

The vision of the Philippines without congestion and with a clean environment. A country in transition

04-22-2021 10:12 AM CET | [Tourism, Cars, Traffic](#)

Press release from: [bellacoola Film Production UG](#)



My interview partner Mr. Don Macamos Visaya in front of the Philippine Embassy, Berlin.

The Philippines is a dazzling tiger economy in Asia. In addition to strong population growth, the economy has also had a permanent boost until the outbreak of the Corona crisis in 2020. The interesting island state captivates not only by 7641 partly uniquely beautiful islands, but also by an extraordinarily friendly population. English is understood by every inhabitant of the Philippines. It is not for nothing that hundreds of call centers vie for the busy call center agents for the US market, Australia or the UK.

Problem No. 1 for the government is the outdated infrastructure:

Infrastructure has lagged behind population growth, however, and that's why President Duterte launched the "Build! Build! Build! - Program." This is intended to radically improve the transport infrastructure in particular. Airports are being built or modernized on many islands, and in Manila there are also efforts to improve local transport and road connections between districts. Even small and sometimes beautiful islands are involved and wide roads are being built there, so that one rubs one's eyes in wonderment as to who is supposed to use these wide roads... However, from an outsider's point of view, environmental protection falls by the wayside with all these investments. That's why I had an appointment with Mr. Don Macamos Visaya today. Don studies political science and he is vice president of the association 'DDSGermany e.V.'. He is also a vibrant Filipino supporter of the 'Build Build Build'- program. Don explains in the interview how he sees his Philippines in the future.

I myself have visited this island nation many times and yes, I am biased: because I have not only come to know the Philippines, but also to love it.

Until now, it was Manila's average traffic density that was the cause of constant traffic jams.

So many a worried worker wondered: 'Do I really have to get up at 5am to get to work on time at 8h? Or do I risk sleeping until six and then facing a scolding boss 45min late?' So far, these are problems that many commuters in the capital of the Philippines, Manila, face again every day. Manila is considered the metropolis with some of the worst traffic congestion in the world. One reason for this is the geography of this lagoon city: the nearly 3 million people who try to get into the center of this metropolis every day in the morning and out again in the evening have to squeeze onto a narrow strip between the sea on one side and a lake and hills on the other. Poor urban planning and lack of investment in infrastructure in recent decades have exacerbated the problem.

A Manila resident spends about 16 days/year in traffic jams per calendar year.

According to the Boston Consulting Group, Filipinos spend 384h/365 days in traffic jams. The World Economic Forum ranks the Philippines 96th out of 141 countries for the quality of its infrastructure. Nearby Indonesia, also a nation of thousands of islands, ranks 72nd. On January 17, 2020, the Secretary of Public Works announced that by the time President Rodrigo Duterte leaves office in 2022, he wants to have reduced by one-third the number of cars passing through the city's main arteries each day. Such statements are characteristic of the government's approach to improving the infrastructure situation. When Davao lawyer Rodrigo Duterte became president of the Philippines in 2016, he considered asking Congress for emergency powers to get traffic under control. In the end, he opted instead for a long-term plan to spend 9 trillion pesos (\$177 billion) on new infrastructure, called "Build, Build, Build."

The focus on radically improving infrastructure represents a "very bold shift in government priorities," Secretary Mr. Vince Dizon, an adviser to the president, believes.

The infrastructure, which has hardly improved in decades, is by no means the only problem facing the state. The air and wastewater pollution in the urban centers is considered to be in urgent need of improvement, and modern disposal technologies in environmental protection must be optimized or first installed and introduced. Here a German environmental engineer, Norbert Kessler, who lives on Siquijor Island, is of particular importance. He already wrote promising and very concrete concepts for the Philippines environment development. More about this in the following interview.

Don Macamos Visaya in dialogue:

Today I have an appointment with Mr. Don Macamos Visaya for this purpose. Don is studying political science and is a native of Luzon (Philippines). The likeable Filipino has been living in Europe, in Frankfurt and Barcelona, since 1991 and knows Spain, Germany and the Philippines from many years of personal experience. He is also well informed about the specific problems of his island nation and now explains to us details about a very progressive vision for the years 2025 to 2040 for this vibrant island nation.

Oliver Gaebe, www.bellacoola.de:

„Don, thank you very much for taking time for an interview today. How do you see the Philippines developing in to the year 2040?“

Don Macamos Visaya on 'The Philippines' by 2025:

"Well, President Duterte has included several major goals in his ambitious 'BUILD! BUILD! BUILD! Program: to massively improve infrastructure throughout the country, alleviate poverty among the population, and also significantly improve the island nation's sustainability through a cleaner environment. We Filipinos are all called upon to pitch in together, and this solidarity among the people also helps the president to achieve his ambitious goals. By 2025, more and more primary goals will be addressed, most notably including public transport in Greater Manila and significantly reduced traffic congestion in the metropolis."

Vision of the Philippines in 2040:

Don: "Insiders are certain: by 2040, the country will have morphed into an excellently developed industrial location, though the beauty of the island world will also enjoy special protection. We will place large parts of the forested islands (such as Palawan) under conservation. Sewage treatment plants will do their good work on all inhabited islands by 2040. Recycling, waste prevention and waste disposal will also have a special role."

