

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY

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– A newly built Gender Neutral Restroom in Mandaluyong City is part of city’s efforts to promote gender equality, an issue that is in the limelight after a transwoman was denied the use of the women’s restroom in a Quezon City mall.

Gretchen Diez the transgender woman whose rights were violated inside a women’s washroom in a mall in Quezon City, strongly objects to the proposal to build a separate comfort room for the LGBT community.

In a press briefing, Diez said the LGBT community is fighting for equality rights and not the construction of another washroom that could prove costly to mall owners.

Diez said the creation of another CR does not eliminate discrimination and instead only emphasizes the disrespectful acts committed against the LGBT group.

Flanked by Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte and Councilor Lena Marie Juico, Diez said the irony is the incident happened in a city that has a high regard for gender equality.

Recalling last Tuesday’s incident at Farmers’ Plaza Mall, Diez said that at first she wanted to just let the incident pass, but decided to come out in the open to “put an end” to the misery experienced by LGBTs.

To document the discriminatory act, Diez said she videoed the incident.

Diez together with her battery of lawyers trooped to the Quezon City Legal Department to sue Araneta Center, Inc., Starling Security Agency and the sanitation service employed by Araneta Center for violation of the Gender Fair Ordinance.

Diez was prevented by the mall’s sanitation worker from using the female comfort room, who insisted that she use the male washroom.

She said she was pulled out of the female comfort room and was charged with unjust vexation when an argument ensued.

She was taken to a police station but was later released.

The incident earned the ire of Belmonte who assured justice for Diez.

“We condemn this kind of discrimination towards members of the LGBT+ community,” the mayor said.

“Quezon City is the first local government to pass the Gender Fair Ordinance that protects the members of the LGBT community,” she said.

Belmonte said the Farmers’ Plaza Mall violated the ordinance because it has no “All-Gender Toilets” for LGBTs.

“I have ordered the Business Permit and Licensing Department (BPLD) to ensure that all business firms adhere to the Gender Fair Ordinance at the soonest time possible,” she said.