**March 29 2021**

**APPEAL ON NEED FOR ACTION BY THE ADMINISTRATION TO RESTART THE METALLIC MINING INDUSTRY**

The Philippines has been blessed with a well-documented range and volume of metallic mineral resources. These resources constitute the base of what could be a great growth industry for the country, able to contribute to the economic recovery and the sustained long-term economic growth of the country. Sadly, for more than a decade, starting with the last administration, its potential to contribute to the economic well-being of the nation has not only been ignored but also blocked based on opposition citing risks that are over-generalized, exaggerated, and out-of-date perceptions of modern mining.

The very real benefits of modern metallic mining implemented on an environmentally and socially sustainable basis have been demonstrated around the world in other mineral-endowed countries such as Australia, Canada, and South Africa. These benefits are specific and significant, being:

* Ensuring self-reliance in the supply of increasingly scarce metallic resources for economic security,
* Creating well-paid direct employment, mostly in the poorest remote areas of the country,
* Providing a base for development of a range of processing and supporting businesses small and large,
* Transforming a requirement to be an importer of metals into being an exporter, and
* Generating increased tax revenue from mining without increased and uncompetitive tax rates.

***Major blocks in the way of realizing these benefits for the Philippines are two Executive Branch actions:***

* ***The imposition of a freeze on new metallic mining permits under EO 79 (issued in 2012), and***
* ***The ban on open pit mining.***

***We urge the Administration to use the same Executive Branch authority that imposed these blocks to immediately rescind these two blocks for the benefit the nation in its time of dire economic need.***

In urging these two actions by the administration, we confirm the expectation and demand that the metallic mining industry be developed on a sound environmental and socially sustainable basis using the model now required in Australia and Canada. We agree entirely that it is no longer acceptable for the government and the metallic mining industry to tolerate the standards and technologies allowed in 20th century, long since past. Now in the 21st century with higher environmental standards the norm for all industries, including metallic mining, and with new 21st century technologies to support implementation of such standards, it is very timely to move forward.

In urging these two actions by the Executive Branch, what the metallic mining industry is already doing to contribute to a sustainable environment should be recognized and acknowledged:

* In sharp contrast to flooding caused by ineffective control of illegal logging, the metallic mining industry planted as many, if not more, new trees than other tree planters, and well documented by DENR,
* Metallic mining operations are now subject to progressive and final mine rehabilitation with the land being sculptured, restored, and improved for future suitable productive use,
* In contrast to expanding industrial development around urban centers displacing prime agricultural land as well as increasing urban concentration and congestion, most, if not all, mining operations are in remote areas usually unfit for agriculture, and
* The voluntary adoption by the Philippine metallic mining industry of the *Towards Sustainable Mining* program developed in Canada and now a growing international standard representing responsible mining practices, which the industry is already practicing.

Lost opportunities in terms of added employment, increased tax revenue, and other economic benefits in the decade since the imposition of EO79 have been incalculable and can never be recovered. However, future losses of these great potential benefits can be avoided if the metallic mining industry is allowed to develop on an environmentally and socially sustainable basis. The potential future opportunity losses with these two blocks continuing can, with their removal, be transformed into real and tangible benefits for the nation. But the initial critical requirement is for decisive action now by the administration using its Executive Branch authority to rescind these two blocks to make possible benefits for the nation, its population, and, in particular, Filipinos in remote poverty-stricken areas in need of development and where metallic mining opportunities are located.

We look forward to the Philippine Government continuing to consult with the private sector, LGUs, and civil society and for all to work together to develop an environmentally and sustainable metallic mining industry to contribute to the economic recovery and long-term economic growth of the Philippines.

Approved by the following:

American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines

Canadian Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines

Foundation for Economic Freedom