

BUSINESS REVIEW

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PLATFORMS FOR POWER

Where the Philippine
Presidential Candidates
Stand on the Issues





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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NEW MEMBERS CORNER

Will 2016 become another year of “It’s More Fun in the Philippines”?

By Florian Gottein



The Philippines is widely expected to remain one of Asia’s fastest growing economies in 2016. Its gross domestic product is expected to grow slightly above 6% despite the turmoil unleashed on world economies by China’s weakening economy.

The National Economic and Development Administration (NEDA) sees the Philippines’ GDP growing by 6% in 2016 on the back of strong domestic consumption. Some forecasts for the state of the Philippine economy in 2016 and 2017 predict growth reaching as high as 6.5% no matter what the short-term policies of the next Philippine President might be.

On the other hand, the International Monetary Fund projects Philippine growth in 2016 at 6.2% instead of its initial 6.3% estimate. The IMF, however, lowered the Philippines’ growth in 2015 to 5.7% from 6% to reflect weaker expansion in the fourth quarter, as well as weaker global growth during this period. The Philippine economy improved 5.2% in the first quarter of 2015; 5.6% in the second and 6% in the third.

Analysts believe the medium-term GDP outlook beyond 2017 will hinge on the next President’s policies. This uncertainty is fostering anxiety among local and foreign businessmen given the widely different economic policies proposed by the leading presidential candidates.

The Philippine economy since 2010 has outperformed other Asian countries due to its strong economic fundamen-

tals and domestic consumption. From 2010 to 2014, the Philippines’ average annual growth stood at 6.2%, which was among the highest in Asia. This stands in marked contrast to the period from 1990 to 1999 when GDP growth averaged 2.8%, and from 2000 to 2009 when it stood at 4.5%.

New challenges, more specifically the dramatic fall in world crude oil prices, will directly impact future economic growth. As a consequence, a goodly number of Overseas Filipino Workers in the Middle East are expected to lose their jobs. The loss of remittances from these laid-off workers might profoundly slash total remittances from OFWs, which historically contribute over 10% of the Philippines’ GDP.

This challenge has brought to the fore the importance of foreign direct investments (FDIs) to future Philippine growth. The government of President Benigno Aquino admitted that much when NEDA acknowledged in a briefing in December 2015 that FDIs are vital if the Philippines is to attain middle-income status.

The World Bank defines a middle-income country as having a per capita income ranging from \$4,125 to \$12,735. The Philippines’ current GDP per capita stands somewhat above \$2,900, making it a low middle-income country.

The government’s belated recognition of the key role FDIs play in boosting the economy stands in sharp contrast to its disdain for FDIs over the past five years.

Philippine FDI inflows came to \$ 1.07 billion in 2010 (the year Aquino came to power), and has increased over the years, posting \$6.2 billion last 2014. Despite the increased levels of FDI inflows, the Philippines has paled in comparison with its fast-growing neighboring country, Vietnam. Vietnam has attracted \$ 7.43 billion worth of FDI inflows in the year 2010, and has closed the year 2014 with an even higher FDI inflow of \$ 9.2 billion. At any rate, sustained and strong Philippine growth coupled with China’s economic malaise has transformed the Philippines into a new FDI destination despite government neglect.

Apart from its sound macroeconomic fundamentals, the economy grew at an average 6.2% over the past five years because of the “culture of integrity” fostered by the Aquino administration. As a chamber we can be proud to be part of these efforts and see us through the Integrity Initiative as an engine in fighting corruption together with our partners and allies.

This emphasis on integrity has to be continued by the next President, as this is one of the most essential pillars in enabling stronger economic growth to happen in the country over the next years. Other key issues are the restrictive economic provisions of the 1987 Constitution; questionable fiscal policies such as the Foreign Investments Negative List and disappointing FDIs. In this light, it’s on the next administration to decide whether 2016 will become another year of “It’s More Fun in the Philippines”.

More LGUs Join Project I4J

Last December 2015, the project started its next phase which is to disseminate the results and experiences of the 9 Pilot Areas to other LGUs across the country.

Through its partner Leagues, Project I4J has already conducted two among the four batches of one-day orientation trainings entitled “LGUs as Sustainable Networks for Integrity and Business and Investment Promotion” to LGU leaders and civil servants last December 10-11, 2015 and January 18-19, 2016. A total of 66 participants representing 27 LGUs attended the two batches of trainings.

This orientation is the first step in the Integrity Building Process. LGU leaders and civil servants were briefed on how important Integrity is in their own locality as well as how it is linked to Global Competitiveness. The Integrity Building Process, a process in helping LGUs develop their own Integrity and Business Promotion Mechanism, was also discussed.

During the orientation, the LCEs or his/her authorized representative were invited to sign the Integrity Pledge. The Integrity Pledge is a tangible expression of commitment of the LGU to abide by ethical practices and to advocate the national campaign against corruption.

At the end of the orientation, the LCEs and the representatives of the following LGUs signed the Integrity Pledge and gave their formal decision of joining the Dissemination Phase of the Project.



Here is the list of new signatories who pledged to practice Integrity in their local offices. From the Cities, 12 signed and are named

Cities	Municipality	Provinces
Zamboanga	Muntinlupa	San Remigio
Lamitan	Marikina	Kalibo
Bislig	Guimaras	Janaiuay
Bayawan	Negros Occidental	Panay
Iloilo	Iloilo	Maddela
Cauayan	Bataan	Solano
Calapan	Palawan	Abra de Ilog
Balanga		Iba
Masbate		Dinalupihan
San Pablo		Sablayan
Laguna		

Two more batches of orientation trainings for LGU leaders and civil servants will be held on February 4-5 and February 16-17. A series of trainings to business and CSOs will also be conducted in the next months.



Development of Project Guidebook for Expansion Use

After more than two years since the launch of Project I4J, the Integrity and Business Promotion Guidebook was published with the developed Integrity Building Process.

