

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
(January- December 2020)**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2020, the far-reaching impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic did not spare the Philippines. Despite the unprecedented challenges, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) actively led national efforts to advance Philippine interests in the global arena.

Guided by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, the chief architect of the country's foreign policy under the constitution, the DFA continued to advance the three pillars of Philippine foreign policy: (1) the preservation and enhancement of national security, (2) the promotion and attainment of economic security, and (3) the protection of the rights and promotion of the welfare of overseas Filipinos.

The DFA pushed forward with the administration's independent and principled foreign policy through strengthening and enhancing bilateral and multilateral relations to promote a stable security environment conducive to the country's economic growth which has been seriously affected by the pandemic.

Under the leadership of Secretary Locsin, the DFA fortified ties with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries and traditional allies while enhancing relations with non-traditional partners. These international engagements were critical and essential in managing the COVID-19 health crisis and in adapting to the "new normal."

The DFA sustained participation in the ASEAN, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the United Nations (UN), among others, and was involved in global governance and cooperation efforts on key advocacies, including the protection of its maritime sovereign interests, counter-terrorism, and the promotion of micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises.

OUTCOME 1:

Foreign Relations Strengthened to Promote a Stable Security Environment for Economic Growth

Major outputs:

AMITY AND COOPERATION

The DFA actively engaged bilateral partners, especially its traditional allies, in addressing the challenges posed by COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the more urgent repatriation of Filipino nationals and acquisition of COVID-19 vaccines, medicines, and related supplies, the DFA also sustained engagements with bilateral and international partners in line with the government's vision of a secure and prosperous Philippines that is confident of its place in the community of nations.

1. Bilateral Engagements

Travel restrictions and lockdown measures were enforced in the Philippines and majority of the countries worldwide in order to curb the spread of COVID-19. The conduct of official visits and face-to-face meetings were significantly limited throughout the year. The DFA utilized digital channels, such as phone calls, teleconferences, and videoconferences, to foster dialogue and cooperation with bilateral partners.

President Rodrigo Roa Duterte's Phone Conversations

Since the start of the lockdown around the middle of March, the President received telephone calls from his counterparts in the US, Vietnam, India, China, Australia, and Japan. The topics discussed included COVID-19 response, counter-terrorism, defense cooperation, economic and infrastructure cooperation, South China Sea, maritime security, and charting the future directions of bilateral relations.

- **United States:** President Duterte engaged in a telephone call with US President Donald Trump on 19 April 2020 during which they discussed enhanced cooperation on COVID-19 response and strengthening efforts on counter-terrorism. Both sides continue to build economic, cultural and security ties.
- **Vietnam:** President Rodrigo Roa Duterte and Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc of Vietnam held telephone discussions on 26 May 2020 to discuss cooperation amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Both leaders agreed that rice trade represented a key aspect of bilateral cooperation. President Duterte thanked Vietnam for its policy of proceeding with rice exports despite the pandemic, Viet Nam being the Philippines' top source of imported rice and an important partner in food security.

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- **India:** President Rodrigo Roa Duterte and Prime Minister Narendra Modi of the Republic of India engaged in a fruitful 25-minute telephone conversation on the evening of 09 June 2020. Among the topics discussed were COVID-19 response in terms of pharmaceuticals and vaccines, ASEAN-India relations, and India's role in the Indo-Pacific, particularly in terms of human endeavors and geo-politics, defense modernization, food security, and health cooperation.
- **China:** On 11 June 2020, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte had a productive 38-minute telephone conversation with President Xi Jinping of China. Both leaders expressed their commitment to further strengthen bilateral, regional, and global efforts to combat COVID-19 and underscored the importance of international solidarity to effectively address the pandemic's health and socio-economic impact.
- **Japan:** President Rodrigo R. Duterte spoke with Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during a 25-minute phone call on 07 September 2020. According to the Office of the President, the President thanked PM Abe for his "valuable contribution in the strengthening of the Philippines-Japan Strategic Partnership."

On 14 December 2020, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte and Japanese Prime Minister Suga Yoshihide engaged in a 25-minute telephone conversation where they reaffirmed their shared commitment to broaden and deepen Philippines-Japan Strategic Partnership across various areas of cooperation, especially as both nations commemorate 65 years of diplomatic relations in 2021. The President congratulated Prime Minister Suga on his appointment, and reiterated his invitation for the latter to visit the Philippines as soon as circumstances allow.

- **Australia:** On 30 November 2020, President Rodrigo Duterte had a phone call with Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison to discuss bilateral and regional issues. On the issue on the West Philippines Sea, the President expressed appreciation for Australia's formal manifestation before the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf of the importance of international law and rejecting attempts to undermine UNCLOS. The President also expressed gratitude to Australia's support in the country's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and in the natural calamities that have hit the country.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Locsin's Phone Conversations and Teleconferences

Foreign Affairs Secretary Locsin likewise engaged in phone conversations and teleconferences with traditional allies and international partners, further enhancing foreign relations and bilateral dialogue. While the focus was mostly related to the COVID-19 response, including vaccine development and assistance, the telephone calls also provided opportunities to raise relevant issues with his counterparts, including developments in the South China Sea and ASEAN cooperation.

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- **15 March 2020** – DFA Secretary Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr. received a phone call from Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi to discuss COVID-19 cooperation. SCFM Wang informed the Secretary that China would donate medical supplies and would dispatch a medical team to the Philippines to provide advice and share experiences.
- **28 March 2020** – DFA Secretary Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr. and Canadian Foreign Minister François-Philippe Champagne had a telephone conference on the COVID-19 situation in both countries, and the repatriation of Canadians and permanent residents due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **30 March 2020** – DFA Secretary Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr. initiated a phone call with Foreign Minister Minh to secure uninterrupted rice exportation by Vietnam to the Philippines, amid the uncertainty brought on by COVID-19. During their discussion, Secretary Locsin conveyed the Philippines' concern, citing the prominent role of rice trade in bilateral economic relations and the overall Strategic Partnership.
- **30 April 2020** – DFA Secretary Teodoro L. Locsin and Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne engaged in a telephone call to talk, among others, about the PH Government's assistance in the repatriation of Australian nationals, the status and repatriation of stranded Filipino nationals in Australia, and Australia's support and exchange of best practices to address COVID-19.
- **21 May 2020** – DFA Secretary Teodoro L. Locsin and Japanese Foreign Minister Motegi Toshimitsu engaged in phone discussions, in which they agreed to step up mutual support during the ongoing pandemic and to foster with regional partners a unified approach to the post-COVID-19 "new normal."
- **22 June 2020** – DFA Secretary Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr. had a telephone conference with Brazilian Foreign Minister Ernesto Araujo on the COVID-19 situation in both countries and future Philippine-Brazil bilateral consultations.
- **10 July 2020** – DFA Secretary Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr. met with Swiss Ambassador Alain Gaschen, via a virtual call at the latter's request, and engaged in open and fruitful discussions on bilateral cooperation.
- **14 July 2020** – DFA Secretary Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr. met with Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, via teleconference at the latter's request, and engaged in open, cordial, and fruitful discussions. Secretary Locsin reiterated the importance of continued dialogue to propel Philippines-China cooperation forward across various fronts, under the "new normal" brought about by the global COVID-19 pandemic.

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- **06 August 2020** - Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr. spoke with U.S. Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo to discuss issues of mutual concern including the South China Sea and the need for rules-based international order, bilateral security and defense arrangements and the ongoing vaccine development against COVID-19. Both Secretaries agreed to continue to strengthen the already robust Philippines-U.S. cooperation and the ASEAN-U.S. strategic partnership.
- **18 December 2020** – DFA Secretary Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr. engaged in a telephone call with U.S. Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo during which the high-level officials discussed the Philippines-U.S. alliance and the Philippines' need for access to COVID-19 vaccines.

