

Belmonte touts accomplishments, vows continued delivery of services

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Stressing that the **city government** remains focused on delivering needed services to residents, Quezon City **Mayor Joy Belmonte** on Monday touted the different programs and initiatives implemented amid the COVID-19 pandemic.



During her annual State of the City Address on Monday, Belmonte assured residents of her continued commitment to clean and honest government as she fulfills her 14-point agenda while addressing the public health emergency.

She also outlined the accomplishments achieved by the city government, including the local tax collection of P22 billion in 2020, the highest in the country and in the history of the city.

“This is proof that our QCitizens have more trust and are more confident that their taxes and contributions will go to meaningful programs,” she said in Filipino.

“Even if we have allocated a huge budget in responding to COVID-19, we still have P24.6 billion in savings, which is even bigger than the budget before 2019,” she added, noting that the city remains in good financial standing and without any debt.

Belmonte cited milestones and programs implemented over the past year in terms of good governance, public services, COVID-19 response, improvements in transportation and infrastructure and strengthening of the economy and creation of more jobs.

She noted the unqualified opinion of the Commission on Audit, which indicates that no public funds were misused by the local government.

The mayor cited some of her programs to promote transparency and accountability, such as the creation of an Internal Audit Service.

She also reported the establishment of district offices to bring services closer to residents, as well as the launch of the unified QCitizen ID to fasttrack the delivery of programs to residents and workers.

Social services

Despite the pandemic, Belmonte said there would be no letup in the delivery of social services, including the provision of permanent housing for informal settlers and poor residents.

Earlier this year, the city government purchased six parcels of land in three barangays as part of Belmonte's shelter program, which aims to provide in-city housing programs to an estimated 17,674 families in her first term.

On QC's COVID-19 response

Belmonte expressed gratitude to city government officials and employees, the private sector and Quezon City residents for working together to address the pandemic.

Within the week, she said the city will achieve its target of vaccinating 1.7 million adults or 70 percent of the city's population.

The mayor vowed to continue with the vaccination program, citing the start of pediatric vaccinations last week.

Workers whose livelihoods were affected by the COVID pandemic were given financial assistance.

The city also launched various initiatives to provide support to local businesses and enterprises, as well as to promote food security through urban farms and edible gardens.

Among the programs recently implemented were the online one-stop shop processes for permit applications, automated inspection audit system and enhanced tax mapping.

Belmonte also announced plans to further extend the deadline for the payment of business and real property taxes in January 2022.

Over the past year, Belmonte said the city government also focused on ways to improve transportation in the city.

It launched a city bus system to provide free bus service to some 73,000 commuters weekly, as well as improved the bike lane networks to promote active transportation amid the pandemic.

According to Belmonte, the local government has allocated some P4.5 billion for essential infrastructure projects, including health, social welfare and community facilities; school buildings; parks and sports facilities; police stations; markets; road; and streetlights, among others.