The guidebook introduces the relevant concepts and ideas that will be their guideposts in developing mechanisms on integrity as well as good governance practices in Small Business Registration and Business and Investment Promotion procedures.

Alongside the publication of guidebook is the development of the Integrity Building Process. This process is the key model in the replication and dissemination to the other LGUs. The guidebook provides coherent and easy to understand guide for the purpose of cascading.

Strategic solutions can also be found in the guidebook in the hope to illuminate the path of other LGUs joining the project. Standardized steps are

presented in different forms and content to respond to the different contexts of each LGU which will decide to join.

Moreover, one of the highlights of the guidebook is the Integrity Self-Assessment Tool (ISAT) for LGUs and businesses.

The ISAT is a confidential survey that will gather experiences and suggestions on how to improve the integrity situation and business promotion mechanisms. To expound, it aims to assist the signatories of the Integrity Pledge in examining the scope and effectiveness of Integrity Policies and Practices in their respective organizations, as well as to provide areas of improvement to strengthen the LGUs' and businesses' overall Integrity Practices.

After all, the development of the guidebook and the Integrity Building Process are the tools in providing basic orientation by the use of the manifold documents and presentations available.

Through these tools and by the help of local government offices, the project can expand to its sustainable networks.

To request for a copy of the Guidebook, you may contact cgiangan.i4j@gmail.com or visit www.euprojecti4j.com



Networking for Dummies

The Young Professionals Committee held the Networking for Dummies night on December 2nd 2015 at Acceler8 Co-working Space. Francis Del Val, General Manager of GSK, shared tips and tricks with young professionals on how to make the most of networking events and build effective professional networks. Francis' inspirational talk was followed by a networking event during which young professionals were able to put his tips to practice.



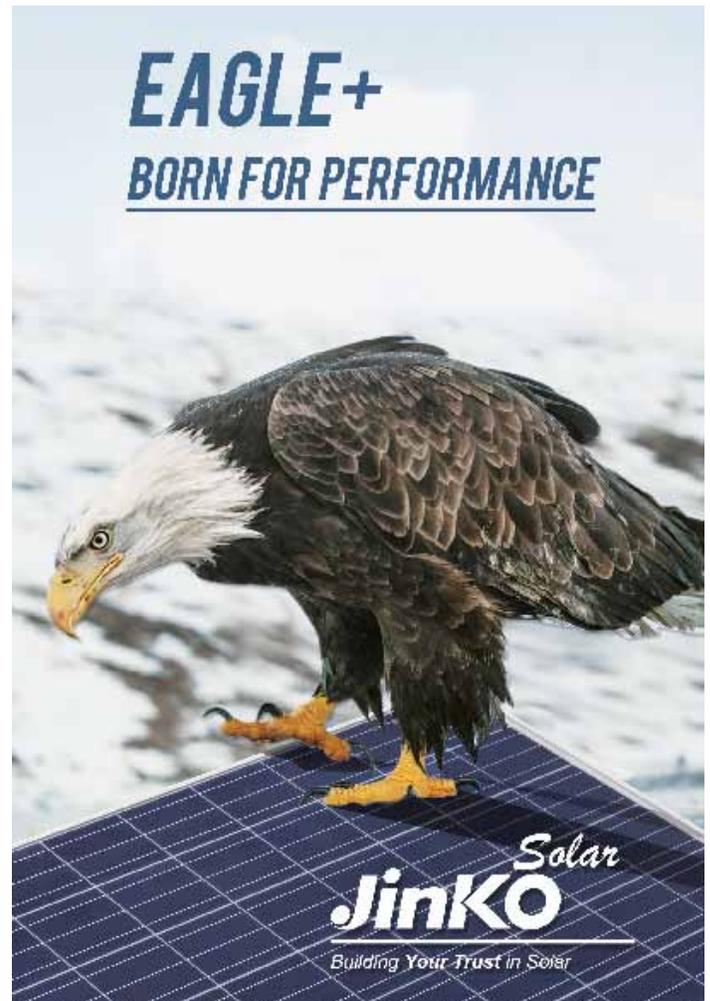
Young Professionals Cebu Core Meeting

Written by: George Genove

The Young Professionals Cebu (YPC) held their first core group meeting last January 26, 2016 at Café Georg in Gov. M. Cuenco Ave, Cebu City. Establishing the committee's vision, mission, and direction for the Cebu chapter were discussed. As the core agreed to direct its efforts towards cultivating the city's creative industries, further refinement of YPCebu's objectives are expected, ensuring relevance to the different industries represented. Though the group is concentrated around the creative sector, varied strategies to increase membership from other industries were also a main point of discussion.

An amicable agreement was expressed for YPCebu to act as collaborators for the upcoming EKO FEST that will be organized by ECCP Cebu this July 2016. Being a group that's also passionate about bamboo, EKO FEST would be an ideal jump off point for YPCebu.

As agreed, the core group will have another meeting to further define possible collaborations to occur during the EKO FEST





Platforms for power: where the Philippine presidential candidates stand on the issues

By Art Villasanta

As in previous presidential elections, that convoluted word “winnability” was the yardstick political parties relied on to select their standard bearers for the polls on May 9.

In Philippine politics, “winnability” is a synonym for inevitability. It carries with it the implication of a beauty contest where form (the candidate’s pedigree) matters more than substance (his platform of government).

Past elections have shown that well thought-out platforms of government count for little against those well-worn and emotionally charged buzzwords beloved by the voting masses.

Among these magical words that lead to victory are “makatao” (someone who loves his fellowman); “maka Diyos” (someone who loves God); “makabayan” (someone who loves Mother Philippines); “mapagkumbaba” (someone who is humble) and most especially “makamasa” (someone who is pro poor).

A candidate perceived to possess these killer qualities in abundance is more than halfway home.

