

Foreword

In 2012, the Philippines announced its commitment to host APEC in 2015, 18 years after its first hosting in 1996. In the intervening period from 1996 to 2015, the regional economy has evolved, global economic architectures such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) took shape, coupled with the rise of bilateral and multilateral free trade and preferential agreements. In less than two decades, the world has witnessed two financial crises that continue to affect and inform how governments and businesses conduct their affairs. During the same period, the Philippine economy has contracted and expanded—and of late has become one of the fastest growing economies in Asia.



Against this backdrop, the Philippines hosts APEC 2015 and hopes to showcase its growth story 18 years hence. While it is clear that “inclusive growth” is high in the Philippines’ priority agenda domestically, it is equally important to translate “inclusive growth” into cooperation areas that APEC can mainstream in its own agenda.

It is in this light that the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) commissioned the Philippine Institute of Development Studies (PIDS), the TA Trade Advisory Group (TATAG), and the University of the Philippines–Marine Science Institute (UP-MSI) in partnership with the Asian Institute of Management (AIM), to undertake research studies in order to explore possible priority areas that the Philippines can advance within the APEC framework; and at the same time, to look deeper into the Philippine situation and recommend policy and reforms with an end in view of a post-APEC 2015 domestic agenda that government policy makers can pursue.

With the theme “Building Inclusive Economies, Building a Better World,” we hope to take advantage of our hosting of APEC in building a better Philippines for the more than 100 million Filipinos; no matter their current circumstances, and however they are spatially spread.

I sincerely hope that these research studies, and their resulting policy recommendations, provide useful input into our government’s decision-making processes post-2015 and beyond as well as useful information for our DFA officers as they work on economic issues.

Undersecretary
APEC 2015 SOM Chair