

**Presidential Communications Operations Office
Presidential News Desk**

**PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS CEREMONY OF FIVE RESIDENT AMBASSADORS-
DESIGNATE TO THE PHILIPPINES**

[Malacañan Palace, Manila | 10 February 2021]

**AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO THE PHILIPPINES HIS
EXCELLENCY LUC VERON:** Mr. President, I'm honored to present to you my letters of
credence as Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of the Philippines.

The Philippines and the European Union have enjoyed diplomatic relations over six decades. Our shared interest and values are strong bases for partnership based on respect and mutual benefit.

The EU is eager to pursue the effective implementation of its partnership and cooperation agreement with the Philippines in all areas.

By [unclear] closer political relations, we together will strengthen multilateralism and cooperation on bilateral region and on global issues. And we will be true to our shared pledge to our rules-based international order.

The EU has a strategic interest in a stable, prosperous and secured Philippines. The EU is working with the Philippines to expand trade and investment, to promote maritime security and to maintain open and safe shipping routes.

The EU and the Philippines have developed a strong economic and trade partnership characterized despite the crisis by substantial trading goods balance in favor of your country worth 715 billion pesos.

Since 2014, the EU has provided the Philippines with preferential trade access to the EU market based on sustainable development, principles, good governance and human rights.

The EU with its business community is also the first foreign investor to the Philippines.

The EU has recently established its strategic partnership with ASEAN and is looking forward to engaging closely with the Philippines during its role as ASEAN Coordinator for dialogue with EU starting in August this year.

The EU is at the forefront of international efforts to fight climate change and share strategic interest with the Philippines on environment. The EU has decided to cut further its emissions by 55 percent by 2030.

The EU stands prepared for all times to support the Philippines in case of natural emergencies like most lately following Typhoon Goni and Vamco. The EU is ready to work as well with the Philippines --- with the Philippine government on disaster preparedness.

Mr. President, for all these reasons, the EU is willing to have a productive political relationship with the Philippine government, notably to support the Philippines in its effort to overcome the COVID-19 crisis and its effort to restart its economy.

The EU and its member states will continue their efforts to contribute to the international response to the pandemic including by guaranteeing affordable and fair access to vaccines for all.

The EU continues its participation in supporting peace and development in Bangsamoro through a comprehensive and inclusive approach. The recent signing of several financing agreements worth 4.7 billion pesos will enable us to continue our unwavering support to the peace process that has been a cornerstone of your presidency.

Mr. President, in the European Union, the Philippines and the Filipinos have a strong and reliable partner. In the coming years, building on these robust foundations, together we can take the EU-Philippine relations forward.

PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE: I accept Your Excellency's credentials as the Ambassador of the European Union to the Philippines.

The Philippines and the EU share a deep respect for democracy and the rule of law. This should serve as a solid foundation for robust cooperation on the basis of mutual trust, respect, and benefit.

Ours is a longstanding relationship dating back to 1964. We should continue to redefine, refine, and reinforce our ties in the face of new challenges and opportunities.

I am encouraged by the convening of the subcommittees under the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) this year. This signifies our shared resolve to implement this landmark agreement, notwithstanding the pandemic.

Our priority is to intensify trade and investment through a free trade agreement.

We wish to partner with the EU to protect and promote all rights of all, especially the human rights of migrant workers.

We are also ready to further enhance cooperation on climate change and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. Those most responsible for climate change must be held to account even as we work together to build our communities' resilience and preparedness.

I thank the EU for its support to our justice sector and peacebuilding and development efforts in Mindanao, particularly the Bangsamoro.

Excellency, the Philippines is ready to work constructively with the EU for the greater good of our peoples.

Congratulations, Your Excellency. I wish you a successful tour of duty in the Philippines. I welcome you and may you be --- have a fruitful tour of duty in my country.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE OF THE FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL TO THE PHILIPPINES HIS EXCELLENCY ANTONIO JOSÉ MARIA DE SOUZA E SILVA: Mr.

President, thank you very much for welcoming me here in this beautiful Malacañan Palace.

It is a great honor to present to Your Excellency the letter of recall of my predecessor and my letter of credence as Ambassador of Brazil to the Republic of the Philippines.

Let me take also this opportunity, Mr. President, to convey to you the best wishes from my President, Mr. Jair Bolsonaro, that he extends to you personally and to the Filipino people.

