



# CANADALINKS

## CHANGES IN ASEAN BUSINESS



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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members and Friends,

As we welcome the new year, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each of you for your continued support and engagement with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines. Together, we have navigated challenges, celebrated milestones, and strengthened the ties between Canada and the Philippines.

In 2025, we made significant strides in stabilizing our finances, enhancing transparency, and reinforcing CanCham's credibility. Our milestone events and advocacy initiatives showcased the strength of our community and the value of collective action. These achievements would not have been possible without your active participation and trust.

Looking ahead to 2026, our priorities remain clear:

- **Advocacy:** We will continue to engage government on key regulatory issues affecting our members, including taxation, labor, and trade facilitation.
- **Partnerships:** We aim to deepen collaboration with other chambers, diaspora leaders, and regional partners to amplify our voice and impact.
- **Events & Committees:** Expect more sectoral activities, networking opportunities, and legacy-driven programs that highlight Canadian excellence and foster inclusivity.
- **Member Value:** We are committed to ensuring that every initiative we undertake delivers tangible benefits to you, our members.

This year also marks a fresh chapter in our engagement with government stakeholders, with new leadership in key agencies offering opportunities for constructive dialogue and reform. We will continue to represent your interests with professionalism, transparency, and resilience.

On behalf of the Board and Secretariat, I wish you a prosperous and fulfilling 2026. Let us build on our momentum, strengthen our community, and create lasting impact together.

Warm regards,

Christopher Ilagan  
President



# CANADA-PH ROUNDUP

## 7th JCBC Meeting in Manila (Feb 12)

On February 12, officials from both governments met in Manila for the 7th JCBC. Discussions focused on economic and development cooperation, with emphasis on energy security, critical minerals, and cybersecurity. This signals a deepening of strategic ties in areas vital to both economies.

Source: <https://canadianinquirer.net/2026/02/15/ph-canada-affirm-bilateral-commitments-at-7th-jcbc/>

## Defense & Security

- Intelligence-Sharing Pact: Negotiations are underway for a General Security of Information Agreement, enabling military intelligence-sharing between the two countries.

<https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1269331>

- Balikatan 2026: Canada is expected to be the third-largest participant in this year's joint military exercises, reflecting its growing Indo-Pacific security role.

<https://manilastandard.net/news/314705666/canada-eyes-free-trade-visiting-forces-pacts-with-ph-this-year.html>

**Canada-in-Asia Conference:** The Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada hosted the Canada-in-Asia Conference 2026 in Singapore (Feb 10–11), with strong Philippine participation. The event focused on unlocking partnerships across business, research, and innovation

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2026/02/14/tmt-newswire/globenewswire/canada-in-asia-conference-2026-advances-bold-new-era-of-canada-asia-engagement/2278309>

## FTA Talks Begin (Feb 18–20)

The Philippines hosts the first round of formal Free Trade Agreement negotiations with Canada, aiming for conclusion within 2026.

<https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1269053>

## Canada keen to back PH vs. cyber threats ahead of 2028 polls

Canada has pledged support to the Philippines in strengthening defenses against cyber threats as the 2028 national elections approach. Ambassador David Hartman highlighted Ottawa's commitment during a recent forum in Makati, noting that the initiative aligns with Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy.

The partnership aims to bolster cybersecurity infrastructure, counter disinformation, and guard against foreign interference—reinforcing democratic resilience and protecting electoral integrity.

<https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1269370>

## 10 New Canada Immigration Laws and Changes Coming in 2026

Source:

<https://immigrationnewscanada.ca/new-canada-immigration-changes-in-2026/>

## Canada's visa-free entry list includes the Philippines

Source:

<https://tribune.net.ph/2026/01/06/canadas-visa-free-entry-list-includes-the-philippines>



# Canada, eh...

- Arviat, Nunavut, chosen as main campus site for Canada's 1<sup>st</sup> Inuit University

Source: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/inuit-nunangat-university-location-9.7083111>