But substance does trump form in the long-run. And since a Philippine President will serve for six arduous years, it’s best if we knew what he plans to do before he does it. Hence, the need for a platform of government however humble.

Here are the platforms of Jejomar Binay, Miriam Defensor, Rodrigo Duterte, Grace Poe-Llamanzares, and Mar Roxas.

Photos:

newsinfo.inquirer.net
(MNS photo)
Photo Courtesy of Al Jurn
ipilipino.com



Jejomar Binay

Slogan: “Daang Mabilis” (The Faster Path)

Political Party: United Nationalist Alliance

Of all the five legitimate “presidentiables” aspiring to be the 16th President of the Republic, none is more at home in Philippine politics than the divisive front runner, Vice President Jejomar Binay, Jr.

But beyond Binay’s fluency in local politics, which after all is the basis of national politics in this country, lay his promises and his platform of government that will give substance to these promises. Just what does the Vice-President propose to do once he attains his cherished life-goal?

Binay, 72, has been more forthcoming about his intentions as President than his foes. This might be due to his perception his victory is inevitable. Or it might be in keeping with his proven tactic of promising everything to everyone in order to win.

Binay, however, is being beset by a chorus of foes alleging he plundered government coffers on a massive scale. Think over PhP16 billion, according to one conservative account. As a result of these charges, some of which have been filed with the Office of the Ombudsman, Binay saw his once unassailable lead in opinion polls plummet to

precipitously low levels in 2015.

Some polls saw another controversial contender, Senator Grace Poe-Llamanzares, surpass Binay. Others had another contentious candidate, the heavy-handed Mayor Rodrigo “Digoy” Duterte of Davao City, also outstrip Binay in ephemeral popularity.

Meanwhile, Mar Roxas, the grandson of a President, continues to lag in the polls but publicly proclaims he’s confident of victory because he’ll continue to tread President Aquino’s “Daang Matuwid” (The Straight Path) that wars against corruption. Cancer survivor and intellectual Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago is almost an afterthought in the presidential race due to her low poll standings.

But the new year of 2016 brought glad tidings of great joy to the wounded Vice-President. The first major opinion poll of the year, this from SWS, showed Binay regaining his accustomed place as the Filipinos’ favorite for President.

The SWS survey conducted from January 8 to 10 showed 31% of 1,200 respondents that are registered voters choosing Binay, who has consistently

harped on his being the most “pro poor” among all presidentiables. This result was a 5% increase from December’s 26%.

Poe-Llamanzares took second with 24% (2% below her previous 26% in December) while Roxas had 21%, down 1% from 22% in December. Duterte polled 20% for fourth. Defensor Santiago drew just 3%.

Political pundits credit the Vice President’s resurrection to his new “strategy of silence” during which he assiduously kept out of the fatal glare of the media spotlight. Media then turned its baleful gaze to viral controversies lashing Poe-Llamanzares and her Filipino citizenship and Duterte for the flap surrounding his certificate of candidacy substitution.

Binay’s reassertion of superiority proves his artistry in playing the many entangling strings that constitute local Philippine politics. He is a musician that can transform discordant notes into a soothing melody by the simple expedient of keeping quiet. He realizes the more he plays his music, the more his critics will hear. Silence is truly golden and this has worked well for Binay.



Miriam Defensor-Santiago

Political party: Independent

Foolhardy is not a word associated with that profound and passionate intellectual, Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago. But her decision to contest the presidency brings to mind another word not often attached to her: quixotic

The first presidential survey released by the Social Weather Stations for the year (in January) saw Miriam win the votes of only 3% of those polled. She was fifth out of the five major contenders. And even this early one can predict her quest for the presidency has taken on the aura of Don Quixote de la Mancha's fruitless quest for chivalrous glory.

She was, however, the choice for President in mock student polls at the University of Santo Tomas and the University of the Philippines Los Baños. She is also the runaway choice for President among Netizens and has over two million Facebook followers.

If ours were a virtual world, Miriam Defensor Santiago will undoubtedly become President of the Philippines.

But this, the real world of vote buying and political dynasties, is another animal altogether and Defensor Santiago looks more like cannon fodder than a credible contender. Add to this the fact no independent like her has won the presidency and one appreciates the quixotic-ness of her quest.

Her intelligence and honesty are beyond reproach. Her acerbic wit tells it like it is. Her courage as a cancer survivor is incredible.

It's widely believed she was cheated, especially in Mindanao when she lost the Philippine presidency in 1992 to Fidel Ramos by only 880,000 votes. Undaunted, she again ran for President in 1998, finishing seventh among 10 candidates with less than 800,000 votes.

Third time lucky but why another try? Defensor Santiago has said she wants to end her career in government as President of the Philippines "... unless I get struck by another bout of cancer, but it doesn't happen that often".



Rodrigo Duterte

Political Party: PDP-Laban

Rodrigo Duterte's statements are brushing along the lines of dictatorship should he be elected President. Tough words are the norm from the man who proudly proclaims in his letterhead that Rodrigo Roa Duterte is "Mayor of the 4th Safest City in the World".

How Davao achieved that epithet is controversial but Duterte's critics say it was by police summarily executing suspected criminals, even petty criminals. Duterte has himself admitted to killing three people.

Duterte, an avowed leftist, is the first Philippine presidential candidate to openly embrace such ideals. Such brazen admissions could be a first in Asia and in the entire world, for that matter.

Duterte made this horrible confession during an interview with the investigative website, Rappler (<http://www.rappler.com/nation/politics/elections/2016/111096-leadership-duterte-style>) in October 2015:

MARIA RESSA: Do you think one man can make that much of a difference – to turn the entire system upside down?

RODRIGO DUTERTE: Yes. It's always – in every dictatorship. It's going to be a dictatorship. It's the police and the military will be the backbone.

If they agree with you – if the right thinking policemen and military men agree with you, then after 6 years, there will be a new setup, maybe a federal type, less corruption and a fresh air for the next generation.