Oliver Gaebe, www.bellacoola.de:

"Don, that sounds really huge! So what is your personal vision for your country, the Philippines?"

Don Macamos Visaya:

"My vision for my Philippines? To finally create much better living conditions for the majority of Filipinos. The eradication of poverty and hunger is essential for me, our

association <https://ddsgermany.de/> and the government under President Rodrigo Duterte. 88% of Filipinos believe that the country will improve significantly if people work together and stay in the Philippines instead of working in other countries. Filipinos also ask: What is "my" vision for the Philippines? The Philippine government has adopted a long-term vision called 'Build, Build, Build'. This ambitious program envisions the country transforming itself into a prosperous, poverty-free, civic-minded society by 2040." Many a citizen wonders and skeptically asks, "how can the Philippines implement its extremely ambitious goals?" I then always say, "look how much the islands have improved since President Duterte came to power. Even on small islands, excellent roads have been built and a rainstorm no longer makes for a muddy desert as it did 10 or 20 years ago. These small changes will continue and we will actually have a very modern island kingdom if we think ahead just once twenty years."

Oliver Gaebe, www.bellacoola.de:

"Don, that sounds very nice, I'm impressed. What else is the Philippines known for?"

Don Macamos Visaya:

"Our capital is the people! Filipinos are certainly the most accommodating people you will ever meet in your life. They are simply happy, which is why Filipinos are always smiling despite an often difficult life. If you are lucky enough to be invited by a local to their home, you will experience how caring and hospitable the people from our country are. You will get the best room in the house and be treated like a VIP. The culture is just like that. The locals speak good English. This is the reason why traveling to the Philippines is often much easier than in other countries in Southeast Asia. Filipinos are hardworking and family oriented. The father is usually the head of the family, but mothers are treated equally. Often even the head of the household is given a special role. If you speak to a Filipino, you speak as if to a friend."

Oliver Gaebe, www.bellacoola.de:

"Woow. What is the reputation of the Philippines in the world? How do you see your island nation from a foreigner's perspective?"

Don Macamos Visaya:

"If you have been to the Philippines only once, the mystical island world catches you and doesn't let you go. This is also proven by the 'repeaters', because most visitors come again and again. That alone says a lot. The 7641 islands have retained their own character and beauty and the hospitality of the people also ensures that strangers to the country soon feel at home. A survey among western travelers about their favorite destinations in Asia came to the unsurprising conclusion that the Philippines can be placed at the top of the popularity ranking. Those who have once traveled to the islands of our great country generally do not easily 'relocate' to other countries. He or she always likes to come back. Again and again the friendliness of the Filipinos is also praised among travelers as a particularly positive aspect..."

Oliver Gaebe, www.bellacoola.de:

"You're right about that, Don! What is the current security situation in the Philippines? There are always rumors about the security situation in the island state."

Don Macamos Visaya:

"As an update from our civil society partners in the Philippines, we are pleased to inform you and the readers that the Philippines received an excellent rating in the "Global Law and Order Index 2020" by "Gallup Polls". It is noteworthy that 'Gallup Polls' as an independent private US-based company (which applies science-based data analysis instead of anecdotal opinion-based accusations to determine an empowering and safe civic space for civil society) gives such a good verdict. The positive result on the Philippines is convincing as the island nation is among the twelve safest countries in the world. This result makes us Filipinos very happy and confirms that the security situation has improved significantly under President Duterte. Or have you ever had a negative experience in the Philippines, Oliver?"

Oliver Gaebe, www.bellacoola.de:

"No, actually, not Don. I personally have enjoyed every trip to the Philippines very much and never had or witnessed any conflict. There seem to be some fairy tales on the way that I can't confirm. What would you like readers to know about the Philippines, what would you like to conclude by telling people, Don?"

Don Macamos Visaya:

"Come and visit the Philippines. Visit some of the beautiful islands and let yourself be intoxicated by the experiences and the exotic island world. A trip to Palawan is certainly one of the highlights, because the partly endemic flora and fauna there takes the visitor into a long forgotten beauty of nature. But also the mystical island of Siquijor ("Island of Fire" or also "the island of the healers") is certainly worth a visit. For example, the German Terry, manager of the beautifully quiet on the western beach 'Casa de la Playa beach hotel' on Siquijor, offers special island tours, for example to visit widely known healers on this 'mystical' island. Swimmers and divers will also be happy on our islands. Water rats love to dive into the shallow or occasionally rocky coastlines and get to know the beauty of the reefs of our islands. The country is so diverse that I could talk for three days now and would have mentioned only 2% of what visitors can see and experience there. A surprising number of Europeans spend their retirement years on one of the Philippine islands. A survey among American, German, Swiss and Austrian islanders showed that hardly anyone wants to go back to their old home. That also speaks clearly for my homeland, I think! "

Oliver Gaebe, www.bellacoola.de:

"I guess that's true. Don, thank you very much for the interview and then good luck for the Philippines and the implementation of the ambitious plans of the "Build, Build, Build" program."

BellaCoola Film Production UG (limited liability)
Mr Oliver Gaebe
Eythstr. 10
D-51103 Cologne
Germany
phone: +491796004547
web: <http://www.bellacoola.de>
email: bellacoola-liefert (@) die-besten-bilder.de