

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS OFFICE
PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK**

**INTERVENTION OF
PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
AT THE ASEAN LEADERS' GATHERING**

[Delivered at Sofitel Bali Nusa Dua Beach Resort in Bali, Indonesia | 11 October 2018]

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Your Majesty, Excellencies, the Leaders of ASEAN, the ASEAN Secretary-General, the United Nations Secretary-General, the International Monetary Fund Managing Director and the World Bank President, good afternoon.

I would like to thank President Joko Widodo for hosting this gathering and Prime Minister Lee Hsien- Loong for co-chairing this important meeting.

With only 12 more years to go before the deadline for the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, now is the time to ask the hard question: Are we on track towards achieving the objectives we set for ourselves?

The indications are encouraging. For the Philippines, our economy is on an upward trajectory of growth.

My Government continues to work hard to build and strengthen our enabling investment environment.

Make no mistake: We are serious in practicing good governance. We are committed to address corruption. And we are resolute in securing our nation from criminal elements and terrorist threats.

For ASEAN, our region has maintained a steady growth path. We are connecting more with the world.

Last year, ASEAN's trade grew almost 15 percent. Foreign Direct Investment also grew by almost 12 percent. And ASEAN intra-regional trade and investment linkages are continuing to strengthen.

But the question remains – can we sustain this growth and make development truly inclusive for everyone in Southeast Asia?

There are dark clouds looming on the horizon. They warn us of real challenges that we must face. Escalating trade tensions and protectionism threaten to undermine the gains we have achieved in the economic front.

On the other hand, natural calamities brought by more severe and disruptive weather patterns bear down on Governments with limited resources, and citizens with even less capabilities to handle disasters.

Terrorism and violent extremism – along with transnational crimes such as the illegal drugs trade – lure the disadvantaged and marginalized into divisive, devious and destructive alternatives to genuine development.

We have no other option but to confront these challenges head on.

To do so, we must be prepared to invest in ourselves.

The Philippines is investing in its future and looking to innovation and resiliency in our trade and investment policies to further drive growth.

We have embarked on an ambitious Build-Build- Build program that can support domestic consumption and cushion the impact of decreased external demand.

We are unrelenting in our resolve to ensure a peaceful, secure and stable environment that protects the greater common good.

But we must do more. We have to work together.

Today, I say, ASEAN should be bold enough to invest in ourselves. A stronger ASEAN is key to unlocking the potentials of the ASEAN Economic Community.

As our economies grow, we should look at each other as our natural economic partners, intensifying trade and increasing direct investments within the ASEAN region.

This is our collective investment in our shared future. But we need to continue looking outward. We need to deal with an interconnected world economic order.

Only a stronger ASEAN will allow us to effectively deal with regional and global economic powerhouses. And only a more stronger ASEAN can take on opportunities that are only available to the many that work together.

This, so the world can see that ASEAN is worth investing in. This, so global institutions should rightly support us in achieving our goals.

Other regional blocs have shown how they can effectively change economic dynamics. If we ramp up ASEAN-centered efforts to bring down collective trade and investment barriers, we can achieve – and maybe even surpass – what other regional blocs have done.

Recent events have seen our brothers and sisters in Indonesia deal with an onslaught of natural disasters.

To Indonesia, the Philippines would like to reiterate our sincere sympathies for the tremendous loss of lives and extensive damage to property.

Indonesia has taken on the challenge of rebuilding and rehabilitating its communities. Indonesia stands resilient and unbowed in these difficult times. But Indonesia does not stand alone.

Your brothers and sisters in ASEAN stand with you. In responding to disasters, Southeast Asia has declared: One ASEAN, One Response. And we have done so.

This should be our rallying call, not only in times of disasters but, indeed, as we strive to move our region forward to genuine growth, inclusive development and one resilient ASEAN community.

Thank you.

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