



Swiss Chamber of Commerce
of the Philippines

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SWISSCHAM PHILIPPINES BUSINESS E-JOURNAL

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
SWISS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE PHILIPPINES

*working together
to strengthen
economies*



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DIRECTOR'S BRIEF

As a proactive business institution representing the Swiss private sector presence in the Philippines, the Chamber sees to it that our members' interest are communicated to the government and society for transparency and shared prosperity. Our constant engagement with the public sector likewise add value in terms of alignment, regulatory updates, and business forecasting. Thus, in this issue, we highlight our opportunity to sit in a dialogue and discuss shared observations about the country with NEDA Director General Arsenio Balisacan and Senate Trade, Commerce, and Entrepreneurship Committee Chairperson Mark Villar. These two government offices are primary agents to ushering economic reform agenda for a more globally competitive and business friendly Philippines. Through these frank exchanges and direct dialogues, initiatives are formed and joint activities are formulated. It is through knowledge-sharing that innovations are sparked and changes taking place.

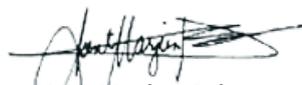
Speaking of transparency, we cover in this issue Switzerland's South East Asia Strategy 2023- 2026, which outlines objectives and measures for multilateral and bilateral dimension of Switzerland's relations with South East Asia including the Philippines centered on peace and security, prosperity, sustainability and digitalisation. These focus areas reverberate SwissCham priority themes as well, which means that we hope to encourage more participation from member-companies and partners on these topics.

We are always enthused to learn of new business prospects or expansions, thus we made time to visit the manufacturing plant of Blue Macay in Laguna as it wishes to reach and look for partners in Switzerland and the wider EFTA and European region. MSMEs play a vital role not just in domestic progression but likewise global supply chain stability, and our Chamber supports capacitating our MSME sector specially under the framework of PH-EFTA FTA.

All these efforts seemed to capture the very essence of Horia Adrian's Executive Insight - advancing initiatives to be part of the solution thereby promoting innovative and sustainable alternatives. Holcim embeds sustainability at the nucleus of its operations and corporate practices, and we want to hear more and more stories on our Swiss companies taking a single step towards a more ecologically-friendly business models.

Our huge thanks also to PMFTC and Prozone Xpress for their continued support to the activities of the Chamber and making sure that our organization grow and responsive to the needs of our community through your active membership.

We aim to do more and convene impactful events / dialogues for this year. Hence, we remind our members to update their membership profiles so we can include your companies in our 2023 SwissCham Membership Directory - a copy of which will be sent to those who filled out the update form.



Kent Marjun Primor
Director of Operations

director@swisscham.ph

SwissCham and NEDA

*On Economic Development
and Sustainable Innovation
in the Philippines*

The Swiss Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines recently held a courtesy meeting with top officials from the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) to discuss bilateral economic initiatives and sustainable innovation for the Philippines; topics that mostly resonate to Swiss enterprises.

The Board of Directors of SwissCham Philippines, which includes representatives from major companies such as Novartis Healthcare Philippines Inc., Rolex Philippines, John Clements Consultants Inc., SGS Philippines Inc., Holcim Philippines, and Nestlé Philippines, shared their experiences and observations with NEDA Secretary Arsenio Balisacan, Undersecretary Joseph Capuno, and Assistant Secretary Sarrah Lynne Daway-Ducanes.

During the meeting, parties discussed the continuity of their long-standing partnership and the shared vision of promoting collaboration between public and private sectors, and equal access and opportunities for inclusive development. Moreover, impacts and possible measures on climate change and environmental protection were likewise covered.

The Board of Directors emphasized the importance of proactive partnerships in enabling a more competitive and inclusive growth for the country.





Photos taken by National Economic Development Authority



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Read more: <https://www.pmi.com/our-science>

Blue Macay looks at exporting to Switzerland and EFTA states

SwissCham Director of Operations Kent Primor visited the manufacturing facility of Blue Macay in Laguna, Philippines in an effort to assess and assist the company's plan to export its products to Switzerland and European states through EFTA-PH Free Trade Agreement mechanism. Switzerland is fully committed to help Philippine MSMEs to be globally competitive.

Ayet Austria, Owner and CEO of Blue Macay shared her optimism to venture into international trade noting the competitive advantage of Filipino processed food and natural ingredients such as bottled sardines, flavoured spices, Pinoy inspired honey and lemon tea.

