

**Presidential Communications Office**

**Presidential News Desk**

**PRE-DEPARTURE BRIEFING ON PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE'S ATTENDANCE TO BOAO FORUM FOR ASIA IN HAINAN PROVINCE OF PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND HIS WORKING VISIT TO HONG KONG SAR BY DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS UNDERSECRETARY MANUEL ANTONIO J. TEEHANKEE**  
[Malacañang Press Briefing Room | 06 April 2018]

**OPENING STATEMENT:**

**USEC. TEEHANKEE:** Good morning ladies and gentlemen.

We are pleased to announce that President Rodrigo Roa Duterte will be traveling to the Boao Forum for Asia, also known as the BFA, an international dialogue platform for Asia Pacific countries and other partner nations and organizations from all over the globe.

It aims to bring together heads of state, business elites, academic experts and media personalities to discuss cooperation, innovations, and solutions towards a more open and prosperous Asia.

This year's theme is "An Open and Innovative Asia for a World of Greater Prosperity."

The Opening Plenary which the President will attend and address will be held on April 10. Addressing the BFA is a singular privilege for the Philippines and a privilege for acknowledging the President's role and leadership in Asia and the ASEAN Region.

The Forum was first conceptualized in 1998 by then President Fidel V. Ramos, Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke and Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa.

It was launched in February of 2001 with an initial number of 26 participating countries. Today, the BFA has 29 member nations.

The President sees the goals of the forum as parallel and complementary to his own vision of a developed Philippines and a more prosperous Filipino nation as well as a more prosperous ASEAN economic region.

President Duterte looks forward to actively engaging his counterparts to create positive outcomes that will benefit the Filipino people in particular in the Asia Pacific region in general.

The leaders on April 10 will assemble in the ASEAN --- in the BFA Plenary and also on April 10, the President will hold a bilateral meeting with the Chinese President Xi Jinping to discuss ways to further enhance the bilateral relationship between the Philippines and China.

The two leaders will also discuss ways to collaborate on jointly addressing pressing issues as well as common threats such as violent extremism and terrorism and cross-border traffic of illegal narcotics.

After the meeting, the President will be traveling to Hong Kong to meet with members of the Filipino community with OFW welfare being one of the initiatives closest to the heart of the President. He is eager to see and hear firsthand the concerns and the situation of our kababayans in Hong Kong.

He will be returning to Manila on April 12.

Thank you. And I will be now ready to answer a few questions and also to hold informal briefing on further issues you want to know about the Boao Forum for Asia.

### **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:**

**Q:** Yes, my name is [unclear] from China Central Television. I would like to know what kind of achievement we expect this time from Boao?

**USEC. TEEHANKEE:** Well, the Boao Forum this year focuses on innovation as a tool for continuing Asia's growth.

And being a dialogue forum that assembles really leaders in the academe and business worldwide, it allows foreign exchange of ideas on how to have sustainable prosperity in the Asia Pacific region.

**Q:** This time you just mentioned the [unclear] focus and open on innovative Asia so and this year also marks the 40 anniversary of China's reform and open up policies. So I would like to know how do you value this kind of policies and what kind of experience that the Philippines can learn from it?

**USEC. TEEHANKEE:** Yes, it's very important to dialogue at this moment wherein the international economy is indeed facing certain challenges.

The challenge really is how to encou --- how to use innovation as a tool for greater prosperity and also address the issues whether the Fourth Industrial Revolution means greater unemployment or further prosperity through innovative mechanisms that lead to sustainable development.

And this is precisely the benefit of a forum such as the BFA wherein really in cutting-edge issues of addressing the challenges to the global economy will be discussed between government, the academe and business leaders.

**Q:** Good morning sir, my name is [unclear] Xinhua News Agency of China. As you mentioned we know that the BFA was the first to propose by leaders from the Philippines, Australia and Japan. So I want to ask, is there any special meaning of BFA for the Philippine current administration?

**USEC. TEEHANKEE:** Yes, of course, the current administration recognizes President Ramos' leadership in establishing the Boao Forum for Asia.

The focus of the BFA is indeed the challenges facing Asia and how the Asia can contribute to world prosperity at the same time assure that Asia is at the forefront of economic growth and assure to the Asian peoples a unified approach to economic development and addressing the fact that the target is indeed inclusive growth and zero poverty for all of Asia.

And for Asia to catch up in the development --- in the world development and assure to its citizens that it will be a prosperous region.