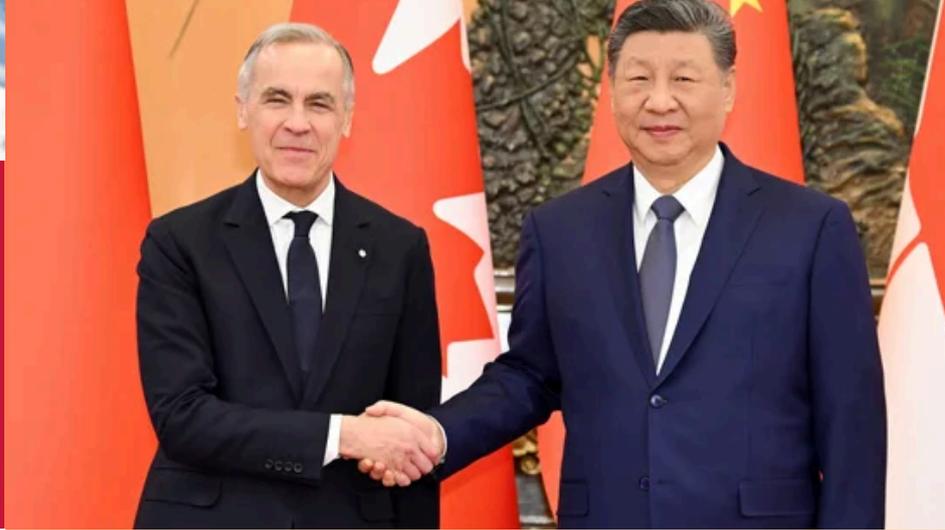
**Mark Carney** • Following  
Prime Minister of Canada and Leader of the Liberal Party | Premier m...

Our government is investing in a new Inuit-led university in Nunavut.



- Agreement between the European Union and Canada concerning participation under the SAFE Instrument

Source: [https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/international\\_relations\\_relations\\_internationales/eu-ue/agreement-accord.aspx?lang=eng](https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/international_relations_relations_internationales/eu-ue/agreement-accord.aspx?lang=eng)



## CANADA AGREES TO CUT TARIFF ON CHINESE ELECTRIC VEHICLES IN BREAK WITH THE U.S.

Canada has agreed to reduce its 100% tariff on Chinese electric vehicles in exchange for lower Chinese tariffs on key Canadian agricultural exports, Prime Minister Mark Carney announced Friday following two days of meetings with Chinese leaders in Beijing.

Under the agreement, Chinese EV exports to Canada will be subject to an initial annual cap of 49,000 vehicles, rising to approximately 70,000 over five years. In return, China will reduce its tariff on Canadian canola seeds from 84% to about 15%, providing significant relief to one of Canada's major export sectors.

Carney described the discussions as constructive and results-driven, noting that Canada's relationship with China has shown renewed momentum in recent months.

The development marks a departure from the United States' trade position on Chinese EVs and comes as Ottawa continues to face unresolved tariff pressures from Washington. Carney has yet to secure a broader trade agreement with U.S. President Donald Trump, whose administration has maintained tariffs affecting key Canadian industries.

Earlier in the day, Carney met with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People, where both leaders signaled a shared interest in stabilizing and improving bilateral relations after several years of strain. Xi noted that prior discussions had opened a new chapter toward renewed cooperation.

The agreement signals a recalibration of Canada's trade posture, balancing domestic economic interests with evolving global partnerships.



## Philippine Airlines' 85th Anniversary, leads launch of its new Airbus A350-1000

**Pasay City, Philippines — January 18, 2026** — As it marks 85 years of service, Philippine Airlines (PAL) unveiled its first Airbus A350-1000, becoming the first airline in Southeast Asia to operate the long-range widebody aircraft and signaling a major step in its global expansion.

The ceremony, held at Lufthansa Technik Philippines in the Macroasia Economic Zone, Villamor Airbase, was led by PAL Holdings, Inc. President Lucio C. Tan III and attended by President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos, Jr., First Lady Liza Araneta Marcos, and senior government officials and dignitaries.

Tan described the aircraft as a symbol of PAL's renewed strength and global ambition. “The A350-1000 reflects our confidence to compete globally while fulfilling our role as the nation's flag carrier—connecting people, supporting livelihoods, and contributing to national development,” he said.

The aircraft features PAL's signature “Sunrise” livery and commemorative “85 Years” decal. Five A350-1000 aircraft will join the fleet in 2026, with three more arriving in 2027.

President Marcos toured the aircraft, which will enhance PAL's transpacific services to the United States and Canada. Configured in a tri-class layout, it accommodates 382 passengers, including 42 Business Class suites, 24 Premium Economy seats, and 316 Economy seats.

Designed in partnership with Lift Aero Design, the cabin emphasizes comfort, privacy, and connectivity. Business Class offers full-flat suites with sliding doors and direct aisle access, while Premium Economy and Economy provide enhanced ergonomic seating, personal entertainment, and inflight connectivity. Wi-Fi messaging, browsing, and streaming are available across all classes.