Supporters of the gun-toting Mayor of Davao City have taken to coining a new euphemism to describe a Duterte-style dictatorship to make it more palatable. They call it "**Duterte Democracy**".

So, what does the man that would impose a Duterte Democracy on the entire Philippine archipelago have as a platform of government? And is a platform necessary in a dictatorship at all?

Yes, Duterte does have a platform of government and it covers one page on Duterte's letterhead.



Grace Poe-Llamanzares

***Slogan: “Walang Iwanan sa Bagong Umaga”
 (“No One Gets Left Behind in the New Dawn”)***

Political party: Independent

Senator Grace Poe-Llamanzares has draped herself in her foster father’s political legacy much like a flag draped over a coffin.

In announcing her candidacy for President on Sept. 16, 2015, Poe-Llamanzares took pains to remind her adoring fans she was simply continuing the aborted mission of her foster father, the legendary Fernando Poe, Jr., to banish poverty from the Philippines.

The solution her late foster father crafted, and which she has wholeheartedly embraced, is to establish a “social covenant” whose goal is to rebuild Philippine society. She said FPJ would have led the Philippines towards unity and sustainable development.

She reminded her listeners the late action star was confident that with the people’s support, it was possible to have a country where every Filipino can live the good life.

FPJ, “Da King” of Philippine Movies, described poverty as “the biggest scandal in the country”, she said.

“I share my father’s dreams. Ang inumpisahan ng tatay ko, tatapusin ko” (“I will finish what my foster father began”), she declared to the delight of her supporters.

The second sentence is a take on, “Umpisahan mo ... tatapusin ko”! (“Start it ... I’ll finish it!”), and is one indelibly linked to FPJ. Da King starred in and directed a hit 1983 action movie with this title.

Poe died on December 14, 2004 from cerebral thrombosis and multiple organ failure.

Da King’s adopted daughter also reminded her listeners FPJ was robbed of the presidency in 2004 by Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, who posthumously declared Poe a National Artist of the Philippines for Film on May 23, 2006.

Poe-Llamanzares’ platform of government focuses heavily on poverty alleviation, as can be expected from a candidate who is contesting the right to be regarded as the most pro-poor candidate with Jejomar Binay.

But Binay isn’t the darkest cloud on her presidential horizon. That honor goes to the series of petitions demanding she be disqualified from running for President because she isn’t a natural-born Filipino citizen as required by the 1935 Constitution.

In addition, it’s claimed Poe-Llamanzares didn’t meet the 10-year

constitutional residency requirement for a presidential candidate.

Poe-Llamanzares, 47, was a founding Filipino citizen who became a naturalized American then a naturalized Filipino so she could run for Senator in 2013. She won. The neophyte senator’s husband and all her three children, however, are American citizens residing in the United States.

These challenges, which might well put paid to her presidential ambitions should the Supreme Court find against her, has neither stopped her from campaigning nor her fans from egging her onwards.

Poe-Llamanzares is widely expected to lose her case before the Supreme Court. The Tribunal is expected to rule she’s isn’t a natural-born Filipino citizen, disqualifying her from running for President.

Despite the Commission on Elections reaching this same conclusion last December, Poe-Llamanzares remains on the Comelec’s list of presidential candidates. But should Da Foundling become Da President by fortuitous twists of Fate, she has a platform of government based on her 20-point plan.



Mar Roxas

Slogan: “Ituloy ang Daang Matuwid” (Continue along the Straight Path) or Daang Matuwid version 2.0

Political Party: Liberal Party

It’s a choice you wouldn’t wish on your worst enemy. But Manuel Roxas II has lived with this blessing -- or curse-- for his entire life.

His candidacy for President is his final campaign to complete the Roxas family’s trinity of greatness. The two other legs of this trinity are his late grandfather and namesake, President Manuel Roxas, and his late father, Senator Gerardo Roxas, a leading foe of Ferdinand Marcos.

Mar Roxas, however, is buckling under the weight of two of the fatal mortal sins in Philippine politics: a widespread perception of not being “pro poor” considering his “elitist” (and rich) background, and the perception he’s a loser.

Roxas was leading Jejomar Binay in the race for Vice President in 2010 before somehow losing at the end. “Mr. Palengke” was repudiated by the “masa” he so zealously courted. Binay has been bashing Roxas over the head for this failure since President Aquino anointed Roxas as his successor. Some critics say Roxas’ more truthful campaign slogan should have been “Mr. May ari ng Palengke” (The man that owns the wet market) rather than Mr. Palengke (Mr. Wet Market).

Roxas’ widely criticized handling of the ridiculed government response in Leyte before and after Super Typhoon Yolanda in 2013 dented his image as an effective executive. The continuing misfortunes of the MRT are also being blamed on Roxas’ mismanagement, as was the botched NAIA 1 reconstruction project.

Roxas, 58, has never led in any of the credible polls taken by SWS and Pulse Asia since 2014. In contrast, Binay has dominated most of them. But Roxas can take comfort he’s a favorite among the more informed voters in Metro Manila.

Roxas has said he’s running on a platform of continuing the good work done by President Aquino. He will also probably hew to most of President Aquino’s 16 point agenda crafted in 2010 (<http://www.liberalparty.org.ph/about/platform/>).

Roxas also believes the May presidential election will be a referendum on Daang Matuwid. This idea is unfitting since it means the voting masses will hold him to account for the perceived failures of President Aquino such as the PDAF Scandal and the Mamasapano Massacre.

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TABLES

United Nationalist Alliance



GOVERNANCE

"My basic policy of governance is anchored on competence, inclusiveness and compassion"

ANTI-CORRUPTION

Implement "strong and hard-nosed policies on efficient progressive tax collection and elimination of graft and corruption".

