

Presidential Communications Operations Office

Presidential News Desk

**OPENING STATEMENTS OF
PHILIPPINE PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
AND
MALAYSIAN PRIME MINISTER MAHATHIR MOHAMAD
DURING THE EXPANDED BILATERAL MEETING**

[Aguinaldo State Dining Room, Malacañan Palace | 07 March 2019]

PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE: Welcome back to Manila Mr. Prime Minister. Thank you for accepting my invitation to visit my country as soon after my own visit in Kuala Lumpur last year.

This is a valuable opportunity to renew and reaffirm valued relations that must continue to grow in strength in the coming years.

With the Philippines and Malaysia staying on track as part of the growth engines of Asia and the world, broadening our engagement across many fields will be crucial for the continued benefit of our nations and people.

I look forward to productive discussions on matters of mutual interest and concern. It is my hope that we will continue to open up new areas of cooperation, more meaningful partnership. I am keen to listen to and reflect upon the Prime Minister's thoughts and development between the Philippines and Malaysia as well as in the region.

May I now invite his Excellency.

PRIME MINISTER MAHATHIR MOHAMAD: President, members of the Philippine government, I would like to once again thank you very much for inviting me to visit the Philippines and for the reception given to me and my delegation, especially my wife.

And we are very gladly to again visit the Philippines, because as you know we belong to a certain regional group. But although we belong to a regional group, it is only after we became independent that we know that there are countries within the group.

We shall have the capacity to help each other by working together. So my visit is of course in order to strengthen the relationship between Malaysia and the Philippines and also of course to promote the cause of ASEAN.

I hope that during the course of this visit we will be able to discuss issues and areas where we can work together and help each other. In particular, of course we are very gratified to be congratulating you on the peace that has been achieved in Southern Philippines.

This is a problem that has lasted, I think, from the Spanish period. But it has taken centuries even for proper conclusion to be achieved. And the conclusion there must be sought of course is that of achieving peace in the nation of the Philippines.

This is a country of 7,000 islands divided by the seas but it is still one nation. And I think the people of the Philippines deserve to have a good system of government that caters to the needs and visions of all its people.

And in achieving peace, you have shown your generosity in not...

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