

Mayor Celso Lobregat yesterday shared Zamboanga City's good governance practices to members of the Certified Veterinary Practitioners of the Philippines (CVPP) participating in the 3-day Global Veterinary Trends Expo, a national gathering at the Garden Orchid Hotel.

Lobregat was invited by CVPP Chair Dr. Alice Utlang to talk on the local government's initiatives that made Zamboanga one of the most stable local government units in the country today during the convention's preliminary event Wednesday afternoon.

In his presentation, Lobregat talked about his administration's sound fiscal management that enabled the city to undertake over P5.39 billion worth of projects and still have sufficient funds and resources to implement other programs and projects.

"Sound fiscal management is one of the legacies that we can proudly hand over to the next administration. Prudent and judicious allocation of City's financial resources and spending the funds more wisely and sensibly has made Zamboanga City one of the most stable local government units in the country," Lobregat told the participants to the Expo and graced by Agriculture Assistant Secretary Davinio Catbagan, Bureau of Animal Industry Executive Director Dr. Rubina Cresencio, Convention Chair Dr. Erwin Roy Jalao and other officials.

Based on COA Annual Reports for LGUs for FY 2010 covering 112 audited cities, Zamboanga City is Number 6 in terms of Assets; Number 5 in terms of Government Equity; Number 10 in terms of income and Number 5 in terms of Net Income, he said.

When Lobregat was elected in 2004, the annual budget was P1.034 billion and as he ends his third term, the projected annual budget for 2013 is P2.194 billion or P1.160 billion increase which is more than double the 2004 budget.

"This eclipses all records set by previous administrations and the main reason why, although we have P5.39 billion worth of projects for the period 2007-2012, we still have substantial funds and resources all already appropriated for projects for implementation by the next administration", the mayor said amid applause from the audience.

Lobregat cited the massive infrastructure projects and other programs that his administration implemented during the last 9 years covering social services, health, public safety and education among others.

He likewise did not fail to mention that his administration has never been renege in its obligation to fully support and assist the programs and projects of the City Veterinarian Office under Dr. Mario Arriola.

"I also wish to inform you that our City Veterinarian Office under the stewardship of your member Dr. Mario Ariola is a recipient of a new office building with heritage design and architecture in barangay San Roque in 2011", he said stressing that the P5M building is constructed in a government complex where the city also rehabilitated the City Abattoir with

slaughter machineries, constructed the waste water treatment plant, the City Pound and road and drainage systems all amounting to over P45M.

In the same compound is found the P19M City Archive building that looks like Fort Knox, inaugurated last November 14.

Meanwhile, Lobregat extolled the CVPP members for their contribution to society though he said veterinary medicine is a profession that attracts less publicity.

He expressed confidence that the 3-day gathering with the theme “Global Trends in Specialization and Advancing Non-technical Capabilities of Veterinarians” will absolutely advance knowledge and capability of the members to keep pace with the rapid changes and challenges of the times.

Other officials present during the preliminary event yesterday afternoon were CVPP chair Utlang, CVPP adviser Martino Cajita, DA-9 director Oscar Parawan, DA Director Teddy Fiel, Vincent Borromeo, Arnold Frontuna, Augustus Creencia, Fidel Malbas from the DOH, Dr. Gabriel Paz and Dr. Arriola among others.— Sheila Covarrubias