



Message of the Chairman of the Philippines-France Business Council



Anthony T. Huang Jr.

(Delivered at the Makati Business Club and Philippines-France Business Council Special Membership Meeting with French Republic President François Hollande, 26 February 2015, Fairmont Hotel, Makati City)

We have the distinct privilege of welcoming and hosting President Hollande at the [Special Membership Meeting of the Makati Business Club and the Philippines-France Business Council], on the occasion of his state visit to the Philippines—the first by a president of France since 1947. Our deep historic, cultural, and economic ties have brought us to this very day, where all of us present here are given the rare opportunity to celebrate the strong partnership between our two countries.

Our business communities take pride in the fact that both the Philippines and France not only share a mutual ideal and love for liberty and democracy, but also enjoy a robust economic partnership, which we trust will only be further strengthened by President Hollande and his delegation's visit to our shores. To date, France has been consistently one of our country's biggest markets for import and export merchandise trade. More notably, France has risen to become the Philippines' second largest trading partner among the European Union member states.

To underscore the deepening bilateral links between our enterprises, I am happy to announce that a total of six business contracts and agreements were formally signed between Philippine and French companies for approved projects and modes of cooperation in a number of sectors. Moreover, a big-ticket project pre-contract will be signed between the Light Rail Manila Consortium and French company Bouygues/Alstom, for construction of the LRT-1 extension. We welcome these recent developments with pride, as they only serve to reinforce our already-invaluable economic partnership.

Our meeting, with the theme, "Climate Change and Inclusive Development," honors how the cooperation between our two countries is no longer just defined by our mutual trade and commercial links. Over recent years, the Philippine-French bilateral relationship has evolved to that of a progressive partnership founded on shared ideals and principles of social development and environmental sustainability. A great testament to the strength and depth of this partnership is the creation of the France-Philippines United Action (or FPUA); a private sector-led initiative primarily intended to streamline the French business community's outpouring of support for post-Haiyan rehabilitation programs. To this day, the FPUA continues its good work, as it shifts its mission from post-disaster relief, to the implementation of social development programs in communities it has helped rebuild. On behalf of the Philippines, allow me to acknowledge and thank our friends from our French Embassy, the French Cham-

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Message from the Chairman ...

ber of Commerce of the Philippines, and Business France, for their tireless and generous efforts towards not only helping us recover what we had lost, but also for ensuring its sustainability.

Moving forward, post-Haiyan, as the Philippines finds itself facing new challenges and a daunting reality posed by the dangers of climate change, we look forward to France taking the lead in the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties, or COP 21, to the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change on December 2015. Alongside the French Republic, it is our fervent hope that COP 21 can finally achieve, after years of negotiations, a binding global agreement on climate and on environmental protection, recognized and ratified by all nations of the world.

We are indeed very grateful to President Hollande and his country for taking on this worthy cause, as the world seeks to find an inclusive solution to this global concern. On a similar note, we are equally grateful to [our business communities] for taking a step forward with us, as we stand in unity with our French brethren and our newfound mutual advocacy.

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Join the Philippines-France Business Council!

The PFBC was established in 1998 to promote trade and investments between the Philippines and France. The council is composed of top business executives who seek to explore business opportunities between the two countries and to promote the exchange of views on policies of mutual concern. The Makati Business Club serves as the secretariat of the PFBC

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