

**Presidential Communications Operations Office  
Presidential News Desk**

**INTERVENTION OF PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE DURING THE 34<sup>TH</sup> ASEAN  
SUMMIT (PLENARY)**

[Athenee Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand | 22 June 2019]

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Your Majesty, Excellencies,

Foremost, let me congratulate the King on his coronation and the Prime Minister for his election and President Widodo of Indonesia on his victory.

Thailand's theme of "Advancing Partnership for Sustainability" resonates with all of us as it articulates our shared vision for a people-centered and people-oriented ASEAN Community.

We are encouraged by progress in the work of various ASEAN sectoral bodies and organs, as reported by the ASEAN Secretary General.

Over the past five decades, we have been building a stronger ASEAN. We showed the world that we can be masters of our region's destiny.

Our cooperation has brought greater peace and stability and progress to our peoples for decades. ASEAN has taken its rightful place – the driver's seat – in key regional mechanisms for security, stability, and sustainable development.

But challenges remain.

The trade war between the United States and China is creating uncertainty. It is taking a toll on global growth. And it could hinder the ongoing processes of economic integration.

The US and China must both take the high road and resolve their differences before the situation spirals out of control. And we in ASEAN must strengthen our support for a rules-based and open multilateral trading system.

We must reject the zero-sum approach to international economic relations. In pursuit of growth, we should be partners not competitors. The Philippines therefore supports the ASEAN Single Window – a concrete initiative towards a seamless cross-border trade.

Terrorism, violent extremism and transnational crimes continue to threaten our security. They divide our communities, destroy families, and undermine the growth we fought hard to achieve.

Illegal drugs, in particular, corrode the very fabric of our societies. We must redouble our collective efforts to counter these threats effectively and with finality.

Natural disasters occur more frequently and at an intensity unseen before – be it typhoon, drought, earthquake, landslide or volcanic eruption. The cost is horrendous, especially for us in Southeast Asia: Displacement, destruction, and death. Real lives hang in the balance.

We must hold countries most responsible for climate change to account, to answer. We must adapt and build our resilience by advancing initiatives that care for the people and the environment.

Excellencies, we all aspire for inclusive, equitable, and sustainable development. If we are to achieve this, we have to invest in our greatest resource – our people. To this end, the Philippines supports the establishment of an ASEAN Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development Council.

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises or MSMEs are the backbone of ASEAN economies. Let us help MSMEs harness digital technology so they can play a bigger role in the global value chain. We need to recognize that MSMEs can be powerful engines of growth and job creation in our region.

Cutting-edge [technological] breakthroughs are changing our societies in ways we have yet to fully understand. They empower people. But they also widen existing divisions.

Let us maximize the benefits of the unfolding Fourth Industrial Revolution to accelerate growth, alleviate poverty, and bridge socio-economic gaps.

To achieve our vision of a well-integrated ASEAN, we must build more [resilient] infrastructure, sustainable cities, and innovative systems.

Equally important, we must promote greater people-to-people connectivity in the region. We must improve on the mobility of our tourists, students, and skilled workers to realize our vision of one ASEAN community.

As we facilitate people's mobility, it is imperative that we promote and protect their rights, especially those who are vulnerable. Let us, therefore, implement more effectively ASEAN instruments that combat human trafficking and promote the rights of migrants and persons with disabilities.

In support of our collective goals for the region, the Philippines joins other ASEAN Member States in adopting four important documents: The ASEAN Leaders' Vision Statement on Partnership for Sustainability, the ASEAN Leaders' Statement on the ASEAN Cultural Year 2019, the Bangkok Declaration [on] Combating Marine Debris in ASEAN Region, and the ASEAN Indo-Pacific Outlook.

Excellencies, we have indeed made significant strides in our community building efforts. But we face sobering realities that challenge our established order.

Now more than ever, the ASEAN has to provide a new vision for our region. It has to re-assert itself at the center of an evolving regional architecture.

Amidst sweeping [changes] in the region and beyond, ASEAN must rise up to the challenges. ASEAN must do more to bring positive change to the lives of its [peoples].

Thank you.

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