for inmates assuming different identities. The IMIS, I am told, can now detect positive ID through its biometrics feature. It will trigger the development of a Single Carpeta System which has already been mobilized for the BJMP, BPP and PPA.

These reforms in the corrections cluster are a fitting legacy of good governance by the Aquino Administration and a manifestation of its goal for peace and order in society.

I remember fully well the President's 2011 State of the Nation Address when he singled out the need for reforms in the Bureau of Corrections. It was also in a meeting with the Good Governance and Anti-Corruption Cluster that he gave a marching order to implement a system that will truly evaluate the eligibility of qualified prisoners for release and ensure that they do not stay a single day beyond their sentence.

Now, we can tell the President that we have carried out that marching order. The IMIS will be a game changer for the BuCor. It will definitely be an effective catalyst for positive developments that will happen in the way the BuCor will be run. And I have high hopes for the BuCor under the able leadership of Director Rainier Cruz.

As we contemplate on the remaining months of the Aquino Administration, I would like to see the sustained implementation of the reform efforts that we have put in place.

For 2016, I look forward to the implementation of upgraded positions for BuCor personnel. We will considerably discuss this issue during the upcoming budget deliberations in Congress.

Next on our list is the development of a Corrections Cluster Framework that will push for harmonized and synchronized cluster-wide reforms not only

in the BuCor but among corrections agencies such as the BJMP, BPP and PPA. We have started this with the implementation of the Single Carpeta System. I look forward to the development of common and unified corrections indicators that will allow the corrections cluster to undertake well-coordinated initiatives to achieve its objectives within the framework of good governance and the efficient and effective administration of justice.

Finally, I would like to commend the NJIS Team, headed by our Chief Information Officer, Assistant Secretary Geronimo Sy, particularly the Corrections Team, who spent much time and effort in the realization of this project.

To our partner from the UNISON and NEC, we thank you for staying with us in this project. What you have all put together will go a long way for the correctional system.

To the women and men of the Bureau of Corrections, thank you for your cooperation and support in the implementation of our programs and projects. Thank you, too, for supporting me in seeking out workable solutions to address the realities of prison problems in our midst. Bear in mind that in every work we do, it demands justice from us, for the people that we work for, and for the institution that we serve.

To our partners from the religious groups and non-government organizations, your undying support to the cause of corrections remains to be our inspiration in the noble cause of rebuilding the lives of those who once were lost but has now gone back to the folds of the law.

God bless us all and *Mabuhay tayong lahat.*