

## **Presidential Communications Operations Office**

### **Presidential News Desk**

#### **JOINT PRESS STATEMENT OF SINGAPORE PRESIDENT HALIMAH YACOB**

[Delivered at the Reception Hall, Malacañan Palace, Manila | 09 September 2019]

I would like to take this opportunity to thank President Rodrigo Duterte and his Government for the warm hospitality extended to me and the Singapore delegation. I'm very happy to be on a State Visit to the Philippines.

The visit is especially timely since Singapore and the Philippines are commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our diplomatic ties this year.

In our meeting earlier meeting today, President Duterte and I had a good discussion on a wide range of issues. We reaffirm the strong ties between our two countries and took stock of our bilateral cooperation. Our close collaboration between our two countries over many years has borne fruitful partnerships.

President Duterte and I witnessed the exchange of eight MOUs. These MOUs spend many salient areas of mutual interest such as infrastructure development, sustainable urban solutions like water resource management, skills training and education cooperation in preparation for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, agri-trade, arts and culture, and data protection.

The economic ties between our two countries are strong and robust. But President Duterte and I agreed that we can do even more together. There is room to further boost trade and investment flows.

We hope to make progress on updating the Singapore-Philippines avoidance of Double Taxation Agreement and the expansion of the Bilateral Air Transport Agreement, which will increase connectivity and create more opportunities for collaboration and growth.

The 14<sup>th</sup> Philippines–Singapore Business Council Meeting that will be held tomorrow is another valuable platform for business leaders from both sides to connect, exchange ideas, and strengthen economic links.

Singapore and the Philippines also enjoy close people to people ties. There are more than 200,000 Filipinos living, working, and studying in Singapore.

I told President Duterte that we deeply appreciate the contributions of the Filipino community to Singapore's society and economy.

Likewise, I am glad that we have a very vibrant Singaporean community in the Philippines. I will be meeting some of them later this week. Many of whom are here for humanitarian and inter-faith work.

On Wednesday, we will also be having a dialogue with some youth at Ateneo de Davao University to exchange ideas on how we can foster inter-faith harmony and social cohesion.

These exchanges between our peoples will continue to strengthen the bonds of friendship and deepen mutual understanding between our two countries.

In our meeting, President Duterte and I also discussed developments in ASEAN. Singapore and the Philippines shared a common aspiration for lasting peace and prosperity in the region.

We will work closely together in ASEAN to promote continued dialogue so as to build a strong, united, and integrated ASEAN community.

In closing, let me once again thank President Duterte and his officials for the very lovely arrangement for this State Visit.

I look forward to the upcoming meaningful interactions with our Philippine friends, including Mayor of Davao City Sara Duterte, over the next few days.

There is a lot that we can do together, both bilaterally and at multilateral fora. And I hope this visit can kickstart some of these new chapter of areas --- these new areas of cooperation.

I am confident that the next chapter of Singapore-Philippines relations will be marked by deeper friendships and closer collaboration between our peoples and our two countries.

Thank you.

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