

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND ATTACHED AGENCIES (January to December 2019)

OUTCOME 1: FOREIGN RELATIONS STRENGTHENED TO PROMOTE A STABLE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

A. PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF NATIONAL SECURITY

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) actively led efforts to engage bilateral and international partners to promote a stable security environment for the country's economic growth. This is in line with the Government's vision of a secure and prosperous Philippines that is confident of its place in the community of nations.

The Philippines strengthened its international presence with the opening of the following additional Foreign Service Posts in December 2019:

1. The Philippine Embassy in Rabat, Morocco
2. The Philippine Embassy in Stockholm, Sweden
3. The Philippine Consulate General in Barcelona, Spain
4. The Philippine Consulate General in Istanbul, Turkey
5. The Philippine Consulate General in Melbourne, Australia
6. The Philippine Consulate General in Nagoya, Japan

KEY ADVOCACIES:

PROTECTION OF MARITIME SOVEREIGN INTERESTS: WEST PHILIPPINE SEA AND PHILIPPINE RISE

During the Duterte administration, bilateral visits and cooperative mechanisms helped create an improved environment for managing issues in the West Philippine Sea (WPS).

At the same time, the Duterte Administration actively pursued the Philippines' advocacy on the South China Sea by pushing for the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC), a document that embodies the collective commitment of ASEAN and China to promote peace, stability and mutual trust and to ensure the peaceful resolution of disputes in the South China Sea.

The Philippines hosted the 4th Meeting of the Philippines-China Bilateral Consultation Mechanism on the South China Sea (BCM) on 02-03 April 2019 in Manila. The meeting had a productive exchange of views on ways to enhance

maritime cooperation in areas in the SCS, maritime search and rescue, maritime safety, maritime environmental protection/maritime scientific research, and fisheries in relevant Working Group meetings under the framework of the BCM, without prejudice to their respective positions on sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction, cooperation on joint exploration and development of maritime oil and gas.

The 5th meeting of the Philippines-China Bilateral Consultation Mechanism on the South China Sea (BCM) was held on 28 October 2019 in Beijing, China. Both sides recognized and are encouraged by the good momentum of the Philippines-China relations, and highlighted the importance of leveraging on the positive and fruitful meetings between President Rodrigo Roa Duterte and President Xi Jinping. The two sides recognized the importance of other complementary bilateral and multilateral platforms in maintaining regional peace and stability including ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations, the ASEAN Regional Forum, and the East Asia Summit. Both sides also reiterated the importance of the full and effective implementation of the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC), and their commitment to the early conclusion of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC).

As the Country Coordinator of the ASEAN–China Dialogue Relations from 2018 to 2021, the Philippines co-chaired the following meetings with China in 2019:

- 27th JWG-DOC on 27-28 February 2019 in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar;
- 28th JWG-DOC and the 17th SOM-DOC on 16-18 May 2019 in Hangzhou, China;
- 25th ASEAN-China Senior Officials' Consultation on 19 May 2019 in Hangzhou, China;
- 29th JWG-DOC on 21-22 July 2019, Penang, Malaysia; and
- 30th JWG-DOC and the 18th SOM-DOC on 12-15 October 2019, Da Lat, Viet Nam.

The DFA hosted the 141st Maritime Forum that was held on 25 January 2019 at the DFA Building. The Forum promotes public understanding of PH identity as an archipelagic state and it enriches the discourse among relevant stakeholders on how best to promote our interests as a maritime nation.

The DFA Office of ASEAN Affairs and Maritime and Ocean Affairs Office, in partnership with the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR), hosted the East Asia Summit (EAS) Workshop on Maritime Cooperation: Sustainable and Responsible Fisheries Management on 17-19 November 2019 at the Makati Diamond Residences, Makati City.

Representatives from 17 EAS participating countries and other experts from relevant organizations, including the ASEAN Secretariat and the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC), took part in the activity.

The Workshop had sessions on: Science-Based Fisheries Management; Climate Change, Disaster Risk Reduction Management and Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries; Initiatives to Address Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing; Addressing Post-Harvest Losses; and Sustainable Aquaculture/In-Land Fisheries.

The Workshop is the first EAS initiative on sustainable fisheries implemented under the Manila Plan of Action to Advance the Phnom Penh Declaration on the EAS Development Initiative (2018-2022).

COUNTER-TERRORISM / DE-RADICALIZATION/SECURITY COOPERATION

PH strengthened cooperation and coordination with neighboring countries and friends to help contribute to the government's counter-terrorism program and in managing non-traditional security threats.

Consistent with the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the Department, through the representation and facilitation by the Office of the Undersecretary for Civilian Security and Consular Concerns (OUCSCC), participated in the following international engagements in 2019:

African Regional High-Level Conference on Counter-Terrorism and Prevention of Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism, 10-11 July 2019, Nairobi Kenya

OUCSCC coordinated with the National Security Council (NSC) regarding its participation in the African Regional High-Level Conference on Counter-Terrorism and Prevention of Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism held on 10-11 July 2019 in Nairobi Kenya. The event was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kenya and the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), and is the first follow-up to the first High-Level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of UN Member States held in June 2018 in New York.

In the Philippine statement, the NSC highlighted the country's experience in preventing and countering violent extremism, and focused on similar experiences, challenges and strategies of the Philippines and Africa, as well as best practices that can be shared.

Regional Workshop on "Enhancing the Skills of Southeast Asian Officials in Relation to the Exploitation of Social Media and the Internet to Counter the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Phenomenon and Violent Extremism," 11-12 July 2019, Tokyo, Japan

OUCSCC, alongside the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (NICA), the Anti-Terrorism Council – Program Management Center (ATC–PMC), the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), and the Philippine National Police (PNP) participated in the Regional Workshop on "Enhancing the Skills of Southeast Asian Officials in Relation to the Exploitation of Social Media and the Internet to Counter the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Phenomenon and Violent Extremism" held on 11-12 July 2019 in Tokyo, Japan. The event was organized by the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) under the UNOCT.

The Workshop is the first part of UNCCT's "Social Media for Investigations" Project and served as a venue to enhance Member States' understanding of the threat and to identify key gaps in their ability to prevent, mitigate, recover and restore.

The PH highlighted that it is strengthening its domestic laws on terrorism through its efforts in amending the Human Security Act, which amendments seek to include provisions on foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs). It was also shared that the ATC has recently approved the National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (NAP P/CVE) and that with the assistance of UN bodies, workshops have been convened in developing the country's strategic communications plan in this area.

Round-table Discussion on Foreign Terrorist Fighters in Southeast Asia, 24-25 July 2019, Bangkok, Thailand

OUCSCC, alongside NICA, the Intelligence Service of the AFP (ISAFP), the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), PNP and the Bureau of Immigration (BI), participated in the Round-table Discussion on Foreign Terrorist Fighters in Southeast Asia held on 24-25 July 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand. The event was organized by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific with funding from the Government of Canada.