Sustainability is at the core of their operations and her company is working towards sustainability reporting to better communicate their impacts to the environment, society, and people.

BLUE MACAY is a Filipino brand offering high-quality food products and ingredients. Its product line includes spices, seasonings, mixes, beverages, baking ingredients, bottled foods, frozen meat products, etc.

You may visit its website for more information at <http://bluemacayfood.com>.





Conversations with Senator Mark Villar on Bilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation

SwissCham Board of Directors engaged with the Senate Committee on Trade, Commerce, and Entrepreneurship Chairperson, Senator Mark Villar during a working breakfast hosted by His Excellency Alain Gaschen.

The meeting focused on the challenges and opportunities for Swiss investments in the Philippines, exploring cooperation in digital innovation and sustainability, and the President's recent trip to Davos for the World Economic Forum (WEF).

- **Cancer research:** Christine Fajardo (Novartis) discussed the company's oncology research efforts and encouraged more government programs supporting anti-cancer interventions. Senator Villar echoed the importance of the country's National Integrated Cancer Control Program and the Universal Health Care Act including the role of Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), among others.

- **Education and labor market:** Nicolas Souvlakis (PMFTC) and Maria Carolina Dominguez (John Clements) shared their observations on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the Philippine educational system and its potential effect to labor market's performance. Horia Adrian (Holcim) assured the revival of their Apprenticeship Program to provide young adults with opportunities for professional and technical development.
- **Economic policies:** Members of the Chamber calls for a more transparent and stable regulatory policies to attract foreign investors. Policy inconsistencies may discourage potential investments to the Philippines. On this note, the members request for regular dialogues to strengthen public-private sector collaborations.
- **Foreign investment:** H.E. Alain Gaschen highlighted the potential for cooperation in digital innovation and sustainability, which are focus areas of the Swiss government's strategy in South Asia and where Swiss private corporations have substantial experience.

For his part, Senator Mark Villar echoed the optimism of the President's recent international business missions including their participation at WEF, and noted Swiss global expertise on renewable energy, clean technology, and public transport. Senator Villar likewise noted the observations of the business community and will continue to engage with the private sector to push for inclusive development.







Building progress in the Philippines

In 2017, the World Bank estimated that the Philippines urban population will double to 102 million by 2050. The movement of people in expanding urban areas is not unique to the Philippines with 2.5 billion more people projected to live in cities all over the world during this period.

Continued urbanization and population growth requires new structures to be built. However, current practices will consume enormous amounts of natural resources and emit carbon emissions that will contribute to global warming. It is therefore critical to embrace new ways of building that are climate-friendly, nature positive, and inclusive.

At Holcim Philippines, we are advancing initiatives to be part of the solution from improving operational efficiency to providing the market with innovative and sustainable alternatives for building essential structures.

Already, we have significantly reduced usage of water while replacing more traditional fuels with qualified domestic and industrial waste in our operations. We are also set to power our plants with solar energy. Furthermore, we have expanded our line of blended cements that use more recycled materials and have a lower carbon footprint. And with the Holcim Group's unrivaled strength in innovation and sustainability commitment, we are prepared to further accelerate our efforts to help partners *build more with less resources, build new with old materials, and build better with smarter materials and design.*

In the past year, we ramped up engagement with key stakeholders from government leaders to building sector professionals to highlight the benefits of building more sustainably and innovatively and our readiness to make these happen in the Philippines. Winning allies over is important in accelerating the transition to sustainable construction to create the enabling environment and demand that will make these options the norm.

Our participation in last year's Swiss Innovation Forum is among the highlights of our continuing campaign. We excited to continue the conversation on decarbonizing construction, further advance our initiatives, and bolster partnerships in building better in the Philippines.



All of these are meant to strengthen our ability to continue being part of the Philippines' development story. With our direction to build greener, smarter, and for all, we are optimistic in making a bigger impact in the country's progress.



Horia Adrian
President and CEO
Holcim Philippines



South East Asia Strategy 2023–2026

South East Asia is a dynamic growth region. The rise of the Asia-Pacific to become a preeminent centre of geopolitical power is also reflected in the eleven countries of the region, which together already constitute the world's fifth-largest economic area. Their increasing integration in global value chains is accompanied by rising living standards. At the same time, South East Asia faces growing risks: political and security tensions threaten global trade routes, and the impact of climate change is particularly marked in this region.

