

# **Event on the occasion of the visit of the President of the Republic of the Philippines, H.E. Benigno Aquino III**

**Berlin, 19 September 2014**

Organizer:

Körper-Stiftung, Asia-Pacific-Committee of German Business (APA)

## **Welcoming Remarks**

**Dr. Hubert Lienhard**

APA Chairman and President and CEO, Voith GmbH

**Check against delivery!**

Your Excellency, President Aquino, President of the Republic of the Philippines,

Your Excellency, Ambassador Natividad,

Dear Deputy Secretary of State, Mr. Beckmeyer,

Dear Ambassador Ossowski,

Dear Dr. Wehmeier,

Dear Guests,

The year 2014 is an important year for the Philippines and Germany: Next month, we will celebrate 60 years of diplomatic relations. We have developed strong political, economic, social and cultural ties. Your visit, Mr. President, is very well timed.

The Asia Pacific Committee of German Business (APA) is pleased to host today's event with our renowned partner, the Körber-Stiftung. The APA is carried by the German industry and its special interest groups, and is **the** platform for all subjects that preoccupy the German economy in its relationship with Asia.

Asia is about to become an important; perhaps even the most important economic zone in the world. All companies who is not at home in Asia in the future, will become insignificant on an international comparison. This results in a clear task that can only be mastered jointly by German politics and business: We want to work together with Asian partners, finding ways to better understand each other and utilizing the growth in Asia, without weakening Germany as an industrial location.

It is this area between politics and business, where APA has its main role: As an intermediary, translator, backer and advisor. To me, utilizing the

growth in Asia without weakening the location Germany, also means: being deeply rooted in Asia must not be a one way street for German companies: It is in our interest that Asian companies, too, become at home in our country.

The APA works hard so that foreign business which invest in Germany feel at home here. After all, nothing can substantiate our own demands in Asia better than the freedom that Asian companies enjoy in Germany. At the same time, through its local presence, the German economy creates a high amount of added value in Asia. German companies generate jobs. They train employees and suppliers. Today, German companies add substantially to the sustainable development of Asia Pacific national economies. These companies therefore **deserve to** be regarded as local by our Asian partners.

But the German economy does not only contribute to the sustainable development of national economies in Asia, it also **strongly benefits from** it. For this reason, I see my work as the Chairman of APA under the credo **partnership, equality and sustainable development.**

The Philippines are an example here, as an increasingly important **partner** for Germany: In 2013, your country was one of the fastest growing Asian economies. Growth will create new business opportunities for local and foreign investors.

Germany is one of the biggest investors, especially in the IT service sector. The Philippines have also become a popular destination for business-process outsourcing (BPO).

We encourage you, President Aquino, to accelerate your efforts in order to ease the way for German industries to invest in your country. We want to recommend the establishment of a Single Vendor process, plus an entity,

which systematically contributes to a facilitated access to the local market. We are also looking forward to more measures by your government in order to further ease market entry efforts, like the right to purchase land. One step in the right direction was the establishment of the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA). We have a lot of areas where German industries with its technology can contribute to the further development of renewable in your country. German companies can provide state of the art technology for Philippine companies to improve their production capabilities. We should also explore new ways to deal with urbanization, support efficient and environmental-friendly public transport systems and the modernization of infrastructure. German companies are ready to be partners that help with these specific needs.

The Philippines are part of the vibrant ASEAN region – and we are keen to learn more about the region and your country in particular. Germany looks closely at the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015. We believe that the potential for further economic and political integration in your region is high.

As a last point, let me also mention this year's **Asia-Pacific-Conference** of German Business in November 20 – 22 in Vietnam. It shows the importance the German business community places on the Asia-Pacific Region. We are hosting this conference to gain a better understanding of trends and perspectives in Asian economies and to continue the dialogue with our Asian Partners.

Let's start the dialogue today, with the Philippines and you, as their president. The floor is yours. We will listen with keen interest to your words. Welcome.