**Q:** Is President Duterte going to talk about like concrete projects and programs with China?

**USEC. TEEHANKEE:** Well, there will be a series of bilateral meetings between the two leaders and this will be an opportunity for them to also discuss further collaboration and cooperation as a follow-up to Secretary of Foreign Affairs Alan Pete Cayetano's last meeting with Foreign Minister Wang Yi of China, which was just held last month.

**Q:** Good morning sir, I'm Ronron Calungsod Kyodo News. Sir, who else --- who other leaders will speak on the opening, sir, aside from President Duterte, if you know?

**USEC. TEEHANKEE:** From our latest information, apart from President Duterte, the other heads of state are from Austria, Mongolia, Pakistan, Singapore, The Netherlands as well as the UN Secretary General and IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde.

**Q:** Sir, during the bilateral between President Duterte and President Xi, will they tackle the issue on joint exploration as a takeoff from the meeting of Secretary Cayetano and Minister Wang? And in what aspect --- what can we expect from the joint exploration issue?

**USEC. TEEHANKEE:** On this issue, I don't have the details of the bilateral meeting. But we can expect that pursuant to the follow-up from the March meeting that any joint exploration will be based on prudent principles that will be beneficial to the Philippines and China and to the Asia Pacific region in general.

**Q:** Usec, will there be an opportunity for the President to interact with the UN Secretary General?

**USEC. TEEHANKEE:** I have no information on that as of now.

**Q:** Okay. But can we expect discussions about the South China Sea dispute?

**USEC. TEEHANKEE:** We don't expect --- being an economic forum we expect the discussions to take place regarding the challenges at the Boao Forum for Asia.

However, at the bilateral meeting this may come up as well.

**Q:** What will the President relay to President Xi regarding the dispute? Do we already have some, you know, some notes about what he will discuss with his Chinese counterpart?

**USEC. TEEHANKEE:** On this, I think the President has been very clear that he maintains the Philippine position and the meetings are based on mutual respect and equal --- equality among nations.

**Q:** French news agency. Sir, could you elaborate on when they will be meeting --- series of bilateral meetings? Is it going to be one, two, three meetings? And on what day?

**USEC. TEEHANKEE:** Oh yes. The President will be having the bilateral meeting with China on April 10 as well. So it is just on the same day.

The plenary will be in the morning and the bilateral meeting will be in the afternoon.

**Q:** One meeting, sir? Will there be more than one?

**USEC. TEEHANKEE:** Because there are accompanying members of the delegation and Cabinet. There is a series of preparatory meetings but there will be only one meeting on that day.

After that, the President will be heading to Hong Kong.

**Q:** So April 10, he meets with Xi Jinping?

**USEC. TEEHANKEE:** As well, yes.

**Q:** One meeting?

**USEC. TEEHANKEE:** Yes.

**Q:** Not a series of --- not a series of meetings? Just one meeting?

**USEC. TEEHANKEE:** Yes, yes, one meeting.

**Q:** Usec, aside from the Chinese President, will President Duterte also meet with other leaders?

**USEC. TEEHANKEE:** I don't have the details of that. But similar to other fora, there will be opportunities to interact with other leaders at the forum.

**Q:** Maybe the pull-aside?

**USEC. TEEHANKEE:** Yes, these are pull- asides and it's really very interesting to observe the participation of the Philippines at the BFA because really there are important challenges to discuss for the Asia --- Asia's development.

**Q:** What will be the benefit of this forum to say Filipinos? What will be its impact on the lives of Filipinos because that will be the first question of Filipinos?

**USEC. TEEHANKEE:** Well, following up from the President's ASEAN chairmanship, wherein the Philippines is acknowledged as a leading voice in the push for greater economic prosperity together with our AmBisyon 2040 and our goals for 2022, for the Philippines to attain developed status by 2040 and middle-income status by 2022.

The Philippines' poverty rate has dropped to 21 percent. And the President's goal is for poverty to drop to 14 percent by 2022 and hopefully zero by 2040.

So the real challenge for the Asia is to eliminate poverty. Zero poverty is the goal of the President. Walang maiiwanan. No one is left behind.

So I think this is a common theme of the President whether it is in ASEAN, APEC, the World Economic Forum or the BFA, which is inclusive growth for all and that is the challenge and the great dream that the Philippines has for Asia and for itself.

**Q:** Thank you, Usec.

**USEC. TEEHANKEE:** Thank you very much for your questions.

And I will be available for further debriefings on the topics to be discussed at the DFA right after this.

Thank you very much.

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