Political Consultations

DATE	EVENT
28 January 2020	Inaugural PH-EU PCA Joint Committee Meeting, Brussels
29 January 2020	PH-Belgium Political Consultations, Brussels
30 January 2020	PH-Netherlands Political Consultations, The Hague
10 February 2020	PH-United Arab Emirates Political Consultations, Virtual
05 August 2020	1st PH-Australia Foreign Ministry Consultations, Virtual
15 September 2020	Inaugural PH-Germany Joint Economic Commission, Virtual
21 October 2020	4 th PH-Germany Political Consultations
06 November 2020	4 th PH-India Joint Commission on Bilateral Cooperation, Virtual
26 November 2020	5 th PH-Australia Strategic Dialogue, Virtual
02 December 2020	5 th PH-Spain Political Consultations, Virtual

Official Visits of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs

DATE	EVENT
24-26 February 2020	Official Visit to Oman

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27-28 February 2020	Official Visit to Saudi Arabia
09-11 October 2020	Official Visit to China, upon the invitation of State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi

Incoming High-Level Visits

DATE	EVENT	DETAILS
08-09 January 2020	Visit of H.E. Motegi Toshimitsu, new Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan	Secretary Locsin and Foreign Minister Motegi held a bilateral meeting to discuss the overall advancement of the Philippines-Japan Strategic Partnership, and cooperation in various areas of mutual import.
20 January 2020	Visit of Members of the New Zealand National Party	Members of the New Zealand National Party paid a courtesy call on Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr. in Manila. During the call, Secretary Locsin underscored the longstanding friendship between the Philippines and New Zealand, particularly in fundamental areas of people-to-people relations, trade, investment, agriculture, science, and defense.
15 October 2020	Visit of Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Peter Szijjarto	Secretary of Foreign Affairs Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr. welcomed Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Peter Szijjarto to Manila. Both reaffirmed the excellent relations between the Philippines and Hungary that is premised on respect for each other's sovereignty. They also discussed enhanced engagement and cooperation in the areas of trade, development and finance, education as well as continued close collaboration in the multilateral fora.

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20 November 2020	Visit of UK Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO) Minister of State for Asia Nigel Adams	Secretary Locsin met with UK FCDO Minister of State for Asia Nigel Adams in Manila. They discussed the possible procurement of COVID-19 vaccine from AstraZeneca and the conduct of clinical trials for the COVID-19 vaccine in the Philippines.
23 November 2020	Visit of U.S. National Security Advisor Robert C. O'Brien	DFA Secretary Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr., together with National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon, Jr. and other senior officials, met with U.S. National Security Advisor Robert C. O'Brien at the DFA. They discussed ways to strengthen the already robust defense and security cooperation between the two countries, given the political and security climate in the Asia-Pacific region. He turned over Precision Guided Munitions valued at around US\$18M.
08 December 2020	Visit of U.S. Acting Secretary of Defense Christopher C. Miller	Foreign Affairs Secretary Locsin joined Secretary of National Defense Delfin N. Lorenzana and Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff General Gilbert I. Gapay in a joint meeting with visiting U.S. Acting Secretary of Defense Christopher C. Miller in Manila. The senior officials renewed each side's commitment to the alliance while continuing discussions to further strengthen their defense and security cooperation. Both sides expressed support for each other's COVID-19 initiatives.

Agreements Signed in 2020

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AGREEMENT	DATE SIGNED	COUNTERPART
Confirmatory Note No. 20-0862 known as <i>Strengthening Capacities for Conflict-induced Forced Displacement in Mindanao</i> , a technical cooperation project with Germany with a total grant amount of EUR 3,000,000	04 March 2020	Germany
Memorandum of Agreement on Logistics and Defense Industry Cooperation between the Republic of the Philippines and the Republic of Indonesia	11 March 2020	Indonesia
Exchange of Notes for COVID-19 Crisis Response Emergency Support Loan (CCRESL)	01 July 2020	Japan
Philippines-Hungary Framework Agreement on Technical Cooperation	13 July 2020	Hungary
Memorandum of Understanding between the Board of Investments of the Philippines and the Investment Coordinating Board of Indonesia on Investment Promotion	25 August 2020	Indonesia
Protocol between the Department of National Defense of the Republic of the Philippines and the Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China on China's Provision of Military Assistance Gratis to the Philippines	11 September 2020	China
Exchange of Notes on Post-Disaster Standby Loan II (PDSL 2)	15 September 2020	Japan
Philippines-Hungary Memorandum of Understanding on the Stipendium Hungaricum (2021-2023)	15 October 2020	Hungary
Joint Communique on Cooperation for Veterans between the 22 UN Sending States and the ROK	11 November 2020	South Korea
Memorandum of Understanding between the Food and Drug Administration of the Republic of the Philippines and the Ministry of Agriculture of Hungary on Cooperation in the Field of Food Safety	04 December 2020	Hungary

2. ASEAN and Related Activities

ASEAN Coordinating Council Working Group on Public Health Emergencies (ACCWG-PHE)

The ASEAN Coordinating Council Working Group on Public Health Emergencies (ACCWG-PHE) was established upon the recommendation of the ASEAN Joint Consultative Meeting (JCM) in Da Nang on 06 March 2020 and the ad referendum approval of the ASEAN Coordinating Council (ACC) to further develop ASEAN's collective response to COVID-19. The Terms of Reference of the ACCWG-PHE was finalized on 27 March 2020. The ACCWG-PHE consists of the Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM), Senior Economic Officials' Meeting (SEOM) and Senior Officials' Meeting for the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (SOCA) leaders of each ASEAN Member State or their designated representatives, as well as the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR). Additionally, relevant sectoral bodies including the SOMHD shall be invited to provide relevant information and recommendations to the ACCWG.

ASEAN Standard Operating Procedures for Public Health Emergencies

During the 25th ASEAN Coordinating Council Meeting and the Special ASEAN Summit on COVID-19 in April 2020, some Member States called for standard operating procedure for public health emergencies in ASEAN to enhance preparedness for future pandemics.

The ASEAN Standard Operating Procedures for Public Health Emergencies (ASEAN SOP for PHE) is intended to enhance ASEAN's preparedness and resilience in public health emergencies, and in doing so, strengthen ASEAN's cooperation in maintaining health security. The key elements of the ASEAN SOP for PHE apply to four (4) phases of responding to public health emergencies, namely: 1) Preparedness; 2) Notification and risk assessment; 3) Regional response; and 4) Monitoring and review. ASEAN is in the process of finalizing the Concept Note of the ASEAN SOP for PHE.

Ha Noi Plan of Action on Strengthening ASEAN Economic Cooperation and Supply Chain Connectivity in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Ha Noi Plan of Action on Strengthening ASEAN Economic Cooperation and Supply Chain Connectivity in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic (Ha Noi Plan) was adopted by the ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) during the Special AEM Meeting on 04 June 2020. The Plan is a collective statement that follows the Declaration of the Special ASEAN Summit on COVID-19 adopted by the ASEAN Heads of State/Government at the Special ASEAN Summit on 14 April 2020, and complements the mandate to

implement the ASEAN Economic Ministers' Statement on Strengthening ASEAN's Economic Resilience in Response to the Outbreak of COVID-19 on 10 March 2020, to explore a temporary arrangement to preserve supply chain connectivity for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Women's Empowerment Pronouncements on COVID-19

During the ASEAN Leaders' Special Session on Women's Empowerment in the Digital Age on 26 June 2020, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, together with other ASEAN Leaders, acknowledged the important role women play in ASEAN's community-building efforts, in promoting peace, stability, and sustainable development in the region, and in comprehensive and sustainable COVID-19 recovery.

Noting the important role of women in emergency situations, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, DFA Secretary Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr. during the Special ASEAN-Australia Foreign Ministers' Meeting on 30 June 2020 hailed the important role of women in emergencies, and called on the protection of women and promotion of their rights so that they can fulfill their crucial role of protecting and caring for mankind.

Collaboration on Illegal Wildlife with ASEAN Center for Biodiversity

The Philippines continuously seeks collaboration to control, prevent and eradicate diseases - arising from trade in animals and animal products as well as support for capacity building of field and laboratory personnel in zoonotic disease response, border control and veterinary quarantine during ASEAN meetings. DFA Secretary Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr. in a meeting with Australia emphasized that since illegal wildlife trade may be at the root of this pandemic, ASEAN has a chance to improve existing tools and on wildlife disease surveillance through capacity-building and furthering cooperation via the ASEAN Center for Biodiversity located in the Philippines.

High-Level Discussion on ASEAN Post-Pandemic Recovery

The Philippine delegation attended the High-Level Dialogue on ASEAN Post-Pandemic Recovery that was held via video conference on 30 July 2020. Organized by the ASEAN Secretariat, the Dialogue was moderated by the Deputy Secretary-General for the ASEAN Economic Community (DSG AEC) and featured speakers from the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), and the World Economic Forum.

The speakers called for measures to capitalize on the opportunity to rebuild systems towards a more sustainable and resilient future by ensuring long-term food security, building human capital, and creating a conducive investment climate through economic integration mechanisms in the region. The need for a logical order in the continuum of measures as outlined in the Relief-Recover-Reform (3R) Framework was emphasized.

They underscored key macro and sectoral policies essential for recovery as well as aiding sectors that need urgent attention, particularly strengthening information and data management.

