

Closing Remarks

Forum on Public-Private Partnership for Customs Modernization

14-16 October 2004, Manila

It is a great pleasure for me to join the heads of country delegates and Deputy Commissioner Alexander Arevalo to conclude the Forum. I like you to join me to thank our host for the successful organization of the Forum.

- Our stay has been enjoyable because of the care and hospitality of our host.
- Our Forum is productive because of generosity of our host in sharing knowledge and experiences.

We have learned from our Host what we should do in customs modernization. But more importantly, we have learned what we should not do in customs modernization. This message is important because of resource constraints facing most customs administrations, and the role that the private sector can play in customs modernization. There are many ways that customs can work with the private sector as demonstrated by the Philippine Customs. And together we should find whether these best practices can be adapted to your country circumstances. As the Secretariat, we support your effort to partner with the private sector.

This afternoon, we will have a session to (i) review the progress of our customs cooperation and (ii) propose a program for the 3rd Meeting of the Heads of Customs, to be held in Baku in early December. Your active participation in the afternoon session is essential for having a successful CCC Meeting and effectively directing ADB's technical assistance grant for your cooperation program.

Subject to ADB's President approval, a technical assistance grant amounting to \$800,000 has been budgeted to support your proposals and initiatives for the next two years. So I look forward to a productive meeting this afternoon.

Once again, lets give another round of applause to express our deep gratitude to our host, the Bureau of Customs of the Republic of Philippines.

Mabuhay!