

**Presidential Communications Operations Office
Presidential News Desk**

**INTERVENTION OF PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE FOR THE 33RD ASEAN
SUMMIT WORKING DINNER**

[Delivered at Suntec Singapore International Convention and Exhibition Center | 13 November 2018]

Your Majesty, Excellencies: I am pleased and honored to join you at this Summit.

I thank Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and the people of Singapore for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangements. I also take this opportunity to welcome back to the ASEAN family Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad.

We are grateful for Singapore's able Chairmanship of ASEAN, which has brought us closer to achieving a resilient and innovative community.

At the outset, allow me to welcome the launching and establishment of the ASEAN Prize. The Philippines is honored by the conferment of the premier award to Ms. Erlinda Uy Koe, whose work with ASEAN Society Philippines and ASEAN Autism Network has touched the lives of persons with autism and their families across the region.

As we strive to build a resilient and innovative ASEAN Community, we must never forget that ASEAN should continue to be a sharing and caring region.

The path towards the realization of ASEAN Vision 2025 and our efforts in achieving a rules-based, people-oriented, and people-centered ASEAN Community is constantly being tested. But we continue to prevail. In the wake of recent calamities, ASEAN Member States have provided full support for each other, showing ASEAN's resiliency and determination. Indeed, with One ASEAN, there is One Response.

Yet, the crucial task of sustaining innovative and inclusive growth remains. We must remain undeterred and focused. ASEAN must continue investing in itself.

For its part, the Philippines is accelerating infrastructure development to support our growing economy and address the demands of our increasing population and the challenges of rapid urbanization.

In the coming years, more cities are becoming involved in the ASEAN Smart Cities Network. We are pleased that the ASEAN Mayors' Forum will tackle the challenges of urbanization and develop ways to leverage technology to improve the quality of life for our peoples.

We must also invest in MSMEs, the backbone of our economies, by enabling them to participate in the global value chain and production networks.

Certainly, we have to invest in our people. The Philippines therefore supports the adoption and notation in this Summit of significant documents on migrant workers, persons with disabilities, green jobs for inclusive growth, climate change and biodiversity, among others.

Through the Declaration on the Culture of Prevention that we adopted last year in Manila, we hope to address the challenges that hamper sustainable social and human development in our region.

Amidst prevailing uncertainties in the global economy, we must continue supporting the rules-based multilateral trading system. Trade actions contrary to this benefit no one and only threaten the prospects of economic growth.

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership or RCEP, in this regard, is a centerpiece of ASEAN's external economic relations. We must therefore work towards the swift conclusion of RCEP negotiations.

ASEAN still faces many threats, including non-traditional security challenges that divide our communities, destroy families, and hold back economic growth. These challenges include terrorism, violent extremism, radicalization, piracy and armed robbery at sea, and trafficking of persons and illicit drugs.

We need to intensify cooperation and implement previously agreed-upon action plans if we are to address these issues and realize a more peaceful, stable and secure region.

The Philippines is prepared to do its part. In our role as Country Coordinator of ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations until 2021, we are committed to work with all concerned parties in the substantive negotiations and early conclusion of an effective Code of Conduct.

We likewise reaffirm our commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea. This includes the peaceful settlement of disputes, the exercise of self-restraint, and the freedom of navigation and overflight in accordance with international law, especially the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The Philippines welcomes positive developments in recent months in the Korean Peninsula. We urge concerned parties to continue working towards the realization of lasting peace and stability, and reiterate our support for the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the Peninsula.

Finally, we support ASEAN's role in providing humanitarian assistance to all affected communities in the Rakhine State. We must together address the root causes and create a conducive environment for affected communities to rebuild their lives.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, Your Majesty, and Excellencies, for your kind attention.

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