



CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
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## PRESS RELEASE

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### Explore Islands Philippines Kicks Off in NYC's Iconic Grand Central Terminal



*Explore Islands Philippines showcasing the country's tourism and investment destinations from Luzon, Visayas to Mindanao opens in NYC's Grand Central Terminal. (PCGNY Photos)*

NEW YORK, 10 May 2018 – Explore Islands Philippines Expo was launched at the Vanderbilt East Hall of Grand Central Terminal in New York City yesterday, 9 May 2018. The expo, organized by JS Productions Inc. and sponsored by the Philippine

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Department of Tourism (PDOT) and the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB), showcases the Philippines' cultural rich heritage, top tourism destinations as well as trade and investment opportunities.

Philippine Permanent Representative to the United Nations Teodoro Locsin, Jr. graced the ribbon-cutting ceremony together with TPB Chief Operating Officer Cesar Montano, and Her Royal Highness Princess Katarina de Silva of Yugoslavia and Serbia who also serves as the President of Tourism Guild UK. The opening ceremony was also attended by an audience from media, the diplomatic corps, business groups, state officials, and entertainment influencers.

A Plaque was presented by the Office of New York Governor Andrew Cuomo to Messrs. Jerry Sibal and Edwin Josue of JS Productions for their untiring efforts in promoting the Philippines in New York's diverse community, which is also home to many Filipino-Americans.

A series of panel discussions and presentations was held in the afternoon, focusing on trade and investment opportunities in the Philippines. The panel discussion on "Why Invest in the Philippines" featured Ambassador Teodoro Locsin, Jr. and Ms. Nancy Vailakis, Business Development Director of Augentius - one of the largest independent private equity and real estate administrators with an international office in Pasig City. Bloomberg TV and Radio News anchor and correspondent Ramy Inocencio acted as the moderator during the discussions.

The next segment entitled "Architecture, Green Buildings and Sustainability in the Philippines" featured architect Nicolas Medrano and project manager Vram Malek, both of Skidmore Owings & Merrill – one of the largest and most influential architecture, interior design, engineering, and urban planning firms in the world which has master planned Philippines' and Asia's first "green" skyscraper, the Zuellig Building in Makati. Former American diplomat to the Philippines Hank Hendrickson, who is also the current Executive Director US-Philippines Society, served as the moderator during the discussions.

Rhonda Binda, Esq. who is the Co-Founder & VP Policy for Venture Smarter and Executive Director of the Regional Smart Cities Initiative, presented "Smart Cities-Innovation Leading to the Future of the Philippines." Andrea Bartzan, strategic commercial/communication consultant of Impactiv BioConsult, made a presentation on the effect on the business in the Philippines of biotech and life science.

The day was capped by a dinner reception hosted by TPB COO Cesar Montano held at the Grand Ballroom of The Roosevelt Hotel in Manhattan, where renowned fashion designer Renee Salud's Philippine Tapestry collection showcasing his high fashion and wearable designs using Philippine indigenous materials and traditional weaves drew great admiration from the guests.

The Explore Islands Philippines Expo is still ongoing and will run until 12 May 2018.  
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HRH Princess Katarina de Silva of Yugoslavia and Serbia (center), Philippine Ambassador to the UN Teodoroc Locsin, Jr. (left) and Tourism Promotion Board COO Cesar Montano (right), during the ribbon-cutting ceremony officially opening the Explore Islands Philippines. PCGNY Photos)

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*Representatives from New York Governor Cuomo's Office presents Plaque of Proclamation to JS Production's Jerry Sibal and Edwin Josue. (PCGNY Photos)*