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PRESS RELEASE

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Philippines backs Malpass as World Bank chief

OSAKA—The Philippines has expressed its support for the nomination of the United States' treasury undersecretary David Malpass as the new president of the World Bank, citing his leadership as a good opportunity for the multilateral institution to work closely with the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III said that with Malpass leading reforms from the World Bank, a close collaboration of the bank with ADB would be the best answer to respond to the global financial reform agenda in the Asia-Pacific region. This will also allow both institutions to build on each other's strengths.

In a phone conversation, Dominguez informed Malpass of his proposal to the ADB to "reinvent itself and to realign its programs to meet new realities," which the Finance chief first broached when he was in Yokohama, Japan for the ADB's 50th Annual meeting in 2017, and again when he was chairman of the Bank's Board of Governors for the 51st Annual meeting in Manila last year.

Dominguez said that the center of gravity has now shifted decisively to Asia and its economies are now the principal engines of growth in the global economy.

He said a good opportunity exists for the World Bank and ADB to collaborate closely in the Asia-Pacific region given ADB's "operational efficiencies and strong balance sheet, its in-depth knowledge and understanding of the region and the culture of its people because of its proximity, its sensitivity to the unique development needs of the region, and as a trusted brand in infrastructure finance."

"I want to congratulate you on your nomination and to let you know that we fully support your candidacy as president of the World Bank," Dominguez told Malpass through a telephone call.

Malpass thanked Dominguez for his support and said he was looking forward to have further discussions with the Finance chief on the Philippines' development agenda.

The Philippines' expression of support for Malpass is among the first from a developing country. Dominguez currently serves as the governor for the Philippines in the Board of Governors of the World Bank Group.

Malpass, the US treasury undersecretary for international affairs, is American President Trump's nominee as World Bank president, replacing Jim Yong Kim, who resigned last month.

During their brief phone conversation, Dominguez also pointed out to Malpass that in October last year, the G20 Eminent Persons Group (G20 EPG) "also noted that the multilateralism of the past is no longer fitted to the current and future challenges of the global financial system."

"Perhaps, this present system lacks coherence, joint capacity and effectiveness to support the most fundamental goals in global development and financial stability. It must be brought up to date to again align itself to the realities of the new era," Dominguez told Malpass.

According to Dominguez, the G20 EPG report stressed that the central challenge is to create "a cooperative international order--one that is multipolar and decentralized in decisions, yet more interconnected and with more challenges ahead that are much larger and more pressing than we have seen in decades."

With these realities now facing the World Bank, Dominguez said Malpass' nomination is fitting and appropriate.

"Frankly, I think, Mr. Malpass, your candidacy to lead the World Bank Group at this time is most appropriate and definitely we will be supporting your candidacy," Dominguez said.

Malpass, in response, welcomed what he described as "good ideas" put forth by Dominguez, and said he was looking forward to working with the Finance chief on these concerns.

"I had the opportunity to talk to (ADB) President (Takehiko) Nakao and so we had quite a conversation on this and I look forward to working with you on these issues," Malpass told Dominguez.

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