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OF THE PHILIPPINES



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DIRECTOR'S BRIEF

Our main activity for this month was the recently concluded Sustainability Forum, which was combined with our Annual General Membership (AGM) Meeting held at Seda Residences, Makati. We will discuss the highlights of our chamber's achievements this year, which are all in the chairperson's report in the next issue but for now, let us focus on our partnership with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), which has been conducting training for our member-firms in ramping-up capacities for sustainability reporting for free as part of our cooperation agreement.


Through the support of GRI, we published our first installment of the Impact Stories featuring sustainable practices and initiatives of SwissCham members and encouraging others to practice reporting to provide a systematic review of contributions towards the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This partnership has also enabled us to conduct the Sustainability Forum with no less than the Chairperson of the Senate Economic Affairs Committee, Senator Grace Poe as the keynote speaker. While Senator Poe centered her presentation on the country's various programs and legislative updates for resilient and sustainable economic development pathways for the Philippines, we heard two of our very own member companies (Stamm International and Holcim Philippines) showcasing their contributions to the economy, environment, and people. As many of you have requested, we have secured a copy of the entire keynote speech, which you can read in the cover story.

We are also delighted that our Swiss compatriots in the country are doing some meaningful work in Mindanao through the NAK-Humanitas of Switzerland in partnership with the Department of Education (DepEd) in building classrooms and sanitary facilities in Davao de Oro. This is indeed a very worthy initiative, and we intend to hold fund-raising activities such as the Ramseuir Fun Golf Day that was recently held in Silang, Cavite. There will be more special events next year as your Board of Directors designated a working committee for this purpose.

For this issue, we are thankful to the contribution of Mario Biscocho (John Clements) for his insights on human capital development in the Philippines. We have likewise featured ERNI for your Swiss software engineering needs; SATECO, which manufactures very precise silicon keypads found in most, if not all, vehicles globally; and IMPACT Acoustic, which transforms thousands of plastic bottles into beautiful and functional acoustic products.

Let me end this brief by inviting all our members to keep us informed of the many activities you do for the economy, environment, and people, including projects with impacts on human rights - the fundamentals of sustainability.

Enjoy reading, and as always, feedbacks are very much welcomed.



Kent Marjun Primor
Director of Operations

director@swisscham.ph

Senator Grace Poe

Chairperson, Committee on Economic Affairs, Senate of the Philippines

**Keynote message delivered during the SwissCham-GRI Sustainability Forum
17 November 2022**

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Good afternoon! I would like to acknowledge the presence of: Ambassador Alain Gaschen, Swiss Ambassador to the Philippines; Ms. Christine Fajardo, Chairperson of the Swiss Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines; Mr. Kent Primor, Director for Operations of the Swiss Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines; Ms. Vivian Santos, PEZA Deputy Director General; and to all the Swiss Chamber Board of Directors and member companies.

I have made it a point to be early today because I do not want to give credence to the joke that this country "is run by people who wear high-precision Swiss watches but keep Filipino time."

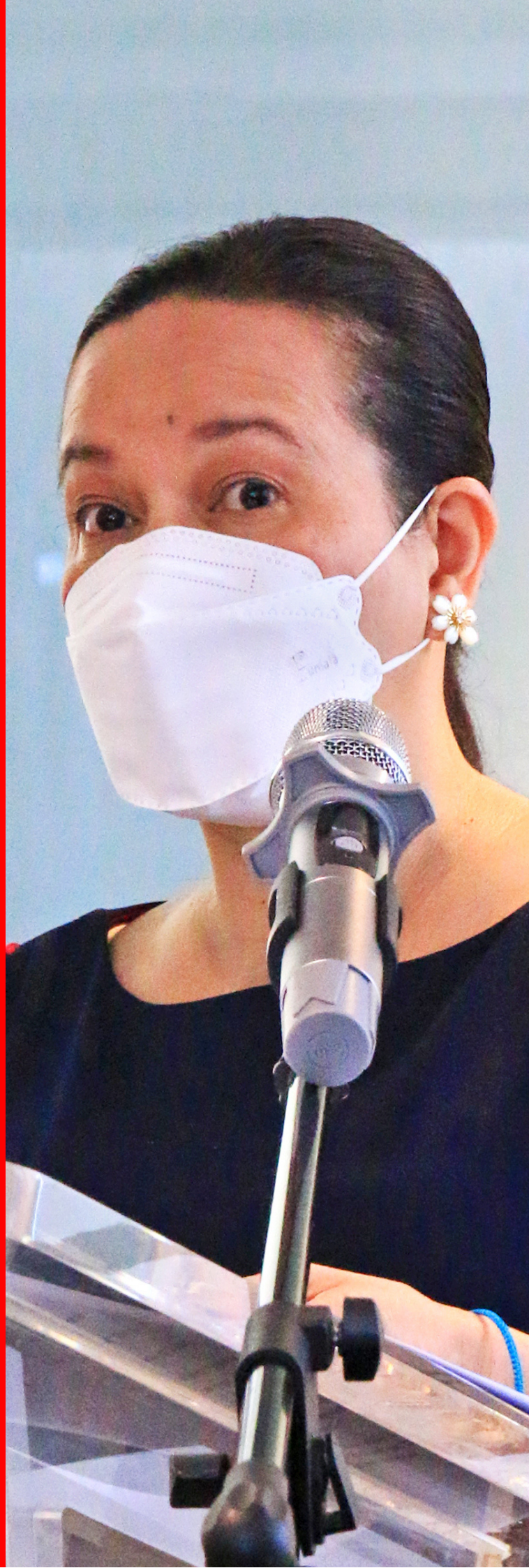
Speaking of time, let me indulge in some throwbacks, for it is in our shared past that we can find our common vision for the future.

