

Speech of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte during the ASEAN Business Awards 2017

[Delivered at the Grand Ballroom, Solaire Resort and Casino, Parañaque City | 06 September 2017]

Kindly sit down. Thank you for the courtesy.

It is an honor for me to welcome the economic ministers of our fellow ASEAN member-states as we host the 49th ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting and Related Meetings.

It is [just proper] that you also join us tonight as we recognize outstanding ASEAN enterprises that contributed to the growth and prosperity of our region.

The ASEAN Business Advisory Council has been instrumental in realizing our common aspirations of inclusive growth for our peoples. It has served as a platform for the private sector to provide valuable guidance in empowering our entrepreneurs to become the bedrock of a stronger regional economy.

As Chair of ASEAN in its milestone 50th year, I consider it a privilege to usher in a new age in our regional economy—one that is motivated not by the desire for profit, but by the drive and entrepreneurial spirit of our peoples.

Tonight, we recognize the finalists and awardees for their outstanding performance in their respective communities. We also acknowledge outstanding companies that made significant social impact through their inclusive business models which enable us to achieve inclusive growth and prosperity for all.

For serving as role models and mentors to other ASEAN enterprises, you have contributed to the growth and prosperity of the ASEAN Economic Community.

It is now your responsibility to help your fellow entrepreneurs do better and achieve more, to propel micro entrepreneurs to become small, and the small to become medium and so on. You are the next breed of role models, and I look forward to your becoming the future mentors.

I also call on other entrepreneurs in the region to follow their example and become beacons of innovation and change towards poverty eradication and economic development in your respective countries.

Let the accomplishments of our honorees serve as an example for the whole region that MSMEs are key drivers and contributors to greater employment opportunities and more resilient economies in ASEAN. Simply put, supporting [them] means supporting the growth of the ASEAN countries.

It is truly an honor for the Philippines to lead ASEAN towards this promising future [for] businesses. For this reason, we have undertaken initiatives to create an enabling, nurturing, and globally competitive business environment [for] our entrepreneurs.

We have pushed for the promotion and integration of MSMEs across all sectors in the Philippines, the development of an innovation-driven economy, and the promotion of women and [youth] entrepreneurship in all sectors.

We have also challenged those who achieve success and wealth to embrace inclusivity by helping our MSMEs. I now extend this call to other big businesses in the region. Embrace MSMEs in your supply chains, open up your retail stores, and integrate these small entrepreneurs [into] the way you do business.

We need concrete action if we are to eliminate inequities in the region. This is why it is my fervent hope that all ASEAN member-states would continue to support local businesses through governmental and private endeavors that would make it easier for them to grow, flourish, and contribute to the development of their communities, their countries, and the entire region.

Thank you very much and congratulations to all of the awardees.

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