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SENATE
P.S. Res. No. 417

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Introduced by Senator Risa Hontiveros

**RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING DAVID AFRICA AND
TOBI LEUNG FOR BEING THE FIRST EVER FILIPINO DEBATERS TO WIN THE
WORLD UNIVERSITIES DEBATING CHAMPIONSHIP**

WHEREAS, on 4 January 2023, Ateneo de Manila University students and merit scholars David Africa and Tobi Leung won the World Universities Debating Championship in Spain, the world's premier international debating tournament¹;

WHEREAS, their championship was attained after besting the other teams from Bulgaria's Sofia University, Israel's Tel Aviv University, and the United States' Princeton University;

WHEREAS, the team from Ateneo became the first team from South East Asia to win the said prize and only the second Asian team to do so in the entire Debating Championship's 43 year history;

WHEREAS, prior to their Madrid victory, the duo from the Philippines also won in the Malaysia United Asians Debating Championship in 2022, with David Africa winning as Overall Best Speaker of Asia and Tobi Leung as the 2nd Best Speaker of Asia²;

WHEREAS, for Mr. Africa, winning the championship is a dream come true and that winning it 'shows the world that Filipino eloquence and critical thinking have always been world class'³;

WHEREAS, the Filipino excellence displayed by Mr. Africa and Mr. Leung show that our people are good not just in serving our more prosperous peers, but are also capable of competing and besting our contemporaries in the developed world, confirming Dr. Jose Rizal's belief that Filipinos 'could excel in the things the modern world values'⁴;

WHEREAS, the triumph of David Africa and Tobi Leung shows young debaters all over the country that a Filipino victory at the highest levels dominated by Western universities is a concrete possibility and no longer just a dream;

WHEREAS, the pair debated against the proposition that it is preferable to have 'a world where all persons have a strong belief in the philosophy of Ubuntu', a position antithetical to the Filipino spirit of 'para sa kapwa';

WHEREAS, Mr. Leung argued that 'community is a shackle that alienates you from your very sense of self and emboldens the worst forms of tyranny'⁵, with the grim reminder of how the way to tyranny is paved by the passive acceptance of a decaying institution and the non-action of the collective against undemocratic movements;

¹ <https://www.rappler.com/nation/philippines-ateneo-de-manila-university-wins-world-universities-debating-championship-2023/>

² <https://web.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=557333029726041&set=a.469457981846880>

³ <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/lifestyle/2023/1/4/Ateneo-debate-championship.html>

⁴ <https://opinion.inquirer.net/160151/ubuntu-and-the-ateneo-debaters-historic-win>

⁵ *ibid*

WHEREAS, their unprecedented achievement may inspire a generation of Filipino world-class debaters and bring the art of debate in the country to new and greater heights; and

WHEREAS, a healthy and thriving culture of debate feeds a working and flourishing democracy where a free exchange of ideas empowers its citizens to demand a government that is open to criticism, unthreatened by transparency and accountability, and intolerant of corruption and violence;

NOW THEREFORE RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, to commend and congratulate David Africa and Tobi Leung for being the first ever Filipino debaters to win the World Universities Debating Championship.

Adopted,

Risa Hontiveros
RISA HONTIVEROS *feb*