

# Foreword

For almost a decade, Ayala has supported the UP School of Economics (UPSE) in contributing to informed policy debate on critical issues affecting the Philippine economy. In 2008, UPSE and Ayala established a quarterly economic forum to showcase the latest research findings on economic issues of public importance. Initially designed as a three-year program, the forum ran in two phases from 2008 to 2016 and provided a venue for sharing evidence-based recommendations with policymakers and the public. A steering committee selected topics to be covered a year in advance, but pressing issues were given space on the agenda insofar as a UPSE professor or research affiliate had ongoing research on the issue.

For research to meaningfully inform policy, we must first ask whether decision makers are choosing from alternatives that evidence suggests are likely to bring us closer to a prosperous and equitable society. A productive starting point, therefore, is to cultivate a shared understanding of the key economic aspects of public policies. It is for this reason that Ayala has supported a mechanism for the public dissemination of research done at UPSE through an arm's length relationship that respects academic freedom.

Under the auspices of the UP CIDS Public Policy Journal, the papers prepared for the second phase of the partnership (2014-2016) have now been subjected to additional independent peer review. These papers make up the chapters of this special issue which has provided the opportunity to refine and document as well as expand the reach of the studies published in this volume.

We hope that decision makers, those involved in the policymaking process, and all concerned citizens will consider this publication a useful resource. We join Dean Orville Solon and his UPSE colleagues in thanking the authors, editors, reviewers and all who contributed to making this publication and the public forums that preceded it possible.

We would also like to thank the members of the UP Diliman and other academic communities, government officials, civil society leaders, and colleagues from the private sector who attended the quarterly forums through the years. The contending perspectives that emerged during the Q&A sessions led to deeper insight and appreciation of the complexity surrounding the issues tackled by the presenters.

We are grateful for the opportunity to support the UPSE faculty and their research affiliates in “doing what they do best”—toward crafting public policies that strengthen the Philippine economy in ways that truly advance the interests of the Filipino people.

**John Philip S. Orbeta**

Managing Director  
Ayala Corporation