The event sought to achieve two purposes: (a) present and discuss the preliminary finding of UNODC's research study on FTFs conducted between 2017 and 2018 in four focus countries; and (b) receive updates from the participants on recent developments on the subject since the beginning of 2018.

During the event, the Philippines highlighted that it recently approved the NAP P/CVE, which transcends the traditional kinetic approach and aims to address the root causes of violent extremism beyond its mere ideological underpinnings. PH also highlighted that in the social media sphere, the Philippines recognizes the efficacy and power of terrorist propaganda in luring and enticing potential recruits. Further, successive workshops involving communications officers of national agencies have been conducted recently, and a TWG is currently in the process of finalizing the national narrative for mass roll out and implementation.

14th Meeting of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation – Counter-Terrorism Working Group (APEC-CTWG) in the sidelines of the Third APEC Senior Officials Meetings, 18-19 August 2019, Puerto Varas, Chile

The Department, through OUCSCC, participated in the 14th Meeting of the APEC-CTWG in the sidelines of the Third APEC Senior Officials Meetings held on 18-19 August 2019 in Puerto Varas, Chile. The 14th APEC-CTWG was hosted by the Chilean Government.

The discussion centered on "Secure Finance" (Terrorism Financing), "Secure Infrastructure" (Target Hardening), "Secure Supply Chain" (Secure Trade), and

“Secure Travel” (Passenger/Transport), which together form the “Four Pillars of APEC-CTWG” with respect to security matters vis-à-vis trade facilitation.

National Workshop for Officials of the Philippines on Enhancing the Skills of Officials in Relation to the Exploitation of Social Media to Counter the Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) Phenomenon and Other Violent Extremism, 19-21 August 2019, Tagaytay City, Philippines

OUCSCC participated in this Workshop held on 19-21 August 2019 at Taal Vista Hotel, Tagaytay City, Philippines. The event was organized by the UNCCT under the UNOCT, in collaboration with UNODC, UN Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED), and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), and was conducted to raise awareness of the FTF phenomenon while increasing the participants’ understanding of legislation, research, analysis, investigations, prosecution, and adjudication techniques in relation to the use of social media by violent extremists.

3rd Philippines-Indonesia Joint Working Group on Combating Terrorism, 4-6 September 2019, Surabaya, Indonesia

OUCSCC formed part of the Philippine delegation, which was led by NSC and supported by the DOJ, PCG, and ATC-PMC, for the 3rd Philippines-Indonesia Joint Working Group on Combating Terrorism held on 4-6 September 2019 in Surabaya, Indonesia.

The working group meeting was designed to strengthen the relationship between the Philippines and Indonesia and form a united front against terrorism.

Regional Technical Workshop on “Effective Prevention and Intervention of the Use of Internet and Social Media by Young Adults for Terrorist Recruitment and Propaganda in South-East Asia,” 17-19 September 2019, Putrajaya, Malaysia

OUCSCC, alongside the Department of Justice (DOJ), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), PNP, and a member of the judiciary participated in the Regional Technical Workshop on “Effective Prevention and Intervention of the Use of Internet and Social Media by Young Adults for Terrorist Recruitment and Propaganda in South-East Asia” held on 17-19 September 2019 in Putrajaya, Malaysia. The workshop was organized by UNODC and provided a venue for prosecutors, criminal investigators, judges and policy makers to share their respective national criminal justice approach to prevent and counter the misuse of cyberspace for terrorist purposes, policy frameworks in collecting digital evidence, and challenges in presenting them in court.

3rd Country Visit — UN Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED), 10-12 October 2019, Manila, Philippines

The Department, through OUCSCC, assisted in organizing, and participated in the 3rd Country Visit of CTED on 10-12 October 2019 in Manila, Philippines. The objectives of the visit include the reassessment of the current terrorism threats in PH; learning about good practices of PH in counterterrorism; identification of efforts that the government is making to counter various threats; and making recommendations aimed at supporting PH in strengthening its capacities.

Cross Regional Workshop on “Promoting Regional Measures and Cooperation in Preventing Youth Involvement in Violent Extremism and Terrorism Through Effective Criminal Justice Approaches and Legal Frameworks in South and South-East Asia, 15-17 October 2019, Colombo, Sri Lanka

OUCSCC, alongside NSC and NYC, participated in the Cross Regional Workshop on “Promoting Regional Measures and Cooperation in Preventing Youth Involvement in Violent Extremism and Terrorism Through Effective Criminal Justice Approaches and Legal Frameworks in South and South-East Asia held on 15-17 October 2019 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The workshop was organized by UNODC to bring together policy makers, criminal justice practitioners and law enforcement offices to share experiences and good practices in the prevention of violent extremism.

DANGEROUS DRUGS

The DFA, as a member agency of both the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) and the Inter-Agency Committee on Anti-Illegal Drugs (ICAD), actively participated in the Philippine government’s anti-illegal drugs campaign through regular participation in DDB and ICAD meetings, workshops and other related activities, including the finalization exercises of the Philippine Anti-Illegal Drugs Strategy (PADS) indicators.

The DFA also finalized its Drug-Free Workplace Policy which aims to strengthen and institutionalize the Department’s programs and initiatives in line with the Philippine government’s anti-illegal drugs campaign.

ENVIRONMENT

Canada Garbage Issue

The Philippines asserted its right to protect its environment by pushing for Canada's retrieval of 69 container vans of Canadian garbage, which were illegally shipped to the Philippines in 2013 and 2014.

The Philippines has been requesting Canada to retrieve its garbage since 2014. An Inter-Agency Committee (IAC) on the issue was established in 2014 for this purpose.

Upon Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's announcement in November 2017 that it was "theoretically possible" for Canada to take back its garbage, the Philippines proposed the convening of a Philippines-Canada Technical Working Group (PH-CA TWG) to find a solution to the issue.

In March 2019, the PH-CA TWG convened to discuss the issue and explore possible options for the retrieval of the garbage.

On 23 April 2019, President Rodrigo Duterte called upon Canada to retrieve its garbage from the Philippines. A few days after the President's statement, Canada formally committed to shoulder the costs for the return shipment of its garbage.

The Philippines gave Canada until 15 May 2019 to retrieve its garbage. When Canada did not meet its deadline, the Philippines immediately recalled the Philippine Ambassador to Canada and the Consuls General in Canada. The Philippines also directed all government agencies to reduce official interaction with their Canadian counterparts, and to refrain from undertaking official trips to Canada.

Assisted by the Philippine IAC, Canada retrieved its garbage on 31 May 2019. The garbage arrived in Vancouver on 29 June 2019.

AMITY AND COOPERATION

High-Level Bilateral Engagements

The Duterte Administration expanded ties with ASEAN countries and traditional allies while enhancing engagement of non-traditional partners through the conduct of a series of high-level bilateral engagements (state and official visits) and bilateral meetings to countries listed below.