The A350-1000 also delivers up to 25 percent greater fuel efficiency and reduced emissions compared to previous-generation aircraft, while increasing cargo capacity to support PAL's logistics operations. Recognized as Asia Pacific's Most On-Time Airline for 2025, PAL now operates a fleet of 82 aircraft. The addition of the A350-1000 underscores the airline's continued investment in modernization, expanded connectivity, and global competitiveness.





JJ MORENO (LEFT) WILL SUCCEED BENEDICT SISON (RIGHT) AS CEO AND COUNTRY HEAD OF SUN LIFE PHILIPPINES

## SUN LIFE ANNOUNCES LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION IN THE PHILIPPINES

**JJ Moreno will succeed Benedict Sison as CEO and Country Head and continue to grow Sun Life's business as the Number 1 life insurer in Philippines**

**Manila, Philippines — January 9, 2026** — Sun Life announced that Benedict Sison will retire as Chief Executive Officer and Country Head, Philippines, concluding a distinguished 15-year career with the company. Jonathan Juan “JJ” Moreno, currently President of Sun Life of Canada (Philippines), Inc., will assume the role of CEO and Country Head effective April 1, 2026.

To support a smooth transition, Sison will continue as Strategic Advisor and serve as Chairman of the Sun Life Philippines Holding Company and the Sun Life Foundation through December 31, 2026.

Since becoming CEO in 2018, Sison has led Sun Life Philippines through a period of sustained growth, reinforcing its position as the country's leading life insurer. Today, the company serves over 6.2 million clients and is supported by a nationwide network of more than 22,000 advisors. During his tenure, Sun Life expanded its investment management capabilities, introduced innovative client solutions, and strengthened its community impact through the Sun Life Foundation. Sison also played a key leadership role in the industry, serving two terms as President of the Philippine Life Insurance Association.

Moreno brings more than 20 years of senior leadership experience across financial services, retail, telecommunications, healthcare, and transportation. Since joining Sun Life in May 2025, he has worked closely with the leadership team to advance the company's strategic priorities. He previously served as President and CEO of AF Payments and Chief Strategy Officer of Metro Retail Stores Group.

“JJ brings strong leadership, strategic insight, and a deep commitment to our mission,” said Manjit Singh, President, Sun Life Asia. “We also extend our sincere thanks to Benedict for his exceptional leadership and lasting contributions, which have strengthened Sun Life Philippines' position as a trusted partner to millions of Filipinos.”

Moreno will oversee all Sun Life business entities in the Philippines. “It is an honor to lead Sun Life Philippines,” he said. “I look forward to working with our teams to expand our impact, strengthen innovation, and help more Filipinos achieve lifetime financial security.”

### **About Sun Life**

Sun Life is a leading international financial services organization providing asset management, wealth, insurance, and health solutions to individual and institutional clients. As of September 30, 2025, Sun Life had total assets under management of C\$1.62 trillion and operates in markets including Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Asia. Sun Life Financial Inc. is listed on the Toronto, New York, and Philippine stock exchanges under the ticker symbol SLF.

# WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS



## MAJOR CORPORATE MEMBER

**GROUP NB MANPOWER**  
<https://groupnb.ca/philippines/>

For more than 2 decades, Group NB has been a trusted name in specialized recruitment and staffing solutions across the world. From logistics and transportation to supply chain management, we help companies find the right talent while empowering people to build meaningful careers.

## GHD PTY. LTD.

[www.ghd.com](http://www.ghd.com)

GHD is a leading professional engineering, advisory, and environmental services company operating in the global markets of energy, resources, water, environment, property and buildings, and transportation. In the Philippines, it has been operating continuously since 1998. Its offices in Metro Manila and Cebu are home to more than 1200 employees.

## KREATEX AI

<https://kreatex.ai/>

Kreatex is a multidisciplinary digital solutions company designing and delivering high-impact web platforms, AI-enabled systems, and 3D and motion visuals for growing businesses.

## VERATECH INC

<https://www.vertechph.com/>

A company founded by entrepreneurs who are well-experienced in the retail and corporate I.T. industry. We have partnered with the top I.T. brands and suppliers in the Philippines to ensure that we offer the best to our clients. Our dynamic enterprise is engaged in corporate/commercial reselling, wholesaling, and direct selling of hardware, software and solutions that fit our customer's needs.