INFRASTRUCTURE SPENDING

Binay said infrastructure spending must be raised from 2% of GDP "to a truly progressive 5% of GDP; investing in infrastructure that raise the quality of the lives of our people and also enhance the country's economic climate"

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

The Philippine economy must be liberalized to "improve competitiveness and attract investments, both local and foreign, into manufacturing and the other stagnant sectors of the economy".

FDIs

Binay supports moves to abolish the "60-40" law limiting foreign ownership.

TAXES

Lower Corporate Income Tax
He will implement tax reforms, and lower the corporate income tax from 30% to 25%.

Lower Personal Income Tax
He defended plans to lower the personal income tax saying the projected P30 billion loss in government revenues is less than 1% of the government's budget for 2016.

BBL

Binay does not support the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL), saying the BBL must adhere to the Constitution, particularly the provisions on territorial sovereignty.

CHINA

He supports the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) with the U.S., saying the pact will prevent armed conflict with China and boost Philippine economic growth.

OTHERS:

Supports creating the DICT Universal Healthcare Renewable Energy Inclusiveness Job Creation Agriculture MSMEs

Independent



GOVERNANCE

- She will restore meritocracy in government.

- Will keep government deficits manageable by keeping it below 3% of the GDP.
- Support passing the Freedom of Information act

ANTI-CORRUPTION

She will solve corruption at the Bureau of Customs and passage the Customs Administration Act. She believes a lawmaker's gender "has a distinct impact on policy priorities".

INFRASTRUCTURE SPENDING

- Invest in public infrastructure and agriculture.
- Build a new international airport
- Build a new railway system from Manila to Sorsogon
- Build a modern, integrated urban transit system in Metro Manila leading to Bulacan, Rizal, Cavite and Laguna

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

She will amend restrictive provisions in the 1987 Constitution.

TAXES

She will reform the two decade-old tax system to make it more equitable; simpler to administer and in sync with other ASEAN countries.

LAW AND ORDER

She will aggressively prosecute the war against illegal drugs. .

LEGACY

She will bequeath to her successor President a better and stronger Philippines compared to the one she inherited from President Aquino.

PDP Laban



GOVERNANCE

Duterte will abolish Congress, which is a must were he to institute Duterte Democracy.

ANTI-CORRUPTION

Streamlining bureaucracy by introducing digital systems/ technologies; Values formation in elementary in high school nationwide

DRUGS & CRIMINALITY

Strengthen the Criminal Justice System

LAW AND ORDER

Duterte, 70, will make certain "criminals are afraid of the law". He will also do away with the juvenile delinquency law he claims criminals are exploiting.

BBL

He will install federalism as an alternative to the BBL.

CHINA

He revealed his views about China in the same Rappler interview, saying, "We're better off making friends with China. America is also the best friend of China. We will adopt a neutral policy there. Then ... because the new trade agreement sa Pacific Rim, we were not included. So we're better off with Asia".

OTHERS:

Tax Reform
Building Disaster Resilient Communities

Partido Pilipino



ANTI-CORRUPTION

"It is only right to continue the fight against corruption. We will hold the corrupt accountable, whether they be friend or foe. "To strengthen transparency in government, I will push for the passage of the Freedom of Information bill at the soonest possible time".

INFRASTRUCTURE SPENDING

"We will make infrastructure development our priority. I will strive to increase the annual infrastructure budget to 7% of the GDP.

The government will support the private sector in formulating an industrialization and IT plan.

As more products 'Made in the Philippines' flourish, more jobs will be created. This should be done while taking care of our environment".

"We should build more roads and trains not only in Metro Manila but all over the Philippines. We should ensure that our train project is awarded to a contractor with strong capability and track record in long-term maintenance. We should clean our drainage systems. We should provide coats and boots for the people who manage our traffic. We should remove all colorum and illegally parked vehicles. We should implement staggered office hours. No road-work should be left unfinished. We should immediately fire contractors who don't stick to the approved timetable".

TAXES

"We have one of the highest tax rates in the world. My aim is to lower these.
- But if government lowers taxes, we should reciprocate by paying the right taxes.

BBL

"We will pursue peace with all groups.

CHINA

"The West Philippine Sea is ours. We will protect our right through peaceful means, and according to international law. We will beef up our Coast Guard and armed forces so that we need not be intimidated by other countries".

OTHERS:

Labor and Job Creation
Energy
Education
Climate Change
Universal Healthcare
Arts and culture
Agriculture

Liberal Party



ECONOMIC PLATFORM

Roxas will abide by the Liberal Party's economic platform, among whose canons are:

- Create more domestic jobs.
- Make amendments to existing trade policies governing exports and imports to promote openness and sustainable growth;
- Consider problems arising from the rural economy as important;
- Make efficient partnerships with the private sector and implement all laws pertaining to land and ownership;
- Expand the anti-poverty program initiated by the Aquino administration to help alleviate poverty.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Roxas has said he will not amend economic provisions in the 1987 Constitution.

TAXES

He will study proposals to lower income tax very carefully, meaning he does not support this move as of yet

FDIs

In contrast to Aquino's lukewarm attitude towards FDIs, Roxas says he will concentrate on attracting more FDIs.

BBL

Support the Basic Bangsamoro Law

JOBS

Roxas will focus on tourism, agriculture and manufacturing for job generation. Roxas continues to revel in his title as the "Father of the Call Center Industry"

CHINA

Roxas will continue Aquino's strategy of defying Chinese hegemony by rallying international law and world public opinion against it while strengthening the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

OTHERS:

Social and Political Platform
He won't support the creation of the DICT

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ECCP explores a new enterprise development project in Bohol

Expanding ECCP Cebu's collaboration with Debbie Palao and DTI Bohol, a visit to MSMEs from Tubigon to Tagbilaran was arranged between January 19 and 20, 2016. With the development of products from the visited MSMEs clear on the agenda, an initial assessment of project scope was made.

Since the enterprise development visit, ECCP Cebu and Debbie Palao have been in constant communication with a selection of these MSMEs. As products in line for innovation and improvement have been identified, additional enhancement processes must be undergone to widen the marketability of these items.

