

# PHL ‘can withstand’ US tariff but must preserve multilateral options, ICC says

By Justine Irish D. Tabile  
Reporter

THE PHILIPPINES is not unduly disadvantaged by US tariffs because it is essentially in the same position as its rivals, the

International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) said, adding however that it must support multilateral approaches to trade to manage its risks.

“I think you can absorb the tariff, because on a relative basis, in the key industries, your competitors have not done any

better. So, you’re actually in a position to withstand that,” ICC Secretary General John W.H. Denton AO told *BusinessWorld*.

“I think the Philippines would be at risk if the system that it is reliant upon, the trading system, collapses. That is why it is impor-

tant to work with us, with the rest of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), to maintain it,” he said.

“And also, at the same time, getting access to development support because there’s less going around than there was, so we need to work out a new strategy

here and that is really around increasing economic activity and attracting foreign investment,” he added.

He said ASEAN forms the foundation of the largest free trade group, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

“But the RCEP group has not been able to deliver a lot of the economic activity that is necessary and opportune for small businesses,” he said.

“We are looking at how we can help, and one of the inhibitors there is actually the way rules of origin are drafted,” he added.

# Co-ops say BIR red tape hindering their ability to tap RA 9520 tax breaks

THE Philippine Chamber of Cooperatives, Inc. (Co-op Chamber) said Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) rules are hindering them from accessing tax exemptions.

In particular, the group is asking the government to remove the requirement that individual co-op member present a tax identification number (TIN) to secure a certificate of tax exemption.

“Since 2010, we have been complying with it. But a lot of cooperatives nationwide cannot comply. That is why if you look at our data, only a few have complied,” Noel D. Raboy, chairperson of the Co-op Chamber, told reporters.

“And there are cooperatives now that have (been penalized by) the BIR. Some of them are negotiating compli-

ance. And this is our problem because there are a lot of reports that they just want to settle (the penalties),” he added.

He said that the tax exemption is a benefit granted to cooperatives under the Republic Act (RA) No. 9520.

“Under the law, *wala kaming bayaran* (we pay no tax) on the interest of our deposits, our share capital, and also our final tax,” he said.

“*Kaya lang may mga requirements na binigay ng BIR ay* (The requirements set by the BIR are) outside the requirements of the law. They said that to get our tax exemption, we need to submit yearly the TIN of the members,” he added.

He said smaller cooperatives can comply with this, but those with about 100,000 members find it hard to comply.

“We want to get rid of it so we can grow and we can really avail ourselves of the exemptions,” he added.

He said that the penalties vary by cooperative, with one cooperative assessed around P300 million in penalties.

According to the group, the TIN requirement issue is being addressed in Senate Bill No. 1431, the proposed amendment to the Cooperative Code.

“The Co-op Chamber, as a member of the technical working group in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, is just awaiting the schedule of the Committee Meeting in the House of Representatives to finalize its version of the proposed revisions,” it added. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

## Lucena, Siquijor ports set for nearly P700M in upgrades

THE Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) said it allocated nearly P700 million to upgrade and expand ports in Lucena City and Siquijor.

The port regulator said it issued bid invitations for the P620-million expansion of Lucena Port in Quezon and the P58-million expansion of Lazi Port in Siquijor.

Interested parties can submit proposals until Nov. 4, according to the bid notice signed by Mark Jon S. Palomar,

who chairs the PPA’s bids and awards committee for engineering projects.

The contractor for the Port of Lucena will be given 720 days or 23 months to complete the project, the PPA said, adding that the winning bidder for the Lazi Port expansion project will be given 300 calendar days to finish the contract.

For this year, the PPA expects to complete at least four port projects valued at a combined P1.56 billion.

These include the P426.18-million Salomague Port expansion project in Cabugao, Ilocos Sur; the P155.96-million San Andres Port expansion and improvement project; the upgrade of Banago Port in Negros Occidental; and the expansion of Balingoan Port in Cagayan de Oro.