## WITTY GEKKO

<https://gekkomultimedia.com/>

We're a dedicated team of passionate designers, coders, brand strategists, entrepreneurs and experts. We come from different parts of the world and speak several languages, but the melting pot of our team cultivates a unique brand that is exciting, fun and a joy to work with.





**In the photo:** L-R: Ricardo Romeo Naval (DTI), USec Alan Gepty (DTI), Christopher Ilagan (CanCham Philippines), and Mikaela Gabrielle Castro (DTI)

## **STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION AHEAD OF THE CANADA–PHILIPPINES BILATERAL FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (FTA)**

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (CanCham Philippines) recently conducted a courtesy call with representatives from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to discuss how the Chamber can meaningfully contribute to the upcoming formal negotiations of the Canada–Philippines Bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

As both governments prepare to enter this important phase, strong alignment and sustained engagement will be essential. The negotiations will require close coordination not only between Canada and the Philippines, but also across a broad spectrum of stakeholders—including industry leaders, policymakers, investors, and the wider business community.

CanCham Philippines reaffirmed its commitment to serving as a trusted and constructive platform for dialogue. By convening public and private sector partners, the Chamber aims to help ensure that industry perspectives are heard and that discussions remain solutions-oriented, inclusive, and forward-looking.

Through open communication and collaboration, CanCham Philippines seeks to support the development of an agreement that expands trade, enhances market access, and unlocks shared economic opportunities for both countries. A well-structured FTA has the potential to strengthen supply chains, encourage investment flows, and drive sustainable long-term growth across sectors in Canada and the Philippines.

As negotiations progress, the Chamber stands ready to facilitate continued engagement and partnership in support of a modern, high-impact trade framework.



## Mining Committee Series: Update on RA 12253: A Deep Dive into Reform and Opportunity

**Manila, 5 February 2026** - The Canadian Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (CanCham Philippines) through the Mining Committee, convened industry leaders, investors, and legal experts for a focused discussion on Republic Act No. 12253—a landmark reform modernizing the country's mining fiscal regime.

Signed on September 5, 2025, and taking effect on February 17, 2026, RA 12253 introduces a clearer, more transparent framework designed to ensure fair government share, strengthen accountability, and support sustainable mineral development.

### Key Discussion Points

- Clearer and more predictable taxation rules
- Stronger revenue-sharing with host communities
- Greater fiscal transparency and investor certainty
- Strategic opportunities under the forthcoming IRR

Participants emphasized that consistent implementation will be critical to maintaining the Philippines' competitiveness as a responsible mining destination.

The forum was proudly co-partnered with SGV & Co., and sponsored by OceanaGold (Philippines), Inc., highlighted the importance of public-private collaboration in shaping policy and industry standards.

As reforms transition from legislation to implementation, CanCham Philippines remains committed to providing a platform for constructive dialogue—supporting sustainable growth and positioning the Philippines as an attractive, globally competitive mining jurisdiction.

The Mining Committee of CanCham, chaired by Atty. Joan Adaci-Cattiling of OceanaGold (Philippines), Inc., serves as a platform for dialogue and advocacy on mining and natural resource issues. It engages members and stakeholders in discussions on regulatory reforms, sustainability practices, and investment opportunities, ensuring the sector's concerns are represented in policy conversations and aligned with responsible business standards.



# LEADING WITH PURPOSE

## CanCham President in Action

The CanCham President continues to lead with purpose—driving strategic initiatives, strengthening partnerships, and advancing member interests across key sectors. From policy advocacy to event engagement, the President remains committed to building a resilient, inclusive, and future-ready chamber for the Canada–Philippines business community.



## ARTa and ADB Convene 2026 Economic EODB Briefing

Mandaluyong City, 11 February, 2026 - The Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTa) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) hosted the Economic Ease of Doing Business (EODB) Briefing at ADB Headquarters. With the theme “Strengthening Fiscal Compliance, Transparency, and Seamless Government Processes for a Competitive Business Environment,” the event gathered government leaders, private sector representatives, and development partners to advance reforms that improve the Philippines’ business climate.

### Highlights

- Fiscal Transparency: Calls to streamline tax and audit processes.
- Digital Governance: Emphasis on innovation to boost efficiency and accountability.
- Collaboration: Stronger public–private partnerships for inclusive growth.

### Fireside Chat

Chris Ilagan joined the fireside chat, sharing insights on adapting to evolving compliance frameworks and advocating for reforms that reduce red tape while building trust between government and business.