Numerous agreements were signed during the visits on economic and infrastructure projects. These agreements feed into the "Build, Build, Build" program of the Duterte Administration, which will provide the infrastructure and logistical support for the country's economic development.

Asia and the Pacific

China

President Duterte on 25 April 2019 held bilateral meetings with Chinese President Xi Jinping in the Great Hall of the People and with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang in the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse ahead of the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing.

President Duterte took the occasion to welcome more projects for the Philippines under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) “based on the principles of transparency and adherence to international law while reiterating both countries’ commitment in implementing various projects at the soonest possible time, meeting targets closely and ensuring that proper procedures and requirements are observed.”

President Duterte undertook an official visit to China on 28 August – 1 September. In his meeting with President Xi Jinping, the two leaders reaffirmed the long-standing friendship between the Philippines and China and renewed their commitment to further enhance the two countries’ Comprehensive Strategic Cooperation. They also expressed determination to fast-track negotiations for the conclusion of a binding Code of Conduct in the South China Sea.

President Duterte also met with Premier Li Keqiang and reiterated the Philippines’ strong resolve to further expand economic ties and people-to-people exchanges with China. At the same time, he stressed the importance of completing infrastructure projects supported by China with favorable financing arrangements. Premier Li conveyed his country’s commitment to step up cooperation to support the Duterte administration’s “Build, Build, Build” Program.

Six agreements were signed during the President’s official visit, covering cooperation in the areas of education, science and technology, finance, and customs, among others.

India

President Duterte received Indian President Ram Nath Kovind during the latter’s State Visit to the Philippines from 17 to 21 October 2019. The two leaders agreed to work together on defense and security cooperation and on further strengthening economic ties. They also committed to building a more dynamic and forward-looking relationship while highlighting linkages between Indians and Filipinos dating back centuries. Agreements on the areas of tourism, science and technology, shipping, and cultural exchanges were signed during the visit.

Indonesia

An agreement delineating the boundary between the overlapping exclusive economic zones (EEZs) of the Philippines and Indonesia officially entered into force following the exchange of the instruments of ratification in a special ceremony held on 01 August 2019.

Secretary Locsin and Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi signed Protocols of Exchange of the instruments of ratification concerning the delimitation of the EEZ between the two countries at the sidelines of the Southwest Pacific Dialogue held during the 52nd ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting on 1 August 2019 in Bangkok.

Japan

On 30-31 May 2019 in Tokyo, Japan, President Duterte had a Summit Meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and participated in the 25th Nikkei International Conference on the Future of Asia.

President Duterte and Prime Minister Abe agreed to enhance bilateral cooperation in infrastructure development, trade and investments, agriculture, labor, defense, maritime security and maritime domain awareness, people-to-people exchanges, and the pursuit of just and lasting peace and progress in Mindanao. The President conveyed appreciation for Japan's renewed support for the government's Build, Build, Build program, citing Japanese development assistance as the gold standard for the country's development cooperation with other partner countries. The President welcomed Japan's fresh commitment of around 25 billion yen for the development of Mindanao's road network, vocational training facilities and equipment, water supply development in the Bangsamoro, and livelihood programs, among other projects.

President Duterte and Prime Minister Abe also discussed modalities for greater cooperation in upgrading the Philippines' defense capabilities, including in maritime security and maritime domain awareness.

They explored opportunities to tap the demographic complementarity between the two countries to drive economic growth, including the possibility of Japan opening its door to skilled foreign labor.

The President held a bilateral meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during the 35th ASEAN Summit.

Myanmar

Secretary Locsin undertook his Official Introductory Visit to Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, from 21 to 22 May 2019, and co-chaired the 3rd Meeting of the Philippines-Myanmar Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation (JCBC) with his counterpart Myanmar Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin.

During the visit, Secretary Locsin called on Myanmar State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyii. Accompanied by Senior Foreign Affairs Adviser Ambassador Rosario G. Manalo, also currently Chair of the Independent Commission of Enquiry, Secretary Locsin and State Counsellor Suu Kyi discussed bilateral relations, as well as the situation in Rakhine State. The Secretary reaffirmed the Philippines' support for Myanmar's efforts.

Singapore

Secretary Locsin undertook his Official Introductory Visit to Singapore from 8 to 9 May 2019. During his official visit, Secretary Locsin called on Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at the Istana, and held a bilateral meeting with Singapore Foreign Minister Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Malaysia

On 10 July 2019, President Rodrigo Duterte received H.M. the Sultan of Johor Ibrahim Ibni Almarhum Sultan Iskandar and his spouse, H.M. Raja Zarith Sofiah, Permaisuri of Johor.

The President welcomed the Sultan's interest in expanding Johor State's commercial and business interaction with the Philippines. Halal development, agribusiness, infrastructure development, reciprocal investments, and closer business ties were among the areas identified as offering greatest potential for cooperation.

A dinner was hosted by the President, with key Cabinet officials in attendance, for the visiting Sultan.

Sultan Ibrahim made a brief visit to Davao City, before wrapping up his Philippine visit.

Singapore

Secretary Locsin undertook his Official Introductory Visit to Singapore from 8 to 9 May 2019. During his official visit, Secretary Locsin called on Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at the Istana, and held a bilateral meeting with Singapore Foreign Minister Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

President Duterte received Singaporean President Halimah Yacob during her State Visit on 9–12 September 2019. President Duterte expressed interest in deepening defense and security ties with Singapore and encouraged Singapore's participation in the country's priority investment areas. President Yacob noted that there is room to further boost trade and investment flows for the Philippines and Singapore. During the visit, eight agreements on cooperation in the areas of education, skills training, culture, agriculture, infrastructure, and data protection were signed.

South Korea

President Duterte and South Korean President Moon Jae-In held a bilateral meeting at the sidelines of the 30th ASEAN-ROK Commemorative Summit in Busan, South Korea on 25 November 2019. During the meeting, they signed a trade agreement opening the Philippine and South Korean markets for selected products and resolved to conclude free trade negotiations within next year. They also signed a social security treaty and made plans to put into action a bilateral memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the field of tourism.

Sri Lanka

State Visit of Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena on 15-19 January 2019. The Philippines and Sri Lanka have maintained cordial relations since the establishment of diplomatic relations on 11 January 1961.

Timor-Leste

Timor-Leste Foreign Minister Dr. Dionisio Da Costa Babo Soares visited the Philippines on 04-07 July 2019. FM Babo Soares paid a courtesy call on Secretary of Foreign Affairs Teodoro L. Locsin Jr. at the Office of the Secretary on 5 July 2019 and sought the Philippines' support for its bid for ASEAN membership. Secretary Locsin assured him of the Philippines' support for Timor-Leste's bid. The two ministers also took the opportunity to review the overall state of relations between the two countries and agreed to work together to explore opportunities for cooperation, particularly in the economic front.

Vietnam

Secretary Locsin undertook an official visit to Vietnam on 8–9 July. The Secretary held a bilateral meeting with Vietnam Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh. The two sides also agreed to further strengthen cooperation in maritime affairs, law enforcement and labor. The meeting also saw the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the two Foreign Ministries. The Secretary also paid a courtesy call on Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc later in the day.

