

# Manny V. Pangilinan's Gintong Alon Leadership Award Acceptance Speech at the Philippine Association of Hong Kong charity ball

Jun 24, 2025

*On June 14, 2025, PLDT Chairman Manuel V Pangilinan (MVP) was honored with the Gintong Alon Leadership Award during the Philippine Association of Hong Kong (PAHK) charity ball held at the Ritz-Carlton hotel in Kowloon, Hong Kong. The award is in recognition of MVP's impactful support to OFWs worldwide.*

**Acceptance Speech**  
**Philippine Association of Hong Kong Recognition**  
**7:00 PM, Saturday, 14 June 2025**  
**Hong Kong SAR**

Sa lahat ng ating mga kababayan at kapwa OFWs; Consul General Romulo Israel Jr.; Senator and Mrs. Raffy Tulfo; PAHK Chair Scylla Kwong; mga kasapi ng Philippine Association of Hong Kong; mga minamahal kong mga kapatid sa Hong Kong—magandang gabi sa inyong lahat.

Sa kaunahan, maraming salamat sa inyong napakahalagang parangal. Ako po ay tunay na nagagalak na makapiling muli kayong mga Pilipino dito sa Hong Kong. It feels good to be back home.

I am deeply moved by a recognition such as this—coming from a place where I lived for 22 continuous years, and from people whom I care for dearly.

There may be some doubt in my heart as to whether I deserve this award—over other Filipinos who have served, and continue to serve, here in Hong Kong. But there is no question about my pleasure and pride in receiving it.

So I accept this award on behalf of all the workers here, simply as a trustee and steward for all the services and sacrifices they have given—for their families, to Hong Kong, and for our country.

## **Our Economic Contribution**

Let me just highlight how important you are as an economic contributor to the Philippine economy.

In 2024, official inward remittances totaled 38.34 billion US dollars—equivalent to about 10% of our country's Gross Domestic Product in nominal terms. The money our foreign workers send represents the largest single business in the Philippines—and its biggest employer, supporting around 10 million people.

But the significance of these remittances goes beyond their sheer size. There is no more cost to our country to earn these revenues from you. They are 100% value-added to the economy—like economic cocaine injected into the veins of our nation.



## **Life in Hong Kong**

Hong Kong is where I started my real career and built my adult life in 1976. This is where I learned how to survive on my own—personally and professionally; to compete with some of the best bankers, lawyers, accountants, and business people in the world; to enjoy the perks of a first-world cosmopolitan city; to be intimate with dark nights of loneliness, with work as one's major source of solace and happiness; to survive illness with no one to care for you; to rise above the struggles of career—and thrive.

My life and work are simply a metaphor of your own.

The unique situation of Hong Kong taught me how to stand on my own and be myself—to become independent and accountable—away from the warm and secure cocoon of extended family life in the Philippines, especially during Hong Kong's own sovereignty transition from the UK to China in 1997.

Here in Hong Kong, we have built something lasting—thousands of small parts that can be traced to our long days and nights in offices or homes we worked or lived in. I first arrived here in February of 1976 to work with Bancom International, on the 28th floor of Connaught Centre in Central—then the tallest building, now known as Jardine House, the Noble House.

From there, we moved to the 9th floor of Central Building along Pedder Street, where First Pacific was born in just 50 square meters of space, with six people. Then on to the 24th floor of Worldwide House, and finally to the 24th floor of Two Exchange Square, where we've been since 1985.

As I look back almost 50 years ago—to 1976—I can only say in closing that time has indeed moved on, as it always does. My career has taken on a different direction, as has Hong Kong. I have moved back to our country—though not quite entirely, as I am here once a month.

But this award tells me how much those 22 years mattered. That they weren't just a chapter in a young man's life, or an interlude in a lifelong career. They were priceless. The lessons that Hong Kong taught me about business and about life fill me with sublime gratitude I cannot express.



So tonight is a night of thanksgiving for the workers in Hong Kong. A night of reminiscing, of re-living one's days here—washed by fond remembrances of yesteryears, coaxing by happy experiences, and kept vibrant by memories of those wondrous years.

Sana po ay ang aking munting kasaysayan dito sa Hong Kong ay magbigay ng pag-asa sa inyo, at sa inyong pamilya, habang kayo ay nagsusumikap.

The circumstances of your work and lives might be different today from when I was here—but your mission as OFWs, and your commitment to your families and to the Philippines, remain immutable and inviolate.

As OFWs, we continue to be charged with doing our appointed tasks with quality and excellence—no matter the place or the time. To hold up to the world the Filipino greatness of heart and spirit, of courage and compassion. You are our country's bright lights of hope—worthy of emulation and valued for your immense contribution.

Maraming salamat sa inyong lahat. Mabuhay ang mga OFWs! Mabuhay ang Pilipinas!

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