An identified end goal is for these improved items to be given a platform where they can be exposed to an audience and accessed by markets. ECCP Cebu targets a showcase for these products between the third and fourth quarter of 2016.



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DOST Assistant Secretary Tejada Visits MATIC

DOST Assistant Secretary Urdujah Tejada visited the Materials Innovation Centre (MATIC) on January 14 to take a look at the facility and for a review of the DOST-funded programs ECCP is implementing in the Visayas. Accompanying ASec Tejada are DOST 7 Regional Director Ed Paradela, DOST 7 Assistant Regional Director Jess Zamora, and DOST Cebu Provincial Director Tristan Abando.

DOST 7 is funding the Design and Technology Fusion through Innovation Project (De-Tech Fusion Project) that primarily benefits the fashion and home lifestyle sectors of Cebu and the weaving community of Tubigon, Bohol. The project involves shop floor R and D in partnership with academic institutions and partner companies, materials research and development, management and promotion of MATIC, and business incubator.

ECCP Cebu is conceptualizing the De-Tech Fusion Project Levelled Up as the next phase of the collaboration.



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Guest of honor at the event was Ambassador Franz Jessen, new head of delegation of the European Union to the Philippines, who talked about EU priorities



Meeting with the European Ambassadors



ECCP hosted a “Meeting with European Ambassadors” on Jan. 13, 2016 at Makati attended by Ambassadors from the Member States of the European Union (EU) and the European Free Trade Area (EFTA).



discussions with the Philippine government.



The priorities of EFTA, including its Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations with the Philippines, were discussed by Raoul Imbach, Charge d’Affaires ad interim of the Embassy of Switzerland. Imbach said EFTA hopes to close the FTA discussion this February and sign the agreement in April.

The meeting highlighted issues of importance to European firms operating in the Philippines in order to gain the support of European Ambassadors for these advocacies when they enter into

The advocacies on the EU-Philippine FTA, ASEAN integration, the ASEAN Economic Community and the Integrity Initiative were presented by ECCP’s leadership. On the other hand, subject matter experts from the private sector talked about healthcare, PPP, agriculture, IT-BPM/KPM and energy.

NOW IN DAVAO!

ECCP PRESIDENT VISITS DAVAO CITY

ECCP President Guenter Taus visited Davao City last December 7-8, 2015 to meet with ECCP members and other European businessmen doing business in Davao. A presentation on Doing Business in Europe and with Europeans was also organized by the ECCP Davao Branch officer Fem Garcia where Guenter Taus made the opening remarks noting the strong ties of the Philippines and Europe, a DTI representative presented the EU GSP+ to encourage exporters to enjoy the zero tariffs offered to Philippine products, Florian Gottein presented an overview of ECCP and its services, Gerry Constantino presented ECCP programs in Mindanao, and Merly Cruz of Mindanao Development Authority presented the business opportunities in Mindanao. The visit also provided an opportunity to visit the Davao Sasa Port, the SOS Children's Village which was founded by the Austrian Professor Hermann Gmeiner, and the modern Davao International Container Terminal managed by Anflo Management and Investment Corporation.

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For inquiries, please contact Jasmin Runez at jrunez@eccp.com or 845-1324.

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Solar Energy: Solar System Design and Savings Monitoring 16 March 2016

The training will cover an introduction to solar technology and their practical applications including self- consumption for stand-alone and grid-tied systems, net metering, battery storage, and hybrid systems. Actual case studies will be presented.

Participants will be taught with system design and component sizing by understanding the electrical load, the solar resource, solar system components and configurations to address the power and energy requirement. Simple design calculations as well as the use of design software will be shown.

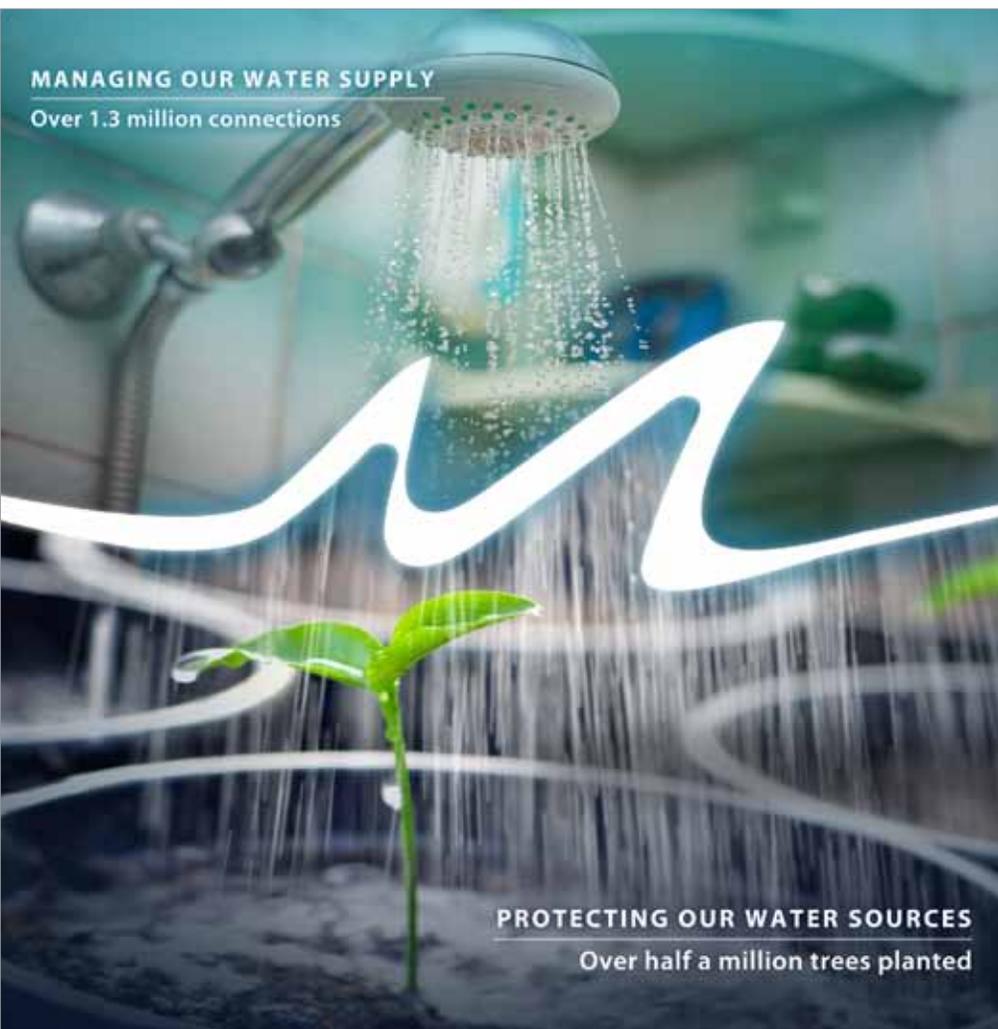
The training will show the techno financial analysis of solar systems and their financial returns to the end users and investors. Design optimization of the system configuration to maximize the financial benefits through savings will also be demonstrated. Actual system performance and real-time monitoring of installed systems to validate the savings will be presented.