Middle East and Africa

Bahrain

Visit to the Philippines of His Highness Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, First Deputy President of the Supreme Council for Youth Sports of the Kingdom of Bahrain on 6-8 March 2019

Ethiopia

The Philippines and Ethiopia concluded the First Bilateral Consultative Meeting on 22 November 2019 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Philippine delegation, led by DFA Office of Middle East and African Affairs Assistant Secretary Leslie J. Baja, and his Ethiopian counterpart, Asia and Pacific Countries Affairs Director-General, Dawit Yirga, discussed a whole range of political, economic and other bilateral issues, as well as exchanged views on a number of issues of mutual concern between the Philippines & Ethiopia. During the meeting, the Philippines expressed the hope that ties between the countries will steadily increase, with the opening of a Philippine Embassy in Addis Ababa by the end of 2020.

Iran

Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr. and Iran Deputy Foreign Minister Morteza Sarmadi discussed the status of bilateral relations between Manila and Tehran and regional developments during the courtesy call by the Iranian official at the Department of Foreign Affairs on 22 February 2019.

On behalf of their respective governments, Science and Technology Secretary Fortunato T. de la Peña and Iranian Vice President for Science and Technology Dr. Sorena Sattari signed the MOU between the Department of Science and Technology and the Vice-Presidency for Science and Technology on Scientific and Technological Cooperation.

Under the MOU, the two countries are poised to undertake joint research and development on innovation and technology of applied sciences, science expert exchanges, conduct joint trainings on specialized courses, promotion of collaboration between knowledge-based companies, private enterprises, and technology parks, among others.

Five areas of cooperation between the Philippines and Iran have been prioritized with the MOU, namely: agriculture and biotechnology, medicine and pharmaceuticals, space technology, advanced materials, and nanotechnology.

Israel

Deputy Director-General (DDG) for Asia and the Pacific of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel Gilad Cohen called on Foreign Affairs Undersecretary for Policy Enrique A. Manalo on 20 February 2019 at the Department of Foreign Affairs. DDG Cohen was in Manila from 17 to 20 February 2019 to head the Israeli delegation to the 10th Philippines-Israel Joint Commission Meeting that was held on 19 February 2019 at the Manila Diamond Hotel.

The 10th Philippines-Israel Joint Commission Meeting was held on 19 February 2019 at the Manila Diamond Hotel. The Philippine delegation was headed by Assistant Secretary Leslie J. Baja of the Office of Middle East and African Affairs (OMEAA) while the Israeli delegation was headed by Deputy Director-General (DDG) for Asia and the Pacific of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel Gilad Cohen.

The meeting enabled both parties to discuss key areas of cooperation in key areas such as labor, agriculture, tourism, trade and investments.

Libya

Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr. received visiting Libyan Health Minister Ahmed Mohamed Omar in a courtesy call at the Department of Foreign Affairs on 20 August 2019.

During the meeting, Secretary Locsin expressed appreciation for the kind hospitality extended by Libya to the more than 2,300 Filipinos working there and the steps being taken by the Libyan Government to address the concerns over remittances and salaries of Filipino nurses and other workers. The Foreign Affairs Secretary also promised to look into the request of the Libyan Government for the Philippines to allow the deployment of more nurses and other workers to Libya. Secretary Locsin also expressed his hope for peace and stability to return to Libya.

Oman

The Republic of the Philippines and the Sultanate of Oman held their 3rd Joint Bilateral Consultation Meeting on 5 December 2019 in Manila.

Foreign Affairs Undersecretary for Policy Enrique A. Manalo led the Philippine delegation while Undersecretary for Diplomatic Affairs Sheikh Khalifa bin Al Al-Harthy led the Omani delegation. Philippine Ambassador to Oman Narciso Castañeda, Omani Ambassador to the Philippines Munther Mahfoodh Salim Al-Mantheri and officials from the two foreign ministries were also present.

Palestine

Secretary of Foreign Affairs Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr. received visiting Palestine Deputy Foreign Minister Dr. Mazem Shamiyah at the Department of Foreign Affairs on 7 February 2019.

Qatar

President Rodrigo Roa Duterte met with the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, His Excellency Soltan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi, in a courtesy call at the Study Room of Malacañan Palace on 4 December 2019.

Secretary of Foreign Affairs Teodoro L. Locsin Jr. received Qatari Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Soltan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi, during the Qatari Minister's courtesy call at the Department of Foreign Affairs on 3 December 2019.

Secretary Locsin welcomed the visit of the Qatari Minister and conveyed appreciation for the hospitality of Qatar during President's Duterte visit to Qatar in 2017, and renewed the invitation of the President for the Qatari Emir to visit the Philippines and the support of Qatar in the Human Rights Council.

Qatari Minister Al-Muraikhi, on his part, thanked Secretary Locsin and expressed confidence in working together to expand bilateral cooperation between the Philippines and Qatar.

The courtesy call was followed by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding for the Establishment of Political Consultations on Issues of Common Interest Between the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, by Secretary Locsin and Minister Al-Muraikhi.

The MOU aims to expand and enhance bilateral relations by solidifying the political cooperation between the respective foreign ministries and diplomatic missions of the two countries.

Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Enrique A. Manalo hosted lunch for Qatari Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Soltan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi, during the Qatari Minister's visit to the Philippines on 4 December 2019.

Foreign Affairs Undersecretary for Policy Enrique A. Manalo received National Security Adviser to the Emir of Qatar Mohamed Bin Ahmad Bin Abdullah Al-Mesned at the Department of Foreign Affairs on 17 July 2019. During the call, the two officials exchanged views on security issues affecting their respective regions.

Saudi Arabia

President Duterte, on 20 August 2019, met with Dr. Abdullah Bin Mohammad Bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh, the president (Speaker) of the Majlis Al Shura (Consultative Council) of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, who arrived in the country for a parliamentary visit.

Also present during the call were House Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano, Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr., Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Adnan Alonto, and Deputy Speakers of the House of Representatives Mujiv Hataman and Raneo Abu.

House Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano received Dr. Abdullah Bin Mohammad Bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh on 20 August 2019. Both parties expressed readiness to enhance cooperation between the Shoura Council and the House of Representatives, particularly through the establishment of a Committee of Friendship between Filipino and Saudi legislators.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro L. Locsin Jr. received Saudi Arabia Majlis Al Shura (Consultative Council) Speaker Dr. Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Ibrahim Al Sheikh in a courtesy call on 19 August 2019 at the Department of Foreign Affairs.

United Arab Emirates

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Cooperation in Combating Human Trafficking was signed between the Philippines and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr. and UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan signed the MOU at the sidelines of the 74th United Nations General Assembly on 26 September 2019 in New York.