I am deeply grateful and honored to be the Brazilian Ambassador to the Philippines. Honored because it's a country that has strong and growing relations with Brazil over the past 71 years. Those 71 --- those 75 years also mark the 75 years of our mutual relation --- diplomatic relationship.

And I am grateful to my President because my coming to the Philippines was a personal wish I had and I was lucky and happy that those wish was granted. So there are those two reasons why I would like to extend to you also.

Mr. President, our common history in those 75 years has brought about many opportunities and many field of cooperation. We go from agriculture to new sources of energy; we go from science and technology to trade and investments; and from tourism to political --- mutual political dialogue.

Furthermore, Philippines and Brazil, due to the place they hold within their respective regional groups, MERCOSUR and ASEAN, this can also mean an opportunity to also bring closer together South America to Southeast Asia.

Furthermore, Mr. President, I would like to assure you that I will be, with my team in Manila, do the utmost to persevere and to strengthen our mutual relations.

I would like, Mr. President, if you allow me to tell you that the next time we meet --- Insha'Allah, in the future --- I may be able to say a few words on your native language. I have already started my classes but not enough to be able to say anything meaningful to you.

Mr. President, finally, our deep recognition to the efforts and the diligence with which your government, your country, your people have faced this tragic pandemic that has affected all of us.

I want to congratulate all of you and hope as we all do that this period ends soon and life will go back and the Philippines will again follow its path of development and growth. Salamat.

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: I am pleased to accept Your Excellency's credentials as Ambassador of Brazil to the Philippines.

Brazil is an old friend and partner of the Philippines. With room for growth in our relationship, the horizon is wide as it is bright.

Let us work together to intensify bilateral trade and investment exchanges during your tenure, especially in agriculture, biofuels, Business Process Outsourcing and logistics.

I welcome the delivery of six new A-29 Super Tucano aircrafts from Brazil last year. The partnership in defense and security is important for the Philippines.

Let us also continue to work together to ensure universal access to the COVID-19 vaccine. This is a principled position which we should continue to push and demand in all available fora.

This year marks the 75th Anniversary of the establishment of our Diplomatic Relations. As I reaffirm the Philippines' commitment to expand bilateral relations with Brazil, let us renew the resolve to take our relations to an even [higher] plane.

With the deep mutual understanding between our countries, we hope to continue our collaborative work through our shared advocacies for inclusive growth and sustainable development and bilateral consultations.

Congratulations, Your Excellency. May you have a fulfilling stay in the Philippines and I personally would like to say welcome.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA TO THE PHILIPPINES HIS EXCELLENCY

KIM IN-CHUL: Mr. President, allow me at the outset to convey to Your Excellency the highest compliments and the warmest personal regards of President Moon Jae-in.

It is an honor to present my credentials today and to represent the government of the Republic of Korea to Your Excellency's government. It is an immense personal honor to be here in the Philippines as a Korean diplomat.

Just referring to a few numbers given by Your Excellency's government would attest to the robust current state of relations between our two countries. Korea is the Philippines' fifth trading partner and fourth investor and ODA fund source.

Koreans account for one quarter of the visitors from around the world to this beautiful country and half a million Filipinos visit Korea every year. I would say, however, that our bond goes beyond these solid numbers. Being the Philippines the nearest geographical neighbor outside the Northeast Asia region, we can see records of interaction since early times.

Korea's first Catholic priest and one of its early martyrs lived and studied in Bulacan for over a year in 1839. The Catholic Church of our two countries is celebrating this year the 200th anniversary of his birth.

We cannot bring back to our memory and thank enough the sacrifice of the Philippines and their brave men during the Korean War, as well as its role as a leading voice advocating our case in the international community.

The Philippines was also one of the few only openings to the outside world available to Korea for its economic development.

One signature example will be that the rice breed that helped overcome chronic shortages in Korea was developed at the International Rice Research Institute where numerous Korean experts were trained.

And not only economy breakthroughs came from the Philippines, Koreans worked and familiarized with the Magsaysay Award much before the Nobel Prize and winning the gold medal over the all-winning Philippine basketball team 52 years ago gave us a taste of what it was like to be at the top of the world, of the class.

More recently, 520 women and men engineers from Korea worked for a year along with the Philippine people to help the country recover from the devastation of Typhoon Yolanda. And I am proud to say, Your Excellency, that I have been a small part of that joint effort.

