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PH CONSULATE HIGHLIGHTS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP POTENTIAL WITH AUSTIN AT THE 2026 ASIA X AUSTIN SUMMIT



Consul General Gunther Sales addresses business, civic, and city leaders at the Asia x Austin 2026 Summit.

Austin, Texas – On 17 March 2026, Consul General Gunther Sales joined business, civic, and city government officials at the opening session, *“Why Asia x Austin: The Central Texas Connection”* at the Asia x Austin Summit 2026 held at the iconic Long Center for the Performing Arts.

The Asia x Austin Summit is an annual event organized by the Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce (GAACC) and held as an official event of the South by Southwest (SXSW) Conference. Now in its third year, it has established itself as a reputable platform for fostering dialogue and partnership between Asia and the Greater Austin region, bringing together business and civic leaders, entrepreneurs, city officials, and diplomatic representatives to explore opportunities for cooperation across trade, investment, technology, and the creative economy spheres. The Summit reflects Austin's deliberate positioning as a globally connected innovation hub and its openness to deepening ties with Asian partner economies - spanning Hong Kong, Malaysia, South Korea, Singapore, India, and the Philippines - whose complementary strengths in finance, manufacturing, technology, services, and talent align closely with Central Texas' own diversified and rapidly expanding economic landscape.

Addressing the event's participants, Consul General Sales highlighted the Philippines' key pillars of potential partnership with Austin - a young, English-proficient, and increasingly AI-literate workforce; leadership within ASEAN in the creative services industry; and a progressively open investment environment complementary to Austin's integrated music, film, and technology ecosystem.

Beyond the economic case, he also emphasized the role of the Filipino American community as a vital cultural bridge, and - with 2026 marking the 80th anniversary of Philippines-U.S. diplomatic relations - extended an invitation to both communities to take the next step toward a shared future,

affirming the Philippines as not merely a partner of opportunity, but a steadfast ally in the pursuit of common interests as well.

Austin Mayor Kirk Watson closed the opening session by expressing strong enthusiasm for the growth and contributions of the Asian American community in Austin and reaffirming the city's commitment to actively pursuing international relationships.

Mayor Watson championed sub-national diplomacy — city-to-city, city-to-business, and region-to-region engagement — as essential infrastructure for international cooperation and outlined his administration's ongoing efforts to strengthen Austin's global connectivity. He enthusiastically committed to exploring sister city relationships with Philippine cities, proposing Cebu as a near-term candidate for engagement. (END)



Austin Mayor Kirk Watson (center) with Consul General Sales and Austin City Development Manager, Genesis Gavino.

Consul General Sales with GAACC President and CEO Mark Duval.





(L-R): Philippine American Chamber of Commerce (PACC) Regional Chairpersons Rob Raroque (Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW)), Joyce Garcia (Austin), and DFW Membership Committee Director Nilda Henson join Consul General Sales and Vice Consul Tanya Gaurano at the 2026 Asia x Austin Summit.