Effective Business Writing

31 March - 1 April 2016

This two--day Effective Business Writing program has been designed to improve the written communication skills of the participants through its interactive lectures, fast--paced small group discussions, fun games and activities. The participants will not only learn grammar rules and writing techniques, but also understand how the rules and techniques can be used more effectively from a “contextual/situational” perspective.

Participants will also learn to write documents that specifically address a customer’s concern or need in a clear, concise and organized manner. They will also discover different writing formats that will make their documents more reader--friendly, and be guided in the use of the different punctuation marks. They will be made more aware of the common problems encountered in writing that will help them eliminate these, or at least minimize their frequency.



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A look at the successes of 2015 and the priorities for 2016

2015 was a busy year for the EPBN advocacy team. Throughout the year, we held 59 Committee meetings in the 14 sectors we cover, 11 Technical Working Groups (TWGs) on priority topics that industry identified and 68 meetings with legislative and executive bodies of the government.

We also held the 2nd EU-Philippines Business Dialogue in May 2015, during which we handed over the first edition of the EPBN Advocacy Papers to the Philippine government, and the Healthcare Advocacy Workshop.

But the year was not just all about numbers. During 2015 we continued to strengthen our Committees, we created a new Committee for Food and Beverage and merged the Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Committees into a single Healthcare Committee.

We strengthened existing and established new working relationships with the Philippine government, with an institutionalised approach in the Food and Beverage and Healthcare sectors, where we now have permanent TWGs established with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Department of Health (DOH) respectively.

Most importantly, we have seen some important achievements in terms of addressing the market access obstacles that European companies face in the Philippines.

From a legislative perspective, the enactment of the Philippine Competition Act, Amendments to the Cabotage Law, the Tax Incentives Modernization and Transparency Act (TIMTA) have been important successes. The adoption of the bills for a Department of ICT (DICT), the Right of Way Act (ROWA), the Customs Modernization and Tariffs Act (CMTA) by both Houses of Congress, also.

On an administrative level, the alignment of Bureau of Customs (BOC) requirements with FDA requirements for the importation of wines, the inclusion of energy efficiency technologies under VAT and import duty exemptions for PEZA-registered companies, the implementation of the first stage of the FDA Business Plan, the initiation of a modernization process for the Philippine National Formulary, the implementation of Euro 4 fuel requirements and the adoption of the Mexico City Principles for the pharmaceuticals industry have been some of the positive changes we have seen in the past year.

However, these achievements do not make us complacent. As 2016 begins, we look ahead with renewed energy.

2016 will be a year of changes; the national elections that will lead to a new Administration and a new set of political priorities, intensifying ASEAN economic integration, and the kick-off of negotiations between the EU and the Philippines for a Free Trade Agreement will make it an exiting year.

In terms of our priorities, we will continue to push for changes before the end of the 16th Congress and the end of the Administration. The passage of the Apprenticeship Bill, the PPP Act, and the enactment of DICT, ROWA, FINL and CMTA remain top priorities. We also begin to plan ahead and look at the areas we want to prioritise for the New Administration and 17th Congress: a Comprehensive Tax Reform, Amendments to the Procurement Law and removal of the Flag Law, Liberalization of the Retail Trade Sector are at the top of that list.

With this in mind, we have decided to change the way our Committees operate to make them more strategic, efficient, and results-oriented.

We will hold four (4) leadership meetings throughout the year for each Committee. In between, we will hold bilateral meetings and discussions on the advocacy priorities initiated in response to the direction defined during the strategy meetings.

We invite you to designate a permanent and alternate representative of senior managerial level to join our Committee meetings throughout the year and effectively give your company a voice in the policy changes and reforms that are taking place during this exciting time of changes.

If you wish to designate your company representatives or request any additional information you may contact lauren.skarkou@epbn.ph.

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The EU-Philippines Business Network (EPBN) is a dynamic platform launched by the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines in cooperation with other EU national chambers of commerce to help European enterprises, especially SMEs, gain access to high-potential business opportunities in the Philippines, and to assist in driving European trade and investment in the country as well as the wider ASEAN region.

For inquiries, please contact Lauren Skarkou at lauren.skarkou@epbn.ph or 845-1324.

EPBN Agriculture Advocacy Forum Recap

EPBN held an Agriculture Advocacy Forum last January 19, bringing together the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food, Office of the Presidential Assistant for Food Security and Agricultural Modernization (OPAF-SAM), Department of Agriculture (DA), EU Delegation and the private sector.

