

Lecture Report:

## From Old Camps to New Cities

URA Function Hall  
20 January 2017



Speaking to an audience in Singapore on 20 January 2017, Arnel Casanova, former President and CEO of the Philippines' Base Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA), described two large-scale military camp conversions in his country.

### A Green City Rising From the Ashes

The first is the 9,500-hectare Clark Green City. Located in central Luzon, this site housed what was once the largest overseas US naval base.

The US base was closed in 1992, after the devastating Mount Pinatubo volcanic earthquake. The land was then transformed into the Subic Bay Freeport Zone by the government, with ongoing developments to complete the country's first smart, green, disaster-resilient metropolis.



Image source: AECOM

“It was an argument before that it was a very bad idea to let go of the US military because they were actually providing employment to 7,000 Filipinos, who at the time were directly affected by the Mt. Pinatubo eruption,”

said Mr Casanova, who is now Senior Advisor for the Office of the Vice President of the Republic of the Philippines.

“But now we’ve proven that it was actually a good decision because it has created 5,000 jobs, and this is increasing. BPOs [business process outsourcing] are now moving here, because of the increase in rental in Manila. We have established schools ... and even manufacturing.”

Clark will also serve as a back-up facility for the government, he added. Fibre optic lines and data centres are being installed, with building roofs designed to withstand typhoons up to 276 kilometre per hour.

## Bonifacio: Military Headquarters to Thriving City

Another master-planned development is Bonifacio Global City, located southeast of Metro Manila. Previously called Fort Bonifacio where the Philippine Army was headquartered, the city began its transformation in the 1990s, incorporating principles of sustainable expansion, walkability and urban greenery.



Before and after satellite images of Fort Bonifacio, from 2001 to 2015) Image source: Google Earth

“Our economy was suffering from bankruptcy because of plunder, disaster and political instability,” said Mr Casanova, referring to the country’s former dictatorship, coups and destructive earthquakes.

“So we needed immediate cash to raise capital to rehabilitate infrastructure. And to do that, we looked at Fort Bonifacio, which is located just beside Makati business district — to be privatised to a [private-public partnership] and to raise funds, which we did by tendering and forming a special vehicle in transferring the ownership of land.”



Image source: CLC

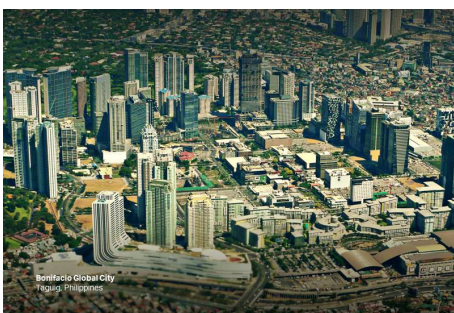


Image source: AECOM

The investment was hit by the 1997 Asian financial crisis, and development stalled until a new partner was brought in in 2001. Now Bonifacio employs 40,000 people, and has achieved a 50% built-up development. Real estate is growing at 6–7% year-on-year, and this demand is expected to continue.

The developer (Base Conversion and Development Authority) manages the sale of inventory to avoid real estate speculation. “We are not simply looking at what the market demands,” Mr Casanova added.

“That’s why our first investment is in schools. So if you educate and you develop your human capital, you will create your own opportunity. We should not be afraid of losing jobs, when we can create our own jobs, right? And that will drive innovation.”



Image source: CLC

# About the Speakers

*Speaker:*



**Arnel CASANOVA**

Senior Advisor

Office of the Vice President of the Republic of the Philippines;

Country Representative, AECOM Philippines;

Former President and CEO

Philippines' Base Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA)

Mr Casanova has diverse expertise focusing on public-private partnerships, real property development, urban planning, security, and peace negotiations and mediation. As the President of BCDA, he led the development of the 9,500 hectare Clark Green City, Philippines' first and only smart, green, disaster-resilient metropolis. He also took major leadership roles in numerous major property development projects and public-private partnerships that have established vibrant economic districts such as the 600 hectare Bonifacio Global City in Metro Manila and the Philippine's longest and most modern 94 kilometre tollway, the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEX). Mr Casanova is currently teaching in the College of Law of the University of the Philippines and the Faculty for Social Entrepreneurship in Ateneo de Manila University.

*Moderator:*



**Michael KOH**

Fellow

Centre for Liveable Cities

Michael was previously the Head of Projects and Design at SC Global, a property developer in Singapore, overseeing both overseas and in-country development projects. Prior to SC Global, Michael has 25 years of experience in the public service including 7 years as CEO of the National Heritage Board and 4 years concurrently as CEO of the National Art Gallery. He was also the former Director of Urban Planning & Design at the Urban Redevelopment Authority where he spearheaded the planning and urban design of the new mixed use Downtown at Marina Bay, revitalisation of Orchard Road as a shopping street and creation of an arts and entertainment district at Bras Basah Bugis.

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*Note*

Please refer to <http://www.clc.gov.sg/documents/Lectures/2017/20-Jan-2017-Urban-Renewal-Lecture.pdf>

*About CLC*

The Centre for Liveable Cities was set up in 2008 by the Ministry of National Development and the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources, based on a strategic blueprint developed by Singapore's Inter-Ministerial Committee on Sustainable Development. Guided by its mission to distil, create and share knowledge on liveable and sustainable cities, the Centre's work spans three main areas - Research, Capability Development, and Knowledge Platforms. The CLC Lecture Series is a platform for urban experts to share their knowledge with other practitioners. For more information, please visit: <http://www.clc.gov.sg>