

**Presidential Communications Office**

**Presidential News Desk**

**TOAST REMARKS  
OF  
PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE  
AND  
PRIME MINISTER PETER O'NEILL OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA  
DURING THE OFFICIAL DINNER  
IN MALACAÑAN**

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

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** Your Excellency, the Honorable Prime Minister Peter O'Neill, distinguished members of the Papua New Guinea delegation, members of the diplomatic corps, ladies and gentlemen.

I am pleased to host this dinner in honor of a true friend of the Philippines --- Prime Minister Peter O'Neill.

I first met the Prime Minister in Da Nang at the sidelines of the APEC Summit in 2017.

Back then, our discussions centered on how we could move the relations between the Philippines and Papua New Guinea to a higher level.

This evening, we fulfill that agreement by writing a new chapter in the joint history of the Philippines and Papua New Guinea.

With more than a hundred years of interaction and exchange began by the Filipino missionaries in the late 1800s, and with more than four decades of formal diplomatic relations between our nations, we are now writing a new narrative in our ties as we chart destiny as free and sovereign states.

Prime Minister O'Neill has made it clear: He is working hard to attain greater peace, progress and prosperity for his people. I want the same for the Filipino nation.

Today, in our meeting, I see friendship and cooperation being deepened by a common commitment towards a future where prosperity is shared and the comfort and security of our peoples are assured.

We agreed to work together on matters of mutual interest, particularly in reinvigorating trade and investment, as well as strengthening the very important agricultural and fisheries sectors.

Tonight, we strengthen the foundations of our mutual respect and understanding, not only at the official level but more at the personal level.

The 35,000 Filipinos in Papua New Guinea and the hundreds of Papua New Guinea citizens studying in the Philippines are living bridges of friendship that we intend to strengthen and nurture in the years to come.

The Philippines will further deepen our engagement with Papua New Guinea as we fully support your Chairmanship, Prime Minister O'Neill and we truly --- I'm confident that under your leadership, we can articulate and uphold our common desire to provide comfortable and dignified life for our peoples.

I am truly honored to host this evening's occasion as we mark this important milestone with Your Excellency's first Official Visit to the Philippines.

Today, we reaffirm the strength of bond and we celebrate this opportunity to build a brighter future together.

On that note, I would like to propose a toast:

To Her Majesty The Queen and Head of State of Papua New Guinea; to the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Mr. Peter O'Neill; and to the enduring friendship between the Independent State of Papua New Guinea and the Republic of the Philippines.

Mabuhay!

**PRIME MINISTER O'NEILL:** Thank you, Your Excellency President Duterte. Members of the diplomatic corps, members of the Philippines government, members of the business community, and friends of Papua New Guinea.

Thank you very much for having us here tonight and honoring us with this official dinner on behalf of our delegation by the President of the Philippines.

Papua New Guinea and Philippines has enjoyed a very strong and cordial relationship for over 43 years since the establishment of diplomatic and bilateral relationship between our two nations.

As the President correctly stated, but our relationship between our two communities and countries have been there for many hundreds of years.

Early 1800s, many of your missionaries and traders were doing trading with our country during that period. We are here today, this official visit, trying to strengthen that relationship between our two countries.

Ours is one that's been peaceful and growing from strength to strength. We enjoyed the continued and strong business investment and trade between our two countries and of course, the people-to-people relations that we enjoy today.

Compared to Philippines, ours is a small country of eight million people but in the Pacific, we are the biggest country. We are the biggest economy. We have the huge potential.

Even though we have transitioned from our traditional way of life to a modern economy and modern society, in merely 43 years, I think there is a lot to be learned from the Filipino community and Philippines as a country.

Many of your people work and live among us and I believe many of them want to continue to do so. They are peace-loving people. They are certainly have no trouble living among Papua New Guineans.

Our agreements today with the Philippines government in extending opportunities for both countries, particularly in the development of agriculture where we have huge potential with a small population and a large land mass, there is enough to provide food security for both countries --- both Papua New Guinea and Philippines.

We have opportunities in other sectors like fisheries and in tourism and many small to medium enterprises where we know Philippines has got a huge experience and of talent and the technical knowledge in developing these sectors.

We can be --- opportunity to take advantage of these opportunities where we can continue to provide long-term supply lines to the Asia and the Pacific as a region.

In November [2018], we will be hosting --- Papua New Guinea will be hosting the APEC Leaders' Meeting where we will be very much welcoming your beloved President to our land.

We look forward to many of you business leaders and government officials accompanying him during the visit. Then you will truly appreciate the opportunities that are there. And the business community and of course, the Filipino community will be able to welcome you and honor your presence in our country.

Being a member of the APEC Community is one that provides opportunities for both countries, we are very much appreciative of the growth that economy of Philippines is enjoying today.

Over the last 16 years in our own country in Papua New Guinea, we have enjoyed an average of six percent per annum over that period which with world-class projects now coming along the way over the next few years, I know that in the long term, we will continue to help the economy even growing at those rates for the long-term.

That is why we invite the Filipino government and of course business community especially to come and join us in Papua New Guinea so that our two countries can enjoy the prosperity and the good relations that we continue to enjoy.

With those few words, Mr. President, thank you once again for the kind invitation that you extended to me in Da Nang, Viet Nam and thank you very much for hosting this dinner tonight.

And God bless Philippines. God bless Papua New Guinea.

And again let me propose a toast to our both countries and especially to His Excellency President Duterte, for his leadership and to the people of Philippines and to Papua New Guinea.

Thank you.

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