This strategy sets out objectives and measures for the multi- lateral and bilateral dimension of Switzerland's South East Asia policy. It is guided by the thematic focus areas in Switzerland's Foreign Policy Strategy (FPS) 2020–2023, namely peace and security, prosperity, sustainability and digitalisation. It also takes account of the needs of Swiss citizens living in South East Asia.

This strategy also sets out how Switzerland intends to shape its relations with each state in the region. Through this country-specific approach, the Federal Council takes into account the differing development levels of the South East Asian states and the respective Swiss interests. The development cooperation programmes of the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) are an integral part of the bilateral relations with the countries concerned.

Philippines

Originally published by Federal Council on 15 February 2023.

The Philippines is a country with substantial **economic development potential**. The third-largest economy in South East Asia is also one of the region's most dynamic, with pre-pandemic growth rates of over 6%.⁴⁰ The continuation of this trend will depend largely on whether the country manages to improve its economic framework conditions (infrastructure, efficiency of public administration, education). Furthermore, large parts of the population do not benefit from the country's economic upswing at all, or only to a limited extent. Around one fourth of people in the Philippines still live under the national poverty line, with a lack of food security remaining a widespread problem.

The increasing frequency and intensity of **natural disasters** is exacerbating the poverty issues. Together with the island states of the South Pacific, the Philippines is one of the countries hit the hardest by natural disasters. Typhoons, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions claim numerous lives each year and cause extensive damage to agriculture and infrastructure. Disaster management in the Philippines regularly reaches the limits of its capacity given the many natural catastrophes and the topography of the country (with over 7,000 islands).

Armed conflicts are an additional challenge. In the Bangsamoro region in the south of the country, the peace process needs new impetus following the agreement reached in 2014. Owing to the many Islamist rebel factions, the potential for conflict remains high. In addition, the simmering conflict between government troops and communist groups in various parts of the country has recently gathered momentum. Another cause for concern is the anti-drug campaign ('war on drugs') declared by the then government in 2016 – a campaign that includes systematic and widespread extrajudicial killings of drug crime suspects. The Philippines has been drawing international criticism for these gross violations of human rights.



Switzerland and the Philippines maintain **multifaceted relations**. Alongside its work furthering human rights, Switzerland has been supporting the peace process in the Bangsamoro region through various activities, including its chairing of the Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission from 2014 to 2021. Further opportunities for peace policy engagement are being examined. In terms of economic affairs, Switzerland seeks to make greater use of the free trade agreement which entered into force in 2018. Furthermore, Switzerland is supporting the Philippines in implementing the 2030 Agenda, with a focus on capacity-building for disaster risk reduction. With over 3,300 people, the Philippines is also home to the second-largest community of Swiss abroad in Asia, making consular relations another important aspect of bilateral ties.

To read the full report, visit <https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/fdfa/fdfa/publikationen.html/content/publikationen/en/eda/schweizer-aussenpolitik/suedostasien-strategie-2023-2026>

Partners Group acquires SureWerx, a leading North American supplier of personal protective equipment, safety gear, and tool solutions

*Originally published by Partners Group AG.
04 January 2023*

Co-headquartered in Vancouver, BC, and Chicago, IL, SureWerx is a leading supplier of technical safety equipment and safety tools that help improve employee wellbeing, working conditions, and productivity. SureWerx owns 18 well-established safety brands across 27 product categories, including welding safety head protection, safety footwear and traction aids, arc flash apparel, detectable warning equipment, and abrasive and cutting tools. The Company serves diverse end-markets, including infrastructure and utilities, manufacturing, transportation and logistics, and warehousing, where customers typically purchase multiple product categories and regularly replenish stock, generating strong recurring demand. SureWerx has around 350 employees across 12 distribution centers, with the majority of its sales in the US and Canada. SureWerx is positioned to benefit from tailwinds in the safety equipment market, such as increasing regulatory requirements on worker safety, a proliferating culture of safety across industries and geographies, and new use-case scenarios for innovative safety equipment.

To read more, please visit <https://www.partnersgroup.com/en/news-views/press-releases/investment-news/detail/article/partners-group-acquires-surewerx-a-leading-north-american-supplier-of-personal-protective-equipment-safety-gear-and-tool-solutions/>



Novartis Healthcare Philippines recognized as Top Employer for third consecutive year

*Originally published by Novartis Philippines.
17 January 2023*

Novartis Healthcare Philippines has been officially recognized by the Top Employers Institute as a Top Employer 2023 in the Philippines. This marks the third consecutive year the Swiss research-based healthcare company has received the prestigious certification.