Under the MOU, the Philippines and the UAE will adopt procedures to combat human trafficking, share best practices, exchange information, promote human rights, and provide assistance in the protection, rescue, repatriation, recovery, and rehabilitation of trafficking victims in accordance with domestic laws.

The signing of the MOU also seeks to strengthen the bilateral relations and cooperation between the Philippines and the UAE. Both countries have ratified the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Palermo Protocol).

The Philippines as a country of origin has been in the forefront of the fight against human trafficking. By forging international cooperation and arrangements, the Philippines hopes to intensify the government's efforts to help prevent and stamp out this global problem.

Europe

Hungary

Secretary Locsin undertook an official visit to Hungary on 13–15 February 2019. He delivered a foreign policy lecture entitled “Independent and Sovereign: The Foreign Policy of the Philippines in a Changing Global Order” at Hungary’s Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade (IFAT). In his lecture, he mentioned that Philippine Foreign Policy has to ensure that the security challenges in the West Philippine Sea are met through the strengthening of bilateral and regional relations such as with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to achieve peace in the region.

Poland

Bilateral meeting between Secretary Locsin and Polish Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz on the sidelines of the ASEAN-EU FMM in Brussels on 21 January 2019.

Portugal

The Third Philippines-Portugal Political Consultations in Lisbon, Portugal was convened on 05 July 2019.

Russia

Bilateral talks were held with Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and with President Vladimir Putin. The visit saw the signing of agreements on science, health, culture, and Implementing Arrangement between the Department of National Defense of the Republic of the Philippines and the Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation of the Russian Federation for the Supply and Delivery of the Heavy Lift Helicopters.

Switzerland

The Eighth Philippines-Switzerland Political Consultations was convened in Berne on 03 July 2019

Americas

Canada

Secretary Locsin met with Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland on the sidelines of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting on 1 August 2019 in Bangkok, to discuss ways to further strengthen bilateral relations.

Chile

The 5th Philippines–Chile Political Consultations were held on 8 May 2019 in Santiago, Chile. The two sides outlined 20 Action Points to advance bilateral relations in the areas of security, disaster risk reduction and management, trade and investment, finance, agriculture, tourism, culture, air services, cooperation between diplomatic academies, and other technical cooperation initiatives.

The Philippines and Chile agreed to pursue negotiations on pending agreements on establishing a joint economic commission, tourism, standards of training for officials of merchant ships, as well as update existing agreements on culture and agriculture. The Philippine delegation was headed by DFA Undersecretary for Policy Enrique A. Manalo while the Chilean delegation was headed by Ambassador Patricio Torres, Secretary General of Foreign Policy.

Mexico

The 2nd Philippines - Mexico Bilateral Consultation Mechanism Meeting (BCM), Mexico City was convened on 06 May 2019.

Philippine Foreign Affairs Undersecretary for Policy Enrique A. Manalo and Mexican Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs Julián Ventura led their respective delegations in discussing bilateral political, economic, and socio-cultural issues, as well as pressing regional and multilateral issues, as a means to further deepen more than six decades of diplomatic relations between both countries.

United States of America

President Duterte received US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo on 28 February 2019 in a courtesy call and discussed issues concerning Philippine-US bilateral relations. During the call, Secretary Pompeo and the President reaffirmed their commitment to the mutual defense and security of both countries.

Secretary Locsin met US Secretary of State Pompeo on 01 March 2019 at the Department of Foreign Affairs.

The Philippines and the United States held the 8th Bilateral Strategic Dialogue (BSD) from 15 to 16 July 2019 in Manila. The BSD is a key mechanism for consultation and exchange of views on a broad range of bilateral, regional and global issues, and discussion on political, security, and economic cooperation between the Philippines and the United States.

Secretary Locsin received U.S. Secretary of Defense Esper in a courtesy call on 19 November 2019 at the Department of Foreign Affairs. Philippines - United States alliance, defense and security cooperation, and other issues of mutual interest to the Philippines and the United States were discussed.

Enhancing Regional and Multilateral Engagements

The Duterte Administration actively participated in regional and global platforms to pursue Philippine advocacies and interests in the international arena.

Participation in ASEAN and Related Activities

22nd ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting

Secretary of Foreign Affairs Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr. headed the Philippine delegation at the 22nd ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting in Brussels, Belgium on 21 January 2019. He joined his colleagues from the nine other ASEAN Member States, the ASEAN Secretary-General, and twenty-eight counterpart representatives from the European Union Member States, as well as officials from the European Union and European Council.

The Ministerial Meeting reviewed recent developments and discussed the future directions of ASEAN-EU dialogue relations. The meeting agreed in principle to elevate to the level of Strategic Partnership the EU's dialogue relationship with ASEAN, with details to be worked out later.

34th ASEAN Summit and Related Meetings

The President participated in the Plenary and Retreat sessions of the 34th ASEAN Summit, held on 22-23 June 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand, where he articulated the Philippines' commitment to the realization of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and emphasized concerns on the impact of rising protectionism and anti-globalization sentiments in the world, on the brewing competition among big powers, situation in the West Philippine Sea/South China Sea, among others.

Key outcome documents that were adopted by the ASEAN Leaders include the ASEAN Leaders' Vision Statement on Partnership for Sustainability, Bangkok Declaration on Combating Marine Debris in ASEAN Region, ASEAN Leaders' Statement on the ASEAN Cultural Year 2019, and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific.

The President also took part in ASEAN Leaders' interfaces with the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, ASEAN Youth, and the ASEAN Business Advisory Council.

13th Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines (BIMP-EAGA) Summit

At the 13th BIMP-EAGA Summit, where BIMP-EAGA marked its 25th anniversary, the President expressed the need to enhance military and police cooperation to address terrorism and piracy in the high seas and as a prerequisite to further sub-regional development. He also called for enhanced facilitation of cross-border trade and improved sub-regional connectivity, particularly in transportation and infrastructure links.

52nd ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM)

On 31 July 2019, H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand chaired the 52nd ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM) plenary session, starting with the 52nd ASEAN Foreign Ministers' (AMM) / Post Ministerial Conferences (PMCs) and Related Meetings held on 30 July – 3 August 2019 in Bangkok.

The Meeting acknowledged the progress made in ASEAN based on Thailand's Chairmanship theme of "Advancing Partnership for Sustainability" which gives high importance to promoting sustainability in all dimensions and efforts to achieve a people-centred ASEAN Community. The Ministers discussed the progress of implementation of initiatives agreed at the 34th ASEAN Summit, such as the "ASEAN Leaders' Vision Statement on Partnership for Sustainability" and the "ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific."

The Ministers also discussed the challenges due to the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the need to advance ASEAN in the areas of digital economy, infrastructure development as well as projects to narrow the development gaps within ASEAN. They also noted the increasing interest by external partners to intensify engagement with ASEAN. They exchanged views on regional and international issues, such as the situation in Rakhine State and efforts made towards the conclusion of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) this year. They also noted the complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Ministers also agreed to have a Joint ASEAN Statement at the SDG Summit and the Climate Action Summit later in September this year.