### ARTa’s Commitment

ARTa reaffirmed its mission to transform the Philippines “from red tape to red carpet” and aligned the briefing with Ease of Doing Business Month under Proclamation No. 818 (2025).

## AFBA Launches Oxford Economics Report on Agri-Food Sector

Manila, 6 February 2026 — The ASEAN Food and Beverage Alliance (AFBA) hosted a landmark event in Manila to launch the Oxford Economics report “The Economic Impact of the Agri-Food Sector in the Philippines.”

Chris Ilagan, President of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (CanCham), joined the industry panel alongside FrieslandCampina and Alaska Milk Corporation.

### CanCham’s Commitment

CanCham reaffirmed its role as a bridge between government, industry, and international partners, ensuring that reforms in the agri-food sector benefit both businesses and communities.



# BOT IN ACTION

The CanCham Board of Trustees continues to lead with vision—driving strategic initiatives, forging partnerships, and championing member interests across key sectors. From advocacy to engagement, the Board is committed to building a resilient, inclusive, and future-ready chamber for the Canada–Philippines business community. *Driving advocacy, forging partnerships, shaping the future.*



## CanCham Trustee Nancy Castiglione at Canada-in-Asia Conference 2026

Singapore, 10-11 February 2026 — The Canada-in-Asia Conference 2026 (CIAC2026), hosted by the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, gathered over 700 leaders from business, government, and research to strengthen Canada–Asia ties.

Representing CanCham, Trustee Nancy Castiglione joined discussions on trade, agri-food, and renewable energy. She highlighted the need for Canada to not only build partnerships but also execute effectively to seize Indo-Pacific opportunities.



## CanCham Joins Trade Commissioner Service Appreciation Dinner

Manila, 20 January 2026 — The Trade Commissioner Service (TCS) hosted an Appreciation Dinner to honor partners advancing Canada–Philippines business ties.

Representing the Canadian Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (CanCham), Heidi del Pilar and Carol Marcelo attended the event, underscoring CanCham's close collaboration with TCS in promoting trade, investment, and inclusive growth.

The dinner highlighted milestones in partnership and reaffirmed TCS's commitment to strengthening Canada's economic presence in the Indo-Pacific.



## CanCham Welcomes MLA Mable Elmore: Strengthening Philippine–Canadian Ties

Manila, 15 January 2026 — The Canadian Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (CanCham) represented by CanCham Trustee Carmela “Bon” Ferreira, had the privilege of joining MLA Mable Elmore and the Filipino Legacy Society for an exclusive tour of the under-construction Museo del Galeón in Manila. The visit highlighted the enduring cultural and historical connections between the Philippines and Canada, underscoring the role of heritage in advancing bilateral relations.

### CanCham's Perspective

The visit reinforced CanCham's advocacy for people-to-people ties as a foundation for stronger economic and diplomatic partnerships. By engaging with leaders like MLA Elmore, CanCham continues to elevate the role of the Filipino–Canadian community in shaping a resilient and future-ready bilateral relationship.

# CANCHAM RECENT EVENTS

## AmCham-CanCham Meet and Greet

February 3, 2026 at the Society Lounge, Makati City



## Economic Outlook (with AmCham)

January 22, 2026 at the Marriott Ballroom

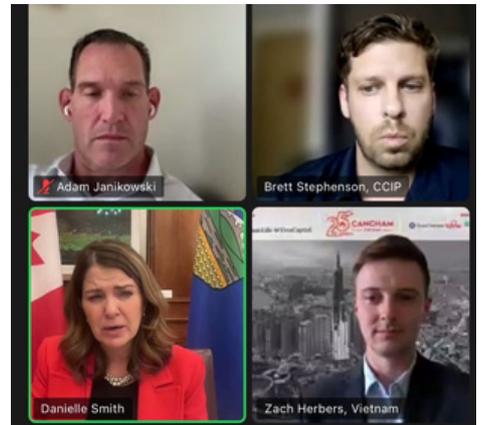


## Discussion with Alberta's Premier Danielle Smith

December 4, 2025 via Zoom

Alberta's Economic Priorities with Premier Danielle Smith. CanCham Philippines, in partnership with the CanChams of the Indo-Pacific (CCIP), invites you to join us as we welcome Alberta Premier Hon. Danielle Smith as she addresses the collective memberships of the 19 Canadian Chambers of Commerce across Asia.

