



Opening Address

by

SUSUMU ITO

JICA Country Representative

- 1) Honorable Secretary Ramon Lopez
- 2) Undersecretary Ceferino Rodolfo
- 3) Assistant Secretary Rafaelita Aldaba,
- 4) Mr. Clay Epperson, Deputy Mission Director,
USAID
- 5) Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Good morning. Magandang Umaga.



I'd like to begin by thanking the Department of Trade and Industry for making JICA a part of this important event.

JICA is pleased to join you in this dialogue and meeting of minds towards sustaining the revival of the Philippine manufacturing industry. I believe this summit is certainly more relevant than ever as the Philippines' strives to maintain its growth path, and also since the global manufacturing business is changing so fast.

Just recently, a Financial Times story featured how robot armies are changing industries in



developed and emerging economies. A photo of a robot pouring beer at a bar went with the article and looks very inviting. While the rise of industrial robots is seen as a threat to the human work force, the article pointed out an interesting insight: that while robotic systems are changing the world, an opportunity can be seen for industries that can support the software side to these machines.

Therefore, the exchange of ideas in this summit would also allow us to see how we can seize new opportunities in a sophisticated global manufacturing industry.



For our part, JICA is pleased to work with DTI in many fronts that impact manufacturing, specifically on international trade agreements, product standards safety, and investment promotion. Allow me to cite some of them.

Our project supporting Philippine industrial promotions strategies for the auto industry is now on its final phase. Hopefully, this cooperation contributes to scientific-based policy making to further integrate Filipino MSME manufacturers and service providers in the global market.



Just recently, JICA is also launching with DTI, Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and TESDA our cooperation to boost the Philippines' human resources. This new project aims to come up with a partnership model for supply value chain and industrial human resource development. This also involves the academe, foreign and local companies on developing the competencies of the Filipino workforce, and attracting much needed investments.

Thus, this summit encourages us all to look into the challenges we face and find a way forward.



JICA believes that the Philippines can be equally progressive as its neighboring countries in Asia. Industry 4.0 or the current trend towards intelligent and flexible production systems is an opportunity that the Philippines cannot miss.

Japan, where manufacturing accounts for a large portion of our gross domestic product, has already initiated industrial value chain strategies to deal with this global shift.

The Philippines, with its young, trainable, and English speaking work force, is at an advantage. The challenge is how to make it possible to attract more



foreign direct investors and speed up infrastructure development to support industries and uplift the lives of Filipinos.

Now is the time for the Philippines to find its niche, identify strategic policy actions, and maximize the transformation in the global manufacturing industry.

On this note, I wish everyone a productive summit. JICA looks forward to more years of successful and solid partnership with the Philippines.

Thank you.

Data Source:

“Robot armies start to transform world of work”

<https://www.ft.com/content/f04128de-c4a5-11e7-b2bb-322b2cb39656>

“Industry 4.0” <https://www.isa.org/intech/20160601/>.