

Presidential Communications Operations Office

Presidential News Desk

JOINT PRESS STATEMENT
OF
MALAYSIAN PRIME MINISTER MAHATHIR MOHAMAD
DURING HIS OFFICIAL VISIT

[Reception Hall, Malacañan Palace | 07 March 2019]

Thank you, Mr. President.

Members of the Philippines government and the Malaysian government, members of the press.

I am very pleased and honored with the hospitality that His Excellency President Rodrigo Duterte and the government of the Republic of the Philippines extended to me and my delegation throughout this visit to Manila.

The President and I had a very productive discussion this afternoon. We discussed a wide range of issues on bilateral relations between Malaysia and the Philippines as well as regional and international issues of mutual concern.

We have very strong and close ties within our two countries at every level. I fully support the theme "Partners for Progress, Brothers for Peace" for this visit.

Given the vast economic potential of this area, I believe with the establishment of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao or BARMM, we have to boost economic ties between both countries. I therefore assured Mr. President of Malaysia's desire to continue to be of help in the development of Mindanao.

I congratulated President Duterte on the success of the ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law and the appointment of members into the Bangsamoro Transition Authority. I look forward to the smooth transition of the ARMM through the interim government of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao.

We also discussed on the economic matters, the trade between both countries are increasing but they are largely in favor of Malaysia. I believe there is still room for improvement and from my meeting with Mr. President, we would encourage private sectors from both countries to explore opportunities of collaboration and venture in new cooperation and investments.

One of the main priority areas where cooperation could be exerted is the --- to enhance connectivity which is vital to promoting economic development.

Malaysia and the Philippines have been actively involved in the BIMP-EAGA and could use this platform to assist the Mindanao Development Authority.

The Philippines is ranked as Malaysia's 15th largest trading partner globally and fourth largest trading partner among ASEAN member countries.

The President and I strongly believe that trade and investment through between the two countries could be further strengthened in the coming years.

We had the opportunity to apprise ourselves with the progress in the present areas of tourism, health and education including the investment of our private sectors.

I look forward to the finalization and the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the government of Malaysia and the government of the Republic of the Philippines on cooperation in the field of health.

I highlighted that Malaysia has been a favorite healthcare destination for the Philippines. The number of patients from the Philippines seeking treatment in Malaysia has been increasing over the years.

The President and I also emphasized on the importance of education. We discussed programs for teachers and students in Madrasahs, especially in Mindanao.

The President and I also talked about security matters. Malaysia is committed to take the necessary steps to address the serious issue of terrorism and violent extremism through the Trilateral Cooperation Agreement.

Under this framework, Malaysia and the Philippines together with Indonesia have agreed to undertake unilateral maritime and air patrols to tackle the growing security challenges.

We also exchanged views on a number of regional and international issues of mutual interests, such as the South China Sea and cooperation within ASEAN.

I thank you.

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