The Premier as discussed Alberta's economic agenda and answers questions on the province's growing partnerships in the Indo-Pacific.



## 20th JFC Networking Night

November 27, 2025 at the Bellevue Hotel Manila



# INSIDE THE JOINT FOREIGN CHAMBER (JFC)



**Jan. 21, 2026** - The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), through the BIR Partnership with the Multi-Sectoral Group (BIR-PMMSG), holds a public-private consultation to discuss proposed reforms and new guidelines for resuming tax audits after the suspension of letters of authority (LOAs) in November 2025.

<https://manilastandard.net/news/314695115/bir-set-to-resume-tax-audits-under-new-reform-framework.html>



## Joint Foreign Chambers Recognized by BIR Commissioner Mendoza

**9 December 2025** - The Bureau of Internal Revenue's year-end celebration, Commissioner Charlito Martin Mendoza formally recognized the Joint Foreign Chambers of the Philippines (JFC) as valued partners in advancing transparency and trust in tax administration.

The award highlighted the JFC's active role in the Partnership with Multi-Sectoral Group (PMMSG), a platform that fosters structured dialogue between

the private sector and the BIR. Commissioner Mendoza commended the chambers for their collaboration in promoting reforms that reduce discretion, improve predictability, and strengthen taxpayer confidence.



## Meeting with DENR Sec. Lotilla

**December 2, 2025** - The Joint Foreign Chambers of the Philippines (JFC) recently met with DENR Secretary Raphael Lotilla to discuss strengthening fiscal incentives under the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Law. The dialogue focused on advancing circular economy practices, making sustainability more practical, investable, and impactful for communities.

Secretary Lotilla welcomed the chambers' engagement, emphasizing the importance of government-industry collaboration in driving environmental reforms and ensuring that policies support both ecological protection and business competitiveness.

As part of the JFC, CanCham continues to champion sustainability initiatives and advocate for policies that balance environmental responsibility with economic growth.

[https://www.linkedin.com/posts/joseph-roco-fabul-823a2991\\_building-on-our-earlier-philippine-alliance-activity-7402340461824376832-gb-5/](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/joseph-roco-fabul-823a2991_building-on-our-earlier-philippine-alliance-activity-7402340461824376832-gb-5/)

*The Joint Foreign Chambers of the Philippines (JFC) is a coalition of the American, Canadian, European, Japanese, Korean chambers and PAMURI. We represent over 2,000 member companies engaged in over \$100 billion worth of bilateral trade and some \$30 billion of investments in the Philippines. The JFC supports and promotes open international trade, increased foreign investment, and improved conditions for business to benefit both the Philippines and the countries the JFC members represent.*

# CANCHAM PHILIPPINES GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING (GMM) WITH DOH SEC. TED HERBOSA



On February 11, 2026, CanCham Philippines gathered members, partners, and stakeholders at Ayala North Exchange, Makati City for its General Membership Meeting.

The event was graced by DOH Secretary Teodoro Herbosa, supported by Manulife Philippines, presented with AC Health and Centre Medicale Internationale (CMI). This milestone event focused on strengthening the Philippines' cancer care ecosystem—from prevention and early detection to treatment, survivorship, and sustainable financing.

#### Highlights:

- Multi-sector collaboration to improve cancer care nationwide
- Innovations in digital health and HPV vaccination programs
- Sustainable financing and regulatory reforms for long-term accessibility

Cancer remains one of the top three causes of death among Filipinos. By convening leaders from government, business, and civil society, CanCham reinforced its role as a bridge for advocacy, innovation, and inclusive growth. More than networking, the GMM showcased CanCham's commitment to legacy-driven initiatives that empower communities and strengthen investor confidence in the Philippines.

Together, we build resilient, future-ready communities.

#CanChamPhilippines #SmartCityConvention #CancerCare #HealthcareInnovation #InclusiveGrowth  
#Sustainability #DiasporaLeadership #PublicPrivatePartnerships #FutureReadyCommunities  
#LegacyDrivenInitiatives

*Thank You for making this event possible*

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# THE CANCHAM OUTSIDER

## 2026: The Year Canada–Philippines Relations Turn Strategic

by Vic Dela Casa, CanCham Member

History rarely announces its turning points in advance. But sometimes, the signals are unmistakable. For Canada and the Philippines, 2026 is shaping up to be one of those inflection years—when diplomacy, trade, security, and people-to-people ties converge into something more permanent and strategic.

