



(Left photo) Ambassador Jose L. Cuisia, Jr. discusses the Philippine roadmap for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) at the 2013 Annual Conference on Trade Policy and International Marketing organized by Georgetown University's American Marketing Association last Thursday. (Right photo) Ambassador Jose L. Cuisia, Jr. discusses the Philippine roadmap for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) at the 2013 Annual Conference on Trade Policy and International Marketing organized by Georgetown University's American Marketing Association last Thursday. (Philippine Embassy Photo by [unclear])

18 March 2013 - The Philippines has laid down the roadmap for its eventual participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)—an initiative involving the United States (US) and other Pacific nations that seeks to create what could be the biggest free trade area in the world.

Philippine Ambassador to the US Jose L. Cuisia Jr. outlined the Philippines' desire to join the TPP in his presentation during a panel discussion at the 2013 Annual Conference on Trade Policy and International Marketing organized by Georgetown University and the American Marketing Association here on March 14.

"The roadmap to the TPP reflects the Philippine Government's interest in joining after it has undertaken adequate preparations for the commitments required under the agreement," Ambassador Cuisia said as he echoed President Benigno S. Aquino III's instructions to look into how the Philippines could become part of the proposed free trade area that would account for 40 percent of global gross domestic product (GDP).

Ambassador Cuisia said the Philippine roadmap prepared by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is underpinned by three strategies involving stakeholder engagement in trade policy-making; trade policy research network and capacity-building; and enhanced interagency cooperation.

The TPP started as a 2006 trade pact involving Singapore, New Zealand, Chile and Brunei Darussalam but now also includes the US, Australia, Canada, Chile, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam—all member economies of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum.

The Philippines and other Pacific nations, including Japan, are being invited to be part of TPP, which seeks to deepen economic relations among members by significantly reducing or eliminating tariffs. Aside from trade in goods and services, the initiative also covers foreign investment, government procurement, intellectual property rights and environmental and labor protection.

According to Ambassador Cuisia, the Philippines cannot afford to be excluded from the TPP as well as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)—an ASEAN-led initiative with dialogue partners Australia, China, Japan, South Korea, India and New Zealand that seeks to create a free trade area that targets the removal of 95 percent of tariffs on goods.

"We share the view of our fellow ASEAN member-countries that the ASEAN Free Trade Areas, RCEP, and the TPP are pathways towards the establishment of a Free Trade Area of the Asia

Pacific Region,” Ambassador Cuisia said. “RCEP and TPP are mutually-reinforcing tracks for regional integration.”

Aside from Ambassador Cuisia, the other members of the panel were Mr. Seward Jones, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Market Access and Compliance of the International Trade Administration and Mr. Jack Jan, Chairman of the Taiwan-US Commercial Forum. Professor Thomas Cooke of Georgetown University served as moderator while Professor Michael Czinkota was Conference Chair.

The Conference on Trade Policy and International Marketing is an annual event that gathers policy, business and academic circles on relevant issues in international trade policy and marketing. END



Ambassador Jose L. Cuisia Jr. (right) with Mr. Seward Jones, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Access and Compliance of the International Trade Administration (second from right), Mr. Jan, Chairman of Taiwan-US Commercial Forum (left) took part in the panel discussion on the Pacific Partnership during the 2013 Annual Conference on Trade Policy and Development organized by Georgetown University and the American Marketing Association. The session was moderated by Prof. Thomas Cooke (second from left) and Prof. Robert Czinkota is Conference Chair (center). (Philippine Embassy Photo by Lilibeth)

