

British Embassy Manila convenes Philippine private sector ahead of COP26

Manila, Philippines – A virtual gathering of Philippine business leaders discussing climate change and sustainability was convened recently by the British Embassy in Manila, in partnership with the Department for International Trade.

During the Embassy-hosted Philippine Green Business Leaders virtual roundtable, keynote speaker Nigel Topping, the UN's COP26 High-Level Champion for Climate Action, discussed his role in galvanising new, more ambitious and most credible climate action from companies, investors, cities, states and regions, and referenced the UK's own journey in driving down emissions while at the same time growing its economy.

With 15 companies represented across the business spectrum, senior Philippine corporate executives highlighted the importance of pursuing and embedding sustainability in their operations, while at the same time tackling the significant challenges posed by COVID-19.

The Philippine Green Business Leaders virtual roundtable followed closely on the heels of the Embassy's Earth Hour events and other COP26 related meetings, and showcased the strong commitment of the Philippine business sector to tackle the challenges of climate change mitigation, adaptation, resilience and sustainability.

Daniel Pruce, British Ambassador to the Philippines said:

At the core of the UK's clean growth leadership is delivering for countries most vulnerable to climate change. This of course includes the Philippines which has witnessed stronger and more destructive typhoons throughout the years. If we are to be successful in achieving a cleaner future, the role of private investment is paramount.

Ambassador Pruce reiterated the need of a whole-system approach to address climate change in the country. On 1 to 12 November, the British Government will welcome heads of state and climate policy experts and negotiators in Glasgow, Scotland for the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP26). The COP26 summit will bring parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Nigel Topping, the UN's COP 26 High-Level Champion for Climate Action said:

COP26 is the first real test of the Paris Agreement, which set our long term goal to net zero and a process of ratcheting ambition every five years. When you as business leaders raise your ambition, it sends a very strong signal to political leaders and makes it easier for policy makers to be bold. And when bold policy comes, it makes it easier for your peers to intensify their own [climate] ambitions. We call this the 'ambition loop', and hope it delivers a real step up in climate action from governments and the private sector alike.

During the event, Mr. Topping encouraged local businesses to embrace and join the Race to Zero initiative, the flagship global campaign to rally leadership and support from non-state actors for a healthy, resilient, zero carbon recovery that creates decent jobs, prevents future threats, and unlocks inclusive, sustainable growth.

As part of the British Embassy in Manila's contribution, the Embassy will organise a series of thematic sessions in the lead up to COP26. These sessions will include representatives from Philippine government, civil society, academia, and industry leaders. The Philippine Green Business Leaders roundtable was the opening forum in this series, and set a positive tone for the events to come.

For businesses interested in joining the Race to Zero campaign, please send an email to RaceToZero@unfccc.int