

# Upgraded NAIA can boost GDP growth through tourism, investments – consortium

---

Manila Bulletin · 5 Apr 2018 · B-12

---

An upgraded and efficient NAIA can generate inclusive and significant economic growth and create more than a million jobs across the country through tourism and investments.

"If there is one single economic catalyst that carries so much punch, it is NAIA. That we are an archipelago endowed with natural beauty makes NAIA even more important," said Jimbo Reverente, spokesperson for the NAIA Consortium which has a pending proposal to expand and improve NAIA.

He cited a study by Oxford Economics and the International Air Transport Association (IATA) that said the local aviation sector contributed 3.2 percent or more than \$9 billion of the country's 2014 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and generated a total of 1.2 million jobs.

The sector has grown since then and NAIA must grow as well to keep driving growth, he said, adding that time is running out to prevent "NAIA from becoming the next EDSA."

In 2014, Oxford said 38.8 million flew through NAIA. Last year, the figure was 42 million. This year, it will be 44 million.

"In all those years, NAIA's terminal capacity remained constrained at 31 million. If we want air transport to create more economic wealth and generate more jobs, we have to expand, upgrade and improve NAIA now, not later," he said. The Oxford study said of the 1.2 million jobs created in 2014, close to a million came from tourism.

"Clearly, NAIA is a lifeline for the countryside. Tourism is one of the ways the government can achieve its goal of making the country's growth more inclusive. The bigger and better NAIA is, the better for everybody all over the country," he said.

The all-Filipino consortium, consisting of seven of the largest corporations in the country, proposes to raise NAIA's terminal capacity of 31 million to 47 million in two years, or in 2020, and to 65 million in four years, or 2022.

Reverente qualified, however, that to enable the consortium to deliver, it must get the notice to proceed from the government by late this year.