At the heart of this moment is a proposed bilateral Free Trade Agreement. Negotiations are moving with unusual focus and intent. For the Philippines, an agreement with Canada would diversify export exposure in North America and reduce concentration risk in a volatile global trading environment. For Canada, it advances the country's Indo-Pacific Strategy—a deliberate pivot toward deeper engagement in Asia's fastest-growing markets.

This is not symbolic diplomacy. The sectors under discussion—agriculture and agri-food, clean and renewable energy, critical minerals, ICT, artificial intelligence, digital trade, semiconductors, and advanced manufacturing—are the industries that will define the next decade of global growth. If finalized, the agreement would represent the Philippines' first free trade deal with a North American country. That milestone alone would recalibrate investor perceptions and strengthen the country's competitive positioning.

But 2026 is not merely about one bilateral negotiation.

The Philippines will also chair the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, placing it at the center of regional economic diplomacy. In parallel, discussions continue toward a Canada–ASEAN Free Trade Agreement. A regional deal would grant Canada preferential access to nearly 700 million consumers, while reinforcing the Philippines' role as a convening power in Southeast Asia. The bilateral and regional tracks are not competing agendas—they are mutually reinforcing pillars of a broader architecture.

This momentum also intersects with the Philippines' application to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership. Progress with Canada strengthens Manila's credibility in meeting high-standard trade rules, intellectual property protections, and digital economy commitments. In effect, each agreement builds institutional confidence in the next.

Trade, however, does not operate in a vacuum. It depends on trust, stability, and shared security interests. Canada's diplomatic footprint in Manila has grown significantly; its embassy is now among the largest in its global network. Defense cooperation is also expanding, with Canada expected to be a major participant in the 2026 Balikatan exercises. These developments are not peripheral to commerce. They signal long-term commitment. Investors pay attention to that.

Equally powerful—if less visible—is the human dimension. The Filipino diaspora in Canada continues to expand in scale, influence, and economic contribution. This community is not merely a demographic fact; it is an economic bridge. It facilitates capital flows, entrepreneurial ventures, supply-chain linkages, and talent mobility. In many cases, businesses are already leveraging these networks to enter markets and build partnerships—formal agreements simply make those pathways more efficient and secure.

Taken together, the bilateral FTA, the Canada–ASEAN negotiations, ASEAN chairmanship, CPTPP momentum, diplomatic expansion, defense cooperation, and diaspora strength point toward something larger than incremental trade growth. They suggest the formalization of a long-term economic partnership grounded in shared strategic interests.

For companies, this moment presents a choice. Enter early and shape supply chains, partnerships, and regulatory conversations—or wait and compete in a more crowded field. For investors, it offers geographic diversification anchored in rules-based frameworks. For policymakers, it presents an opportunity to align economic growth with regional influence. For citizens, it promises mobility, jobs, and more resilient prosperity.

The significance of 2026 lies not in a single signature on a document. It lies in the architecture being constructed across multiple fronts. When trade policy, regional leadership, security alignment, and diaspora connectivity move in parallel, they create durable foundations.

Windows of opportunity rarely stay open for long. The Canada–Philippines corridor is widening. The next phase will belong to those who recognize that this is not a routine policy cycle—it is a strategic turning point

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## ANNUAL PLENARY SESSIONS

**CEBU** : March , 2026 , Venue: TBC

**DAVAO**: April 8, 2026 , Venue: TBC

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING (AGMM)

April 24, 2026 (Friday) | 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM (Registration starts at 1:30PM)  
Ayala Museum, Makati Ave., cor dela Rosa St., Makati City

## 2<sup>ND</sup> GRAND TRI-CONTINENT GOLF CHALLENGE

November 6, 2026

The Manila Southwoods Golf and Country Club

## SMART CITY CONVENTION

June 1-2, 2026

SMX SM Aura Taguig



## DCPO Welcomes Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Strengthening Peace and Security Partnership

Davao City – January 29, 2026 - Davao City Police Office (DCPO), under the leadership of PM PCOL MANNAN C MUARIP, Acting City Director, warmly welcomed Atty. Jude Ralph Villacin Yap together with representatives from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines during their courtesy visit at the Office of the City Director, DCPO Building, Camp Captain Domingo E. Leonor, San Pedro Street, Davao City.

The engagement provided an opportunity to strengthen rapport and foster cooperation between the DCPO and the private sector. Discussions focused on key areas such as peace and order, intensification of traffic enforcement, and the promotion of a culture of security in Davao City.

