

**PRESIDENT FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.'s
SPEECH AT THE PHILIPPINES-CZECH BUSINESS FORUM**

Prague, Czech Republic

15 March 2024

(00:00:00)

Thank you very much.

His Excellency Petr Pavel; the Deputy Foreign Minister Jan Marian; Vice President of the Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic Milena Jabůrková; Vice President of the Chamber of Commerce of the Czech Republic Jana Havrdová; Czech officials; my colleagues in the Philippine government; the distinguished guests who have joined us here this morning; ladies and gentlemen. Good morning.

It is with great pleasure that I stand before you today at this Philippines-Czech Business Forum. For this event symbolizes the burgeoning partnership and shared aspirations of our two nations.

Organized by the Philippine Embassy in Prague and the Philippine Trade and Investment Center in Berlin, with the support of and in cooperation with the Czech Republic's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Confederation of Industry, and the Chamber of Commerce, this event showcases the potential for economic cooperation and serves as a testament to the strong diplomatic ties that bind the Philippines and the Czech Republic.

I would also like to express my sincerest gratitude to President Pavel for his insightful keynote address, which has laid a solid foundation for our discussions here today. President Pavel, your leadership in fostering a deeper understanding and collaboration between our countries is truly commendable. And certainly, we are very, very grateful for your attention and continuing interest in the Philippines.

As we proceed with today's agenda, I look forward to the signing of the Memoranda of Understanding that will mark a significant milestone in our journey towards mutual prosperity. These agreements are not just documents. They are a commitment to unlocking the vast potential that lies in our partnership, especially in the semiconductor and IT-BPM sectors. These strengths that are complementary in these different industries, stand to benefit from this collaboration; we pave the way for innovation and for development. The Philippines, with its strategic location and our vibrant economy, is committed to become a reliable partner for the Czech Republic in implementing its Indo-Pacific

Strategy. We believe that by working together, we can achieve our shared goals of stability, economic growth, and sustainable development in the region.

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Moreover, we seek the support of the Czech Republic for the resumption of the Philippine-EU Free Trade Agreement negotiations. We believe that the resumption of these negotiations will be a big step in furthering our trade relations, with the end view to establish a stable, predictable, and enabling business environment that promotes inclusive and sustainable growth and development.

Furthermore, today's agreements also signify a very exciting step forward. They embody our commitment to complement our strengths and explore new avenues of cooperation. The expertise of the Czech Republic in minerals processing is of particular interest to us.

Hence, we invite Czech companies to invest in the processing of our critical minerals, offering a robust diversification plan that can mitigate the risks of global supply chain disruptions as we have seen in the recent years.

As we look to the future, we eagerly anticipate welcoming Czech Republic companies to further discussions and potential industry cooperation during the upcoming Joint Committee on Economic Cooperation this July.

This will be a very important opportunity to deepen our dialogue, to explore new partnerships, and foster an environment conducive to business and investment between our two countries.

So, let us embrace this forum as a starting point for a journey filled with opportunities and challenges but, also, triumphs. With mutual respect and understanding, we can forge a partnership that not only benefits our nations, but also contributes to the broader goals of peace, prosperity, and stability in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond.

Thank you, and I look forward to the fruitful outcomes of our collaboration.

Thank you and good morning.

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