

PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
News and Information Bureau

PRE-DEPARTURE BRIEFING OF MS. DAPHNE OSEÑA-PAEZ
WITH DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS UNDERSECRETARY CHARLES JOSE
AND DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY-FOREIGN TRADE SERVICE CORPS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ALTHEA KAREN P. ANTONIO
NOVEMBER 7, 2023 [4:16 P.M. – 4:30 P.M.]

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Magandang hapon, Malacañang Press Corps, and welcome sa ating pre-departure briefing ngayong Martes, November 7.

Next week, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. will attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation or APEC Leaders' Summit 2023 in San Francisco, California, USA under the theme, *“Creating a Resilient and Sustainable Future for All.”* After participating in the APEC Summit, President Marcos will be making working visits to Los Angeles, California and Honolulu, Hawaii where he will meet with business leaders and the Filipino community.

To give us details about these visits in the United States, we have today, Department of Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Charles C. Jose and Department of Trade and Industry-Foreign Trade Service Corps Executive Director Althea Karen P. Antonio.

Good afternoon Usec. Jose and Executive Director Antonio. Go ahead.

DFA USEC. JOSE: Good afternoon to everyone.

The President is attending this year's 30th APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting which will be held on November 15, 16 and 17 in San Francisco, California, USA. The APEC Leaders' Meeting is the culmination of the year-long chairmanship and hosting by the United States of APEC in 2023.

As we all know, the Philippines is a founding member of APEC in 1989. APEC is important to the Philippines because it is the primary forum for our engagement with the other economies in the Asia-Pacific Region. Eleven of our top 15 trading partners are APEC members. APEC economies account for 85% of our total exports and imports and about 56% of the foreign direct investments that enter the Philippines.

This year's APEC theme is *“Creating a Resilient and Sustainable Future for All”*. Throughout the year, APEC's work focused on building sustainability, inclusivity and resilience toward a peaceful and prosperous APEC Region. There have been several successful outcomes for APEC's work in 2023 including the adoption of agreements that would advance food security, energy security, human resource development, digitalization and supply chain resilience.

This year's APEC theme aligns with the economic agenda of the administration of President Marcos Jr., the Philippine Development Plan and the administration's 8-point socioeconomic

agenda envisaged on economic transformation for a prosperous, inclusive and resilient Philippines by prioritizing the creation of more quality and green jobs. Key to this economic transformation is ensuring a sustainable future for every Filipino to have a “*matatag, maginhawa at panatag na buhay.*”

This reflects the importance of cooperation and of our involvement in the APEC agenda to pursue our economic interests. This is the second time that President Marcos Jr. is participating in the APEC Economic Leaders’ Meeting. For this year, the President is keen to push for financing a just, sustainable and affordable energy transition through partnerships with the business sector. He will emphasize the need to invest more on clean energy to preserve and protect the environment while ensuring that we are energy-secure and sufficient.

With our experience from the COVID-19 pandemic, the President wishes to push for deeper cooperation in health and modernizing health systems and to ensure that our health professionals are recognized and provided with welfare they deserve.

The President will also touch on digitalization and innovation of given that digital transformation is already upon us and how we can best prepare our workforce and the larger human resource. Like in the previous year, the President will push for the digital participation of our MSMEs.

The President will continue to push for cooperation in food security, particularly focusing on research and development, innovation and equity and inclusivity so as to benefit our small farmers and in climate action given the urgent need to be resilient to climate change.

On other related activities, the President may have bilateral meetings with other leaders but as the schedules and logistical considerations keep evolving, we are not able to confirm any at this point.

As for the business community, the President will lead a Philippine economic briefing and have several meetings with top US companies.

He will also attend the APEC CEO Summit and the APEC Leaders’ Dialogue with the APEC Business Advisory Council.

The President will also be meeting with our Filipino community in San Francisco, Los Angeles and Honolulu.

This, in summary, will be the Philippine participation in the APEC High-Level Week later this month.

Thank you.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Okay, thank you. We shall open the floor for questions. And if you have anything that Director Antonio can answer, please direct the question to her. Job Manahan, ABS-CBN.

JOB MANAHAN/ABS-CBN: Good afternoon. Sir, clarification lang: Iyong November 15 to 17, kasama na po dito iyong visit to L.A. and iyong sa Honolulu or ibang dates pa po iyon?

