

## **KEYNOTE SPEECH**

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**JOINT OPENING CEREMONY OF PIFS, IDM, PHILFFEX, PHILVAC**

**March 9, 2017 | 09:00 am | 2nd floor Pre-Function Lobby, SMX Convention Center Manila**

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Our distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, good morning!

It is an honor to be here today to witness the union between Design and Construction, a marriage that will offspring unprecedented opportunities to boost sales and meet the growing demand for furnishing solutions in the country.

In behalf of DTI Secretary Ramon M. Lopez, I wish to thank you all for your contributions in the development of the construction industry. It is because of your efforts that we are all gathered here today.

Philippine Finishing and Furnishings Expo (PhilFFEX 2017) will not be possible if not for the joint effort of the Philippine Constructors Association, Inc. and the Philippine Construct Events Exhibitions and Conferences, Corp.

PhilFFEX 2017 is a gift to all Filipino designers, suppliers and construction professionals to showcase their talent and creativity, the melting pot of the best and the brightest in the industry.

The construction and infrastructure development is seen as one of the fastest growing sectors in the industry. A London-based research firm has forecasted that the rate of construction growth in the Philippines will reach \$47 billion by 2020 from \$30.2 billion last 2015. Based on the report, the industry's growth will remain high because of the increased focus on infrastructure improvement and continued expansion of residential and commercial buildings. And as the industry grows, all the sub-sectors will also grow.

There will be a massive demand for interior designers, engineers, architects and furniture makers. The finishing and furnishing sector as well as the air-cooling, ventilating and refraction sector will be at their busiest. While infrastructure development remains among the top priorities of the government, this is a win-win for the construction industry.

I will not hesitate to highlight the role of this industry in nation building. The construction sector generates employment, drives economic growth, and delivers solutions to address social concerns, climate change and energy challenges. The impact of the construction industry goes beyond the direct benefits of construction activities.

By now we all already know that we have P9Trillion to spend on infrastructure until 2022, and that the national government has allocated P900Billion for 2017 alone. The Duterte administration is committed to boost infrastructure spending by 7.4% of GDP for inclusive economic growth, and we all need to work together to realize this in order to accelerate growth, raise productivity and increase competitiveness in the industry.

There are a lot of opportunities, and we have enough for everyone. There is also a lot of competition, and we urge all of you to make this a healthy competition that will push the country forward. We need to band together to build the future of our beloved Philippines while preserving the integrity of the construction industry.

As we celebrate March as the National Women's Month, let us not forget the significant contribution of women in the construction industry. Women play an important role not only in building families and the lives of our children; we build the nation as well. Women complement the lack in men, as we also have an unending supply of talent, skills, competence and passion. Women not only have the muscle to do what men do in the construction industry, but we also have the heart as a bonus.

As the Undersecretary of the Construction Industry Authority of the Philippines, I want to make sure that women in our industry are empowered and are given equal opportunities as men do. We can make change work for women.

Years from now, I can see our industry in the globally competitive international arena. A future where public commute is the regular mode of transportation because we are able to build and connect bridges, roads and railways. I can see urbanized and well-developed rural areas in our country because we are able to build the necessary facilities such as airports and seaports to pave the way for modernization. I can see us building highways of opportunities for our country to march forward to globalization.

Build, build, build. I may already sound like a broken record to most of you, but I will continue to implore all of you in the construction industry to imbibe this mantra until we have achieved our goals, and until we have met the huge expectations that the President and our countrymen have bestowed on us. The industry has quietly supported national economic growth through the years, and it is only now that we are making this fact known to the whole country and to the world.

It is your time to shine and take center stage. Strike while the iron is hot.

We at DTI are your partners in this endeavor. We shall remain committed to be the leading and active partner in propelling the growth of the construction industry, encompassing its sub-sectors and allied industries. We shall create an enabling

business environment that would favor not only the general construction sector, but also the design, interior and fit-out construction sectors.

We shall raise your global competitiveness by expanding opportunities in both the national and global markets. We will let the world witness the proficiency of Filipinos across all phases of construction—from design up until building and construction, administration and maintenance.

As an initial step to signify our commitment, we have taken steps to further improve ease of doing business with the government. With the current administration's aggressive efforts to streamline business processes and suction bureaucratic fat, you can all expect a much easier and a more convenient way of doing business.

Together, we shall take the Philippine construction industry to greater heights.

Let us show the world that our industry is ready, willing and very much able to face the challenges and opportunities of the Golden Age of Infrastructure. Let us seize the moment, let us seize the day to build, build and build.

Carpe diem!

Congratulations to Philffex 2017 and this event's organizers!

Mabuhay ang PCA at mabuhay tayong lahat!