10th ASEAN Maritime Forum

The 10th ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF) was held via video conference on 15 November 2020, and the 8th Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum was held via video conference on 15 December 2020. It was a venue for dialogue on a wide range of maritime issues. The Forum discussed stock-taking and updates on ASEAN maritime-related frameworks and the results of the Workshop on the 10th Anniversary of the AMF.

37th Meeting of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM), 8th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management (AMMDM), and Related Meetings

The 37th Meeting of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM), 8th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management (AMMDM), and Related Meetings which were held virtually on 25-27 November 2020 discussed the progress of the implementation of the AADMER Work Programme 2016-2020 and adopted the AADMER Work Programme 2021-2025. The new Work Programme sets the strategic direction and priorities for the ACDM to collaborate with other ASEAN sectoral bodies and partners for the next five (5) years in the areas of disaster risk management, emergency response, and humanitarian response, including the assistance provided by ACDM, through the AHA Centre, to AMS in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Meeting also discussed ASEAN cooperation on disaster management with external partners such as China, Japan, UN, and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

9th ASEAN Social Work Consortium

The 9th ASEAN Social Work Consortium Conference held from 03-04 December served as a venue to strengthen cooperation and solidarity and enhance networking among social workers, practitioners, and educators of social work and social welfare in ASEAN. The Conference discussed the operationalization of the Ha Noi Declaration on Strengthening Social Work towards a Cohesive and Inclusive ASEAN and gathered the views on the regional and global commitment on social work and development, health, including the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED), which is one of the concrete responses of the region to COVID-19, and education among different stakeholders, including ASEAN Bodies, UN Agencies, and Civil Society Organizations.

ASEAN-China Cyber Dialogue

The inaugural ASEAN-China Cyber Dialogue was held on 07 December 2020 via video conference. The Meeting noted that ensuring the safety and security of cyber space, including the digital economy, is crucial because the pandemic has highlighted the several ways in which the digital economy has contributed and will contribute to the overall socio-economic recovery.

High-Level Roundtable on “A Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN Community: 2020 Reflection for Bolder Joint Actions”

The High-Level Roundtable on “A Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN Community: 2020 Reflection for Bolder Joint Actions” was held via video conference on 17 December 2020. The Roundtable gathered in-depth views and insights from senior officials, specialists, and academia in the region. Acting Undersecretary for Policy Elizabeth P. Buensuceso, the Philippines’ Leader to the ASEAN Senior Officials’ Meeting, delivered a presentation on “Strengthening ASEAN’s Operational Efficiency.”

ASEAN Assistance to the Philippines to Address COVID-19

The Philippines, through ASEAN, has also been participating in multilateral discussions on shaping regional policies that aim to address the effects of COVID-19. Through these multilateral meetings, the Philippines received assistance in the form of RT-PCR testing kits, surgical masks, personal protective equipment (PPE), and other medical supplies to combat COVID-19.

For the summary of the funds/events and donations, please refer to Annex A.

Bilateral Assistance of ASEAN Member States to the Philippines on COVID-19

The ASEAN Member States of Brunei Darussalam, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam have extended their assistance to the Philippines during the COVID-19 pandemic. Following are details of assistance from ASEAN Member States on COVID-19 based on the DFA International Humanitarian Assistance Report (as of 31 December 2020) submitted to the National Task Force COVID-19:

Summary of Donations from Brunei, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam

COUNTRY	DONATION/ASSISTANCE	STATUS
Brunei Darussalam	20 units of Real-Time Fluorescent RT-PCR test kits	Received by DOH and turned over to RITM

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Singapore	3,000 testing kits and 1 PCR Machine	Delivered to DOH
Thailand	10,000 RT-PCR testing kits	Ceremonially turned over to PH Government. Donations were directed to DOH.
Viet Nam	30,000 face masks	Turned over to PH Congress
	USD 50,000 worth of medical supplies	Ceremonially turned over to PH Government. Donations were delivered to RITM.

The timeline of COVID-19-related donations and assistance from Brunei, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam as of 31 December 2020 can be found in Annex B.

3. **Management of the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The DFA continuously monitors the COVID-19 situation abroad through our foreign service posts and provides regular reports on COVID-19 statistics, situation of affected Filipinos, countries' recovery plans and good practices, and travel advisories affecting Filipinos.

As of 31 December 2020, the Department has accomplished the following:

- The repatriation of 327,511 overseas Filipinos (OFs) since the COVID-19 pandemic began in February 2020.
- Facilitated/approved 496 out of 496 requests for diplomatic clearances in the repatriation of foreign nationals and has facilitated/approved 1,673 out of 1,960 requests for flight permits for the repatriation of Filipino nationals abroad.
- Foreign Service Posts issued 552 9(c) Crew List visas, covering a total of 6,384 foreign seafarers under the DFA's Green Lane Initiative. The Green Lane Initiative Green Lane Initiative facilitates the speedy and safe travel of seafarers, including their safe and swift disembarkation, and crew change during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Assisted in the processing/facilitation of international humanitarian assistance from 11 foreign governments and 6 other entities thereof, 5 international organizations, and 47 private companies, groups and individuals.
- Assisted in obtaining flight clearances and in the issuance of visas to foreign technical experts in relation to the COVID-19-related procurement of the Philippine Red Cross and to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) grant to DOH.

At the initial phases of lockdowns and community quarantine, the DFA has been facilitative in ensuring business continuity and coordination. Referrals to the DFA Task

Force-Pandemic Threats and relevant agencies were done to ensure the continued operations of various industries and in encouraging the retooling of manufacturing activities to address the needs of the country in responding to the pandemic.

The DFA has been active in inter-agency coordination to ensure that tariff and related matters are utilized to fund the government's actions under the Bayanihan I and II, to ensure unrestricted trade of essential goods and to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. A joint statement was also conveyed in the World Trade Organization (WTO) in support of the continued importance of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the global economy, supporting the MSMEs being one of the most affected sectors in the pandemic.

Pursuant to President Rodrigo R. Duterte's directive to ensure transparency and accountability in managing and allocating resources to the intended beneficiaries, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), and Office of Civil Defense (OCD) launched on 24 August 2020 the Philippine Humanitarian Assistance Registry (PHAR) website. PHAR (www.phar.gov.ph) is the primary government website for information, inquiries, and procedures on all local and foreign humanitarian assistance to the Philippine Government, including in-kind and financial donations, and deployment of humanitarian workers for COVID-19 as well as other future pandemics and civil and natural disasters.

The DFA, as the lead agency of the Task Group on Diplomatic Engagement and Negotiations (TG DEN) and a member agency of the Task Group on Vaccine Evaluation and Selection (TG VES) of the National Task Force (NTF) against COVID-19, continues to oversee engagements with foreign governments, pharmaceutical companies, and other relevant entities on vaccine development and evaluation and selection of vaccines to be considered for procurement and clinical trials, to ensure that Filipinos will have access to COVID-19 vaccines.

4. Advancing Philippine Interests in the International Setting

UNITED NATIONS

The Philippines participated in regional and global platforms to help the international community understand PH priorities and policies better. Among the key accomplishments were the following:

President Rodrigo Roa Duterte addressed the UN General Assembly for the first time on 22 September 2020, during the High-level General Debate of the 75th Session of the UNGA held from 22 to 29 September 2020.

In his well-received speech, the President highlighted key issues such as addressing COVID-19 pandemic, rule of law and law of the sea, climate change, human rights protection, counter-terrorism, humanitarian initiatives, refugees, and protection of migrant workers. President Duterte underscored the importance of open dialogue and constructive engagement with the UN. He also called on the strengthening of the role of the UN General Assembly, improving the composition and working methods of the UN Security Council (UNSC), and streamlining the process of the UN.

Very positive feedback on the President's first UN statement was received from Member States, notably ASEAN and Latin American states, as well as high-level officials of the UN Secretariat. Many of the comments expressed appreciation for the unequivocal statement on the arbitral award, as well as the mention of middle-income countries and the strong portion on migrants.

"The Award is now part of international law, beyond compromise and beyond the reach of passing governments to dilute, diminish or abandon."

Following his UNGA appearance, the president again spoke at the UNGA Special Session on COVID-19 Response in December, where he pushed for universal access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines and technologies.

President Rodrigo Roa Duterte participated in the Aqaba Process Virtual Meeting on COVID-19 Response held on 02 September 2020 which was hosted by the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

In his speech, the President emphasized the efforts being undertaken by the Philippine Government to mitigate the socio-economic impact of the pandemic. He further expressed support for the adoption of a "Roadmap of Resilience" that would provide strategic direction for countries in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. He stressed the continued need to fight terrorism despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to revive the economy and build supply chain resilience.