DFA USEC. JOSE: Hindi pa 'no. Iyong 17, iyong APEC proper lang, but then the President will be leaving, I think, November 18 for Los Angeles and also for Honolulu on the—I think on the 17th he will be leaving San Francisco for Los Angeles and then he'll be meeting the Filipino community on the 18th, and then he will leave Los Angeles for Honolulu on the 18th and he will be meeting the Filipino community on the evening of the 18th.

JOB MANAHAN/ABS-CBN: Ano pa po iyong mga itinerary doon sa Honolulu, Hawaii?

DFA USEC. JOSE: The President is being invited to visit the Indo-Pacific Command and he will also have a roundtable discussion with the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for security studies.

JOB MANAHAN/ABS-CBN: Sir, last na po. Sino po ang kasama ni President Marcos doon sa Indo-Pacific Command?

DFA USEC. JOSE: His official delegation will form part of the President's delegation when he visits Honolulu.

JOB MANAHAN/ABS-CBN: How about the US counterpart, sir? Is there information on that, sa US counterpart po ng Indo-Pacific Command?

DFA USEC. JOSE: Right now, I don't have the information as to who will be on the other side.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Alexis Romero, Philippine Star.

ALEXIS ROMERO/PHIL STAR: Usec, you mentioned he was invited to the Indo-Pacific Command, has he accepted the invitation?

DFA USEC. JOSE: Yes 'no. It's already in the, I think, President's schedule on the visit. But I don't have the complete details with me right now, but I know it's already a part of the President's program.

ALEXIS ROMERO/PHIL STAR: What will be the agenda for that visit? Will that include the situation in the Indo-Pacific, including the South China Sea?

DFA USEC. JOSE: Well, like I said, I don't have all the details. But I would imagine that would be part of the visit; there will be a security briefing.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Nestor Corrales, Philippine Daily Inquirer.

NESTOR CORRALES/PDI: Sir, there is a report from—just a follow-up on the Indo-Pacific visit. There's a report from Nikkei that a head of state visiting a foreign military's regional commander is unusual in terms of a diplomatic protocol. What can you say about this? And what's the importance of the President's visit to this US Command in Hawaii?

DFA USEC. JOSE: Well, I would imagine, because the President will be in Honolulu to meet with the Filipino community, so I would imagine this was an opportunity for the Pacific Command to invite the Philippine President.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Perhaps we can hear a little bit from the DTI on some of the program thrust that the President will be participating in?

DTI EXEC. DIR. ANTONIO: Yes. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. For the DTI, as mentioned earlier we are lining up some business activities in different configurations from a big business forum up to level of one-on-one meetings, so this will be as you know, as mentioned by Undersecretary Jose, with US companies. Thank you.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Okay. Mariz Umali, GMA 7.

MARIZ UMALI/GMA 7: Hi. Good afternoon, sir and ma'am. Sir, can you just elaborate on the significance of the invitation of the Indo-Pacific Command to the President amidst the trilateral agreement that we have had with America and Japan in the middle of all these tension in the South China Sea?

DFA USEC. JOSE: I think the President will be focusing his visit in San Francisco, in Los Angeles and in Honolulu in meeting the Filipino community – so, I think that will be the main focus of his visit to these three American cities.

MARIZ UMALI/GMA 7: Yes, sir, we understand but there's also an invitation and this is just happening right after a trilateral agreement happened in the midst of all the tension in the South China Sea. How significant is this visit that the President has accepted this invitation, Usec. Charles Jose?

Sir, kasi of course we understand that we have been very vocal with our stance in terms of the harassments that have been happening. Marami na po tayong statements that we released so far stronger than the previous administration and now there's a trilateral agreement that has been made and now there's an invitation from the Indo-Pacific Command just after the trilateral agreement has been made and with all the tensions that have been happening in the South China Sea.

So, just a short answer from you, sir, how significant is this acceptance of the invitation?

DFA USEC. JOSE: Well, of course it adds a layer to the cooperation that we are trying to establish with like-minded states in order to promote what we have been advocating all along – a rules-based order especially in the maritime areas.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Sir, given that the visit is quite important let's wait for the events to unfold and we shall inform you of the details and also the President will be visiting and meeting with the Filipino communities both in LA, Hawaii and also San Francisco.

Are there other questions? I think this ends our briefing. Thank you very much. Usec, any other statements that you would like to make?

Thank you very much, Malacañang Press Corps. Magandang hapon po.

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