

Joy: I will look after vendors

By Rio N. Araja

QUEZON City Mayor Joy Belmonte vows to balance the welfare of illegal vendors in maintaining order on the roads and sidewalks.

Belmonte said Monday she has started to conduct a series of dialogues with some organized vendors' associations to guarantee their livelihood, and find sustainable and viable solutions of illegal hawking.

"That is my style of governance wherein you talk to them (vendors). You appeal to them," she said.

"I am a democratic leader, one who has the concern for the people and who gets their sentiments (first)," the mayor added.

Belmonte claimed she is a "very dem-

ocratic and participatory leader," saying "I want to listen to them."

She said the 60-day timetable is not a "contest, a 100-meter dash that I am faster than mayor X or mayor Y."

"What is important is I can be able to accomplish it in 60 days," the mayor added.

The Department of Interior and Local Government, acting on orders of President Rodrigo Duterte gave the 17 mayors from the 16 cities and one municipality of Metro Manila 60 days to

clear all roads from illegal parking and ambulant vendors, or until the end of September.

According to Belmonte, she does not want to confiscate commodities of the illegal vendors to the prejudice of their families.

"It is not to the best interest if these vendors lose their livelihood. We also do not want to give dole-out," she said.

The mayor is willing to rent out spaces inside private markets even for the first two weeks, look for vacant lots or open a night market to accommodate sidewalk vendors to be displaced by the clearing operations.

"I cannot allow them to lose their livelihood. If I would allow them to lose it, that would be against my policy of self-reliance," she said.