Also, from last decades, Puerto Princesa Airport renovation to the currently ongoing 3.7-kilometer Panguil Bay Bridge construction in Mindanao, we have been and are trying our best to work along with and for the Philippine people.

I may say, Your Excellency, that any envoy from Korea to the Philippines will feel blessed by these enviable ties. While at the same time, I have a responsibility to keep these ties ever stronger.

The long-standing bond and friendship between our two governments will guide me through my efforts. The honor of serving in this great country and the warmth of its people will help me carry my responsibilities.

Mr. President, let Your Excellency be assured of the cooperation of the Korean Government in the endeavors of your government. And please accept my best wishes for the continued success in all Your Excellency's endeavors.

Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Excellency, welcome to the Philippines. I am pleased to accept your credentials as Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the Philippines.

The Republic of Korea is a valued friend and partner. Over the past seven decades, our ties have grown from strength to greater strength.

We forged a special bond. We shared the struggle for and defense of freedom and democratic values during the Korean War.

And together we continue to achieve more. Today, we remain committed to pursue shared aspirations for our peoples.

Let us sustain the momentum of our robust cooperation in trade and investment, sustainable development, infrastructure and [integration], and defense.

We value your country's exceptional commitment to the Philippines' Build, Build, Build program.

I thank your Government for supporting our defense modernization program. Today marks the delivery of the BRP Antonio Luna --- that is the frigate. This demonstrates our nations' mutual commitment to peace and security in our region.

I appreciate the Republic of Korea's solidarity with the Philippines as we battle the pandemic. The Filipino people will never forget Korea's timely assistance in the form of testing kits, PPEs, [masks] and rice.

Excellency, I am aware that you visited the Philippines in the aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda to help in the rehabilitation efforts.

This is a connection at a most personal level.

You were there during the most difficult moments of the Philippines' history. I am confident you will do your utmost to ensure we build the best memories for our nations.

Congratulations, Your Excellency. I wish you a fulfilling assignment in the Philippines and may I say welcome to my country.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF FRANCE TO THE PHILIPPINES HER EXCELLENCY MICHÈLE BOCCOZ: Your Excellency, Mr. President, it is for me a privilege and an honor to present my credentials as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the French Republic to the Republic of the Philippines and the letter of recall of my predecessor, signed by the President of the French Republic, His Excellency Emmanuel Macron.

We will celebrate next year the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries and of the signing of a Treaty of Friendship. United by these long standing ties and their attachment to the same values, our two countries share the same ideals of peace, freedom, and democracy.

I am particularly grateful, Mr. President, for you to receiving me a few days only after my arrival in Manila. I wish to seize this occasion to show you my full availability to closely work with the Philippine authorities to uphold and to further develop the high level of cooperation already existing between France and the Philippines and to continue building bridges between the people of our two nations.

As a nation of the Indo-Pacific, France developed further its partnerships in this fast growing region and commits itself to bring its contribution to stability, free trade, peaceful settlement of dispute, development, fight against climate change, and freedom of navigation in the region.

In that regard, France is committed to continue to step up the growing cooperation in defense and strategic matters between the Philippines and France. France is also grateful for having been designated as a development partner of ASEAN and will honor this decision as a reliable and constructive partner on the long term with the organization and its member states, in particular, the Philippines.

Finally, investments in key sectors of the economy in the Philippines is for us a priority. We see with pleasure that more and more French companies are investing in major project and benefit from a good image and excellent cooperation with local companies. Be assured, Mr. President, that France wishes to further its economic and commercial cooperation with the Philippines.

On behalf of His Excellency, President Macron, of the French government and of the French people, please accept, Your Excellency, Mr. President, our most sincere wishes for the success and prosperity of the people of the Philippines.

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: I am pleased to accept Your Excellency's credentials as the Ambassador of France to the Republic of the Philippines.

As you begin your tour of duty in the Philippines, I assure you of my government's keen interest to further strengthen cooperation with France in areas of mutual interest.

I welcome France's active participation in our defense modernization and "*Build, Build, Build*" programs.

Yet, our constructive engagement must continue to grow. The challenges we face today are unprecedented. We need closer collaboration bilaterally and in the [multilateral arena].

We are interested in further expanding ties, particularly in defense, trade and investments, public health and tourism.

We also look forward to enhanced cooperation on climate change and sustainable development, environmental protection, migration and migrant workers' rights, gender justice, and combatting transnational crimes, including cybersecurity and counterterrorism.

