

# BusinessWorld



## BPI-Philam to expand presence in branches

THE NEW chief executive of BPI-Philam Life Assurance Corp. on Monday said the firm is on track to reach its target of increasing its presence in almost all branches of the Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI), as it will be able to cover more than 90% of the Ayala-led bank's branches by yearend.

"[BPI-Philam] is in almost every BPI bank already... wherever BPI is, we would like to be there as well," Surendra M. Menon, the new president and chief executive officer of BPI-Philam, told reporters on the sidelines of a press conference yesterday.

He said that BPI-Philam is on track to fully cover almost all BPI branches nationwide before the year ends through its bancassurance sales executives (BSEs), with more than 90% of all BPI branches expected to be covered by the end of the year.

According to Mr. Menon, BPI-Philam's current BSEs are "well over 800" in BPI's more than 800 branches.

"In general, we follow where BPI goes," he said.

BPI-Philam is a bancassurance joint venture between BPI and

*BPI-Philam, S2/3*

### BPI-Philam,

*from S2/1*

Philippine American Life and General Insurance Co. (Philam

Life).

Bancassurance is the sale of life insurance policies through the branch network of a certain bank.

Earlier, former BPI-Philam and CEO Ariel G. Cantos — who is now the president of Philam Life — said the firm set "very ambitious targets" this year. Asked what are the drivers that would help the firm reach these targets, Mr. Menon said yesterday: "population basically, the growth in population, both the general population as well as the banking population."

"So as the middle income grows, more people open bank accounts; as the population grows, more people will also open bank accounts," he added. "So you have a growth in numbers and you have a growth in affordabilities. So that gives you a double impact in terms of growth."

Mr. Menon also said that BPI-Philam will introduce more of its products "eventually."

"We already have several lined up, they are different products for different segments of the population, so from the very high end part of the banking down to the microinsurance level," he said.

At end-2015, the joint venture between the AIA Group subsid-

iary and BPI ranked fourth highest in the life insurance industry in terms of premium income that registered at P20.79 billion, up 44% from the previous year's P19.48 billion.

"Six years have passed and the joint venture today is the leading bancassurance company of the Philippines. It is probably also the fastest growing life insurance company in the Philippines," President and CEO of BPI Cezar P. Consing yesterday said during BPI-Philam's launch of Bancassurance Month.

In the past years, BPI-Philam's premium income growth was seen at 35% at average. Last year, the company's premium growth exceeded the industry's 18% and was the fastest in its five years of operations.

"It is my hope that in one to two years, [BPI-Philam] will actually be bigger than one of its parents, Philam Life," Mr. Consing added.

Philam Life had the third highest premium income in 2015 among life insurers, which logged at P21.17 billion from its the P18.31 billion in 2014.

It topped the list of life insurers in 2015 terms of assets at P188.633 billion, net worth at P40.969 billion and net income at P7.5 billion. — **Janine Marie**

**D. Soliman**