Human Rights

Resolution 45/53 on Technical cooperation and capacity building on the Philippines was adopted by consensus at the Human Rights Council (HRC), 07 October 2020

The Philippines and Iceland co-initiated the resolution "Technical cooperation and capacity building for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Philippines" which was adopted by consensus at the close of the 45th Human Rights Council (HRC) session on 07 October 2020. Co-sponsored by a wide cross-regional group of 50 countries, the resolution sends a positive message on the importance of constructive

engagement in the HRC that is informed by an objective assessment of the situation on the ground.

UN-Philippines Joint Program on Human Rights: A First in UN Human Rights Council, 27 November 2020

As part of its continued open dialogue and constructive engagement with the UN, the Philippine Government endorsed the matrix of projects under the UN Joint Program on Human Rights with the UN Resident Coordinator (UNRC) on 27 November 2020. The four-year Program encompasses technical cooperation in strengthening domestic investigative and accountability mechanisms, civic space and engagement with civil society, and a human rights-based approach to countering terrorism and to drug control, among others. It seeks to further mainstream human rights as part of the broader development partnership between the Philippine Government and the UN, which also includes engagement with the Philippine Commission on Human Rights (CHR) and civil society.

Nuclear Energy

High Level Meeting to commemorate the International Day of the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons at the margins of the UNGA75, 02 October 2020

The Secretary represented the Philippines and delivered the national statement, through a pre-recorded video message, at the High-level Plenary Meeting to commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons convened primarily in a virtual format on 02 October 2020. The Secretary reaffirmed the country's commitment to the goal of nuclear disarmament, and the country's adherence to the universalization of global norms against nuclear weapons.

Conventional Weapons

PH as co-coordinator on Universalisation at the 2nd Preparatory Meeting for the 2nd Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, 04 September 2020

Geneva PM participated in the Second Preparatory Meeting to the Second Review Conference (2RC) of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) on 04 September 2020. In its interventions, PH stressed the need to reflect recent achievements and activities in the Review of the Dubrovnik Action Plan; the centrality of victims in the Convention's work, and the need to fully assist States in victim assistance in accordance with their specific national conditions; and the need for the Lausanne Action Plan (LAP)

to go beyond mere numbers in its indicators, particularly in terms of promoting gender equality.

Philippine Presidency of the Amended Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW APII)

Ms. Maria Teresa T. Almojuela, Deputy Permanent Representative of the PH Mission to the United Nations in Geneva (Geneva PM), was designated as President of the 22nd Conference of the High Contracting Parties (HCPs) to the Amended Protocol II (AP II) of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). CCW AP II prohibits or restricts the use of mines, booby traps, and other devices. PH's acceptance of this presidency finds anchor in PH support for the United Nations Secretary General's disarmament agenda, the second pillar of which focuses on conventional weapons. 2020 also marks the 40th anniversary of the CCW.

The PH Presidency chaired the Group of Experts (GOE) Meeting on 29 to 30 September 2020. In accordance with the mandate given by the previous HCPs' Annual Conference, most of the discussions during the GOE meeting focused on addressing the threat of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). PH was able to share its experiences and challenges during the sessions on new types of IEDs, methods, and challenges in mine clearance and risk education.

Migrant Rights

International Migration Council elects first Filipino Chair

Ambassador Evan P. Garcia was elected Chair of the Council Bureau of the International Organization on Migration (IOM) during the opening of its 111th session on 24 November 2020.

The Council is the highest governing authority of the UN's migration agency responsible in charge of determining, reviewing, examining, and approving the programs of the IOM. It is holding its annual session virtually.

Ambassador Garcia, Philippine Permanent Representative to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, will head the Council until November 2021. He is the first Filipino to serve in this capacity. Prior to his election, the Philippine envoy served as the Council's rapporteur from 2017-2018, second vice president from 2018-2019, and first vice president from 2019-2020. Ambassador Garcia assumed this new responsibility following the one-year stint of Ambassador Morten Jespersen of Denmark as IOM Council Chairperson.

Women's Issues

Re-election to Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) for the term 2021-2024

Ambassador Rosario G. Manalo was successfully re-elected to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) for the term 2021-2024 on 09 November 2020 in New York. Nineteen (19) candidates vied for eleven (11) vacant seats. Along with Ambassador Manalo, candidates from the following countries were successfully elected to CEDAW: The Netherlands, Bahamas, Nepal, Lithuania, Ghana, Australia, Mexico, Lebanon, France and China.

Ambassador Manalo's election allows her to serve an additional consecutive term in the Committee, where she is currently serving. Her new term begins on 01 January 2021. Ambassador Manalo's advocacies in her re-election include the continued promotion of women's rights, particularly in the fields of politics and decision-making, diplomacy and development, and including in the contexts of climate change, culture, way of life, and the rights of indigenous peoples.

Population Development

Commission on Population Development (CPD) for the term 2021-2024

The Philippines was elected to the Commission on Population Development (CPD) for the term 2021-2024 on 14 September 2020 in New York.

Along with the Philippines, Belgium, Botswana, Comoros, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ethiopia, India, Japan, Mexico, and the Republic of Moldova are elected to the Commission. The members will be serving a four-year term beginning at the 55th session of the Commission in 2021 until the end of the Commission's 58th session in 2025.

Science and Technology

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres appoints Filipino in the Independent Scientists Group

The UN has appointed prominent Filipino scientist, Dr. Jaime C. Montoya, as one of the 15-member Independent Scientists Group tasked to draft the second quadrennial Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR 2023). Dr. Montoya is the current Executive Director of the DOST-Philippine Council for Health Research Development. The 14 other scientists in the Group come from Trinidad & Tobago, Qatar, Botswana, Senegal, Japan, Australia, Peru, China, Sweden, India, Germany and Canada. The GSDR 2023 aims to strengthen the science-policy interface and to serve as a strong evidence-based

instrument to support policy makers in promoting poverty eradication and sustainable development.

Philippines elected as Chair of the 3rd Session of the UN ESCAP Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation, 19-20 August 2020

DOST Undersecretary for Scientific and Technical Services Dr. Renato U. Solidum was elected to chair the Third Session of the UN ESCAP Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation (CICTSTI) which was held on 19-20 August 2020.

Usec. Solidum also delivered the Philippine Statement under Agenda Item 2 of the Session, entitled “Collaborative actions to harness technologies during pandemics.” He underscored the STI initiatives of the country in response to COVID-19 highlighting development of the country’s very own GenAmplify™ rRT-PCR COVID-19 detection kits, RXBox, use of QR codes, and SafePassPH.

The Committee will meet again in 2022 and will discuss relevant issues and progress on its initiatives such as the Guidelines, the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway, the Action Plan for Digital Transformation of the Asia-Pacific Region, and the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development.

Health

Philippines is the 123rd State Party to the Minamata Convention, 08 July 2020

On 08 July 2020, the Philippine Government deposited its instrument of ratification, thereby becoming the 123rd Party to the Minamata Convention. The Minamata Convention on Mercury is the world’s first legally binding treaty to phase out mercury. The Philippines is the 123rd out of the original 128 signatory countries to join the treaty.

Philippines Health Secretary elected as Chair of 71st WHO Regional Committee for Western Pacific session

In its 71st Session, representatives of the 37 member-states of the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Committee for Western Pacific elected Health Secretary Francisco T. Duque III as its new chairperson to serve a term of one (1) year.

The committee meets annually to formulate policies, provide oversight for regional programmes, report on the progress of their projects, and consider, revise and endorse new initiatives. Resolutions and decisions adopted during the session will guide the work of the Regional and Country Offices for 2021.

Environment

Deputy Speaker Legarda Appointed as CVF Thematic Ambassador, 07 October 2020

At the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) Leaders' Meeting held on 07 October 2020, Hon. Loren Legarda, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Philippines, was appointed as one of Thematic Ambassadors.

During her speech (pre-recorded), she stated that vulnerable country parliamentarians must take a far more active role in steering development towards low carbon and sustainable pathways and enhancing the adaptive capacities of communities to the climate crisis.

