

PBG-JFC call for more reforms entering homestretch of Aquino administration

26 May 2015 – The Philippine Business Groups and Joint Foreign Chambers, a coalition composed of 18 local and foreign business groups, urged the government to enact critical policy reforms aimed at ensuring inclusive growth through job generation, poverty reduction, and global competitiveness, entering the final 12 months of the Aquino administration.

The list of reforms was contained in a letter sent to the President and was the product of a month-long consultation process with the participating organizations.

Focusing on institutionalizing integrity and good governance, accelerating infrastructure development, ensuring massive job generation, facilitating trade, increasing foreign investment, and boosting competitiveness, the following points requiring executive action were proposed by the PBG-JFC:

- Immediate appointment of qualified, credible, and experienced public servants to the vacant posts in the Civil Service Commission, Department of Energy, and the Philippine National Police
- Establishment of a public-private Energy Council composed of credible electricity experts who will formulate and regularly update a detailed energy security and price competitiveness roadmap
- Establishment of the National Privacy Commission and the release of the implementing rules and regulations of the Data Privacy Act and the Cybercrime Prevention Act
- Creation of agricultural trading centers that will provide farmers and fisherfolk the latest technology, as well as assistance in securing financing and marketing support.
- Reduction of the number of steps in establishing a business to the minimum across the country, taking into account the need to expand the ease of doing business efforts of the National Competitiveness Council.
- Revision of the Foreign Investment Negative List to reduce the list of industries where foreign participation remains limited
- Intensified efforts to implement with minimum delay critical land, air, and sea transportation projects
- Early resolution of the Maguindanao massacre trial and the plunder cases against the senators accused in the pork barrel scam and Former President Arroyo, as well as provision of additional resources to the judiciary

As a complement to the above proposals, the PBG-JFC also called for the executive's support for the swift passage of the following legislative measures:

1. Freedom of Information Act
2. Amendments to the economic provisions of the 1987 Constitution (Resolution of Both Houses No. 1)
3. PPP Act (BOT Law Amendments) and amendments to the Right-of-Way Act (RA 8974)
4. Fair Competition Act

5. Act creating the Department of Information and Communications Technology
6. Customs Modernization and Tariff Act
7. Comprehensive Tax System Reform

The PBG-JFC reiterated their position that the immediate enactment of the aforementioned proposals will greatly assist in accelerating the Philippines' upward trajectory. The group also emphasized their continuing support for the administration and commitment to work with the government entering the homestretch of the President's term.

The signatory organizations include the Management Association of the Philippines, Makati Business Club, Semiconductor and Electronics Industries in the Philippines, Employers Confederation of the Philippines, IT and Business Process Association of the Philippines, Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Alyansa Agrikultura, Philippine Exporters Confederation Inc., Chamber of Mines of the Philippines, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines, American Chamber of Commerce, Australia-New Zealand Chamber of Commerce, Canadian Chamber of Commerce, European Chamber of Commerce, Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Korean Chamber of Commerce, Philippine Association of Multinational Companies Regional Headquarters.

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