

AGREED MINUTES OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE PHILIPPINES-MYANMAR JOINT COMMISSION FOR BILATERAL COOPERATION

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In accordance with the Agreement on the Establishment of the Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation between the Philippines and the Union of Myanmar signed on the 17th of October 1997, the First Meeting of the Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation between the Republic of the Philippines and the Union of Myanmar was held in Yangon from 11 to 12 April 2004.

2. The delegation of the Republic of the Philippines was led by Her Excellency Mrs. Delia Domingo Albert, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines. The delegation of the Union of Myanmar was led by His Excellency U Win Aung, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar. The lists of the two delegations appear as Annexes A and B.

3. The two delegations discussed various issues of mutual interest with a view to further enhancing the existing relations of friendship and cooperation between the two countries. The texts of the opening remarks by the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar appear as Annexes C and D.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

4. The agenda of the meeting appears as Annex E.

III. DISCUSSIONS ON BILATERAL RELATION

Exchange of Visits

5. The Meeting underscored the importance of exchange of visits between the two countries. The two sides agreed to promote exchange of visits at various levels and expressed the belief that such visits would serve to promote better understanding and contribute to the further strengthening of bilateral relations and cooperation between the two countries and peoples.

Trade

6. The two sides noted that the volume of trade between the two countries was not very significant at present but that the potential for enhancement of bilateral trade exists in many areas.

7. With a view to promote and expand bilateral trade, the Myanmar side proposed to form a Joint Trade Commission, led by the Minister for Commerce of Myanmar and the Secretary of Trade and Industry of the Philippines, to review the development of trade, identify areas of mutual interests, to hold consultations and exchange information on trade and other related areas. The Philippine side agreed to the proposal in principle. A draft Memorandum of Understanding for the establishment of the Joint Trade Commission from Myanmar appears as Annex F.

8. The two sides agreed to organize and participate in each other's trade fairs, with a view to organizing trade fairs strictly for Myanmar products in the Philippines and vice-versa in the future. Further", the two sides agreed to inform one another in advance of upcoming trade fairs in each country.

Cooperatives

9. The two sides agreed to promote cooperation between the small and medium-sized enterprises of both countries. The Philippine side invited Myanmar to participate in the yearly trade events organized in the Philippines in order to promote Myanmar's lacquer ware industry and other small and medium-sized enterprises. A copy of the trade events appears as Annex G.

10. The Meeting agreed to promote information exchange and networking activities between the business organizations of the two countries to further boost existing bilateral trade and investment ties.

Investment

11. The two sides recognized the fact that both Myanmar and the Philippines are striving to attract foreign direct investments into their respective countries. However, it was agreed that the two sides should also encourage their respective private sectors to invest into each other, in keeping with the spirit of the Agreement for the Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investments between the two countries. The two sides also recognized the need to increase investments on a reciprocal basis.

Agriculture

12. The two sides agreed to enhance the existing level of cooperation in agriculture.

13. The Myanmar side expressed its interest for cooperation in the areas of estate plantations, transfer of technology in food processing, and in food packaging industries.

14. The two sides agreed to promote information exchange and explore possible joint ventures, particularly on the establishment of plantations for banana, pineapple, coconut, agro-based industries and food processing industries.

15. The Myanmar side took note of and welcomed the Philippines' offer of training on post-harvest technology, particularly in packaging and preservation.

Forestry

16. The two sides reiterated their interest to implement as soon as possible the Memorandum of Understanding on the Promotion of Technical Cooperation in Forestry and Forest Industries Development signed between the two countries.

17. The Myanmar side emphasized the promotion of cooperation in areas such as forestry research and development; forest products processing and marketing; people-oriented forestry; forest protection, biodiversity conservation; eco-tourism and technology development in forest utilization, particularly in lesser-known species. The Philippine side agreed to explore ways and means to further enhance cooperation in this area.

Tourism