

**SPEECH OF AMBASSADOR MANUEL M. LOPEZ
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF ROCOCO**

15 July 2014

Kikuen Room, 4F Hilton Tokyo

Speaking Slot: 1700H-1703H

Hon. Shinji Tarutoko, former Minister of Internal Affairs and Communication

Hon. Michiaki Ogasawara, Former Administrative Vice Minister of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication, and Advisor at the Daiwa Institute of Research

Mr. Kazuhiko Hasegawa, President and Chief Executive Officer of ROCOCO

Distinguished Guests.Friends.Ladies and Gentlemen.

Minnasama. Konnichiwa.

My sincerest congratulations to ROCOCO CO., LTD on the occasion of its 20th Anniversary.

I first met your President, Mr. Hasegawa some three years ago when I was just newly-installed as Ambassador of the Philippines to Japan. Since then, I have had the privilege of being regularly updated by Mr. Hasegawa on the progress of Rococo's business in the Philippines.

Today, I am happy to note that Rococo's facility in Cebu and Makati are now running, enabling Filipino IT practitioners to provide information technology services to the Japanese market challenged by high operational costs, a limited talent pool, among others.

Rococo's initiatives in harnessing the IT talent pool in the Philippines is also worth noting. I am aware of the continuing training program you designed for fresh Filipino graduates, who are allowed to experience on-the-job training in Japan. To date, I understand 15 Filipino trainees have already qualified under this special program. Thank you for nurturing Filipino talent.

I for one believe that there is a huge opportunity for knowledge sharing and human resource development between the Philippines and Japan.

Let me just share with you briefly that last June 13, I personally made a policy recommendation before the ASEAN-Japan Business Council or the AJBC, for Japan to provide easier access to Filipino IT professionals, who wish to undergo training. I also exhorted the AJBC to forward a recommendation for Japan to provide more IT training programs to the very young and skillful IT talents in the Philippines. I have been advised that the AJBC has sent these recommendations to the Japanese government.

Before I end, let me personally thank Mr. Hasegawa for always giving a good word about the Philippines to your Japanese colleagues. The confidence of the Japanese people is one of the reasons why the Philippines is one of the best performing economies today. To those of you who have not been to the Philippines, please visit my country.It's more fun in the Philippines. It is just four hours away from Japan, and multiple flights now fly between our countries, including three new ones via Haneda which commenced only last March 30.

Again, congratulations, and I look forward to Rococo's further growth through the Philippines in the future.

Mabuhay!!! And omedetougozaimasu!!!