

**Presidential Communications Operations Office
Presidential News Desk**

**INTERVENTION OF
PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
DURING THE 2021 APEC ECONOMIC LEADERS' MEETING (AELM)**

[12 NOVEMBER 2021]

Excellencies, Your Majesty,

The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered an unprecedented global economic crisis that has affected all countries, regardless of size and level of development.

But, as we are quickly learning, recovery is proving to be uneven and far from inclusive.

This uneven recovery cannot simply be attributed to weak domestic systems or pre-pandemic economic fault lines. This is also due to structural and artificial constraints in the global economy.

Closer international cooperation is needed to address these constraints and to ensure that all countries recover from this crisis.

We need improved risk management systems, better response and mitigation measures, and stronger support mechanisms for vulnerable communities.

Toward these ends, APEC economies should work closely together in the following areas.

First, creating an integrated system on vaccine passport validation and contact tracing in order to facilitate safe cross-border travel. This is key to promoting mobility and revitalizing hard-hit sectors, particularly tourism.

Second, ensuring pandemic-ready healthcare systems. We must maximize technology to establish innovative delivery mechanisms for healthcare service.

These include online consultations and mobile and homecare services to make healthcare more accessible to our people.

Third, establishing social protection for non-traditional forms of employment. Under the new normal, we can expect more people in the informal sector and gig economy.

Yet, workers in these sectors are not usually covered by mandatory benefits and social protection programs.

To address this, the Philippines, for its part, will broaden the coverage of social insurance under its Social Security System and improve unemployment insurance and related services.

Fourth, promoting transnational education among APEC economies. We can consider various modalities, including setting up international branch campuses and training centers in APEC economies as well as twinning [arrangements], among others.

Fifth, bridging the digital divide and harnessing innovation. Technology and innovation are vital to preparing our economies for the future world of work.

Pursuant to the Boracay Action Agenda, we must continue to build quality digital infrastructure and empower micro, small and medium enterprises to participate in the global digital economy. These require accessible, stable and affordable energy.

We should also pursue sustainable financing and adopt relevant initiatives under the New Strategy for Implementation of the Cebu Action Plan for finance resilience.

Finally, as we work towards full economic recovery, let us not forget that climate change is hitting us at a faster pace than expected.

Developing economies such as the Philippines contribute the least to climate change, but we are the most vulnerable to its disastrous consequences. And the cost of transitioning to a green economy is too high for developing countries to afford. This is the simple truth.

The Philippines thus reiterates its call for developed economies to fulfill their longstanding commitment to climate financing, technology transfer and capacity-building in the developing world. It is the right thing to do.

Excellencies, Your Majesty,

We have accomplished much, but more needs to be done. We look forward to begin implementation of the Aotearoa Plan of Action under Thailand's chairmanship, and [welcome] the hosting offers of the United States and Peru.

Let us continue to join...to work...to grow...together.

Thank you.

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