Filipino appointed as Executive Director of the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization based in Seoul, Rep. of Korea, 28 December 2020

The Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO) based in Seoul, ROK, on 28 December 2020 confirmed that Assistant Secretary Ricardo L. Calderon of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) was officially appointed as the Executive Director of AFoCO during the AFoCO Assembly held from 25-26 November 2020. Mr. Calderon will commence his 2-year term as AFoCO Executive Director in January 2021. AFoCO received nominations from the Philippines and Indonesia, and made its selection based on the merits and qualification of the nominees. SFA Teodoro Locsin Jr. officially endorsed the nomination of Asec. Calderon through a letter to the AFoCo.

Refugees

The Philippines' Participation in the "Virtual Donor Conference on Sustaining Support for the Rohingya Refugee Response," 22 October 2020

The Philippines participated in the "Virtual Donor Conference on Sustaining Support for the Rohingya Refugee Response" held on 22 October 2020 and co-organized by the United States, United Kingdom, European Union, and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). During the conference, the Philippines announced a modest financial contribution of USD100,000 for the UNHCR to be earmarked for its response to refugees from Rakhine State. The Philippines also reiterated its strong humanitarian tradition of offering protection to refugees, including those from the Rakhine State, consistent with the Philippines' strong humanitarian tradition and the Filipinos' value of *malasakit*.

Other Advocacies

PH elected as Rapporteur of the UN ESCAP Committee on Statistics during the 7th Committee Session, 26-28 August 2020

The Philippines, represented by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), participated in the 7th Session of the Committee on Statistics of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) held in hybrid format on 26-28 August 2020. Dr. Claire Dennis S. Mapa, PSA Undersecretary, National Statistician and Civil Registrar General, was elected as Member of the Bureau of the Committee and Rapporteur of the said session. Dr. Mapa served as Head of the Philippine delegation.

International Commitments Fund (ICF)

As ICF Secretariat, the DFA coordinated the release of the approved ICF budget for FY 2020 to fulfill Philippine government's mandatory contributions to the United Nations and other international organizations, and facilitate Philippine Government hosting of international conferences. The Office of the President approved ICF 2020 budget in the amount of Php 3,621,012,987.00.

In addition to its mandatory contributions, the Office of the President also approved voluntary contributions to 40 international organizations amounting to USD 910,887.00 (approximately Php 45,682,233.05), chargeable against the lump sum allocation under the 2020 ICF budget.

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 High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisations (GAVI), World Health Organization - Contingency Fund for Emergencies (WHO-CFE), Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovation (CEPI), and others.

ASIA-EUROPE MEETING

ASEM Ministerial Statement on COVID-19

The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Ministerial Statement on COVID-19 was adopted by the Foreign Ministers of Cambodia, EU, Germany, Singapore, and Russia inter-sessionally on 05 September 2020. Due to the extraordinary crisis created by COVID-19 which required a timely response by ASEM, ASEM Partners agreed to adopt the Statement using such format as an exception. The Statement was also circulated as an

official document of the 75th session of the United National General Assembly on 18 November 2020. The Statement emphasizes on the transboundary nature of the pandemic and the interconnectedness between countries. In the drafting of the Statement, the Philippines pushed for the recognition of the important role played by micro-, small-, and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs) and the need to strengthen disease outbreak and pandemic early warning systems among ASEM partners.

5. Promotion of Economic Security

In 2020, the DFA published the 2019-2022 Economic Diplomacy Blueprint, which was aimed to be a comprehensive strategy for the Philippine Foreign Service in promoting the country's economic interests abroad. The Blueprint will provide FSPs a common reference on Philippine economic priorities and realities, as they develop and execute strategies for economic diplomacy.

ASIA-PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION (APEC)

First APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC1) Meeting

On 12 to 14 January 2020, the DFA participated in the First APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC1) Meeting held in Sydney, Australia. The ABAC1 dialogue tackled issues related to integration, inclusion, innovation, and sustainability with the overarching goal of further strengthening the link and partnership of the government and the business sector in the APEC process.

First Formal Meeting of the Senior Officials of the APEC Forum

On 18 to 22 February 2020, the Philippines participated in the first formal meeting of the Senior Officials of the APEC Forum to discuss APEC priorities for 2020. Issues discussed by APEC Member nations include the new vision for APEC beyond the year 2020, the theme and priorities of host country Malaysia, and the recurring issues and topics of APEC concerning the Multilateral Trading System (MTS), the Free Trade Area of the Asia and the Pacific, Regional Economic Integration, the work of the Digital Economy Steering Group, trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, global values chains and connectivity and related work by other sectoral processes of the forum - particularly the Finance Ministers process.

APEC Virtual Extraordinary Senior Official Meeting (VESOM)

COVID-19 regional response was also discussed during the APEC Virtual Extraordinary Senior Official Meeting (VESOM) held on 27 May 2020. During the VESOM, the DFA welcomed initiatives which include the sub-fund to address the impact of COVID-19 and proposals for a coordinated information sharing, adopting a policy tracker mechanism on COVID-19 and exploring a range of tariff reduction in medical goods.

APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040

On 20 November 2020, the 21 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) leaders and representatives unveiled the new APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040 during the Economic Leaders Meeting (AELM) to carry over the work under the original 1994 Bogor Goals that reached maturity this year. The new vision manifests strong support for a rules-based multilateral trading system, and the facilitation of regional economic integration and trade and investment across the region through technology and innovation for stronger economic growth.

“Our Vision is an open, dynamic, resilient and peaceful Asia-Pacific community by 2040, for the prosperity of all our people and future generations.”

The new vision is the “crowning glory for the year” as the Putrajaya vision is a strategic vision for the region for the next two decades. The unveiling of the vision is a historic and momentous occasion in the spirit of APEC solidarity to combat the pandemic. It will be the vision of APEC for the next 20 years, and will be fleshed out next year as New Zealand hosts APEC entirely virtually, and leads in the crafting of implementing details.

APEC Ministerial Meeting (AMM)

The 2020 APEC Ministerial Meeting (AMM) virtually took place on 16 November 2020, organized by APEC 2020 Host Economy Malaysia. Philippine Foreign Secretary Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr. and Trade and Industry Secretary Ramon M. Lopez joined other Ministers and representatives from all 20 other APEC Economies attending the AMM.

The Ministers adopted a consensus Joint Statement, its first in two years, as the Ministers endorsed a new Vision for the APEC community. The Ministers also recognized the unprecedented economic, health and social challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, including the disproportionate impact on MSMEs, women and others with untapped economic potential across the Asia-Pacific. The Ministers resolved to continue to cooperate, and act swiftly to foster quality growth, safeguard the lives and livelihoods of the people in the region to enhance the resilience of APEC economies and support strong and inclusive economic recovery. They further highlighted the importance of a free, open, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent and predictable trade and investment environment to drive economic recovery at such a challenging time and affirmed the importance of agreed-upon rules in the WTO, which enhance market predictability, enable business confidence and allow trade to flow.

Secretary Locsin stressed that technical and economic cooperation is crucial in ensuring that the Asia-Pacific region comes out of any crisis better and stronger. He urged for a learning experience in responding to and mitigating the impacts of the COVID-19 towards collective recovery. As regional and global income, development and growth inequalities are aggravated by the pandemic, Secretary Locsin encouraged the ministers by stating that setbacks such as the pandemic should not deter APEC from realizing a new vision.

APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting (AELM)

President Rodrigo Roa Duterte joined fellow leaders of the APEC forum for the 2020 AELM on 20 November 2020, organized via virtual platform by APEC 2020 Host economy Malaysia. In attendance were President Donald Trump, President Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, President Xi Jinping, the Leaders of 7 ASEAN economies in APEC, and others.

President Duterte also joined APEC Leaders in a consensus in issuing the 2020 Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which highlighted the need for international cooperation for economic recovery amid the coronavirus pandemic. A consensus Leaders Declaration had eluded APEC Leaders in 2018 and 2019.

In his intervention, President Duterte encouraged stronger international cooperation to fight the pandemic, urging other leaders "to defeat the virus everywhere, or no one is safe. To do this, we need to strengthen partnerships to make vaccines a global public good." The President further called on APEC members to "ensure the unimpeded flow of medical supplies and technologies."

President Duterte was accompanied by DFA Secretary Teodoro Locsin, Jr., DTI Secretary Ramon Lopez, NEDA Director-General Karl Kendrick Chua, Philippines APEC Senior Official and Undersecretary Lourdes Yparraguirre and other DFA and DTI officials.

The leaders also witnessed the handover of APEC chairing to New Zealand. New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern accepted the chairing of the 2021 APEC meetings which will start in December 2020 with the informal Senior Officials' Meeting and will end in November 2021 for the AELM.

Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)

On 15 November 2020, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) was signed by 15 countries, including the 10 ASEAN countries, China, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and South Korea. The RCEP is considered as the world's largest free-trade agreement (FTA), covering almost one-third of the world's population, and about one-third of its gross domestic product.

With the signing of the RCEP, the Philippine economy is expected to fully integrate into the global value chain (GVC), PH MSMEs should be able to participate in the GVC and ensure the highest return for the country.

Trade, Investment and Tourism Promotion activities with FSPs

➤ **China International Import Expo (CIIE), 05-10 November 2020**

The DFA joined CITEM in support of the participation of Philippine micro-, small-, and medium-enterprises in the China International Import Expo (CIIE) which was held on 05-10 November 2020 in Shanghai, China. CIIE is among the top trade shows in the yearly calendar of CITEM, providing high exposure opportunity for the promotion of Philippine exports to the huge Chinese market. To reduce risks attendant to COVID-19, the Philippine pavilion in CIIE was a hybrid setup, consisting of business-matching conference pods where interested buyers could virtually interact with the exhibitors physically in the Philippines, while the pavilion was manned on-site by the Philippine Trade and Investment Center in Shanghai which relayed to DTI the business leads generated during the Expo.

Under this year's "FOOD Philippines" banner, the 40-strong MSME delegation presented a wide array of quality Philippine exports ranging from coconut-based products, such as virgin coconut oil, to fresh produce like Cavendish bananas and tuna. DFA supported the MSMEs via CITEM through a participative funding contribution that went to the multimedia content production for boosting the MSMEs' essential digital presence in the Expo. Other partners were the Department of Agriculture, the Philippine Exporters Confederation, Inc. (PHILEXPORT), and the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Inc. (FFCCCII).

➤ **"Make It Happen in the Philippines" investment promotion campaign**

The DFA joined DTI and the Board of Investments in the 24 November 2020 launch of the **"Make It Happen in the Philippines" (MIH)** investment promotion campaign, as one of the national government's core initiatives for Philippine economic recovery amidst the pandemic. MIH targets investors from 18 markets (i.e., Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, Taiwan, the United Kingdom, and the United States) for five Philippine industry sectors, namely: automotive, aerospace, electronics, information technology-business process management (IT-BPM), and copper.

Under the MIH banner, FSPs and attached DTI service attaches will be provided with promotional collaterals for use during economic diplomacy projects, activities and

programs. Leads generated will undergo the usual vetting process, for relay by FSPs to DFA which shall, in turn, convey DFA's recommendations to the DTI.

➤ **Foreign investment promotion for New Clark City**

A specifically targeted investment promotion activity being undertaken by FSPs in support of Philippine economic recovery is the aggressive positioning of Clark as Asia's next investment, lifestyle and outdoor destination, pursuant to the specific marketing thrusts for the development of New Clark City. This follows the close collaboration between DFA and BCDA in October 2019 when Philippine Heads of Post, guided by Sec. Vince Dizon, visited developments in New Clark City, the new Clark International Airport and the Clark Freeport Zone during the Global Conference for Heads of Posts (GCHOP).

In July 2020, the DFA issued instructions to all FSPs to maximize the use of video conferencing platforms for pitching New Clark City to potential foreign investors, in light of prevalent physical distancing and public aversion to mass gatherings.

➤ **Tourism promotion via online and social media platforms**

Recognizing the mobility and physical publicity restrictions brought about by the pandemic, the DFA organized the hybrid online event entitled, "**Fiesta Filipinas: An Online Celebration of Philippine Festivals.**" The first of its kind, the online event brought the cultural experience of a Philippine festival to introduce and showcase

Philippine culture and traditions straight to the homes of its participants through sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell, in whichever part of the world they may be.

Moreover, the DFA enjoined FSPs to effectively maximize their online and social media presence, as well as those of their Filipino networks, to roll out tourism promotion efforts through DOT's "**Wake Up in the Philippines**" campaign videos.

While travel is at a standstill as the pandemic persists, the above campaigns seek to inspire future travellers to consider the Philippines as their top-of-mind destination when international travel eventually becomes permissible.

KEY ADVOCACIES:

1. **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, while negotiating for a Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea.

2016 UNCLOS Arbitral Award

2020 marked the fourth anniversary of the 2016 UNCLOS Arbitral Award on the South China Sea. It may be noted that more and more states are now citing the provisions of the Award.

ASEAN-China Dialogue

As the country coordinator of ASEAN-China Dialogue relations, the Philippines was targeting the conclusion of the COC during its coordinatorship, which will end in August 2021. However, the pandemic has prevented crucial face-to-face negotiations, which has set back the timetable for the completion of the COC negotiations. Nevertheless, PH was able to convene an ad hoc video conference during the year.

The ASEAN-China Joint Working Group on the Implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (JWG-DOC) met for the first time via video conference on 03 September 2020 to discuss the step-by-step resumption of the negotiations on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC). The ASEAN-China JWG-DOC agreed to activate the Sub-Working Group (SWG) to discuss matters as mandated by the ASEAN-China JWG-DOC.

A preparatory meeting of the SWG was conducted on 04 November 2020 and subsequently, its inaugural meeting was convened virtually on 23 November 2020. The Meeting discussed proposals and suggestions on the way forward for the COC negotiations to be considered by the ASEAN-China JWG-DOC in its next meeting.

The Philippines attended the ASEAN-China JWG-DOC Workshop on Promoting Cooperation in Ensuring the Just and Humane Treatment of Fishermen in the South China Sea Workshop, together with the Philippine Coast Guard. The workshop, hosted by Viet Nam, was a confidence-building activity implemented under the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC).

2. Counter-terrorism and Management of Non-traditional Security Threats

- The DFA hosted a virtual diplomatic briefing entitled “Understanding the Human Rights Perspective of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020” on 03 September 2020. The briefing included presentations on the salient provisions of Republic Act 11479 or the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020 and how said law complies with the Philippines’ international obligations, framed in the context and reality of terrorism in the Philippines. The briefing was attended by over 200 participants, mostly from diplomatic missions, UN agencies and international organizations in Manila, as well as missions in Geneva.
- The DFA coordinated with the National Security Council and the Anti-Terrorism Program Management Center regarding the participation of the Philippines in the 3rd Sub-Regional Meeting on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Security (SRM on CTTS), which was held virtually on 01 December 2020.

The meeting was attended by Ministers from Indonesia, Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, with Indonesia’s Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs Mahfud MD and Australia’s Minister for Home Affairs Peter Dutton as co-chairs.

In summary, five (5) themes emerged from the interventions during the meeting: 1) that the pandemic did not reduce the threat of radicalism and terrorism; 2) that the proliferation of new technology makes cyber space the new battle ground in the fight against radicalism and terrorism; 3) that there is a need to propagate cyber space with counter narratives to prevent self-radicalization; 4) that there needs to be a robust exchange of information as part of preparations for the return/repatriation of foreign terrorist fighter (FTFs); and 5) that a concerted effort at the bilateral, regional and international level is needed to address radicalism and terrorism.

It was further decided to establish a Senior Officials Counter-Terrorism Policy Forum, under the auspices of the SRM on CTTS, to identify and share best practices on managing counter terrorism policy issues, including those associated with the movement of FTFs.

OUTCOME 2:

Overseas Filipinos Protected and Engaged

Major outputs:

1. Assistance to Overseas Filipinos (OFs)

From 01 January to 31 December 2020, a total of Php1,482,024,837.27 was utilized

from the **Assistance to Nationals (ATN) Fund**, which assisted a total of 125,627 overseas Filipinos (OFs); and Php169,578,882.91 was utilized from the **Legal Assistance Fund**, which assisted a total of 6,729 OFs.

For the period 01 November to 31 December 2020, upon receipt of the Special Allotment Release Order (SARO) from DBM, the Department assisted a total of 58,239 Overseas Filipino (OFs) through repatriation (7,870) and other welfare services (50,369) using the Assistance-to-Nationals Fund.

The DFA continues to monitor the safety and wellbeing of overseas Filipinos from the onset of the coronavirus pandemic even prior to the implementation of the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act. As of 31 December 2020, the DFA has recorded a total of 12,876 cases of overseas Filipinos (OFs) who tested positive for COVID-19 from 84 countries/regions; of whom 3,578 are undergoing treatment, 8,387 have recovered, and 911 have died.

