



# PRESS RELEASE

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## DND Holds Forum on Women in the Defense Sector

**27 March 2018, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City**— For the first time since its establishment, the male-dominated Department of National Defense (DND) held the "*Gender, Peace and Security Forum 2018: Women in Defense Sector,*" recognizing the significant roles of women in the defense and security of the nation and in peace-building efforts.

The forum was in line with the celebration of the International Women's Month and in accordance with the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAPWPS). Notable women commanders and decision-makers, as well as women in the front line of combat operations and humanitarian assistance and disaster response served as forum speakers and shared their actual experiences in their respective careers.

Director Pamela Ann Padilla-Salvan from the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) opened the forum with an overview of the NAPWPS concepts, followed by the sharing of experiences of the women

leaders who are involved in decision-making, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and women in the frontline ensuring the protection of civilians and prevention of conflict.

The first to share her story was LTC Rozelle B Salvosa PAF, an ace aviator of the Philippine Air Force (PAF) who is currently assigned at the Joint Command Staff for Plans and Programs (JC-5). Equating gender equality to one's personal choice, competence, and commitment (3 Cs), LTC Salvosa said, "*Gender- equal opportunities under gender and development is not a female thing. It's everybody's concern,*" she said.

Meanwhile, COL Joselyn Regis-Bandarlipe CE (GSC) PA, Army Chief Engineer, admits it is not easy to be a woman in a male dominated profession. She, however, proved that gender is not a constraint when it comes to serving the country. "*Along the way, I experienced situations that tested my wits and courage... And I know the effort is being sustained by the government in upholding the rights and power of the women in terms of providing service; I believe in the effort of the government as articulated in the NAPWPS,*" she stated. She also expressed her support for the government's campaign in maintaining the right of the women in performing their duties.

For her part, COL Maxima O Ignacio PAF (GSC) said that getting into a man's world is not an overnight affair. She related crucial instances when she had to over-exert efforts just to prove to her male counterparts her competence and capability in the face of double-standards in the profession of arms. She described her experiences in the military profession as a lifetime and fulfilling journey, and encouraged more Filipinas to join their ranks.

The last speaker, CAPT Luzviminda A Camacho PN (GSC), challenged the future female defenders of the nation to prove that gender is not a hindrance in reaching their goals and actualizing their fullest potentials. “All women should remember that woman can also do what men can do, just be yourself and stay focused,” she said.

USEC. Cardozo M. Luna, Undersecretary of National Defense, capped-off the event with his message thanking the NAPWPS Focal Point System members for organizing the very first forum that gave voices to women in the male-dominated defense establishment. He urged all uniformed and civilian personnel of the One Defense Team to be exemplars in supporting and promoting the NAPWPS, and be agents of change towards the advancement of gender equality. ###