The Philippines welcomes the conferment to France of the status of a Development Partner of ASEAN. We appreciate France's interest to deepen engagement with the region.

Congratulations, Excellency. I wish you a fruitful tour of duty in my country and may I personally say welcome.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE OF COLOMBIA TO THE PHILIPPINES HER EXCELLENCY MARCELA ORDOÑEZ FERNANDEZ: *[Thank you very much.]*

Excellency, Rodrigo Duterte, President of the Republic of the Philippines, it is an honor for me to be here today, as it is an honor for me to represent Colombia before this beautiful country.

Allow me to begin by presenting the warmest greetings of --- on behalf of my President, Iván Duque, and on behalf of my Minister of Foreign Affairs, Claudia Blum.

I come with instructions to strengthen the ties between our two countries in various fields. Colombia as most other countries is now concentrating efforts on tackling the pandemic and on economic recovery. But allow me to say that before this, we have been growing for decades non-stop.

We are also continuing to work very hard on bringing prosperity to the regions of Colombia that were left behind in development because of the presence of the --- of the guerrilla of the FARC -- the former guerrilla of the FARC --- and to ensure the reintegration of the former combatants.

We also work to reduce, to eradicate the coca crops and to substitute them with legal crops.

We have just granted a 10-year temporary protection status to the more than 1,700,000 Venezuelans who have migrated to Colombia --- 5.57 million Venezuelans have had to --- to flee their country because of their dire situation. This is --- this will soon overpass the Syrian crisis.

Let me focus now on our bilateral relation and start with commerce. The amount of goods that our two countries exchange has been growing and we wanted to grow a lot more.

We are interested in selling pork meat and beef to the Philippines and we would welcome, Mr. President, any support you can give us to accelerate the admissibility process.

We also want to see an increase in foreign investment both ways as both your economy and my economy have a lot of potential.

And we want more tourism. More and more Colombians are visiting the Philippines and we believe that Colombia has everything that the Filipinos love. We have the culture, we have the music, we have the dance and this brings me to all the exchanges that we hope to have between our countries.

The Orange Economy or creative industries is a very important one, and both our countries strive in this.

And, Mr. President, we are not a country to teach lessons to other countries but we do have several good practices, several best practices that we would like to --- to share in [unclear] cooperation.

Allow me just to suggest our program in reintegration --- reintegration for former combatants that now is a four-stage program and it goes from institutional strengthening, the route to reintegration, community approach and monitoring and evaluation.

Now, our two countries have already exchanged talks and best practices on this, but this is something where we believe we could work a lot more.

And another one is --- is the centers that we have created for the youth to go after school and do sports and engage in culture and also in technology instead of getting into trouble in the streets.

And allow me to say that we are very interested in learning from the Philippines. My President, President Duque, is very interested in other breakthroughs that the Philippines has had in education. So we want the best practices of the Philippines in education.

And we are restarting our offer of Spanish classes for the diplomats of the DFA and these are just some of the areas where we could center our work but let me just mention other possible areas.

One is, of course, security. We believe security is a public good and we are ready to work on it as we are in the fight against terrorism.

And we have just started the Colombian Presidency of the Pacific Alliance and through it we hope to strengthen the ties with ASEAN countries.

Allow me simply to end, Mr. President, by insisting that we look forward to the opening of the Embassy of the Philippines in Colombia because we want to have the Philippines permanently in our capitol.

Maraming salamat, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Excellency, I am pleased to accept your credentials as Ambassador of Colombia to the Philippines.

Our countries have enjoyed warm and friendly relations.

With your designation as Resident Ambassador and as we mark the 75th Anniversary of the Establishment of our Diplomatic Relations this year, it is time to bring our ties to another level.

Let us deepen bilateral and regional engagement, with Colombia's recent accession to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC).

We are ready to further enhance cooperation particularly in trade and investment, defense and in addressing non-traditional security issues, including terrorism and violent extremism, drug trafficking and other transnational crimes.

We are also interested in cooperating on taking the peace process further, given Colombia's experience.

Together, in solidarity and cooperation, we will continue to build upon the gains of our longstanding friendship. This, as we remain resolved to surmount the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and work together for global bounce back and recovery.

Congratulations, Your Excellency. I wish you a productive tour of duty in the Philippines and personally I would like to extend to you welcome.

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