



## Office of the President of the Philippines

### STATEMENT

#### Participation of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte in the ASEAN-China Special Summit to Commemorate the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Dialogue Relations 22 November 2021

President Rodrigo Roa Duterte joined his counterparts from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the People's Republic of China in a productive discussion at the ASEAN-China Special Summit to Commemorate the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Dialogue Relations via video conference on November 22, 2021.

President Duterte underlined the depth and breadth of the 30-year partnership between ASEAN and China, adding that *"China deserves its status as ASEAN's Comprehensive Strategic Partner"*.

He noted China's timely assistance to ASEAN's COVID-19 pandemic response efforts, highlighting that China was the first Dialogue Partner ASEAN engaged when the pandemic broke out and the first to provide life-saving vaccines and medical supplies.

President Duterte said that enhanced multilateralism and connectivity will be the drivers of inclusive and comprehensive recovery. He welcomed China's ratification of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

Citing the recently concluded 26<sup>th</sup> UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties, the President reiterated the Philippines' call for urgent climate action anchored on the principles of justice and fairness.

President Duterte pushed for the protection and preservation of biodiversity and the marine environment through sustained cooperation by supporting the work of the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity hosted by the Philippines, among others.

The President raised the South China Sea issue as a strategic challenge that cannot be solved by force, calling on stakeholders to exercise utmost self-restraint, avoid the escalation of tensions and work towards the peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law.

*"We abhor the recent event in the Ayungin Shoal and view with grave concern other similar developments. This does not speak well of the relations between our nations and our partnership,"* President Duterte stated.

He further said that *“UNCLOS and the 2016 Arbitral Award provide legal clarity ...pointing us to a just and fair solution to our disputes. We must fully utilize these legal tools to ensure that the South China Sea remains a sea of peace, stability and prosperity.”*

President Duterte likewise told China to remain committed to the conclusion of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea.

*“There is simply no other way out of this colossal problem but the rule of law,”* the President said.

Joining the President during the Summit were Secretary of Foreign Affairs Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr., Secretary of Trade and Industry Ramon M. Lopez, Presidential Assistant on Foreign Affairs Robert E.A. Borje, Social Welfare and Development Undersecretary Luzviminda Ilagan, Foreign Affairs Assistant Secretary Daniel Espiritu, Foreign Affairs Assistant Secretary Nathaniel Imperial and Trade and Industry Assistant Secretary Allan Gepty. **END**