



# DILGinsider

A publication of the Public Affairs and Communication Service on DILG LG Sector News



photo by: Cornelio Sagdullas

## Sarmiento: DILG is 'close to home'

**C**lose to home.

This is how Secretary Mel Senen Sarmiento felt about the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) which he expressed to Department personnel during his first flag-raising ceremony.

*"Alam nyo po, ang DILG na siguro ang departamentong nakasama ko sa pagkahaba-habang panahon. Actually, even before I entered the world of politics, parati ko na itong naririnig sa pamilya namin,"* said Sarmiento.

The DILG Secretary took the opportunity to share about his life and his family to DILG employees who are still curious to know more about their new Secretary.

Before serving as Calbayog City Mayor for nine years and becoming Western Samar's first district representative, he said that politics has been in the family for more than a century already, with his great grandfather starting off as leader-rebels during the Filipino-Spanish until the Filipino-American wars. His great grandfather and great, great grandfather were even among those Filipino patriots who experienced torture in public.

Years before serving as Secretary General in the League of Cities of the Philippines, he also revealed that two elder Sarmientos became officials in the same league before him. His grandfather became its president in 1951, while another uncle, Jose Roño, who later served as Minister of Local Government and Community Development (the Department's former name) for 13 years, was elected as Secretary General in 1960. But it was around that time when a family rift ensued among the Sarmientos because of the political division prompted by the Marcos regime.

But the family tie proved stronger than the rift. *"Yun po eh sa political arena lamang. Pero sa pamilya, okay naman kami."*

As for the younger Sarmiento, he was an active Rotarian helping out eradicate the Poliomyelitis virus before joining politics in 1992. It was during this time that he saw how important DILG was in implementing government programs.

*"Nakita ko pag activity na health lang, hindi sinisipot ni Kapitan, pati yung kagawad na chair noon hindi nga tumutulong. Pero pag si DILG ang tumawag, present sila,"* said Sarmiento.

But it was when he served as Calbayog Mayor in 2001 that his tie with the Department grew a notch tighter. He recalled how difficult it was during that time, especially with regard to the budget allocation and how he and the late Secretary Jesse Robredo would often go to DILG to seek for assistance.

*"Ang DILG ay naging katrabaho ko ng ilang taon. It was really close to us, to my family and to me, because of my exposure to local government units."*

He hailed the DILG for the positive changes it has delivered especially in the recent years. He mentioned that it truly underwent a monumental change with the late Sec. Robredo being able to bring back the local government aspect of the Department, while Secretary Mar Roxas being able to revive the most needed community development side.

Sarmiento then enjoined everyone to be more proactive as the next eight months will prove to be more challenging as the Department will pursue to enhance even more its processes and programs.

*"Sa susunod na walong buwan, habang busy ang mga local politician natin sa pangangampanya, magiging busy din ang opisina natin, kasama ang mga LGU, na pagtingin ulit sa mga proseso ng ginagawa nating trabaho ngayon sa DILG,"* he said.

**Erika Marie E. Daza, ICRD-PACS**

### DILG-CO QUALITY POLICY

We, the DILG Central Office, commit to formulate sound policies and provide effective technical and administrative services to promote excellence in local governance, strengthen local government capacities, and enhance the service delivery of our Regional and Field Offices.