

Presidential Communications Operations Office

Presidential News Desk

**SPEECH OF
PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
DURING THE
PHILIPPINES-RUSSIA BUSINESS FORUM**

[Column Hall, House of the Unions, Moscow, Russia | 04 October 2019]

Thank you. Kindly take your seats.

House Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano and the honorable members of the House of Representatives; Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea; Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr.; Trade and Industry Secretary Ramon Lopez and other members of the Cabinet; Senator Christopher Lawrence Go; Philippine Ambassador to the Russian Federation Carlos Sorreta; our friends from the Philippine and Russian business community; other distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen.

Good afternoon. I am much delighted to join you in this important event aimed at further enhancing trade and investment relations between the Philippines and Russia. Your presence here is a strong vote of confidence in the Philippine economy.

I thank you for your interest to do business as we are with you. On the Philippine-Russian economic relations, Russia is a priority trade and investment market for the Philippines. I am pleased to know that our economic exchanges are increasing.

Last year, our total trade reached US\$1.36 billion. It has more than doubled in 2017 at US\$568 million. Philippine export to Russia also reached US\$86 million last year and increased from almost US\$70 million in 2017. And this year, this upward trajectory continues. This indicates promising ties between our economies at an even higher level.

Towards the end, we open the Philippine trade and investment center in Moscow in 2018. We also established an intergovernmental consultative mechanism purely for economic concerns.

I am pleased that in the recent meeting, our economic officials in August of 2019 here in Moscow, they agreed to further maximize opportunities in trade and investments, agriculture, transport, and infrastructure.

We signed cooperation agreements in the aerospace, automotive infrastructure, energy, and pharmaceutical industries. These are mutually beneficial for both our countries. Our efforts to revitalize bilateral relations are bearing fruit. Very recently, two or more Philippine --- fishery establishments gained accreditation to export to Russia and to other Eurasian markets.

I personally thank President Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev for this, knowing this will create more jobs for the Filipinos.

In the coming days, we are determined to bring more of our food products to Russia. Just last week, we had a delegation of 14 top Filipino companies to the world-renowned World Food Moscow in 2019 Fair. In the coming years we hope that more and more Russians will get to enjoy our top quality export products.

The Philippines' robust economy is attracting investors every year. Our growth rate is steady and going strong. Our national or annual GDP growth rate was positive for 82 consecutive quarters and above six percent past 70 [years?] since 2012.

We are one of the fastest growing economies in Asia and the second fastest in the ASEAN. Our economic advantage lies on the strength of our young workforce --- population. Our macroeconomic fundamentals remain strong.

We invite because we feel that investors have shown a strong trust and confidence in my administration with record-breaking investments. We invite our Russian friends to invest and do more business in the Philippines.

We offer competitive fiscal and non-fiscal incentives to jumpstart qualified investment projects from infancy to maturity of business operations. And these include tax --- income tax holiday that exempts the company from the payment of the 30 percent corporate earning tax from four to six years from the start of commercial operations; additional bonus for three years subject to [set?] conditions such as export earnings, labor generation, and the use of indigenous materials; the gradual reduction --- corporate income tax rate

from 30 to 20 after the ITH or initial investments; tax and duty-free importation of capital equipment; tax and duty-free importation of raw materials and supplies use in the exports; VAT, value added tax refund for locally-purchased raw materials use in exports; then the special non-immigrant working visa for those employed foreign nationals.

With these, I invite you to participate in the massive Build, Build, Build infrastructure program especially in transport and railway construction where Russia has high expertise.

In closing, I say that we indeed we have made significant progress in creating a conducive environment for a robust economic engagement between our countries.

With strong resolve and commitment, I am confident that our economic ties will continue to prosper to its full potential. The new business agreements forged today will bring closer to us in our goal.

In closing, let me assure you that your investments are assured of gains and protection in my country.

Thank you and congratulations to you all. *[applause]*

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