In 2024, the PPA said it earmarked up to P16 billion for infrastructure projects until 2028. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**

## Run For Wellness 2025: Unleashing Greatness beyond the finish line Largest runner turnout of the Run For Wellness fun run by Southstar Drug and Maxicare

Running, more than a physical activity, is a pursuit of something greater: a healthier body and mind, a community, a sense of fulfillment or perhaps, overcoming a personal challenge. And in the process, it also provides valuable lessons that can be applied in your everyday life to unleash greatness such as taking better care of your body, recognizing big and small achievements, and going beyond your perceived limits.

This is the central theme of this year’s edition of Run For Wellness, an annual running event organized by Southstar Drug and Maxicare that encourages participants to embrace a healthier, more active lifestyle through running. Run For Wellness 2025 celebrated a vibrant running community across two legs, welcoming beginners, seasoned runners, families, *barkadas*, running clubs,



and fitness enthusiasts. The first leg, held on July 22 at UP Diliman, Quezon City, saw over 9,000 participants, while the second leg held last Sept. 14 in Naga City had 2,713 participants joining the 3K, 5K, and 10K categories.

This combined effort resulted in 11,902 total participants, marking the largest runner turnout for a Run For Wellness series to date.

Continuing their advocacy as champions of health and wellness, Southstar Drug and Maxicare Healthcare Corp. donated P50,000 to Naga City’s Persons with Disability Affairs Office that was received by Naga City Mayor Leni Robredo during the awarding ceremony of Run For Wellness Naga.



“The record-high turnout of participants in this year’s Run For Wellness shows how more people are prioritizing their overall health and well-being by integrating running and exercise in their life. Aside from unleashing greatness, this is also our way of encouraging Filipinos to take the first step towards a better version of themselves

and develop healthier habits in the long run,” said Thaddeus Sanchez, General Manager of Southstar Drug. “On top of providing the finest healthcare services, Maxicare supports Filipinos in their journey towards their best life through events like Run For Wellness, reaffirming our commitment to enabling a healthier future,” said Raymond Hernandez, Maxicare Chief Customer Officer.

Unleashing greatness continues beyond the finish line. Run For Wellness is just the starting point, a catalyst when it comes to prioritizing one’s overall health and well-being. Take all the valuable lessons running has taught you — the rest of the journey is yours to take!



[From left to right: Robinsons Retail Holdings Inc. Chairman Robina Gokongwei-Pe, Naga City Mayor Leni Robredo, Robinsons Retail Holdings Inc. President and CEO Stanley Co]

### OPINION

## Unlocking value through human-centric transactions

### IN BRIEF:

- Successful transactions require leaders to prioritize transformative goals over mere deal completion, emphasizing a compelling vision that engages employees and drives long-term success.
- Addressing the human element of a transaction is crucial; fostering an environment where employees feel valued and supported significantly enhances the likelihood of successful outcomes.
- Organizations must be prepared to manage pivotal moments throughout the transaction process, leveraging decisive action and transparent communication to build trust and maintain momentum.

Transactions can serve as powerful catalysts for transformation when leaders create the right conditions for high performance. The EY-Parthenon CEO Outlook Survey indicates that 96% of global CEOs plan to engage in some form of transaction in the coming year. These transactions are essential components of corporate strategy, enabling businesses to enhance shareholder value and differentiate themselves in competitive markets. While they present unique challenges, transactions also provide opportunities to accelerate transformation and reshape a company’s future.

Research from EY identifies three key factors that contribute to successful transactions. First, bold leadership is crucial; 59% of transaction leaders believe that an organization’s capacity for transformation is vital for its long-term viability. The more ambitious the vision behind a transaction, the greater the potential for value creation. Second, addressing the human element of a deal is equally important as financial considerations. Leaders must foster an environment where employees feel valued and engaged. Finally, leaders should be prepared to navigate critical moments throughout the transaction process, as effective management can turn challenges into opportunities.