I have been told that this year marks the 65th year of the beginning of official Swiss-Philippine diplomatic relations.

But history tells us that Switzerland opened its first ever consulate in Asia, here in Manila, in 1862, or some 160 years ago.

What is also true is that people-to-people relations antedated the establishment of that diplomatic outpost.

Intrepid Swiss business people like Lutz and Company had already carved a reputation as a noble house long before the "envoy from the Alps" presented his credentials to Spanish authorities.



Manila was such a hospitable place to do profit with honor that they were followed by the likes of Zuellig and Menzi who founded conglomerates which to date still make lives better for many Filipinos.

But, now and then, trade and travel between our two peoples were not a one-way street. For example, Rizal checked the bucket list of his youth when he travelled from Zurich to Geneva, following the same itinerary that modern-day Pinoy wanderers would use today.

And such infatuation with a land which in our collective imagination is the nearest thing there is to the mythical Shang-ri-la persists today.

Some Filipinos would go on a pilgrimage to Basel – for art or watches. They would root for Federer – over Nadal.

And couples from 18 to 80, from the athletic to the arthritic, have tried to reenact romantic poses made popular by Crash Landing On You – which by the way is on my bucket list. To ordinary Pinoys, Switzerland is the country of their daydreams.

All of these point to a *PH-Swiss* relationship as indestructible as the Alps, and as deep as the Philippine Trench.

Today, there are about 3,000 Swiss nationals who reside in the Philippines, savoring our country's sun, sand, and sea. While it is said that 10,000 Filipinos now call Switzerland home and have come to enjoy shoveling snow.

The trade between our two countries is robust, reaching P48.5 billion in last year, which the pandemic failed to flatten.

The good news for the Philippine side is that it tilts in our favor, our exports dwarfing our imports, a \$197 million surplus, which not even all those Daytonas and Pateks have managed to close.

Not counted are the remittances from Filipinos in Switzerland, totalling an estimated P21 billion from 2018 to 2021.

These developments, and the potentials they imply, should be viewed within a larger European context, a market which we hope to tap in terms of trade, investment and tourism.

So I would like to thank the Chamber for inviting me to a conference on a very relevant and timely subject: "Sustainable development." This concept, is of course, rooted in the principle of "sustainability."

To my understanding, sustainability is made up of three pillars: the economy, society, and the environment or "profit", "people" and "planet." Therefore, sustainability has been frequently defined as a process of ensuring a balance between economic growth, social well-being and environmental care.

By adhering to this strategy a community can fulfill the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of the future.

Such a strategy is the most sensible one to take especially in a country ranked as the second most climate-vulnerable in the world. The Philippines is an archipelago situated in what is known as the typhoon belt in the Pacific; hence, we are visited by an average of 20 typhoons every year. We are also situated in the "Ring of Fire", which makes us vulnerable to frequent earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. Climate change has of course, heightened the risks and extent of these phenomena.

The Dept. of Finance reported that from 2010 to 2020, the Philippines has incurred losses and damages estimated at P506.1 billion (approximately US\$10 billion) from climate-related hazards, despite contributing only 0.3 percent of the planet's total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Thus, protecting our environment and natural resources is vital for us in order to prevent or mitigate damage and death caused by natural disasters.

Unfortunately, more than any other segment of Philippine society, it is the poor income classes that will be most affected by climate-related disasters since they have less resources to undertake coping strategies and have less capacity for adaptability and resilience.

This is an important consideration because according to the Philippine Statistics Authority, 18.1 percent of the population in the Philippines live below the poverty line. Hence, if sustainable development is a strategy to improving our quality of life, then it must also include goals such as eradicating poverty, ending hunger, achieving gender equality, and improving education.

