



WELCOME REMARKS
AWARDING CEREMONY
MMC NATIONAL FINALS

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Metrobank Plaza Auditorium, Makati City

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ON BEHALF OF METROBANK FOUNDER AND GROUP CHAIRMAN DR. GEORGE S.K. TY, I WELCOME YOU ALL TO THE 15TH YEAR CELEBRATION OF THE NATIONWIDE METROBANK-MTAP-DEPED MATH CHALLENGE OR M.M.C. IT IS ONCE AGAIN A YEAR WHERE WE WELCOME YOU ALL TO METROBANK'S HEAD OFFICE TO WITNESS THE BATTLE OF THE COUNTRY'S BEST YOUNG MATH ENTHUSIASTS AND BE REUNITED WITH SOME FAMILIAR FIGURES FROM THE MATH EDUCATION SECTOR. AND AS THE DAY PROGRESSED, NATIONAL WINNERS HAVE EMERGED WHO WILL NOW MAKE UP THE 15TH BATCH OF NATIONAL CHAMPIONS.

AT THIS POINT ALLOW ME FIRST TO SHARE WITH YOU SOME IMPORTANT INSIGHTS AS WE LOOK BACK AT THE LAST 15 YEARS OF THE COMPETITION.

IT IS A FACT THAT MANY OF US STRUGGLE WITH MATH. EVEN ALBERT EINSTEIN ONCE SAID, *"DO NOT WORRY ABOUT YOUR DIFFICULTIES IN MATHEMATICS. I CAN ASSURE YOU MINE ARE STILL GREATER."*

BUT THAT DOESN'T DISCOUNT THE FACT THAT MATH IS IMPORTANT NOT ONLY AS A BASIC SUBJECT BEING TAUGHT IN THE ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE BUT AS APPLIED TO OUR DAY-TO-DAY LIVING. MATH CHALLENGES US TO ANALYZE AND SOLVE COMPLEX MATHEMATICAL PROBLEMS. AT TIMES IT COULD EVEN CREATE PANIC IN SOME UPON HEARING SUCH WORDS AS —ALGEBRA, GEOMETRY, TRIGONOMETRY, CALCULUS— IN SHORT, IF YOU APPLY IT IN TODAY'S VERNACULAR, ONE MAY REACT-- AND SAY"NOSEBLEED!"

MATHEMATICS APPEARS TO BE AN "UNPOPULAR" SUBJECT AMONG MANY STUDENTS WHO REGARD THE SUBJECT AS THE TERRITORY DOMINATED BY SCHOOL GEEKS AND NERDS. BUT IF WE CONSIDER THE STORY OF OUR 2009 MMC GRADE 6 FIRST PLACER, STERLING

ALVIN KEE TIU OF ST. STEPHEN'S HIGH SCHOOL, SUCH IS NOT THE CASE. HE STARTED COMPETING IN THE METROBANK MATH CHALLENGE SINCE GRADE 1. WHILE HE WAS WATCHING HIS TEAMMATES ANSWERING, HE FELT ASHAMED OF HIMSELF FOR NOT HAVING BEEN ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE HIS SHARE WITH THE TEAM SINCE HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO AT FIRST. SINCE THEN, HIS FATHER DECIDED TO TEACH HIM MORE SERIOUSLY, STARTING FROM THE BASICS OF ALGEBRA AND MOTIVATED HIM FURTHER – THAT ONLY IF HE TRIED HIS BEST, THERE WOULD BE NO REASON FOR HIM NOT TO WIN. EVENTUALLY, THIS MADE HIS LEARNING FOR MATH EASIER.

AND I BET YOU WILL AGREE WITH STERLING, QUOTING HIM SAYING, *“THE METROBANK MATH CHALLENGE IS JUST LIKE ANOTHER BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT. IT IS EASY TO LEARN BUT NEEDS PRACTICE TO MASTER. THERE IS NO SECRET AND SHORTCUT; WE NEED TO KEEP ON PRACTICING IN ORDER TO EXCEL.”*

ACCORDING TO FORMER DEPED ASSISTANT SECRETARY TERESITA G. INCIONG, THERE IS NO FORMULA, RULE OR GENERAL GUIDELINE WHICH WILL SUDDENLY UNLOCK THE MYSTERIES OF MATH, AND THAT THE KEY TO OVERCOMING THE ANXIETY ABOUT THE SUBJECT IS TO DISPEL RESTRICTIVE MYTHS AND APPLY THE SAME EFFORT AND SKILLS USED IN DOING EVERYTHING ELSE.

LOOKING BACK AT THE LAST 15 YEARS OF THE METROBANK MATH CHALLENGE, WE ARE PROUD TO NOTE THAT INDEED, IT HAS RAISED THE BAR OF MATHEMATICAL COMPETENCE AMONG ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS.