2. Rescued and Repatriated Overseas Filipinos

The DFA capped its unprecedented repatriation efforts for 2020 by bringing home 327,511 overseas Filipinos this year. A total of 231,537 or 70.7% of the repatriates are land-based workers from at least 90 countries around the world. The remaining 29.3% or 95,974 are seafarers from more than 150 cruise ships, oil tankers, and other bulk vessels. Below is the breakdown of the repatriates traveling or transiting through the following regions:

- Middle East - 228,893 or 69.89%
- Asia & the Pacific - 36,868 or 11.26%
- Americas - 30,971 or 9.46%
- Europe - 28,909 or 8.83%
- Africa - 1,870 or 0.57%

Since 09 February 2020 - the day when the DFA mounted its first COVID-19 repatriation flight to Wuhan, China - the Department has been relentless in bringing home overseas Filipinos despite the multitude of challenges it faced. A ten-member team from DFA and DOH Manila personally flew to Wuhan when it was the epicenter of COVID-19 in February. This pioneer mission successfully brought home 30 Filipinos from the Chinese city. The ten-member team was courageous and dauntless despite the fact that much was yet to be discovered about COVID-19 at that time.

Also in February, a three-person rapid response team flew to Japan to assist the Philippine Embassy in Tokyo in the disembarkation and repatriation of Filipinos on board the COVID-19 stricken Diamond Princess cruise ship. This marked the beginning of the pandemic's immediate impact on the cruise line industry where thousands of Filipino seafarers were working.

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As of 24 June 2021*

When countries started to close their borders in March 2020, the tourism industry was heavily hit and cruise line companies were forced to suspend their operations. From March to June 2020, the DFA facilitated the daily arrival of chartered flights - each carrying hundreds of seafarers from cruise ships docked all over Europe, North America, and the Caribbean. Many of the repatriated seafarers have only been on board their ships for weeks when the pandemic struck. They had no choice but to come home, without certainty as to when they will be called again for work.

When businesses started to close shop because of the effects of the worldwide lockdown, the repatriation of our land-based overseas Filipinos followed suit. In April, the DFA chartered flights to Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Maldives, and Italy to bring home 1,096 distressed overseas Filipinos who lost their jobs and had no means to come home from those countries.

Calls for repatriation from the Middle East came in May 2020 as the DFA sent its first sweeper flight to the Middle East, via Riyadh and Dammam, Saudi Arabia. This marked the beginning of the mass repatriation of more than 220,000 overseas Filipinos from the region.

Thereafter, in June 2020, the DFA sent a sweeper flight to Africa which stopped by Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya before heading home to the Philippines with 287 distressed overseas Filipinos on board.

In August 2020, the DFA was confronted with two Herculean tasks. First was the repatriation of our compatriots in Uzbekistan where the Philippines does not have an embassy, let alone an honorary consulate. Through the Philippine Embassy in Tehran and in coordination with leaders of the Filipino community, the DFA worked on the repatriation remotely but was nevertheless able to bring home 257 of our fellow Filipinos.

The second Herculean task was the need for a swift organization of a repatriation flight for the Filipino victims of the blast at Port of Beirut. With utmost urgency, the DFA sent a chartered flight to Lebanon and brought home 386 repatriates, many of whom sustained injuries from the blast. Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin, Jr. welcomed the repatriates personally upon their arrival at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

In September 2020, the DFA organized a goodwill mission to Lebanon. Together with the Chief of Presidential Protocol, the DFA travelled to Beirut and brought 5,000 boxes of relief goods for our overseas Filipinos in Beirut. Medical supplies such as vitamins and face masks were also donated to various Lebanese hospitals and other non-government organization. On the return flight, another 317 distressed Filipinos were repatriated.

Even as the DFA entered its eighth consecutive month of repatriation efforts, October still marked several “firsts” — the mass repatriation of more than 500 Agrostudies students from Israel, the first repatriation of 92 OFWs from Benghazi, Libya since 2017, and the first-ever repatriation by sea from Indonesia of 40 Filipino fishermen via the BRP

Tubbataha.

In November 2020, nine Filipino seafarers were brought home by the DFA after their shipping vessel was abandoned by its owner at the Port of Djibouti. The Department, in coordination with its missions abroad, lobbied hard with the Djibouti representatives in the International Maritime Organization in London, the United Nations in New York and the Djibouti Embassy in Tokyo to allow the disembarkation of the Filipino crew of MV Arybbas on humanitarian grounds. They arrived safely in Manila last November after being stranded onboard their vessel for more than fourteen months.

Finally, December marked the highest monthly total of repatriated overseas Filipinos at 51,770 despite the cancellation of several flights as a precautionary measure to the spread of the new COVID-19 strain. Sweeper flights were also organized to bring home distressed overseas Filipinos from Syria, Lebanon, Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and UAE, in time for the holiday season.

Migration Governance

In terms of Human Trafficking, the COVID-19 pandemic did not completely halt the trafficking problem. The bulk of cases referred by DFA to IACAT covered 2,429 likely trafficking in persons and illegal recruitment victims from the Middle East Region. There were cases where forced labor and sexual harassment were allegedly committed.

A particular highlight in DFA's initiative against human trafficking is the recent case of "Faith" and "Hope" who were able to successfully obtain a conviction against eight traffickers before the High Criminal Court in Bahrain last April 2020. "Faith" and "Hope" survived sexual exploitation and bravely executed statements against their Filipino traffickers, which led to the latter's prosecution and eventual apprehension in Bahrain.

OUTCOME 3:

Consular Services Strengthened

Major outputs:

Passport Issuance. From 01 January to 31 December 2020, the DFA has issued a total of 1,732,459 passports.

Passport production in 2020 decreased by more than 50% (1,732,459 issued passports) compared to passport production in 2019 (4,095,302 issued passports). Passport-related operations in 2020 were critically affected due to the COVID-19 pandemic, hence, the sharp decline in the number of passport issuances.

Breakdown of passport issuance at various issuing sites is as follows:

Passport Issuing Site	No. of Passports Issued	
	Year 2019	Year 2020
DFA Manila (ASEANA)	631,032	158,734
NCR Consular Offices	888,924	309,442
Regional Consular Offices (RCOs)	1,682,475	636,501
Foreign Service Posts (FSPs)	892,871	627,782
TOTAL	4,095,302	1,732,459

Machine Readable Convention Travel Document (MRCTD) Issuances

Effective 01 March 2016, the Department started issuing 44-page Machine Readable Convention Travel Documents (MRCTDs) in booklet format to refugees and stateless persons residing in the Philippines. The MRCTD is valid for five years only and may be used for multiple trips abroad. It is personalized in security inks with laminates and is compliant with the global standards outlined in the Guide for Issuing Machine Readable Convention Travel Documents for Refugees and Stateless Persons (as issued by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in October 2013).

A total of 73 MRCTDs were issued to refugees and stateless persons for the year 2020.

Passport-On-Wheels Services

On 15 January 2018, the Passport-On-Wheels (POW) initiative was launched. The program aims to cater to more Filipinos by enabling them, especially those who reside in places not easily accessible to DFA consular offices, to obtain a passport by bringing the service right to their area.

A total of 20 POW services were conducted in various sites in the Philippines for the year 2020. These POW activities resulted in 6,906 ePassports issued to applicants.

Online Passport Application System and Online Appointment System

On 03 June 2020, the Online Passport Application System and Online Appointment System for Courtesy Lane applicants were launched at the Courtesy Lane in DFA Aseana. These new systems facilitate a more streamlined transaction and reduce the time spent on site by allowing Courtesy Lane applicants to prepare their application form ahead of time and also to pay the passport fee in advance online.

The Office of Consular Affairs also improved its services by providing the public additional payment options in the Online Appointment System at www.passport.gov.ph, through credit and debit cards, and by allowing applicants to pre-pay for optional courier services starting 16 June 2020. These service enhancements provide applicants a secure and convenient way of paying for their fees wherever they may be, without queueing up at payment counters, and plus the option of receiving their new passports at their chosen address, eliminating the need to return to the Consular Office.

Philippine Passport Renewal Centers (PaRCs) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)

In view of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed by the DFA with VFS Global on the Outstanding of the Non-Discretionary, Non-Sensitive, and Non-Complex, Elements on Passport Renewal on 21 November 2019, four additional PH PaRCs were opened in the areas within the jurisdiction of FSPs in the UAE and the KSA such as:

1. Abu Dhabi – 12 June 2020;
2. Riyadh – 15 September 2020;
3. Al Khobar – 30 September 2020; and
4. Jeddah – 05 October 2020.

Visa Issuance. From 01 January to 31 December 2020, the DFA issued a total of 146,800 visas.

Authentication Process. From 01 January to 31 December 2020, the DFA has authenticated 245,017 public documents.