Each year, Top Employers Institute certifies organizations who are focused on putting their people first through their exceptional human resource (HR) policies.

The Top Employers Institute program certifies organizations based on the participation and results of their HR Best Practices Survey. This survey covers 6 HR domains consisting of 20 topics including People Strategy, Work Environment, Talent Acquisition, Learning, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Wellbeing and more.

Top Employers Institute CEO David Plink says: "Exceptional times bring out the best in people and organizations. And we have witnessed this in our Top Employers Certification Program this year: exceptional performance from the certified Top Employers 2023. These employers have always shown that they care for the development and well-being of their people. By doing so, they collectively enrich the world of work. We are proud to announce and celebrate this year's group of leading people-oriented employers: the Top Employers 2023."

Top Employers Institute is the global authority on recognizing excellence in People Practices. We help accelerate these practices to enrich the world of work. Through the Top Employers Institute Certification Program, participating companies can be validated, certified, and recognized as an employer of choice.

Established over 30 years ago, Top Employers Institute has certified 2,053 organizations in 121 countries/regions. These certified Top Employers positively impact the lives of over 9.5 million employees globally.

"Our organization supplies medicines developed through inspiration and driven by the passion of our people. The word 'driven' is associated with an engine, which is analogous to our organization, comprising different components – represented by our people – performing different functions. Yet, we all come together as one, moving towards a harmonized purpose. Another term associated with an engine is HP for 'horsepower' which is a unit of measurement of the power of an engine or motor. For us in Novartis Philippines, HP also stands for 'happy people with high performance,'" said Mr. Joel Chong, Country President, Novartis Healthcare Philippines, Inc.

In 2021, the company's business operations created a total of 9,240 local jobs, including the employment of 441 Filipino associates. In terms of products and human capital impact, Novartis contributed Php2.4 billion to Philippine society.

"Novartis Philippines has been deliberate in its journey towards our culture aspiration of Inspired, Curious and Unbossed and in fostering a psychologically safe and inclusive environment. It is an honor to be recognized for the workplace we have created. This milestone is truly a great testament that our people practices continue to be at par with the industry's best," said Ms. Annelyn Betia, People & Organization Head, Novartis Healthcare Philippines, Inc.



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Combining our local and global network, expertise, and resources, we've got you covered on:

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Kat Gonzales

JVP of Muebles Italiano



Prozone Xpress Logistics never shirks in facing the issues squarely. A partner who delivers."

Mr. Antonio Choa,

GM of Daffid Industries, Inc.



They always look for ways to make things work and move forward."

Wilcon Depot

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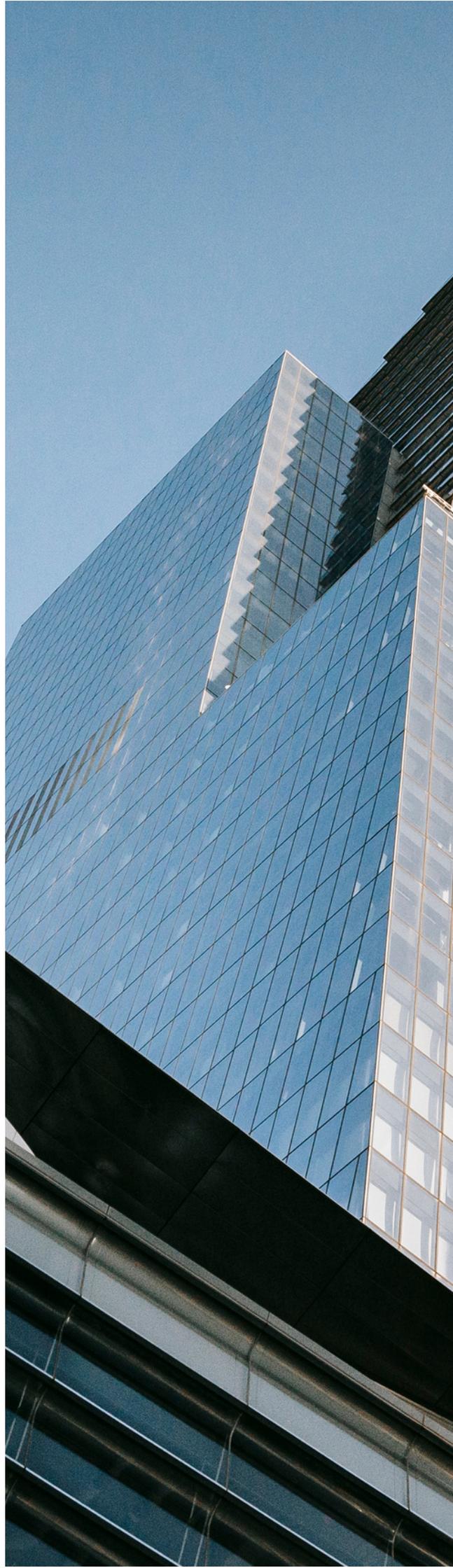
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Lutz Kaiser
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Global Reporting Initiative
Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry
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For queries, please contact your SwissCham Secretariat:

