



ABAC Philippines Post-ABAC 1 Meeting with APEC Philippines Officials

31 March 2017 | Concepcion Room, AIM Conference Center, Makati City

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

I. Highlights from SOM 1 and CTI

- APEC Committee on Trade and Investment (CTI) Chair, Director Sherylyn Aquia updated the group on the highlights of the first APEC Senior Officials Meeting (SOM 1) and the CTI Meeting in Nha Trang, Vietnam.
- She updated the group on the progress made in various work areas, including: Bogor Goals and addressing protectionism, support for the Multilateral Trading System, the Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific (FTAAP), the implementation of the APEC Services Cooperation Roadmap, MSMEs, and Digital Trade.
- Ms. Aquia informed the group of the work being done to advance digital trade, highlighting the Trade Policy Dialogue (TPD) and the APEC Symposium on Trade and Innovation. It was noted that the TPD will include discussions on: inclusive digital trade; regulatory issues; mechanisms to measure digital trade; and issues and blocks to digital trade. It was also noted that the Symposium will bring together ministers, high-level officials, and the business community to exchange views on: trends and developments in innovation; enablers of innovation; and commercially-based technology transfer and commercialization.

Attendees:

ABAC Philippines

1. Tommy Alcantara
2. Joanne de Asis
3. Francis Chua
4. Guillermo Luz
5. Renato Salud
6. Peter Perfecto
7. Patrick Chua
8. Vee Gee Sison
9. Gia Uy

Department of Foreign Affairs

10. Usec. Manuel Teehankee

Department of Trade and Industry

11. Usec. Ceferino Rodolfo
12. Dir. Sherylyn Aquia
13. Atty. Katherine Sinson

National Economic

Development Authority

14. Asec. Carlos Abad Santos
15. Carla Hernandez

Secretariat office:

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- ABAC Philippines Chair Tomas Alcantara identified the topics on inclusive digital trade and issues and blocks to digital trade as possible areas of collaboration with the private sector.
- Ms. Aquia updated the group on the Philippines' proposed initiatives for 2017 in the work areas of MSMEs, Intellectual Property Rights, Services, Trade Facilitation, Inclusive Business, and Digital Trade.
- She informed the group of the schedule of the upcoming meetings in Ha Noi, Vietnam, including the SOM 2 and Related Meetings (9-18 May), APEC Symposium on Trade and Innovation (19 May), APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade Meeting (20-21 May), and the RCEP Ministerial Meeting and Pacific Alliance Ministerial Meeting, which will both be held at the sidelines of MRT.
- Ms. Aquia also shared the outcomes of the Australia-Papua New Guinea Policy Dialogue for APEC 2018 in Port Moresby. She reported that the theme for APEC 2018 will be "Investing in Productivity-led Growth, Connecting for a Better Future". The priorities identified included: Improving Connectivity to Deepen Regional Economic Integration; Promoting Sustainable and Inclusive Growth; Strengthening Inclusive Growth through Structural Reform; and Investing in Inclusive and Sustainable Human Capital Development in the 21st Century.

II. Usec. Teehankee introduced the new ABAC Philippines 2017 members and alternates:

- Philippine APEC Senior Official, Undersecretary Manuel Teehankee presented the APEC 2017 theme, "Creating New Dynamism, Fostering a Shared Future," and its priorities: Fostering Sustainable, Innovative and Inclusive Growth; Deepening Regional Economic Integration; Strengthening MSMEs' Competitiveness and Innovation in the Digital Age; and Enhancing Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture in Response to Climate Change.
- It was highlighted how the APEC 2017 theme and priorities align with ABAC's theme and priorities for the year, and how they also align with APEC's priorities in 2015 and 2016.

II. ABAC 2017 Theme and Priorities

- ABAC Philippines Chair Tomas Alcantara presented to the group the theme of ABAC 2017, and its priorities: Deepening Regional Economic Integration; Achieving Sustainable, Innovative and Inclusive Growth; Enhancing MSME's Competitiveness and Encouraging Innovation in the Digital Era; and Ensuring Food Security and Promoting Sustainable and Climate Smart Agriculture. It was underscored how these priorities have been in line with ABAC's priorities in 2016 and 2017.
- Mr. Alcantara shared with the group the working group assignments of each of the members and alternates: Mr. Alcantara and Mr. Guillermo Luz will be assigned to both REIWG and SDWG; Mr. Lance Gokongwei and Mr. Francis Chua will be assigned to MSMEEWG; Mr. Gokongwei and Mr. Renato Salud to CWG; and Ms. Joanne de Asis and Mr. Salud to FEWG.

III. ABAC 2017 Theme and Priorities

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IV. ABAC Philippines Work Plan

- ABAC Philippines identified the areas in each of the working groups that they would like to pursue advocacies and initiatives.
- Under the FEWG, ABAC PH will support and participate in the Islamic Infrastructure Investment Program (I3P), the Asia-Pacific Financial Forum (APFF), and the Asia Pacific Infrastructure Partnership (APIP). The group discussed hosting a I3P Workshop in Davao City later this year, and will meet with the Department of Finance to discuss the matter further.
- Under MSMEEWG, ABAC PH discussed the possibility of working with APEC Philippines to develop a Philippine MSME Marketplace, which will also feature an e-commerce platform for MSMEs. It could also be a portal to showcase ABAC PH's existing work on inclusive business models. The Philippine MSME Marketplace will serve as a pilot project for the APEC MSME Marketplace; if successful it can be replicated in other economies, and eventually APEC-wide. ABAC PH also agreed to support the Cross-Border E-Commerce Training Program and will identify start-ups to nominate for ABAC Canada's Growing Business Partnerships initiative.
- Under CWG's Institutional Connectivity pillar, ABAC PH expressed interest in pursuing a project related to the Digital Economy and CBET. For the People-to-People Connectivity pillar, ABAC PH agreed to continue to advocate for labor mobility, as well as support ABAC's continuing work on the APEC Business Travel Card.
- Under REIWG, ABAC PH will continue to support the APEC Services Competitiveness Roadmap. This is another area that the Philippines is interested to pursue a future project in.
- Under SDWG, ABAC PH identified Food Security as an area of keen interest for an initiative in the future. Other areas the Philippines will continue to support and advocate for are Energy Security and the work of the Urban Infrastructure Network on Liveable Cities.