Civil Registrations. From 01 January to 31 December 2020, the DFA has facilitated 47,524 civil registrations made overseas.

Opening of Consular Offices – On 30 October 2020, in partnership with WalterMart, CO Paniqui was officially inaugurated as the 36th consular office to be opened nationwide.

Assistance to Stranded Foreign Nationals – From 26 March to 29 August 2020, various Consular Offices nationwide provided assistance to 10,756 stranded foreign nationals on their return to their home country.

Quality Management System. On 10 December 2020, the Department of Foreign Affairs retained its ISO 9001:2015 certification 2020 despite the challenging times, based on the remote audit done by TUV Nord Philippines, Inc. - a third party certifying body. The scope of certification covers frontline services and processes such as the provision of regular passport and authentication services, diplomatic and official passport services, visa application, and assistance-to-nationals (ATN) walk-in clients.

Responsive Public Service. In 2020, the DFA responded to an unprecedented number of public queries, forwarded through its official social media accounts, on its consular and assistance-to-nationals services due to disruptions brought about by the pandemic. The DFA, addressed with promptness and accuracy, a total of 130,702 comments and messages on Facebook, 6,027 on Twitter, and 940 on Instagram in 2020. There were notably more travel advisories and passport-claiming concerns owing to system upgrading concerns as the entire government began its transition to the new normal. Moreover, the DFA has also released over 2,700 press and photo releases, articles, and public advisories on critical issues and concerns; and has maintained a 99.96 percent (137,620 out of 137,669) rating in terms of timeliness and 99.97% (137,634 out of 137,669) in terms of accuracy on its responses to the public through the Department's Official social media platforms.

ASEAN Assistance on COVID-19

EVENT OR FUND	DATE	DETAILS
ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR)	14 April 2020	The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (AFRA) of South Korea donated 350 MT of rice to the Philippines under the Tier 3 Program of APTERR, part of a larger donation of 950MT of rice to the Philippines.
Korea-ASEAN Cooperation Fund	14 April 2020	A total of US\$5,000,000 will be provided to ASEAN Member States (at US\$ 500,000 per country) in the form of diagnostic kits (17,664 COVID-19 tests), PCR and DNA extraction equipment (1 set) and PPEs (300 sets) for each AMS.
ASEAN-US Emergency Health Funding	23 April 2020	The US announced the release of more than \$35.3 million in emergency health funding to help ASEAN. The US Government also approved an additional PHP 269 million (\$5.3 million) in health and humanitarian assistance to help the Philippines in the fight against COVID-19, bringing total US assistance to the Philippines to more than PHP 470 million (\$9.3 million).
ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre)	15 May 2020	<p>The Special Meeting of the Governing Board committed to provide additional support to AMS through distribution of prepositioned items currently available in the DELSA satellite warehouses procured by Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF).</p> <p>The Meeting agreed to release to the Philippines the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One Mobile Storage Unit (MSU) size 10 m x 32 m worth USD15,000; • Loan one forklift to support

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		<p>loading and unloading of medical supplies at the MSU at Camp Aguinaldo, Manila;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide space at the DELSA Satellite Warehouse currently being used as a temporary storage of procured items and supplies for COVID-19 response; and • 5,000 units of personal hygiene kits worth USD75,000 procured with JAIF funds <p>Each hygiene kit contains 1 kg of washing powder, 2 soap bars (bath & laundry), 1 tube of toothpaste, 1 toothbrush, 2 pcs of shampoo, 2 packs of hygiene pads, 1 short towel and 1 plastic container.</p>
Special ASEAN-Australia Foreign Ministers' Meeting	30 June 2020	ASEAN welcomed Australia's package of initiatives amounting to AUD 23 Million to help ASEAN bolster health security, economic recovery and stability in our region in line with the Australian Government's new Partnerships for Recovery policy.
17 th ASEAN-India Summit	12 November 2020	India announced that it will contribute USD 1 Million to the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund.

Timeline of COVID-19-related Donations/Assistance from Brunei, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam as of 31 December 2020:

COUNTRY	DONATION/ ASSISTANCE	MONETARY VALUE	BENEFICIARY	DATE/REMARKS
Brunei Darussalam (Ministry of Health)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 units of Real-Time Fluorescent RT-PCR test kits (each unit capable of doing 50 tests, yielding a total of 1,000 tests; worth BND 90,000 or USD 69,000) 	USD 69,000.00	DOH/ RITM	<u>04 April 2020</u> Received by DOH and turned over to RITM.
Republic of Singapore (Ministry of Health)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3,000 testing kits (15 units capable of 3,000 tests); 1 Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) machine 	USD 82,471.20	DOH	<u>24 March 2020</u> Ceremonially received by Secretary of Foreign Affairs Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr. from Singapore Embassy; delivered to DOH.
Kingdom of Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10,000 RT-PCR test kits (Thai-produced DMSc COVID-19 Real-time RT-PCR kit worth USD 15,625) 	USD 15,625.00	DOH	<u>14 April 2020</u> The Thai Prime Minister, during the Special ASEAN Summit held via video conference, offered to donate 10,000 Thai-produced RT-PCR test kits to each ASEAN Member

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				<p>State as a symbol of concrete ASEAN cooperation and the region's increased self-reliance. The test kits meet international standards.</p> <p><u>28 April 2020</u></p> <p>Thailand's Foreign Ministry sent a Note Verbale formally conveying the donation and transmitting the product details of the test kits.</p> <p><u>29 April 2020</u></p> <p>DFA referred donation to DOH for evaluation and consideration. 6 May 2020 DOH endorsed acceptance of the donation. DFA prepared a Memorandum for the President recommending approval of the donation.</p> <p><u>8 May 2020</u></p> <p>The Office of the President approved the acceptance by the Philippine Government, through DOH, of the donation.</p> <p><u>26 May 2020</u></p> <p>Philippine Embassy (PE) in Bangkok was</p>
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				<p>requested to coordinate with the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs to convey the Philippine Government's acceptance of the donation, and to provide the list of documentary requirements and template Deed of Donation. Bangkok PE was also requested to report on the prospective arrangements for the shipment of the donation.</p> <p><u>28 May 2020</u></p> <p>Bangkok PE conveyed to the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs the Philippine Government's acceptance of the donation. Bangkok PE coordinating with Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Health for the completion of the required documents for the donation and shipment.</p> <p><u>7 October 2020</u></p> <p>The Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs conveyed that the Siam Bioscience Co., Ltd., in collaboration with the Department of Medical Sciences (DMSC), is</p>
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				<p>responsible for the production and coordination regarding the test kits and the necessary arrangements for their delivery.</p> <p><u>9 December 2020</u></p> <p>Thai Embassy notified DFA of the arrival of the donation in Manila on 2 December 2020, and requested a ceremonial turnover on or before 17 December 2020.</p> <p><u>16 December 2020</u></p> <p>Ceremonially turned over to PH Government.</p>
Viet Nam	<p>From the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Assembly of Viet Nam—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30,000 face masks 		Congress of the Philippines	<p><u>20 May 2020</u></p> <p>DFA prepared a Memorandum for the President recommending approval of the donation.</p> <p><u>21 May 2020</u></p> <p>DFA conveyed to the Senate and the House of Representatives the proposed donation with the suggestion to evenly distribute the face masks between the two (2) chambers unless they prefer a different allocation arrangement.</p>

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				<p><u>27 May 2020</u></p> <p>The Office of the President approved the acceptance by the Philippine Government, through Congress, of the donation.</p> <p><u>2 September 2020</u></p> <p>Ceremonially turned over to PH Congress by the Vietnamese Embassy in Manila.</p>
	<p>From the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USD 50,000 - worth of RT-PCR testing kits (with extraction kits) 	<p>USD 50,000.00</p>	<p>DOH/RITM</p>	<p><u>13 July 2020</u></p> <p>Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed that the items to be donated are RT-PCR COVID-19 test kits (with extraction kits included) valued at USD 50,000 and that these will tentatively be delivered to PH on 18 July 2020.</p> <p><u>15 July 2020</u></p> <p>DOH confirmed its acceptance of the test and extraction kits and that it will be the beneficiary institution and consignee for the shipment. DFA prepared a Memorandum for the President recommending approval of the donation.</p> <p><u>24 July 2020</u></p>

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				<p>The Office of the President approved the acceptance by the Philippine Government, through DOH, of the donation.</p> <p><u>21 September 2020</u></p> <p>The test kits arrived in Manila on 29 August 2020 and have since been delivered to RITM.</p> <p><u>26 October 2020</u></p> <p>Turnover ceremony scheduled on 28 October 2020.</p>
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