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Sent: Tuesday, November 5, 2024 12:10 PM

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Subject: Please add as PUBLIC COMMENT to EHRC Agenda Item 2- November 6, 2024-Please confirm receipt of this EMAIL Comment -Agriculture

-EXTERNAL-

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Please note the following in the comment section:

Given that the Filipino Migrant Center chose to condemn Israel on October 24, 2023 publicly, please note the attached June 2023 article about Israel being a consistent partner in assisting and exchanging knowledge on smart and sustainable farming practices with the Philippines, to help the Philippines leverage its status as an agricultural powerhouse.

Please also note that Israel imports from the Philippines have substantially increased by more than 75% in the last two years to over \$100 million a year. Whereas, the UN purchases, most likely for UNRWA, have gone down to less than \$24 million.



Israel has been a consistent partner in assisting and exchanging knowledge on smart and sustainable farming practices with the Philippines, leveraging its status as an agricultural powerhouse.

In June 2023, a renewed partnership between the two countries focused on agriculture and water management was agreed upon.

Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen, during a meeting with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., emphasized the potential for collaboration to bolster the Philippines' food security.

Cohen proposed the establishment of an agricultural hub to further this initiative.

"I think that we can work together, and let's say that less import, more export for the Philippines. And I think that we can work together," Cohen told President Marcos Jr.

Israel's expertise in water management was also a key topic. In 2022, 392 Filipino trainees completed the Agrostudies Program, an on-the-job agricultural training program managed by Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in partnership with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority.

This program, a significant component of bilateral agricultural cooperation, has trained over 6,000 Filipino participants since 2005. Israeli experts provide hands-on

pineapples and mangoes and the importation of Hass avocado planting materials.

Topics included technical cooperation to enhance local laboratories, developing a large-scale dairy farm using Israeli technology, and progressing the proposed Philippines-Israel Cooperative Learning and Linkages in Agriculture through a Bilateral Agreement.

In March 2023, the DA announced plans to revitalize the country’s cacao industry through its High-Value Crops and Development Program.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel highlighted the need to educate farmers on maximizing the economic and livelihood potential of cacao production.

DA chief Laurel Jr., alongside Ambassador Fluss, visited the Filipinas Cacao Heritage Reserve in Calamba, Laguna, a 13-hectare cacao farmland. This site will receive technical assistance and mentorship from Israeli experts in cacao production, in collaboration with the Israeli Embassy in the Philippines.

In 2022, Israel imported a total volume of 3,441,855 kilograms of various Philippine products. According to Trading Economics, citing the United Nations Comtrade database, Philippine exports to Israel in 2023 were valued at \$144 million.



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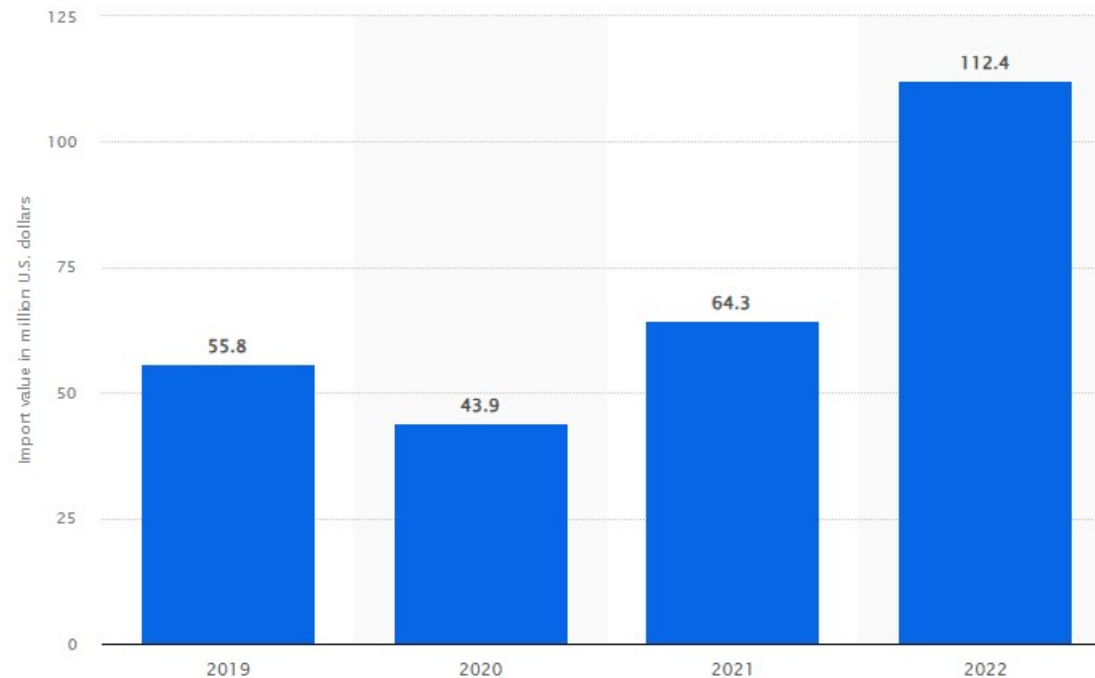
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Retail & Trade > International Trade

Value of imports from the Philippines to Israel from 2019 to 2022

(in million U.S. dollars)

Details: 2019 to 2022

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