We all know that these are goals that cannot be achieved by the government working alone. To provide quality public services on a universal level and without discrimination, we need the competence, capital, and innovation that the private sector can bring to the table. We will need more jobs and enterprises in order to attain inclusive growth where everyone can participate and benefit.

The challenge to achieving sustainable development however, is that it is a common notion that protecting the environment could inhibit economic growth. Fortunately, many executives have demonstrated that pursuing sustainable development strategies can go hand-in-hand with making profits.

(L-R) Alain Gaschen, Swiss Ambassador to the Philippines; Brian Poe Llamanzares, Chief of Staff for Senator Grace Poe; Senator Grace Poe, Senate Committee on Economic Affairs-Chairperson; and Christine Fajardo, SwissCham Philippines-Chairperson.

To illustrate, there is a rising market demand for eco-friendly products and processes. Thus, businesses can improve their reputation and attract customers by using their sustainability as a selling point. Many corporations have found innovative ways to reduce waste, in turn reducing inefficiency and improving their bottom line.

For instance, I read that Nestlé—a brand I'm sure you're all familiar with—has taken on very impressive commitments. Nestlé has committed to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and having 100% recyclable or reusable packaging by 2025.

Sports companies like Nike and Adidas have done the same. Nike has focused on reducing its waste and using renewable energy, while Adidas has created a greener supply chain and pledged that, by 2025, nine out of 10 Adidas articles will be made from sustainable materials.

Because of environmental challenges and underlying socio-economic problems which societies like ours face, institutionalizing the idea of sustainability in our policies on manufacturing and natural resources exploitation is critical. Since natural resources are finite and can be depleted, it would not be wise to kill the goose that lays the golden egg.

We need partners in development who understand these principles; and the fact that you have invited me here today, tells me that I may be barking up the right tree.



In this light, allow me tell you about one of the laws which I authored. The Public Services Act, was passed last year.

This law liberalizes the rules on foreign investment. It is hoped that this liberalization will improve the quality and delivery of important public services. For example, one way of improving internet service is to allow for greater participation and foreign investment in the telecommunications industry.

By removing the 40 percent cap on foreign equity, we encourage and increase the number of players and capital infusion. This will enhance competition, which in turn will lead to innovation, better consumer service, and wider access to the internet.

If we can fully harness the power of digital technology and leverage it in order to provide universal access to public services, especially to the most vulnerable sectors, then we might be able to alleviate poverty and give our next generation better opportunities.

As we recover from the pandemic, and pivot to a changed and challenging world, there are products of Swiss ingenuity which can help the Philippines transition.

On health, agriculture, green energy, IT, transportation, especially train technology – SBB trains run like Swiss watches, precise to the last second – these are a few of the many things which could help us.

The flip side is that the Philippines has a long catalogue of products, expertly made and competitively priced, which the Swiss can benefit from.

We, in the Senate,
are willing to work
with your industries
in creating policies
that would provide
the means to
achieving success in
this endeavor.

Thank you very much.

(L-R) Markus Helber, SwissCham Philippines Board Member; Nicolas Souvlakis, SwissCham Philippines Newly Elected Board Member; Marcel Thenu, SwissCham Philippines Newly Elected Board Member; Cresenciano Maramot, SwissCham Philippines Newly Elected Board Member; Christine Fajardo, SwissCham Philippines Chairperson; Senator Grace Poe, Senator Grace Poe, Senate Committee on Economic Affairs-Chairperson; Alain Gaschen, Swiss Ambassador to the Philippines; and Kent Marjun Primor, SwissCham Philippines Director of Operations.







Another School Project by NAK-HUMANITAS of Switzerland

In partnership with the Department of Education (DepEd) and Swiss Principals, the New Apostolic Church (NAC) South East Asia (SEA) Relief Fund ventured into another Swiss classroom project in Mindanao.

The NAK-HUMANITAS of Switzerland forwarded the signing of the MoM on 12 November 2022 with the strong presence of the Swiss community, Philippine National Police, and DepEd officials. This follows the undertaking of one (1) unit building with two (2) classrooms and one (1) faculty room with sanitary installations in Puting Bato Elementary School located in the small community of Puting Bato in Barangay Compostela in Davao de Oro.

As aligned with Switzerland's commitment to strengthening education systems in developing countries, such as the Philippines, Swiss Principals hope to improve the insufficient, present facilities in the local community and, thus, secure children's future through education.

Completion and inauguration are foreseen in April 2023.

To read the complete report and NAC SEA's other humanitarian efforts, visit <http://www.nacsearelief.org>



Urs Hebeisen, Chairman of STAMM Group of Companies, during the Groundbreaking Ceremony of the one (1) unit building in Puting Bato Elementary School, located in Barangay Compostela in Davao de Oro. 12 November 2022.



European Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines (ECCP)'s luncheon meeting in Cebu City. 21 October 2022.

SwissCham Philippines promotes the Philippines' trade exchange with Switzerland in Cebu City

SwissCham Philippines joined the European Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines (ECCP)'s luncheon meeting in the City of Cebu last 21 October 2022.

Kent Marjun Primor, SwissCham Philippines Director of Operations, contributed insightful advice to encourage Cebuano exporters to maximize and increase the country's trade exchange with Switzerland through the European Free Trade Association (EFTA)-Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

Primor encouraged Cebu-based entrepreneurs to highlight sustainability practices and stories in presenting their products globally particularly in the European region to gain market access and acceptance. Stories such as women empowerment, environmental care, indigenous solutions, and others appeal in general to European consumers.

As part of the EFTA-FTA's promotion, the local government unit of Cebu City also expressed its desire to welcome Swiss companies and for partnership in improving its local railway system in the *Swiss way*.



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Ramseuir Fun Golf Day

A few SwissCham members gathered for the monthly Ramseier Fun Golf Day and fellowship at South Forbes Golf by Silang, Cavite last 9 November 2022.

Ramseier Golf is a Swiss Expats group/organisation here in Manila with 51 members. Some SwissCham members spotted include Marcel Thenu, Christoph Stern, Markus Knoll Captain, Werner Berger, Reiner Gloor, and Chris Eberle Zuellig.





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Mario Biscocho

Senior Vice President and Managing Director,
Executive Search and Selection Division,
John Clements Consultants, Inc.

Executive Search In The Philippines: A Seasoned Professional's View

Back in my university days, I succinctly remember the admonition by the Jesuits to us, the graduating students, "Why sell soap when you can build people?" It was a strong reminder for the graduates to consider work that embodied the Jesuit education's thrust of molding "men for others", as opposed to more popular and lucrative careers in multinational companies. My very first job after graduation was with a non-profit organization. My role required providing training and technical assistance, as well as help in securing funding for projects intended for low-income communities. When my friends, who opted to pursue careers in the corporate world, asked why I chose that particular job, I would kid them by saying that I was "brainwashed" by the Jesuits. Fast-forward to the present, I have been in the executive search industry for more than three decades now, specifically with John Clements Consultants, the company that pioneered executive search in the country almost half a century ago.

Working in this industry has afforded me a variety of challenges—no two searches are exactly alike. Different companies have different situations and problems; oftentimes, conversations with clients would go beyond the subject of executive search. I have been given numerous opportunities to do consultations with clients, as well as career counseling and mentoring with candidates...

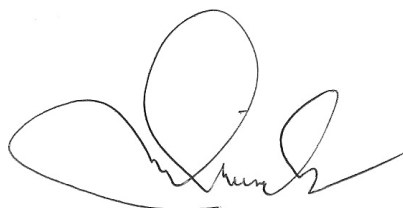
“

... These opportunities allowed me to grow and, at the same time, connect with different types of people... ”

... To date, I still carry with me friendships I have developed with clients and candidates through the years.

Over lunch recently, I was asked by a colleague, who had just joined John Clements Consultants, as to what made me stay with the company all these years. Without hesitation, my answer was similar to what I mentioned during my twenty-five years of service acceptance speech ten years ago: I have found my calling, my passion, in what I do in the company. A successful search not only means helping the executive and his family, but also the employees of the company he would lead. If the executive we placed is able to grow the company, then he is also able to generate more employment opportunities. In fact, we have placed thousands of executives from our inception— imagine the impact of the noble job we are doing on job creation. I could say that this is our humble contribution to building the country and I have been fortunate to partake in this mission with like-minded colleagues at John Clements Consultants.

I am sure that my Jesuit friends and mentors are glad about how I have integrated their thrust of developing "men-for-others" into my work in executive search. I have been happily "brainwashed" and trying to live out this passion every day is an exercise that is refreshing for the soul.



Mario Bischocho
Senior Vice President and Managing
Director, Executive Search and Selection
Division,
John Clements Consultants, Inc.

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Member feature in the Swiss-Philippines Business E- Journal	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Representation and Formal Introductions	✓	✓	✓		
Advertising Opportunities	✓	✓	✓		
<i>Business Consultations</i>					
Economic Reports	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Market Research	✓	✓	✓	✓	
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FTA Technical Consultation	✓	✓	✓		
Business Visa Support	✓	✓	✓		
Mentorship and Traineeship	✓	✓	✓		
<i>Chamber Events</i>					
Event Participation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Collaboration for Sustainability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Executive Chat Series	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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POSITION:

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MOBILE NUMBER:

COMPANY PROFILE

REGISTERED NAME:

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