By focusing on these elements, leaders can significantly enhance the value derived from transactions. This article draws on findings from a collaboration between EY and the University of Oxford’s Saïd Business School, which examined transformation programs and gathered insights from senior leaders and workforce members involved in transaction-driven transformations.

In the Philippines, recent observations indicate a growing trend in mergers and acquisitions (M&A) across various sectors. In particular, there is a lot of investor interest in the consumer sector due to rapid urbanization and the growing middle class. There has also been increased M&A activity in the renewable energy (RE) space following the liberalization of foreign ownership in RE projects. This increase in M&A activities reflects the necessity for companies to consolidate resources and strengthen their competitive position in a rapidly changing market. Such transactions can enhance financial performance, but the company will need to focus on the integration of diverse corporate cultures and the importance of maintaining employee engagement throughout the transition process. Otherwise, the contemplated benefits of the transaction may not be fully realized.

### EMPHASIZING BOLD LEADERSHIP IN TRANSACTIONS

To maximize value, leaders must prioritize transformative goals over merely completing transactions. Successful transformations involve operational changes that aim to improve performance and drive sustainable growth. However, transactions often face distinct challenges, such as tight deadlines, public scrutiny, and prolonged uncertainty.

Organizations frequently focus on finalizing deals rather than pursuing genuine transformation, which can lead to diminished value. Nearly half of transaction lead-

ers report that they do not achieve the expected value from their transactions, with only 46% meeting their innovation key performance indicators (KPIs). Therefore, leaders should concentrate on establishing a transformative vision that engages employees, shifting the focus from mere completion to long-term success.

Moreover, fostering a culture of open communication and collaboration can empower employees to contribute ideas and solutions during the transition. This engagement enhances morale and leads to innovative approaches that can drive the success of the transaction. Leaders who actively involve their teams in the process are more likely to achieve desired outcomes and create a sense of ownership among employees.

### CREATING CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

Establishing the right conditions is essential for fostering high-performance environments that empower employees to overcome challenges. A human-centric approach significantly increases the likelihood of successful outcomes. A compelling vision is critical; employees must believe in a purpose that transcends financial metrics. Additionally, adaptive leadership is

necessary, as leaders should be present and responsive, actively engaging with teams to navigate the complexities of transactions.

Psychological safety is another vital aspect, as leaders must create an environment where employees feel secure and valued. By promoting disciplined freedom, organizations can empower teams to make decisions quickly, facilitating agile responses to challenges. Furthermore, collaboration across departments is essential for effective integration or separation. Leveraging technology purposefully can also help illustrate the potential of the new organization, enabling employees to visualize the benefits of the transformation.

### NAVIGATING TURNING POINTS FOR MAXIMUM VALUE

Decisive action is crucial at various stages of a transaction to effectively manage employee turning points. Research indicates that nearly all transactions encounter pivotal moments, with 98% experiencing turning points that necessitate leadership intervention. As transactions become public, organizations must manage heightened uncertainty, and leaders should quickly form a deal team, establish clear governance, and support the workforce through effective communication. Transparency in decision-making is vital for building trust and addressing potential concerns.

Once the deal closes, the new leadership team must align with the transformative vision and establish new ways of working. Providing emotional support for employees is critical, as many may struggle to adapt to the new organizational identity. Celebrating early successes can reinforce the new entity’s direction and build confidence among employees.

### EMBRACING TRANSFORMATION

Transactions have the potential to significantly reshape a business’ future. The approach leaders take in managing these deals will greatly influence the value derived from them. By fostering a bold vision for transformation and creating an environment where employees can thrive, organizations can navigate challenges and enhance performance, ultimately preparing for future transactions and transformations.

*This article is for general information only and is not a substitute for professional advice where the facts and circumstances warrant. The views and opinions expressed above are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of SGV & Co.*

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