

**Presidential Communications Operations Office  
Presidential News Desk**

**INTERVENTION OF PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE FOR THE 13TH BRUNEI-  
INDONESIA-MALAYSIA-PHILIPPINES EAST ASEAN GROWTH AREA (BIMP-EAGA)  
SUMMIT**

[Athenee Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand | 23 June 2019]

Your Majesty, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.

I am happy to join you in this reunion of old friends. It has been 25 years since we established BIMP-EAGA. I come from Mindanao and I am encouraged by the achievements we have made to accelerate economic growth in our sub-region.

We must continue to take charge of the future direction of our cooperation so that the next 25 years will be even more beneficial to our peoples.

To make BIMP-EAGA more responsive and resilient to our dynamic regional and global environment, we must build a fully-functioning secretariat.

We should take practical steps towards the establishment of the BIMP-EAGA [Facilitation] Centre.

Ensuring food security and increasing economic opportunities for our farmers and fisherfolk should be the core interests of our cooperation.

Let us therefore work together to realize our Food Basket Strategy, maximizing the comparative advantages of our local economies.

We should also work together to develop our halal industries to become more competitive in the billion dollar global halal market.

We must therefore enhance sub-regional trade through improvements in physical connectivity. The Philippines and Indonesia launched a roll-on, roll-off service in 2017. We would like to have similar arrangements with Malaysia and Brunei.

We must ensure the full and timely implementation of the Priority Infrastructure Projects under the BIMP-EAGA Vision 2025, where 16 percent of the 63 identified projects have already been completed.

To this end, I earnestly ask His Excellency the Prime Minister of Malaysia for our two countries to fast track negotiations on the barter trade system as this promises livelihood and income to small communities along border areas.

The institutionalization of the barter trade is an investment for peace and for inclusive, equitable, sustainable development, especially in the newly established Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. It will help address endemic poverty and avoid triggers of instability and insecurity in these porous areas of the Bangsamoro region.

I also strongly encourage Brunei, Indonesia, and Malaysia to hasten the adoption of a common set of standards on the operation of the non-convention ships.

There is also an urgent need to increase air linkages for greater people mobility and cross-[border] trade. Airline companies should also be given strong policy support to sustain commercial operations. At the same time, we must ensure that our borders are secure to counter the growing threat of terrorism and proliferation of illegal drugs.

The Philippines likewise commits to deeper cooperation on maritime security.

Our nations are bound by common cultural ties. We must nurture our special bonds [by] supporting socio-cultural activities, such as the BIMP-EAGA Friendship Games and the Budayaw Festival.

In closing, I join you all in adopting the Joint Statement of the 13th Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth [Area] Summit.

Let us renew our commitment to achieving a people-centered community, where we all enjoy the benefits of a greater peace, stability, and prosperity.

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