

CLOSING REMARKS

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General Membership Meeting and Elections

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We can only look back with mixed emotions to another challenging year that has just come to a close. Regret and pity are understatements as we saw companies fold up, employees laid off and many export operations slowed down. At the same time, we get inspired to learn of best practices that have emerged out of our survival kits, including the ones shared during the membership meeting and Christmas party last December.

Through it all, PHILEXPORT has to keep focused in doing its mandate. Personally now, this privilege to serve the industry poses a humbling but very challenging experience as PHILEXPORT strives to fulfill its vision of an exporting nation. The leaders are undoubtedly critical factors who can make or break opportunities for a company, a sector, an industry, a country. Thus, the relevance of our elections later.

But even as the leaders provide the direction and motivation, they cannot complete a mission by themselves alone. It is at this point that I again stress the strong need for the selfless cooperation, dedication and hard work of the rest of the members of the team. At PHILEXPORT, we have seen many success stories among our PHILEXPORT chapters and industry associations that happened because the team members acted as one and set aside personal circumstances and differences.

Thus, I would like to stress this call to action for our trustees and industry association heads as well. PHILEXPORT, our mother organization, has gone

to such lengths to develop various local and international networks with which we can work with for our various projects and programs. Let us maximize these partnerships and look at developing meaningful activities that will benefit our associations and their members. There are already models that have been implemented by a number of our leaders and associations. Even with modest resources, I am positive that we can duplicate these in many ways and opportunities again as we start anew this year.

We shall be conducting planning sessions in the coming days, the output of which should be part of the industry bible, the Philippine Export Development Plan. The directions that will be identified should help us move closer to our goal of export sustainability and competitiveness at all possible levels. Despite and because of the very clear and daunting challenges we face, we look forward to working productively and efficiently with each of you in the coming days.

Congratulations in advance to the Trustees who will be elected or re-elected. Likewise, we thank you all for your attendance and participation.

Good evening and have a fruitful new year!