

## **PHILRECA honors 'Marilag' lady warriors of light in celebration of women's month**

In celebration of the National Women's Month, the Philippine Rural Electric Cooperatives Association, Inc. (PHILRECA) paid tribute to the invaluable contributions of women in the electrification sector on Friday, March 7.

Carrying the theme "Marilag na Mandirigma ng Liwanag: Maagap, Matatag, May Paninindigan," the virtual event was attended by more than 1,000 lady warriors of light from various electric cooperatives (ECs) in the country.

The event featured strong and independent women in their respective fields: Ms. Bridgette San Pedro, a licensed financial advisor, and Ms. Nadine Samantha Valderrama, Southeast Asia Program Manager of Allotrope Partners.

San Pedro emphasized on the importance of financial literacy in securing a better future, while Valderrama shared inspiring stories under "Rise, Lead, Inspire: Women Accelerating Progress in the Energy Industry and Cooperative Movement."

In her opening remarks, President Victoria Aliviado of the [Philippine Association of Board of Directors of Rural Electric Cooperatives](#), Inc. (PHABDREC) took pride in the resilience of women in the sector, while envisioning a collective commitment in pushing the movement forward.

"As we celebrate the achievements of our lady warriors of light, let us also reaffirm our dedication to continuing this journey together, lifting each other up, and ensuring that women's voices are heard and valued," Aliviado said.

[National Electrification Administration](#) (NEA) Administrator Antonio Mariano Almeda also showed his support for the rights of all Filipino women.

"We all share the responsibility of ensuring Filipino women have the opportunity to enjoy their rights and are free from harm. Achieving meaningful gender equality is challenging, but it is not a distant goal," Almeda said.

Being champions of the movement, Power Bloc representatives Presley de Jesus of [PhilRECA Partylist](#) and Sergio Dagooc of [APEC Partylist](#) also recognized the significant role of women leaders and employees of ECs in serving beyond the lines in their respective messages.

"You [women] act with urgency, face challenges with strength, and stand firm with your principles. Hindi madali ang inyong ginagawa pero araw-araw [na] ipinakikita ninyo na walang imposible sa isang pusong handang maglingkod," Hon. de Jesus said.

"Napakahalaga ng papel ng mga kababaihan dahil sila ang nagsisilbing ilaw sa ating mga [pamilya]," Hon. Dagooc remarked. "Kailangang pahalagahan natin ang ating mga kababaihan, because they are the symbol of our parents and foreparents."

To conclude the event, PHILRECA Executive Director and General Manager Atty. Janeene Depay-Colingan paid homage to the female workforce in the sector.

“The stories, insights, and wisdom shared today reaffirm the undeniable role of women in shaping the future of our industry. From financial literacy to professional growth, we have seen firsthand how investing in women is investing in the strength and sustainability of our communities,” Colingan expressed.

The PHILRECA executive, however, echoed the call for equality to achieve a more inclusive and sustainable future for all.

“Tuloy ang laban para sa isang patas, makatarungan, at mas inklusibong lipunan. Dapat nating tiyakin na ang bawat isa, anuman ang kasarian, ay may patas na oportunidad upang mamuno at maging bahagi ng pagbabago,” Colingan said.

Colingan attributed societal growth to the innate qualities of an empowered woman: “Maagap” in adapting to changes; “Matatag” amidst challenges; and “May Paninindigan” to fight for fairness.

As a female trailblazer in the sector, the PHILRECA executive believes that steadfast commitment drives progress for all ECs and member-consumer-owners (MCOs).

“Let us carry forward the energy and inspiration from today’s discussions into our daily lives and workplaces. May we all continue to foster inclusivity, uplift one another, and drive meaningful change in our respective electric cooperatives and the energy sector as a whole,” Colingan remarked.