WHAT STARTED AS A SIMPLE GRANT BY THE METROBANK FOUNDATION FOR THE CONDUCT OF A MATH COMPETITION IN METRO MANILA BY M.T.A.P. HAS BEEN INSTITUTIONALIZED INTO A PROGRAM UNDER OUR THRUST ON EDUCATION. IN 1997, THE “METROBANK-MTAP-DEPED MATH CHALLENGE” OR MMC WAS BORN—EVOLVING FROM A SIMPLE METRO MANILA-BASED MATH COMPETITION TO ATTRACTING OTHER ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ALL PARTS OF THE PHILIPPINE ARCHIPELAGO STARTING IN 2001. DESIGNED TO CONTRIBUTE IN INCREASING THE QUALITY OF MATHEMATICS EDUCATION IN THE COUNTRY AND ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO DEVELOP THE PASSION AND LOVE TOWARDS THE MATH SUBJECT THROUGH AN ATMOSPHERE OF FRIENDLY

COMPETITION, MMC HAS SINCE BECOME THE MOST SOUGHT-AFTER AND INFLUENTIAL MATH COMPETITION IN THE COUNTRY.

ENHANCING PROFICIENCY IN MATH HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE GOAL OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, GIVEN THE DISMAL PERFORMANCE OF FILIPINO STUDENTS IN INTERNATIONAL MATH BENCHMARKING STUDIES. THIS IS BASED ON THE OBSERVATION THAT PROFICIENCY IN MATH HAS SPURRED DEVELOPMENT IN A NUMBER OF ASIAN COUNTRIES. THUS, IT IS BUT PROPER FOR THE FOUNDATION'S MOTHER COMPANY, THE METROPOLITAN BANK & TRUST, CO., TO BE AT THE FOREFRONT OF CHAMPIONING THIS UNDERTAKING. OUR COMPETITION ENABLES OUR STUDENTS TO PREPARE FOR THEIR FUTURE IN BANKING & FINANCE AND BECOME PRODUCTIVE CITIZENS OF OUR DEVELOPING NATION. THE END-GOAL IS TO DISCOVER AN EXCEPTIONAL BREED OF YOUNG MATH WIZARDS WHO WILL LEAD THE WAY IN FORMING A GLOBALLY-COMPETITIVE GENERATION OF FILIPINOS. M.M.C. NOW HOLDS THE RECORD AS THE ONLY MATH COMPETITION FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY STUDENTS IN ASIA THAT IS IMPLEMENTED BY A BANK. THROUGH THE DIFFERENT STAGES OF THE COMPETITION, MMC ADVOCATES TEAMWORK, TRUST, COOPERATION AND EXCELLENCE, WHICH ARE FUNDAMENTAL VALUES PROVEN TO GREATLY CONTRIBUTE IN THE POSITIVE OUTCOME OF ANY BANK'S PERFORMANCE.

WE ARE HUMBLLED BY THE SUCCESS THE MMC HAS ENJOYED OVER THE YEARS AS ONE OF THE BIGGEST AND MOST-WIDELY PARTICIPATED COMPETITIONS IN THE COUNTRY. SINCE 2001, WE HAVE AWARDED A TOTAL OF 253 MATHLETES FOR WINNING IN THE NATIONAL FINALS. MANY OF THEM HAVE ALSO WON IN INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS, BRINGING MUCH PRIDE TO THE PHILIPPINES. SINCE 1998, METROBANK FOUNDATION HAS INVESTED CLOSE TO 80 MILLION PESOS IN THE M.M.C. LASTLY, WE HAVE ALSO BEEN CONTINUOUSLY RECOGNIZED BY AWARD-GIVING BODIES FOR OUR WORK – 12 AWARDS SO FAR AND COUNTING. AMONG THEM ARE THE AGORA AWARDS OF THE PHILIPPINE MARKETING ASSOCIATION, THE ASIAN CSR AWARDS, THE ASIAN BANKING AWARDS, THE PHILIPPINE QUILL AWARDS ORGANIZED BY THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATORS, AND THE ANVIL AWARDS OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS SOCIETY OF THE PHILIPPINES. WE WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU THAT THIS YEAR ALONE, WE WERE ADJUDGED COMPANY OF THE YEAR AT THE RECENTLY-CONCLUDED

ANVIL AWARDS. THE TROPHIES ARE NOW DISPLAYED. WE SHARE THESE ACCOLADES WITH YOU.

BUT MORE IMPORTANT THAN ALL THESE ACCOLADES ARE THE WAYS WE HAVE TRIED TO MAKE AN IMPACT ON OUR MOST IMPORTANT STAKEHOLDER—THE FILIPINO YOUTH.

THE MMC MAY HAVE EVOLVED OVER THE YEARS, BUT WHAT HAS REMAINED CONSTANT IS OUR GOAL OF UNITING STUDENT PARTICIPANTS WHO COME FROM DIVERSE FAMILY BACKGROUNDS AND GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS. WHETHER YOU COME FROM FROM A PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOL, YOU ARE MOST WELCOME HERE. WITH THIS, WE HAVE PROVEN THAT M.M.C.HAS BEEN A GREAT EQUALIZER FOR MANY OF OUR KIDS.