Highlighted in Senator Villar's keynote speech, was the need for education and focus training courses, to attract young minds and bring fresh ideas to agriculture. Senator Villar has pursued the granting of scholarships by TESDA, which has allotted 500 million pesos for Agriculture training of 45,000 scholars. OPAFSAM proceeded to make a presentation on the need to modernize the Agricultural Supply Chain in order to achieve inclusive growth. OPAFSAM exercises oversight over the National Food Authority (NFA), National Irrigation Authority (NIA), Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) and Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA) with respect to the implementation of policies, programs, projects and activities. Ongoing efforts of the various bodies were presented, which include; Coordination with the Food Security Committee (FSC) on Rice to regularly assess and evaluate the country's domestic rice supply and demand, Strategic positioning of logistical support service situation and outlook every quarter or as often as needed; Prepositioning of stocks and establishment of linkages for disaster preparedness; Completion and repair of irrigation systems; Upgrade and computerization of systems and procedures; Coconut hybrid production and Promotion of new innovative planting system among others. In line



with strengthening Agriculture supply chains, it was mentioned by Usec. Serano during his keynote speech, that exposure to value chains in the international market would serve as a confidence building measure, and will boost the experience of primary producers. Usec. Serano also touched on the issue of EU product accreditation, mentioning that the DA are currently addressing this and are making improvements on accreditation labs. However, he highlighted that the DA does not plan to accredit the EU as a single entity, as that approach would not be in line with national practices.

Two panel discussions ensued, focusing on Trading & Investing in Agriculture, and Improving Farm Productivity through Skills Development, respectively. Participants were engaged in an interactive discussion, and some topics which were discussed among others included: GSP+ as a good op-



portunity to create supply chains connecting local farmers to the market; the need to improve farmer education on good agricultural practices; and micro-credit issues faced by farmers. Common goals and initiatives to bring about inclusive growth, and make agriculture competitive and productive were also identified. Also addressed during the forum, was the need for public-private cooperation, with EPBN offering to actively support and cooperate with the Department of Agriculture on their ongoing efforts toward achieving common objectives.

Win against gunk and corrosion with Shell V-Power Nitro+

With around 170 passionate fuels scientists and specialists across the globe working on fuels innovation, development and implementation, Shell V-Power Nitro+ was developed to meet the evolving needs of customers and their cars.

“At Shell, we share the passion of Filipino motorists in protecting their vehicles to deliver an exciting drive on the road,” said Pilipinas Shell Vice President for Retail, Anthony Lawrence Yam. “This is why we continue to provide our customers with premium quality fuels that help protect their engines, to deliver superior performance.”

Shell’s premium performance fuels, Shell V-Power Nitro+, are designed to help motorists win against the double threats to an engine’s performance as it defends it from gunk and corrosion.

Gunk and Corrosion

Gunk and corrosion are the double threats that hinder a vehicle from reaching its performance potential. Engine gunk is a build-up that forms over time in key components of the engine. The accumulation of these unwanted deposits in critical areas of the engine hampers optimum performance. Shell V-Power Nitro+ is designed to fight gunk, as it is formulated with powerful cleaning agents to prevent and remove engine deposits. Shell’s premium performance fuels are also formulated to protect engines’ fuel system from corrosion. Shell V-Power Nitro+ fuels contain anti-corrosion components designed to form a protective film on metal surfaces, reducing corrosion tendency, helping to protect precision fuel system components.

Win against performance-robbing threats

Illustrating how Shell V-Power Nitro+ is formulated to let you win against gunk and corrosion, Shell has launched a blockbuster-style television commercial in the country. From the director of 47 Ronin, the new television commercial of Shell V-Power Nitro+ treats audiences to an exciting Hollywood action-packed film involving a high-speed car chase and a shape-shifting gargantuan gunk monster.

According to Yam, “Whatever type of vehicle they are driving, our Filipino customers deserve an exciting experience on the road. With Shell’s premium performance fuels—Shell V-Power Nitro+ Gasoline, Shell V-Power Nitro+ Diesel or Shell V-Power Nitro+ Racing—we want our customers to win against the threats that hamper their engine’s performance.”

With the evolution of car engines today, Shell provides Filipino motorists with the latest technological innovation with the Shell V-Power Nitro+ fuels, developed to meet the evolving needs of customers and their cars. Shell V-Power Nitro+ is a product of Shell, which is working to meet increasing energy demand and supply challenges by delivering smarter products and cleaner energy, smarter infrastructure, promoting smarter use, and by developing new energy sources while addressing the impact on the environment, through cleaner burning-natural gas and advanced fuels and lubricants technology.

COMMITTEE MEETING
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Food and Beverage Committee [10am]
February 12 | August 2 | November 3

Energy Committee [8am]
February 15 | August 15 | November 7

ICT Committee [9am]
February 19 | August 19 | November 22

Healthcare Committee [9am]
March 8 | May 25 | August 17 | October 19

Agriculture Committee [10am]
March 8 | May 12 | August 9 | November 10

Tourism Committee [10am]
February 18 | May 26 | August 5 | November 14

Maritime Committee [8am]
February 10 | May 23 | August 11 | November 16

Automotive, Parts, Lubricants and Fuels [8am]
February 9 | May 18 | September 6 | November 8

Consumer Goods and Retail [8am]
February 11 | April 14 | July 21 | October 26

Environment and Water [9am]
February 5 | May 17 | September 7 | November 9

Human Capital [10am]
February 4 | April 28 | August 4 | October 12

Infrastructure and Transportation [8.30am]
February 16 | May 11 | August 3 | October 18

Manufacturing [10am]
February 23 | May 24 | June 7 | November 15

Tax and Financial Services [8.30am – 11.00am]
January 28 | April 21 [TBC] | July 11 | October 20 [TBC]

If you wish to designate your company representatives or request any additional information you may contact sophia.ordona@epbn.ph or alfred.akogu@epbn.ph



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