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MANILA — JinJiang International Holdings Co. Ltd., the largest Asian-owned hotel chain group is set to jumpstart its business operations in the Philippines.

Filipino businessman Carlos Chan, presidential special envoy to China and who will act as the Chinese conglomerate's domestic partner, said JinJiang will get to materialize its first hotel project in the Philippines after eyeing it as early as two years ago or back in 2008.

Chan said JinJiang will build a specialty boutique hotel in Loboc, Bohol, home of the fancied Loboc River Cruise.

The company will also look at Panglao Island, famous among beach-loving foreigners for its serene shores and diving spots, in the same province as a possible location for a second hotel, possibly a five-star one.

“Our group's commitment to invest in this project is our contribution to the development of Philippine tourism,” said Chan, chairman of the Liwayway Group, makers of snack food brand Oishi which, apart from mainland China, also has manufacturing operations in Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and Myanmar.

Jinjiang's commitment had Tourism Secretary Alberto Lim brimming with anticipation, as this will definitely contribute heavily to the government's renewed drive to position the Philippines as a key tourism destination, given Jinjiang's impressive corporate stature and proven track record in China.

Aside from Lim, Rep. Erico Aumentado (2nd District of Bohol), Quirino Rep. Dakila Cua and Quirino Gov. Junie Cua were equally instrumental to JinJiang's vote of confidence on the Philippines.

These officials joined Chan and Zhang Zhao Feng, vice president and secretary-general of the Shanghai Overseas Chinese Chamber of Commerce (SOCCC), in the successful meeting with JinJiang chairman Yu Minliang at the JinJiang International Headquarters in Shanghai, China.

The meeting coincided the Philippine delegation's visit of the closing ceremonies of the 2010 World Exposition, which made history books by surpassing record attendance.

JinJiang is among the top 500 most valuable brands in China.

It owns and manages more than 460 hotels and inns combined with nearly 80,000 rooms/suites in its inventory.

JinJiang is ranked 17th among the world's top 300 hotel companies.

Equally relevant is the fact that JinJiang International also has five international travel agencies which it will use as a leverage to encourage its clients to stay at its upcoming hotel in Bohol.

They are also backed up by a loyalty program for its frequent guests.

The Philippine delegation headed by Lim and through the diligence of Chan, also had a meeting with top officials of Shanghai Ctrip International Travel Service Co. Ltd, the biggest online travel agency originated and based in China, to encourage them to include the Bohol province as a vital cog of their tourism destination drive.

Aumentado believes that Bohol is a must-visit place for foreign tourists given its excellent peace and order state coupled with friendly and hospitable local people.