



Amb. Romualdez: SoCal FilCom Nucleus of Filipino Diaspora Powerhouse



(left to right) Ambassador Romualdez addresses Filipino community leaders during the Town Hall Meeting held at the Philippine Consulate General in Los Angeles. Consul General Cruz introduces the Ambassador to the FilCom.

Los Angeles, CA – Philippine Ambassador to the United States of America, Jose Manuel G. Romualdez, in his first formal engagement with the Filipino-American Community in Southern California on 15 September 2019, highlighted the community’s strength in numbers. He laid out his vision for the estimated 4,000 Filipino-American community groups all over the U.S. being united under one umbrella organization.

“We envision Filipinos from all over the U.S. coming together someday in a show of solidarity to highlight the strength of... the Filipino diaspora right at the heart of the U.S. government’s seat of power...and Southern California, where many of the Filipino-Americans reside, will be the beginning of that nucleus powerhouse,” Ambassador Romualdez said in his remarks during a Town Hall Meeting with the Filipino-American community held at the Philippine Consulate General in Los Angeles in the evening of 15 September 2019.

Video presentations on the “*Build, Build, Build*” program of the Duterte Administration and developments in the New Clark City capped the Ambassador’s remarks.

“Build, Build, Build” is President Duterte’s legacy project that consists of 75 flagship infrastructure projects worth US\$180 billion. It aims to transform the Philippine economy in line with the development goals set in the Philippines’ long-term development plan dubbed *“AmBisyon Natin 2040”* or *“Our Vision 2040.”* The development of New Clark City is dovetailed to this program as it is envisioned to be the next major metropolis in the Philippines with *“unmatched connectivity.”*

Members of the Board of Directors of Clark Development Corporation, General Manuel Gaerlan (Ret.) and General Benjamin Defensor, Jr. (Ret.) were also present to respond to questions regarding Clark.

Prior to the presentations, newly-arrived representatives of the Department of Labor and Employment, Philippine Trade and Investment Center in Los Angeles, Philippine National Police and Social Security System, together with the representative of the Philippine Department of Tourism in Los Angeles were introduced to the community as part of the Philippine Foreign Service’s one-country team approach.

Also present during the Town Hall Meeting were representatives of local economic agencies in Los Angeles, which the Consulate General has been working with for economic diplomacy projects, including the Los Angeles Metro, Global Research Institute for International Trade, and Ever Win International Corp.

During the open forum, the Ambassador engaged the audience in a candid discussion regarding the government’s actions on black sand mining, medical insurance for retirees and senior citizens visiting the Philippines, access to information on construction projects for Filipino-Americans, among other things.

As Filipino-Americans present also expressed concern on the enforcement of the Permanent Court of Arbitration’s ruling on the West Philippine Sea, Ambassador Romualdez sought to present an accurate contextualization of the issue by turning to history and going to the core of the Duterte Government’s pragmatic approach towards China and the West Philippine Sea.

“The pressing issue...is on finding the right way to resolve the dispute. As of this point, the Philippine government believes that the right way to go forward is to engage China,” he said.



(left to right photos) Ambassador Romualdez and Consul General Cruz answer the questions from the Town Hall Meeting participants. Consul General Cruz presents L.A. PCG’s gift to Ambassador Romualdez.



(above photo) Ambassador Romualdez and Consul General Cruz with L.A. PCG personnel and representatives of PDOT, PTIC, POLO, PNP, and SSS.

As a memento of his visit to Southern California, the Consulate General presented the Ambassador with a portrait of him painted by Los Angeles-based Filipino artist, Rafael Maniago. END.