

PHILIPPINE STATEMENT
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Secretary
Department of Labor and Employment
Republic of the Philippines

*(As delivered by HONORABLE REYDELUZ D. CONFERIDO,
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6TH APEC HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT MINISTERIAL MEETING
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Sub-theme: Supporting Inclusive and Sustainable Growth; Addressing the Social
Dimensions of Globalization

Introduction

1. **His Excellency Mr. Bui Quang Vinh**, Minister of Planning and Investment of Viet Nam; **Dr. Young-Hwan Kim**, Human Resource Development Working Group Lead Shepherd; the representative of the APEC Secretariat Executive Director; **Mr. Malcolm Greening**, Labor and Social Protection Network Coordinator; **Mr. Meng-Liang Tsai**, Capacity-building Network Coordinator; Ministers of the Human Resource Development and Heads of Delegations, delegates, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

In behalf of H.E. Rosalinda D. Baldoz, Philippine Secretary of Labor and Employment, I have the honor of delivering the following statement.

Decent Work as Key Strategy to Realize Inclusive Growth and to Address the Social Dimension of Globalization

2. In the Bogor Goals adopted in 1994, APEC economies recognized the need to develop human resources in a more effective way so as to attain sustainable growth and equitable development, to reduce disparities, and to improve the economic and social well-being of our peoples. In the light of the economic integration so far achieved in our most dynamic region, the Philippines recognizes the key role of promoting social protection in balancing the pursuit of economic benefits of integration and realizing the aspirations of women and men for decent work and better quality of life.
3. Decent work for our most important human resources sums up the fundamental aspiration of the global community that converges through the International Labor Organization (ILO). The goal is to create adequate opportunities for work in conditions of equity, freedom and dignity. Regardless of the economies' different levels of economic development in the Asia Pacific Region and their varying causes of risks and vulnerabilities, decent work offers all of them a broad enough

framework that can serve as universal guiding principle for promoting shared and inclusive prosperity and in addressing the social challenges arising from a globalized economy, particularly in harnessing human resources as the primary force in social and economic development, while ensuring that opportunities for reaping benefits are universal and inclusive.

At the heart of promoting decent work is the goal of ensuring that the outcome yields workers that are mobile, job-ready, skilled and competent, which in turn should help produce sustainable and competitive enterprises.

4. The administration of President Benigno S. Aquino III anchored its Philippine Development Plan in advancing inclusive growth through massive employment generation, poverty reduction, and enhancing the competitiveness and efficiency of enterprises. Its sectoral plan on labor and employment aims to invest in human resource as the best asset of the country - to make them employable and competitive, while also promoting industrial peace based on social justice. Under the reform on governance, for the first time, the national budget has been realigned such that the delivery of social services now receives the highest resource allocation, even over defense and debt servicing. With sustained economic growth and strategic investment in human resource that will produce the skills sets required by the industry, the UN projects that the Philippines will reap the benefits of being in her demographic sweet spot until 2025.
5. Referring to the pillar of decent work in employment, APEC must also put emphasis on mobility and job-readiness, to match the demand of industries. Likewise, recognizing regional frameworks of cooperation on skills and professional qualifications as integral to promoting employability and mobility in the region, APEC may take note of the experiences and principles from the work on ASEAN Qualifications Referencing Framework or AQRF, the text of which has been completed for endorsement by the ASEAN Leaders in the 25th ASEAN Summit this November. Linked to APEC through the support of the Australia and New Zealand and the Asia-Pacific Quality Network, AQRF, complemented by mutual recognition agreements, can be a crucial step in setting up a regional framework of qualifications and mobility governance. Anticipating the requirements for regional mobility, Philippines has redesigned its basic education system to add two more years and address our deficiency in the past. It has adopted the Philippine Qualifications Framework for skills and professions, benchmarked with international standards in consultation with industries. It continues to implement an enterprise-based, community-oriented and industry-driven technical-vocational skills development system. It is pioneering a full employment facilitation cycle to shorten school-to-work transition, with the support of the Asian Development Bank and the Canadian International Development Agency. Recognizing the biggest share of employment generation from micro to small enterprises, the Philippines has adopted an integrated, human resource-driven, ladderized-productivity training programs to improve SME competitiveness and up-scaling into higher value chains.
6. **On the pillar of social protection**, universal minimum guarantees are essential to

inclusive growth and are at the heart of social dimension of globalization. The Philippines calls on APEC economies to be guided by the recently adopted ILO *Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012*, which establishes four sets of minimum social guarantees such as: (a) access to essential health care, including maternity care; (b) basic income security for children, providing access to nutrition and education; (c) basic income security for persons in active age who are unable to earn sufficient income, in particular in cases of sickness, unemployment, maternity and disability; and, (d) basic income security for older persons.

