

Presidential Communications Office

Presidential News Desk

JOINT PRESS STATEMENT
OF
PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
AND

PRIME MINISTER PETER O'NEILL OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

[Delivered at the Reception Hall, Malacañan Palace | 16 May 2018]

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: His Excellency, Hon. Prime Minister Peter O'Neill, distinguished members of the delegation from Papua New Guinea, colleagues in the Philippine government, ladies and gentlemen.

Good evening. I am pleased to welcome Prime Minister O'Neill and his delegation to the Philippines. It should be... well, this Official Visit is a testament of both our countries' commitment to further strengthen bilateral relations.

These high-level exchanges demonstrate the depth of our desire to bring our nations and peoples closer.

Indeed over the past four decades, we have seen our ties steadily grow.

What is different now is that the Philippines and Papua New Guinea want these ties to significantly broaden and deepen our concrete and mutually beneficial cooperation.

Prime Minister O'Neill's visit affords us a valuable opportunity to explore new areas of cooperation on shared interests.

In our bilateral meeting, we extensively discussed defense and security cooperation, trade and investment relations, agriculture cooperation, and people-to-people exchanges.

In the pursuit of greater peace, progress, and prosperity for our peoples, we have realized that we have to do more together to ensure what we want to achieve and the goals reached.

There must be translated into actions the sustained projects and tangible results that can be measured.

In this regard, we are pleased to have witnessed the signing of a Joint Declaration of Agricultural Cooperation with emphasis on rice production.

We have asked our relevant officials to negotiate and conclude at the soonest possible time an agreement that will bring our bilateral agriculture cooperation to the modern era, one that will truly be transformative and a hallmark of genuine partnership.

I look forward to working closely with Prime Minister O'Neill and actively engaging him in both bilateral and regional matters such as ASEAN Region Forum.

We recognized that both our countries need to actively contribute to discussions on promoting regional stability.

I congratulated Prime Minister O'Neill and expressed his full support for the Papua New Guinea's APEC chairmanship this year.

The Philippines is positive that under Prime Minister O'Neill's leadership, APEC will continue to be an important forum for ensuring sustained and inclusive economic growth and development in the region.

Later tonight, Prime Minister O'Neill will be my guest of honor at the state dinner.

It will also be an opportune time for our friends from Papua New Guinea to get to know their Philippine counterparts.

The Philippines and Papua New Guinea share a common vision for a progressive future.

Amid the challenges of our times, we have only --- have true friends to rely on.

Certainly, this Official Visit proves that Prime Minister O'Neill is one such leader, and for that, his visit will always be remembered.

PRIME MINISTER O'NEILL: Your Excellency President Duterte, thank you very much for the kind invitation for me and my delegation to visit you on this occasion and again thank the members of the Philippines government and the business community for the warm welcome they've extended to us.

Our two countries has a strong and cordial bilateral relationship since the first diplomatic relationship that was established in 1975, signed 43 years ago.

And I also expressed appreciation to the President for his expression of sympathies to the victims of the recent earthquake in my country.

And again I want to thank the contributions of the Filipino citizens who are in my country and of course the Ambassador for Philippines in my country, Philippines to Papua New Guinea, for the strong support that they have extended to our communities in the time of our need.

Today, we have discussed a range of issues, especially that will strengthen the bilateral relationship between our two countries and the need to continue to build on trade and investment between our two countries.

We have a very strong presence of the Filipino investment community and not only that but also Filipino workers who are providing good technical support and particularly in education and health in our country.

I appreciate the communiqué that we have signed today between our two ministers to advance again the agriculture relationship between our two countries, in particularly in production of the rice fields in our country where we need to ensure that there's food security for both Papua New Guinea and the Philippines.

We have agreed also to extend the cooperation in technical and development cooperation between our two countries where we want to see the technical skills and capacity of Filipinos who continue to build the economy to a very vibrant economy in the region so that they can also continue to train our people in our country.

We acknowledge that we need to continue to extend our people-to-people relationship and that is an indication of the growing relationship between our two countries and the freedoms and the lawful activities that we continue to enjoy as citizens of both countries.

I appreciate the President's confidence and the support that is extended in Papua New Guinea hosting the APEC meeting for the first time since been a member some 21 years ago.

It is a regional economic bloc, significantly important to both our countries and the 21 leaders of those APEC economies will be in Port Moresby in November 2018 and we will certainly welcome the President to be with us on that occasion.

Once again, let me express our appreciation Mr. President for your kind hospitality and the extension of a visit to your lovely country and we look forward to seeing you in Port Moresby.

Thank you very much.

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