CONSISTENT WITH OUR AIM OF REACHING AS MANY LEARNERS AS POSSIBLE, WE HAVE PARTNERED WITH ANVIL PUBLISHING FOR THE PUBLICATION OF M.M.C. QUESTIONS AT THE ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOL LEVELS. VOLUME TWO IS CURRENTLY IN THE INITIAL STAGES OF PRODUCTION.

IN KEEPING WITH THE TIMES, WE HAVE ALSO MOUNTED AN INTENSIFIED SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN. THE MMC FACEBOOK PAGE NOW REGULARLY ENGAGES ITS MORE THAN 25,000 FANS THROUGH ACTIVITIES SUCH AS ONLINE MATH DRILLS AND EVEN REAL-TIME POSTING OF QUESTIONS DURING THE NATIONAL FINALS. OUR STUDENTS ALSO USE THE PLATFORM TO ASK AND ANSWER EACH OTHER'S QUESTIONS, TEACHING THEM THE IMPORTANCE OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING. EVEN OUR PARENTS AND TEACHERS ARE ACTIVE ONLINE.

FOR 37 YEARS NOW, WE AT METROBANK FOUNDATION ARE NOT CONTENT TO JUST GIVE OUT AWARDS. WE ENCOURAGE THE WINNERS OF OUR VARIOUS SEARCHES—TEACHERS, SOLDIERS, POLICE OFFICERS, AND ARTISTS, EVEN OUR FORMER SCHOLARS – TO GIVE BACK THROUGH PAY-IT-FORWARD PROJECTS. FOR MMC, WE HAVE OPERATION MATHEW, NAMED AFTER OUR OFFICIAL MASCOT. PREVIOUS MMC WINNERS SERVE AS TUTORS TO UNDERPERFORMING STUDENTS IN SELECTED PUBLIC SCHOOLS. WE ARE PROUD OF OUR “MATHEWTORS” FOR BEING OUR EQUALIZERS – PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEIR PEERS TO BECOME BETTER AT MATH. WE ENCOURAGE THE FINALISTS AND WINNERS THIS YEAR TO BE “MATHEWTORS’ IN YOUR SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

ALL OF THESE MILESTONES WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT OUR PARTNERS. I WANT TO THANK THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, LED BY SECRETARY ARMIN A. LUISTRO AND THE MTAP, LED BY SISTER ILUMINADA CORONEL. OUR STRONG TRIPARTITE PARTNERSHIP OVER THE YEARS HAS ALLOWED STUDENTS TO SHOWCASE THEIR ABILITIES AND COMPETENCIES. THANK YOU TO OUR GUEST OF HONOR, DR. QUEENA LEE CHUA, FOR REGULARLY PROVIDING US YOUR EXPERTISE, GRACING US WITH YOUR PRESENCE DESPITE YOUR BUSY SCHEDULE, AND FOR FEATURING OUR WINNERS IN YOUR AWARD-WINNING COLUMN. I ALSO WANT TO HONOR OUR MMC JUDGES AND TECHNICAL PANEL FOR CONTINUOUSLY RAISING THE BAR OF EXCELLENCE IN OUR COMPETITION. LASTLY, OUR NEW PARTNERS—AMONG THEM CASIO, THE PRIMER GROUP OF COMPANIES, FIRST METRO INVESTMENT CORPORATION, ANVIL PUBLISHING, AND ITEMHOUND—FOR SHARING OUR ADVOCACY.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OUR STUDENTS FOR DARING TO DO BETTER AND SUCCEEDING IN DEFYING EXPECTATIONS. A LOT OF THINGS COUNT IN MATH, BUT IN LIFE WHAT REALLY COUNTS IS HOW MUCH OF YOURSELF YOU GIVE INTO WHAT YOU DO. AS NOTED MATHEMATICIAN ISRAEL HERSTEIN ONCE SAID, AND I QUOTE:

“THE VALUE OF A PROBLEM IS NOT SO MUCH COMING UP WITH THE ANSWER AS IN THE IDEAS AND ATTEMPTED IDEAS IT FORCES ON THE WOULD BE SOLVER.”

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR CRYSTAL OR 15TH BATCH OF MMC WINNERS FOR THEIR SUCCESS IN TODAY’S FINALS. CONGRATULATIONS ALSO TO YOUR PARENTS, TEACHERS, AND SCHOOL AUTHORITIES.

LET US ALL KEEP ON GIVING MORE OF OURSELVES. MAY WE ALL CONTINUE TO COME UP WITH IDEAS THAT WOULD CHANGE OUR COUNTRY FOR THE BETTER. THANK YOU AND ENJOY THE REST OF THE EVENING.