

Welcome Remarks Inclusive Innovation Conference

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Rigodon Ballroom, Manila Peninsula Hotel, Makati City
May 31, 2017

Acknowledgements:

- Secretary Ramon Lopez of the Department of Trade and Industry
- Undersecretary Perry Rodolfo, also of the Department of Trade and Industry
- Dr. Rowena Guevara, Undersecretary of the Department of Science and Technology
- Mr. Mario Matus, Deputy Director-General, World Intellectual Property Office
- Mr. Dado Banatao of PhilDev
- Our key partners from academia, industry and government
- Other distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen, *magandang umaga po!*

I would like to welcome everyone to today's event. It is a great honor to address this audience that brings together key stakeholders — both from here and abroad — who are working to strengthen innovation in the Philippines.

I am here to represent the United States Agency for International Development, more commonly known as USAID. Part of the U.S. Embassy in Manila, USAID is the principal arm of the United States Government that offers technical and financial assistance to partner countries, such as the Philippines, and the citizens of those countries. I bring you the greetings of United States Ambassador to the Philippines, Sung Y. Kim.

There are two important bilateral agreements that commit the Philippines and the United States to work together to spur innovation and spread lasting growth throughout the country.

The first is the Partnership for Growth. Signed in November 2011, both nations have adopted a whole-of-government approach to accelerate and sustain broad-based and inclusive economic growth in the Philippines.

We have now updated the name of our partnership to the "Partnership for Growth with Equity" to emphasize the U.S. Government's support for the Philippine government's goals of reducing inequality and bolstering growth potential as described in the Philippine Development Plan and summarized in the Zero Plus Ten Point Socioeconomic Plan.

The second is the U.S.-Philippine Science and Technology Agreement. Originally signed in 2012 and currently being renewed, this agreement prioritizes science, technology and innovation, and the need to strengthen scientific and technical cooperation.

Our shared goal of advancing innovation has at its core this underlying assumption: innovation is a key enabler of broad-based, accelerated and sustained economic growth.

This is illustrated by the fact that most advanced economies in the world have rested their growth strategy on harnessing the transformative power of innovation.

As an example, the U.S. economy has been driven by innovation for the last few decades and has led to the discovery of transistors, semiconductors, software and biotechnology. It has produced world-leading companies that generate jobs and advance lasting prosperity. The ubiquity of innovative products and services is a testament to how quickly production and adoption occurs in today's knowledge-based economy.

This conference takes this logic one step further. The addition of the word "inclusive" makes the necessary and important connection between the imperatives of economic growth, and the end-goal of Philippine society, that is, tangible benefits for all Filipinos.

This is best summed up by the *Ambisyon 2040* goal, which envisions a predominantly middle-class society by 2040, where poverty and hunger have been eradicated, and with sufficient, good quality jobs available locally.

Innovation for inclusive growth is also front and center in the Philippine Development Plan of the Duterte Administration. The plan emphasizes the establishment of inclusive innovation centers that can become the focal points for realizing the potentials of technology to address the needs of both the global market as well as local development.

USAID is proud to support this very worthy endeavor.

When we began our work, in partnership with many people in this room, we set an ambitious goal of catalyzing government, industry, and academia to address the obstacles in achieving a vibrant innovation ecosystem.

USAID has made innovation the centerpiece of our higher education programming these past five years. Through our Science, Technology, Research and Innovation for Development, or STRIDE project, and our partnership with the Philippine Development S&T Foundation, or PhilDev, we have invested almost 300 million Philippine pesos a year since 2012 to strengthen the innovation ecosystem in the Philippines.

We tried different approaches, learned valuable lessons, and most importantly, built new partnerships. There is now a network of innovation champions who aspire to the same ambition.

I believe that many of the key people in that network are here today, eager to discuss the next steps.

Thank you to Secretary Lopez and the Department of Trade and Industry for making us your partner in this. A special thanks to Dr. Fita Aldaba for her leadership. I would also like to thank Dado Banatao from PhilDev and the other partners for providing your technical

expertise.

I would also like to thank in particular our STRIDE team led by Dr. David Hall for all the hard work. Thank you to all our partners in the Philippine government, academia, and industry.

USAID has been pleased to support the Philippines' ambition to achieve its true potential and creating a more prosperous, stable and secure nation for all Filipinos.

Maraming salamat at mabuhay!