The ASEAN-China Ministerial Meeting held on 31 July 2019, with Philippines as the Country Coordinator for ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations, discussed regional developments, such as the ASEAN Leaders' adoption of the ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific and negotiations on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea. In addition, the Meeting encouraged the promotion of ASEAN-China cooperation in connectivity, digital economy, Smart Cities Network, educational cooperation, media exchanges, and preparations for the 22nd ASEAN-China Summit to be held in November in Thailand.

The 22nd ASEAN-China Summit during the 35th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits reviewed the progress in the ASEAN-China cooperation framework and discussed future directions to strengthen their Strategic Partnership and the realization of the ASEAN-China Strategic Vision 2030.

The Meeting issued the Chairman's Statement of the 22nd ASEAN-China Summit and adopted the Joint Statement on Strengthening Media Exchanges and Cooperation between ASEAN and China, the ASEAN-China Leaders' Statement on Smart City Cooperation Initiative and the ASEAN-China Joint Statement on Synergising the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The Meeting also designated 2020 as the ASEAN-China Cooperation on Digital Economy Year.

35th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits

The President attended the 35th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits on 2-4 November 2019, Bangkok, Thailand at the invitation of Thai Prime Minister General Prayut Chan-o-cha. The Summits provided an opportunity for the Leaders concerned to exchange views regarding regional and international issues affecting our region and beyond. It also provided a platform to further advance common areas of cooperation with other Plus One partners.

At the 35th ASEAN Summit Plenary, the President called for further ASEAN Community-building efforts and elaborated on concerns such as transnational crime, the fourth industrial revolution, trade-related tensions, environmental sustainability, and geopolitical dynamics.

The ASEAN Leaders adopted seven (7) outcome documents and noted another ten. Key outcome documents that were adopted include the ASEAN Joint Statement on Climate Change to the 25th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP25), the Declaration on the Protection of Children from All Forms of Online Exploitation and Abuse in ASEAN, the ASEAN Declaration on the Rights of Children in the Context of Migration, the Bangkok Declaration on Advancing Partnership in Education for 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in ASEAN, and the ASEAN Leaders Declaration on ASEAN Vaccine Security and Self-Reliance (AVSSR), among others.

The Leaders noted the Terms of Reference of the ASEAN Smart Cities Network which included the Philippines' participating cities - Manila, Davao, and Cebu.

At the 14th East Asia Summit (EAS), the EAS Leaders adopted the following Statements: (a) Combating the Spread of Illicit Drugs; (b) Cooperation to Combat Transnational Crime; and (c) Partnership for Sustainability. The Leaders discussed key areas of cooperation and exchanged views on a number of regional and international issues of common concern, including sustainable development, regional architecture, countering terrorism, combating marine plastic debris, the situation in the Korean Peninsula and in the Rakhine State. The Leaders also emphasized the freedom of navigation and overflight over and above the South China Sea, and respect for international law including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Seas.

At the 22nd ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Summit, the APT Leaders affirmed the strategic role of the ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation (APT) framework in promoting peace, security, stability, and prosperity in East Asia. The leaders highlighted APT cooperation in strengthening solidarity and fostering mutual trust among East Asian countries, and in building an East Asian Community with ASEAN as the driving force.

The President attended several Plus One Summits with China, India, the United Nations, the US, and Japan. These Summits discussed key areas of cooperation and other challenges in the region.

As Country Coordinator of ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations, the President delivered the ASEAN Common Statement at the 22nd ASEAN-China Summit. The Common Statement reaffirmed the Leaders' commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) and to the ongoing negotiations towards an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC). In his intervention, the President called on all states to exercise self-restraint and refrain from undertaking activities, including land reclamation, militarization of features and paramilitary actions, which erode trust and confidence among concerned states and increase tensions in the region. He also expressed the Philippines' hope to arrive at a COC that is responsive to the situation on the ground at the soonest possible time. The Leaders affirmed the need to continue enhancing political-security dialogue through regular high-level meetings and coordination through various ASEAN-led mechanisms. They agreed to strengthen trade, investment and tourism flows, and reaffirmed commitment to the maintenance and promotion of peace, security, stability and safety in the South China Sea. They also committed to increase people-to-people exchanges.

United Nations

Secretary of Foreign Affairs Teodoro L. Locsin Jr. led the Philippine delegation to the high-level week of the 74th session of the UN General Assembly from 24 to 30 September 2019. He was accompanied by a 90-person delegation, which included Secretary of Health Francisco T. Duque III and representatives of Congress, the departments of foreign affairs, health, justice, social welfare and development and finance, and from the offices of the Executive Secretary, NEDA, and the Climate Change Commission. The Philippine delegation attended approximately 80 meetings and side-events during the week-long event, which culminated in the delivery of the

Philippine Statement at the General Debate on 28 September by DFA Secretary Locsin.

Migration and anti-human trafficking

The Philippines, together with Bahrain and Nigeria, organized the high-level event entitled “Combatting Trafficking in Migration Contexts: Best Practices, Challenges and the Global Compact for Migration” at the sidelines of the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly held in New York on 27 September 2019.

Asia-Europe Meeting

Secretary Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr., representing President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, participated at the 12th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Summit held in Brussels, Belgium from 18 to 19 October 2019.

During the meeting, the Philippines underscored that human rights and sustainable development are not mutually exclusive in the context of inclusive economic growth. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals are the framework of Philippine development plans. The Philippines highlighted that the country is continuously engaged in initiatives to address the varying challenges and threats of climate change and develops cooperation at all levels to reduce the human cost of natural disasters. The Philippines emphasized that migration is a shared responsibility of sending, receiving, and transit states and stressed that the Global Compact on Migration (GCM) is not a charter of rights but a universal commitment to decency.

Other ASEM meetings attended:

13-14 December 2019 - Asia-Europe Meeting Senior Officials’ Meeting, Madrid, Spain

15 -16 Dec 2019 - 14th Asia-Europe Meeting Foreign Ministers’ Meeting (ASEM FMM14), Madrid, Spain

FEALAC

The Philippine delegation to the 9th Forum for East Asia Latin America Cooperation (FEALAC) Foreign Ministers’ Meeting (FMM) held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic on 6–9 November 2019 was headed by Special Envoy/ Ambassador Demetrio R. Tuason. During his intervention, Ambassador Tuason highlighted the importance of expanding and deepening inter-regional cooperation between the two regions through FEALAC. The meeting adopted the Santo Domingo Declaration which discussed a broad range of areas, such as trade, environment, culture, tourism, among others. The Declaration also reflected the positions that the

Philippines raised on the following issues: Permanent Secretariat, Regional Coordination Selection, Modifying the Status of Forum to Summit, Proposed Working Group on Environment.

