

Philippine Business Groups' statement on Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators (POGOs)

17 July 2024 – We, the undersigned business groups, fully support the recommendation of DOF Secretary Ralph Recto and NEDA Secretary Arsenio Balisacan for a total ban on POGO. This said, the government should also help, re-skill, and ensure opportunities for Filipino workers who may lose their jobs due to the ban and allow industries affected by POGO to find alternative uses for their assets.

The contribution of POGO investments to the Philippine economy is minimal at 0.2% of GDP in 2023 according to former NEDA Usec. Sarah Dacanay. Compare this to the social costs which have direct effects on economic growth. Recent Senate hearings and statements by NEDA have illustrated that POGO have been linked to negative externalities, particularly involvement in crimes such as human trafficking, kidnapping, and money laundering, among others. As of 2022, PNP data showed that out of the 31 cases of kidnappings, 55% of them were POGO-related. The crimes related to POGO investments can hinder growth, affect investor perception, and potentially affect our bilateral and multilateral relations.

The undersigned business groups agree with NEDA Secretary Balisacan who has said "We want investment inflows that will promote not only the economic but also the social aspects of our development." We support foreign investments that are legitimate and will facilitate knowledge and skills transfer as well as provide quality jobs for Filipinos. (END)

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