



Good morning,

I would like to greet our special guests of course, Former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Secretary Bebot Bello, our favorite Labor Secretary, and of course, Senator Miguel Zubiri and Senator Bam Aquino. These two senators have been prime movers in the Senate in helping micro, small and medium enterprises. Sen. Bam Aquino was the one who enacted the Go Negosyo Act which led to the rise of more than 460 Go Negosyo stores. Thank you, Bam.

And of course, my partner, Ramon Lopez, stop the interview. Come in. Ramon Lopez has been with Go Negosyo for so many years. When we started, he was my Executive Director, and if not for him, Go Negosyo would not be here today. And today, he is the trade secretary, fighting for many of our small and micro entrepreneurs.

Of course, I would also like to greet our new partner, Mr. Okada. Mr. Okada will host all the next three summits, and the ASEAN Business Awards, in his new Okada Manila Hotel.

I would also like to thank our sponsors here -- of course, Tessie Sy-Coson of SM-BDO, San Miguel Corporation and Ramon Ang, ICTSI, PLDT and many other sponsors out there who believed that ASEAN is the way to move forward.

I would like to give a special recognition to Former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. She was the one who appointed me as a Presidential Adviser during her time. And that was the start of the Go Negosyo movement. If not for her, we all would not be in this room today.

I would also like to recognize my father Jose Concepcion, Jr. My father was a great mentor, although he has lapses in his memory, he has always been my inspiration all these years. 10 years ago, he was the Chairman of the ASEAN Business Advisory Council. And many of the members of the ASEAN Business Advisory Council who are all here today, were his colleagues. 10 years later, I find myself as the chairman of this year's ASEAN Business Advisory Council. Talk about destiny and talk about mentorship.

Many of you here, within the ASEAN Business Advisory Council, and all the chambers have been very supportive of the private sector's initiative of really changing the lives of the Filipino people. This event with the ASEAN BAC's theme "Partnering for Change, Prosperity for All" is the most important thing in my mind that the ASEAN has to achieve. Why? If not all countries would benefit from the integration of ASEAN in the next 50 years, ASEAN might not last.

If only few countries benefit and the rest will struggle, nothing will happen. Creating prosperity for all and leaving no nation behind is to me the most important objective of ASEAN. Each brother helping one another in achieving a better life for their nation and their citizens.

Our President Rodrigo Duterte has, as he said, surprisingly won the election. Which means many Filipinos out there, do feel that they have not been part of the growing economy for the past years. We have seen that 99.6% of the entire business community, belong to the MSME



sector and this goes to all other ASEAN countries who are also in the same boat where we are in.

We have appreciated countries like Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore who have really progressed. Many of them, have lowered their poverty levels remarkably, especially Vietnam.

The biggest challenge in our country is agriculture. To me, agriculture is the game changer. It is what will change the lives of many Filipinos. We belong to the 0.4% of the entire business community. We can make decisions that will affect the lives of many people. Many of us control power, real estate, labor, ports, etc. But why are we all here as human beings? It is about time that we try to change and balance their needs and our own needs to really practice inclusivity.

As I shared with many of the businessmen and entrepreneurs in this room, being publicly listed and being in control of our business and all of that is sometimes hard since we have to share the profits we have because of our investors. We are always faced with the challenge to grow, to expand and to meet certain profit requirements. But then, how do we balance that with inclusive growth? We see SM, Rustan's, Robinsons and other supermarkets buying more from our farmers. That is what we need. Many of you in this room, can control the destiny of your own suppliers by mentoring them.

The ASEAN BAC has adopted mentorship as its main deliverable this year. And the power of mentorship as we have seen it—you yourselves, your own parents who have mentored you to where you are today-- made you successful. What made me successful is my grandparents, my parents, my school and my business partners who are with me today. And of course, the entire Kapatid movement that we have all started. Now is the chance to help.

In our country, the Department of Trade and Industry with Sec. Ramon Lopez and Go Negosyo have a massive mentoring program. We wish that this program will progress and really help our less fortunate entrepreneurs. But it will really take time and resources like in many other ASEAN countries.

I believe in the power of mentorship. This year, by November, the ASEAN BAC will launch the ASEAN Mentorship for Entrepreneurs Network (AMEN). This will be composed of hundreds of entrepreneurs from each country who will share their insights and knowledge on their respective fields and strengths.

Again, the event is not going to be successful if we will not achieve prosperity for all. We invited all of you today because we believe that you can connect and help build the unity to start changing the lives of many of our micro and small entrepreneurs. In the end, life is short, we are not here to last or keep our wealth forever. As we age, I'm aging and I'm sure many of you are aging as well, we all have to think of our next life and what it will mean. I guess, wealth, when used properly to help other people is what is asked of us. To those who are given the most, the expectation is far greater. I request that this hopefully is the beginning of really creating greater prosperity for every citizen of the 10 ASEAN countries.

Thank you!

SPEECH_JoeyConcepcion
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