

- Regional planning

# Build more airports, BCDA chief urges private sector

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The head of the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) is urging the private sector to develop more airports across the country and not worry whether their projects would compete with other nearby airports.

BCDA president and CEO Vivencio Dizon said the country is “desperately in need of more airports” which is why competition should not be a problem at this point.

“There are only two runways servicing the island of Luzon. Basically one in Manila and one in Clark, servicing more than 50 million people and not to mention servicing six million tourists, so that is really not enough,” Dizon said.

“So what is the government trying to say? We need more runways and we need more airports, whether they be in Bulacan, in NAIA (Ninoy Aquino International Airport), Sangley, Clark, wherever. We need more airports,” he added.

BCDA and the Department of Transportation are spearheading the development and expansion of the Clark International Airport which is expected to complement the operations of NAIA.

Expected to decongest NAIA, the new Clark airport terminal will accommodate an additional eight million passengers per year.

Meanwhile, San Miguel Corp. has proposed to build a 1,168-hectare airport featuring six parallel runways with a capacity of 100 million passengers, which also seeks to help decongest NAIA.

The proposed international gateway would be constructed within a 2,500-hectare property in Marilao, Bulacan.

Concerns, however, have been raised about the proposed Bulacan airport being too close to Clark.

“I’ve seen the actual site of the proposed Bulacan airport. It is actually right after Navotas, so what does that mean? It’s practically part of Metro Manila, about 75 kilometers from Clark International Airport. I think the idea for the Bulacan airport is really for an airport to serve the most of Metro Manila and not an airport to service let’s say Pangasinan or Ilocos cause these will be very far,” Dizon said.

“This government’s decision is to build more airports. So instead of thinking of these airports and runways competing with each other, at the end of the day, we need to build more. Once these other airports take off in Bulacan or NAIA with an unsolicited proposal and maybe Sangley airport, let’s just keep on building and building and stop thinking about whether these airports will compete with each other,” he added.