Such guarantees should be provided to all residents and all children, as defined in national laws and regulations, and subject to existing international obligations.

7. The Philippines is committed to complete its Assessment Based National Dialogue to determine its nationally defined social protection floor on the four guarantees to implement its *Enhanced Social Protection Framework and Strategy*. It covers all persons in situations of vulnerability and facilitates transition from the informal to the formal economy through a convergent program for livelihood; emergency employment; conditional cash transfer; universal health and social security coverage; income support for poor but deserving students and; convergence program against child labor. Prone to environmental and weather hazards, the Philippines gives strong emphasis on building resilient communities and social and physical infrastructure through a build-back better strategy that is convergent, technology-based and innovations-driven.
8. **On the pillar of rights at work**, the Philippines calls upon APEC to strengthen the regime of protection for all workers including migrant workers, through the observance of core labor standards and principles of the *United Nations Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families*, the *ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers* and the Declaration of the 2013 UN High-level Dialogue on International Migration. For migrants in crisis, the UN (supported by a task force composed of US and the Philippines) will set up a multilateral cooperation framework on protection of migrants involving sending, receiving and transit countries and other stakeholders.
9. The Philippines further calls upon APEC to take note of regional frameworks and practices in safety and security at workplaces, particularly the ASEAN Labor Inspection Conference which continues to serve as the platform for the exchange of best practices in labor inspection and the ASEAN Occupational Safety and Health Network, which helped raise the profile of practice of occupational safety and health in ASEAN through a scorecard system and mechanisms for standards compliance through cooperation, capacity building and awards system for the private sector.
10. The Philippines implements a new labor law compliance system that combines regulatory and developmental, tripartite incentive-based approaches, framed along decent work and enterprise competitiveness. It has a flexible and predictable wage determination system consisting of a first tier in the form of a social safety net and

a second tier as the voluntary productivity-based and bipartite-determined level. It also has free, mandatory non-adversarial, conciliation service for dispute resolution. The Philippines has seen remarkable improvement in its competitiveness ranking for labor market efficiency, especially in the areas that have moved to the upper percentile of the ranking, such as cooperation in labor-employer relations, flexibility in wage determination, pay and productivity, reliance on professional management, capacity to retain talent and effect of taxation on incentives to work.

11. **On the pillar of social dialogue**, APEC should continue to be the forum for exchange of best practices and models and should strengthen links with businesses and other stakeholders, consistent with the *ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection* that recognizes social protection as a cross-cutting issue, requiring holistic approaches with the involvement of the private sector and civil society.

Moving Forward: Cooperation for Sustained Inclusive Growth

12. The Philippines continues to support the vision of APEC for highly-skilled and mobile workforce that will support competitiveness of enterprises and promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth in the region. It is thus timely for APEC to consider the vision of global workers to be presented by the APEC Businesses Advisory Council in this meeting. Even as the Philippines shares the vision, it recognizes that for the vision to be a reality, there is a need for a governance system where the rights of workers are universally protected, their skills and professional qualifications are multilaterally recognized, they are secured against various risks and vulnerabilities by an adequate system of social protection and they actively participate in decision-making processes through meaningful social dialogue. In short, decent work and competitiveness of enterprises should find their way in any development agenda that centers on human resources.
13. To further discuss innovative policies and strategies for improving the competitiveness of our economies, we invite you to the High Level Policy Dialogue on Human Capacity Building, which the Philippines and the Papua New Guinea will jointly host in May 2015. The proposed overall theme tends to lead toward developing Human Resources development for inclusive and sustainable growth, with proposed sub-themes that include: developing 21st century skilled workforce, aligning education and training with emerging industry requirements, and improving productivity of the small and medium enterprises thru training. We hope the member-economies will actively cooperate in this endeavor.

To our excellent Host Vietnam, we say “Kam-An”. We hope to see your delegations in Papua New Guinea and Boracay, Philippines in May next year. Mabuhay!

Thank you and may God Bless our Economies and Peoples.