

IAPP's Jose de Venecia Appointed Envoy by Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte

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April 7, 2017



Manila, Philippines—On April 7, 2017, Hon. Jose de Venecia, Jr., co-chair of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP), was appointed by Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte as Special Envoy for Inter-Cultural Dialogue. He also was appointed as Special Envoy for APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation).

The Department of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines stated that as special envoy, Hon. de Venecia will serve to advise the administration on policies regarding cultural diversity and citizen participation under the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) declaration which states that it is essential for diverse societies to ensure harmonious interaction among people with dynamic cultural identities.

Hon. de Venecia attended the UN's "Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation," in Beijing, China on May 15, 2017 along with 40 heads of states, former presidents and premiers and incumbent government officials. The Belt and Road Initiative proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping revives the century-old silk road and the 21st century maritime route by sea.

Hon. de Venecia called for a third route which would pass by the Philippines, making the China-led project "almost globally inclusive," since it would add two more continents—Latin America and Australia—to its vision.

"In order to expand, deepen, and strengthen the cultural, geopolitical, economic trade, and people to people relations of the historic silk road, what we propose [is] consideration also for the development of a third route to complement and extend China's great belt and road initiative."

From Southern China, the route would pass through the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia and Timor Leste, which would then lead to parts of Australia and Latin America, he said.

In his remarks, Hon. de Venecia emphasized the people-to-people bonds as the first prime catalyst in advancing economic development and in the framing of peace and unity among nations.