Nuclear Energy

DFA Undersecretary for Policy Enrique A. Manalo co-chaired with Ambassador Amanda Gorely, First Assistant Secretary for International Security Division of Australia's Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) Working Group (WG) and Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) on 21-22 March 2019. The Meeting, which was hosted by the Philippines, is part of the preparations for the meeting of the 3rd Preparatory Committee (PrepCom3) of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) held from 29 April to 10 May 2019, in New York, and ultimately for the NPT Review Conference in 2020.

The Meeting was attended by delegates from the following country members of the NPDI: Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, The Netherlands, Nigeria, Poland, and Turkey. Also present were representatives from Geneva PM, NYPM, Vienna PE/PM and UNIO.

The Meeting discussed the next vital steps and approaches to promote concrete and practical measures towards a successful 2020 NPT Review Conference, such as refining the group's working papers and its outreach activities with other concerned parties to the NPT.

Women's Issues

The Philippines has taken the lead supported by like-minded Member States in spearheading the UN General Assembly Resolution titled "Violence against women migrant workers" which was adopted by consensus by the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly on 19 November 2019 at the UN Headquarters.

The resolution calls upon member states to incorporate a human rights, gender-sensitive and people-centered perspective in legislation, policies and programmes on international migration and on labor and employment for the prevention of and protection of migrant women against violence and discrimination, exploitation and abuse.

International Candidatures

The DFA spearheaded efforts in several international candidatures, and resulted in the Philippines being elected to seats in the following international organizations:

- Mr. Patrick Chuasoto's candidature to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) for the term 2020-2022
Mr. Patrick Chuasoto, Deputy Chief of Mission of the Philippine Embassy in Washington D.C., was elected to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) for the term 2020-2022 at elections held during the Fifth Committee Meeting of the 74th Session of the UNGA on 01 November 2019 in New York.
- Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) Executive Council for the term 2019-2021
The Philippines was re-elected to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) Executive Council for the term 2019-2021 at elections held in July 2019 in Paris.

The Philippines, through IOC National Focal Point Dr. Gil Jacinto, has been a member of the IOC-EC for the terms 2015-2017 and 2017-2019. This is the Philippines' third consecutive term as one of the 40 members of the Executive Council.
- Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Executive Council for the term 2020-2022

The Philippines was endorsed by consensus for membership to the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for the term 2020-2022 on 20 November 2019 during the OPCW Asian Group Plenary Meeting in The Hague.

International Commitment Fund

The Secretary endorsed, for approval of the Office of the President, PH's voluntary contribution to various International Organizations for FY 2019 amounting to Php 17,200,000.00.

The voluntary contributions are expected to complement efforts to enhance PH representation in the International Organizations and general goodwill among members of the international community.

Among the endorsed voluntary contributions are to be given to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen, Trust Fund for the Office of the President of the General Assembly (OPGA) and Resident Coordinator System (RCS) in the amount of USD 10,000.00 each.

B. PROMOTION AND ATTAINMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

As part of its independent foreign policy thrust and parallel to its efforts to strengthen foreign relations for its national security goals, the Duterte Administration explored economic partnerships with new and non-traditional trade partners while further strengthening existing ties with its traditional partners. Agreements on trade and investments were signed during the President's various state visits.

The DFA continued to lead the government's efforts in the promotion of the Philippines' economic interests, through both multilateral and bilateral engagements. Priority was given to intensifying economic promotion activities for trade, investment, tourism, and services, as well as capacity-building and strengthening collaboration with relevant government agencies for a reinforced One Country Team Approach.

MULTILATERAL ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENTS

- Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

During the 4th and final meeting of the APEC Vision Group (AVG) in Puerto Varas, Chile from 25 to 27 August 2019, the group finalized their discussion on the statement approving a vision that proposes that the APEC economies reaffirm their commitment to the building of a peaceful and interconnected Asia-Pacific community for the prosperity and welfare of all their peoples and adopted the title of the report: "People and Prosperity: An APEC Vision to 2040." In order to achieve this objective, APEC must continue in its quest to achieve free and open trade and investment and deeper regional integration, while promoting people-centered economic growth that is innovative, inclusive, sustainable, balanced, secure and resistant.

A Multi-Stakeholder Consultation took place in Manila on 14 October 2019 as part of the Philippines' effort to solicit inputs from Philippine stakeholders.

- Secretary of Foreign Affairs Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr. headed the Philippine delegation at the 22nd ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting in Brussels, Belgium last 21 January 2019.

The Ministerial Meeting reviewed recent developments and discussed the future directions of ASEAN-EU dialogue relations. The meeting agreed in principle to elevate to the level of Strategic Partnership the EU's dialogue relationship with ASEAN, with details to be worked out later.

- The Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on Cooperation in Science and Technology and Innovation was signed on 18 July 2019 in Manila.

- The Philippines, together with 45 other countries, signed the Convention on International Settlements Resulting from Mediation (Singapore Mediation Convention) on 7 August 2019 in Singapore.

The Convention is intended to facilitate enforcement of settlement agreements that have been entered into with the assistance of mediation. With the signing of the Singapore Convention, the trio for the international dispute resolution enforcement framework, which includes the New York Convention for Arbitration and The Hague Convention for litigation, is now complete.

The PH delegation, led by NEDA Secretary Ernesto M. Pernia and comprised of officials from the DFA, Department of Education (DepEd), Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), and the Philippine Permanent Mission in New York (NYPM) participated in the 2019 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), held on 9-18 July 2019 in New York.

At the forum, the PH presented the results of its 2nd Voluntary National Review (VNR), which emphasized synergies between government and non-government actions required to ensure inclusiveness and equality. The PH's whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to SDG implementation was underscored, evident in PH's progress in contributing to the achievement of SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions).

- Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)

At the 3rd Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Summit, the RCEP Participating Countries Leaders welcomed the significant progress in negotiations, including the successful conclusion by 15 countries of text-based negotiations for all 20 chapters and essentially all market access issues, and instructed officials to commence legal scrubbing with the view to sign the document in 2020.

The agreement will expand the Philippines' participation in the global value chain and could attract more investments in the country, especially in the manufacturing sector. It will also open more opportunities for Philippine companies, including micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to partner with foreign companies in the supply of goods and services.

OUTCOME 2: OVERSEAS FILIPINOS PROTECTED AND ENGAGED

The Duterte Administration continued to look after the welfare of Overseas Filipinos by providing various forms of help to distressed OFs, including legal assistance when necessary, as well as pursuing advocacies that seek to ensure the protection of migrants, including the fight against trafficking in persons.

The DFA provides ATN/legal assistance in coordination with relevant government agencies under the One Country-Team Approach. It coordinates with government agencies, such as the Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Social Welfare and Development, and the Department of Health, and attached agencies, such as OWWA and POEA, to craft policies and facilitate and maximize services to Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in distress. It also works with bonafide civil society organizations to promote OFs' interests in the country and abroad.

ASSISTANCE-TO-NATIONALS (ATN)

The DFA was at the forefront of providing timely and efficient relief to overseas Filipinos (OFs) in distress. From 01 January to 15 December 2019, a total of Php 840,655,401.35 was utilized from the ATN Fund, which assisted a total of 154,339 OFs; and Php 191,556,978.72 was utilized from the Legal Assistance Fund, which assisted a total of 5,465 OFs.