This courtesy visit highlights the importance of collaboration between law enforcement and business stakeholders in ensuring a safe and secure environment that supports both community welfare and economic growth.

PM PCOL MANNAN C MUARIP  
Acting City Director, DCPO

[#ToServeAndProtect](#) [#HOMEofDisciplinedPoliceOfficers](#) [#PNPPATROLPLAN2030](#) [#BagongPNPparaSaBagongPilipinas](#)  
[#SerbisyonMabilisTapatAtNararamdaman](#)



## CANCHAM GMM HIGHLIGHTS FDA'S ROLE IN STRENGTHENING REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

Makati City, 15 December 2025 — The Canadian Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (CanCham) held its General Membership Meeting (GMM) at the PepsiCo office in Makati City, bringing together government, private sector, and development partners to discuss regulatory modernization and public health safeguards.

### FDA's Key Message

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA Philippines) emphasized its commitment to:

- **Consumer Protection:** Ensuring medicines, food, and health products meet safety standards.
- **Regulatory Efficiency:** Streamlining licensing and product registration to reduce delays and foster innovation.
- **Partnerships:** Strengthening collaboration with chambers and industry stakeholders to build trust and transparency.

### Fireside Engagement

FDA representatives joined the dialogue with CanCham and the Food and Manufacturing Industry members, highlighting how regulatory clarity and predictability can attract investment while safeguarding public health. The discussion underscored the importance of balancing compliance with competitiveness, a priority for both government and business leaders.

### CanCham's Advocacy

CanCham reaffirmed its role as a bridge between regulators and the private sector, ensuring that member concerns are heard and aligned with reforms that improve the business environment. The GMM highlighted the chamber's ongoing commitment to transparency, inclusivity, and legacy-driven partnerships.

*Special thanks to:*

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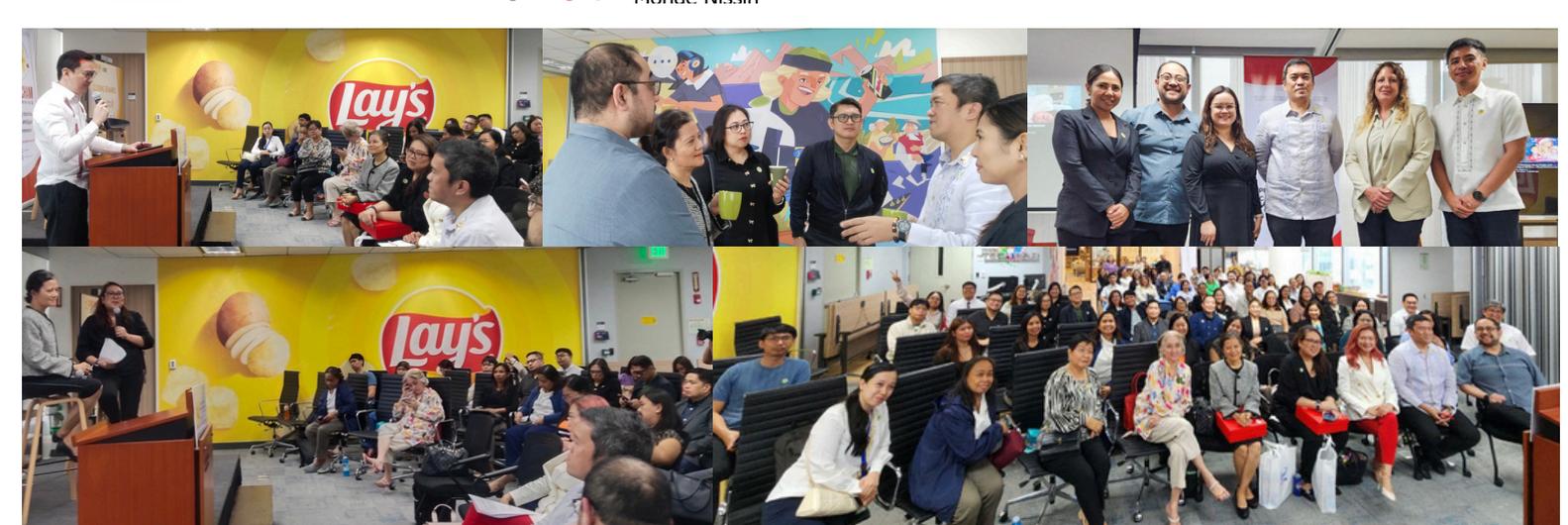
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