

by Vic Larato

Mayor Beng Climaco today leads an 82-man trade mission to the 12th China-ASEAN Exposition (CAEXPO) in the northern city of Nanning, China, where Zamboanga plays the “City of Charm,” representing the Philippines.

While in China, Mayor Climaco together with other city officials in the delegation will take the opportunity of forging two sisterhood agreements with the cities of Zhoushan and Guigang in a bid to strengthen trade relations, and promote cultural and tourism exchanges between Zamboanga and the two Chinese cities.

Climaco stressed that the twinning agreements, which were initiated by local Chinese group, have been sanctioned and approved by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) in compliance with the requirements of the Bureau of Local Government Supervision of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG).

Aware of the Philippines’ territorial dispute with China before the international court, however, she pointed out that the twinning initiatives will not in any manner affect the country’s stand on territorial issues with China.

“Zamboanga City cannot remain in isolation. As the city progresses, we do not close the door to trade and investment opportunities with other countries,” Climaco said.

“We must take the opportunity to grow with other countries. That’s why Zamboanga must set sail across the sea and open up markets for local products on foreign lands,” she added.

On Thursday, Sept 17, the mayor will receive Chinese government officials and ASEAN heads of state at the Nanning International Convention and Exhibition Center.

Beng leads Zambo trade trip to China

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She will also preside over a mayor's forum to mark 2015 as the China-ASEAN Maritime Cooperation Year.

The city's delegation to China include 12 government officials and staff, 5 of which are on official travel, while others are travelling either on official time or using personal expenses and 70 local investors, among them are community-based entrepreneurs hoping to find markets for their native products in the CAEXPO.

The group's mission is to promote Zamboanga City in terms of its trade, tourism and investment potentials.

Also taking the lead in supporting such an international event are the Zamboanga Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Los Contratistas de Zamboanga, Zamboanga Economic Zone and Freeport Authority, local exhibitors like Sotto delicacies, EJT Food Products, Mega Sardines and Universal Canning Corp.— Vic Larato