

**Presidential Communications Operations Office
Presidential News Desk**

**STATEMENT OF
PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
DURING THE JOINT PRESS EVENT WITH JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER
ABE SHINZO**

[Delivered at the Prime Minister's Office, Asakasa State Guest House in
Tokyo, Japan | 31 May 2019]

Good evening.

I am pleased to be back in Tokyo, and I am honored to return to Japan at a most auspicious time --- the dawn of the new Imperial era.

On behalf of the Filipino people, I convey deepest respect and appreciation to His Majesty Emperor Emeritus Akihito.

Emperor Emeritus Akihito's reign was defined by amity with all nations and peoples. For the Philippines, in particular, that legacy is that of a meaningful friendship with special significance.

With the accession of His Majesty Emperor Naruhito, there is renewed confidence that Japan's ties with the Philippines – and indeed with the rest of the world – will be characterized by beautiful harmony.

Since my last visit in 2017, there has been a marked increase in Philippines-Japanese engagements across the full spectrum of our relations.

This is unprecedented. And it must be sustained.

My summit meeting with [Prime] Minister Shinzo Abe this evening, our seventh since 2016, was an opportunity to ensure that Philippines-Japan ties will continue to grow from strength to greater strength.

After all, we are committed to the same Strategic Partnership.

We discussed modalities for greater cooperation in upgrading the Philippines' defense capabilities, including in maritime security and maritime domain awareness.

We explored opportunities to tap our demographic complementarity to drive growth in our economies, including the possibility of Japan opening its doors to foreign skilled workers.

And I am pleased with the growing interest and confidence in the Philippines as a preferred trade and investment destination by Japanese businesses.

I welcomed Japan's reaffirmation of support for my government's flagship *Build, Build, Build* [program].

Japan's comprehensive development assistance is nothing short of exemplary in quality and concessionality. It is the gold standard for the Philippines' development cooperation with partner countries.

I am grateful for Japan's fresh commitment of around 25 billion yen for the development of Mindanao's road network, vocational training facilities and equipment, and other projects.

I thanked Prime Minister Abe for the importance his government attaches to the Mindanao and its commitment to achieve just and lasting peace and a sustainable development for the people of Mindanao.

With the world undergoing profound transformations brought by power shifts, rapid globalization, and technological advancement, we need to find a new equilibrium.

Our region must be able to maintain its gains so that we can achieve the promise of an Asian century.

We discussed challenges to regional maritime security, non-traditional threats, ongoing efforts to secure peace in the Korean Peninsula, and supporting free trade, and advancing the rule of law.

Today, Prime Minister Abe and I have rededicated ourselves to the common vision of a stable, free, and prosperous Asian region.

Nothing can less be expected when friends closer than brothers meet.

Thank you.

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