 secretariat@swisscham.ph

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MEMBERSHIP MILEAGES

	Regular Corporate	Associate Corporate	Foreign - Based Corporate	Regular Individual	Young Professionals
<i>Networking Benefits</i>					
SwissCham Philippines Business E- Journal	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Daily News Clips	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Member feature in the Swiss-Philippines Business E- Journal	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Representation and Formal Introductions	✓	✓	✓		
Advertising Opportunities	✓	✓	✓		
<i>Business Consultations</i>					
Economic Reports	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Market Research	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Government and Chamber relations	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Business Support and Network Access	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Business Matching	✓	✓	✓		
FTA Technical Consultation	✓	✓	✓		
Business Visa Support	✓	✓	✓		
Mentorship and Traineeship	✓	✓	✓		
<i>Chamber Events</i>					
Event Participation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Collaboration for Sustainability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Executive Chat Series	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sector Roundtable Discussions	✓	✓	✓		
Trade Exhibits and Business Tours	✓	✓	✓		

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Working together to strengthen economies

COMPANY REPRESENTATIVE

FULL NAME (LAST, FIRST, M.I.):
POSITION:
DATE OF BIRTH (MM/DD):
EMAIL ADDRESS:
MOBILE NUMBER:

ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE

FULL NAME:
POSITION:
EMAIL ADDRESS:
MOBILE NUMBER:

COMPANY PROFILE

REGISTERED NAME:
INDUSTRY:
 Agriculture Financial Activities Real Estate
 Manufacturing Arts and Entertainment Transport and Storage
 Construction Health and Allied Services Administrative, Support Services
 Wholesale, Retail Trade Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities Others: _____

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF BUSINESS (30-50 WORDS):

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES (PH):
GROSS ANNUAL REVENUE:
COMPANY WEBSITE:
COMPANY ADDRESS:

APPLICATION PROCEDURE:

1. Fill out Membership Application Form
2. Send form to secretariat@swisscham.ph
3. Application will be processed/approved in the next immediate board meeting.

MEMBERSHIP TYPES:

Individual

Young Professionals
Php 5,000

Regular Individual
Php 8,000

Corporate

Regular Corporate
Php 30,000

Associate Corporate
Php 20,000

Foreign-Based
Corporate CHF 500

OTHER OFFICERS (OPTIONAL)

FULL NAME:
POSITION:
EMAIL ADDRESS:

FULL NAME:
POSITION:
EMAIL ADDRESS:

PRIVACY AND CONSENT

I give consent to SwissCham Philippines to use my organization's logo for the website and other social media platforms.

I give consent to SwissCham Philippines to include me in the Viber group, which is exclusive for primary / alternate members only.

I, with due authority, hereby apply for membership to the *Swiss Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines* and agree, if accepted, to be bound by its rules and regulation.

I hereby certify that I have the authority to supply the above information and also certify that it is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

SWISS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE PHILIPPINES
WORKING **TOGETHER TO STRENGTHEN ECONOMIES**
SINCE 2003

MISSION STATEMENT

The Swiss Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines is a non-stock and non-profit organization that serves as a channel for initiating and facilitating business-related and networking activities to grow trade and investments between the Philippines and Switzerland.

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Upcoming Events

SWISSCHAM **ROUNDTABLE** SERIES

presents

A Digital Philippines: Updates and Roadmaps

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



HON. IVAN JOHN UY

Secretary

Department of Information and
Communications Technology

SAVE THE DATE

 19 April 2023 | 11:00 AM - 01:00 PM

 Ascott Makati, Philippines



Scan the QR Code to **pre-register** or
email us at secretariat@swisscham.ph

THIS EVENT IS OPEN FOR PARTNERSHIP.

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