Table 1. ATN Fund and LAF Disbursement from 01 January to 15 December 2019

	Number of Beneficiaries	AMOUNT (PhP)
ATN Fund	154,339	840,655, 401.35
Legal Assistance	5,465	191,556,978.72

ANTI-TRAFFICKING

The DFA, as a member of the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT), and the Presidential Task Force Against Illegal Recruitment (PTFAIR) created under Executive Order No. 41, series of 2011, is actively pushing for the adoption of the ASEAN Declaration on Trafficking in Persons and is also actively participating in the discussions of the ASEAN Regional Forum on Combating Terrorism and Transnational Crime.

Furthermore, the DFA, through its Foreign Service Posts, is actively pursuing awareness campaigns among Filipino communities abroad to prevent and combat

the proliferation of Trafficking in Persons. It also works closely with the UN High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) and the Bali Process on Human Trafficking and the Colombo Process on Migration. Efforts are being undertaken to encourage other countries to accede to the Palermo Protocol on TIP and to collaborate with the Philippines on issues on human trafficking.

MIGRATION GOVERNANCE

The DFA likewise actively participates in the discussions at the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), which tackles issues relating to trafficking, recruitment, and the protection of migrants.

OUTCOME 3: CONSULAR SERVICES STRENGTHENED

CONSULAR OFFICES

Pursuant to Executive Order No. 45, entitled "*Providing for the Reorganization of the Field Offices of the Office of Consular Affairs of the Department of Foreign Affairs,*" which was signed by President Duterte on 20 October 2017, three Consular Offices were opened in 2019 in Malolos, Bulacan; Clarin/Ozamis, Misamis Oriental; and Dasmariñas, Cavite:

PASSPORT SERVICES

From 01 January to 31 December 2019, DFA has issued a total of 4,095,302 passports.

To meet the increasing demand for passport services in Cebu, the DFA launched the POW Mega Vans in Cebu on 9 February 2019. Two (2) POW Mega Vans can process 800 to 1,000 applications a day.

From 01 January to 18 December 2019, a total of 116,437 passports were issued through the conduct of POW services in 206 cities and municipalities.

The first overseas ePassport Online Appointment System (OAS) was launched in the Philippine Consulate General (PCG) in Hong Kong on 14 July 2019. The OAS was launched in the FSPs to help minimize queues and to provide overseas Filipinos in Hong Kong with an easy-to-navigate and faster way to set an appointment at the PCG.

The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on the establishment of overseas ePassport Renewal Centers (PaRC) in the United Arab Emirates and in the Kingdom of Saudi

Arabia was signed by DFA and VFS Global in Dubai, UAE, on 21 November 2019. The MOA aims to decongest FSPs that attend to numerous applicants on a daily basis as well as provide overseas Filipinos with an alternative and more convenient way to renew their passports. The first PaRC was inaugurated on the same day in Dubai's Wafi Mall.

The project will not entail any cost to the Philippine government. Applicants will have the option to renew their passports at a venue other than the Philippine Consulate General (PCG). The objective of the project is to decongest the PCG and to provide a more convenient location for applicants.

The services to be provided by VFS shall be limited to applications for passport renewal and shall cover only the following processes: receiving of application, acceptance of lawful fees.

AUTHENTICATION SERVICES

The PH acceded to the Apostille Convention on 12 September 2018, which entered into force on 14 May 2019. DFA is now using Apostilles to replace the authentication certificate as proof of authentication of Philippine public documents for use abroad. After DFA, these documents no longer need to undergo authentication (legalization) by the foreign embassies/consulates if the destination of the document is an Apostille country. Conversely, Philippine Embassies and Consulates shall no longer authenticate foreign documents authenticated (Apostilled) by Apostille countries (except Austria, Finland, Germany and Greece). For non-Apostille countries, there is no change in the authentication process.

The use of Apostille eases cross-border trade, investment, and personal relations. This will be more beneficial and convenient for the transacting public.

Authentication services was successfully rolled out in CO Davao on 21 June 2019 and CO Cebu on 10 September 2019 to make these services more accessible in the Visayas and Mindanao regions.

VISA ISSUANCES

From 01 January 2019 to 31 December 2019, the DFA issued a total of 1,191,320 visas, which is 21.89 % more than the previous year.

The DFA is now using the 2019 Machine Readable Visa (MRV) stickers bearing new design. The design was approved during the 40th Cabinet Meeting on 05 August 2019 in Malacañang. Shortly after, the DFA started the procurement of the visa stickers and these were subsequently distributed to all Philippine Foreign Service Posts (FSPs). FSPs started using the stickers in November 2019.

The development of the online portal OVAS started alongside the procurement of the 2019 MRV stickers. Once implemented, visa applicants will lodge applications via OVAS, which will allow inter-connectivity between FSPs and the Home Office. In December 2019, FSPs in China were trained to use the OVAS.

QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

On 11-12 December 2019, the DFA underwent its re-certification audit with TÜV Nord for DFA core and support processes under ISO 9001:2015 standards. The DFA received positive observations from TÜV-Nord at the audit's Closing Meeting and was recommended for re-certification in February 2020.

OVERSEAS VOTING

For the 2019 National and Local Elections, there was a total of 1,822,115 registered voters which increased by 32.41% from the 1,376,067 active registered voters for the 2016 Elections

ATTACHED AGENCIES:

A. FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE (FSI)

OUTCOME:

Contributed to the development and professionalization of the career corps of the DFA

- The Carlos P. Romulo School of Diplomacy (CPRSD) prepared, organized and implemented 75 training programs in 2019. CPRSD also responded to requests from government agencies to organize and implement demand-driven courses, and was able to complete an additional 36 training programs in 2019.
- The Center for International Relations and Strategic Studies (CIRSS) responded to the research needs of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and other stakeholders on matters related to foreign policy. It organized conferences, lectures, round table discussions and other events to support its research program. It also published 27 Commentaries and two Insights.
- Was awarded the ISO 9001:2015 QMS Certification by SOCOTEC Certification Philippines in 18 December 2019.

B. TECHNICAL COOPERATION COUNCIL OF THE PHILIPPINES (TCCP)

OUTCOME:

Foreign relations strengthened through providing technical training for the Developing and Least Developed Countries

In line with South-South Cooperation, provided technical assistance to the Government of Vanuatu through the conduct of a Training on Food Processing held in Port Vila on 19-22 November 2019.

C. UNESCO NATIONAL COMMISSION OF THE PHILIPPINES (UNACOM)

OUTCOME:

Contributed to Philippine development in educational, scientific, and cultural matters

- Provided support to Philippine sites and traditions for possible UNESCO recognition.
- Organized a regional conference on inclusive and rights-based education.
- Organized a series of workshops on promoting the interface between policy-making and research.