

Office of the Press Secretary
Presidential News Desk

**SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.
DURING THE STATE LUNCHEON**

[Delivered at The Istana, Singapore | 07 September 2022

Her Excellency, Madame President Halimah Yacob; Mr. Mohammed Abdullah Alhabshee; ministers and officials from the Republic of Singapore; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

At the outset, I would like to give my thanks to all the members of the Singaporean government and of course also the people of Singapore for the kindnesses that you have shown us in this brief visit that we come this time to Singapore. And once again, it attests to the longstanding relationship between our two peoples.

When I received the invitation to undertake a state visit to Singapore, a fellow ASEAN founding member and one of our closest and oldest friends in the region, I did not hesitate. Our bilateral relations have grown from strength to strength over the years.

And this should not be a surprise because as Madame President has mentioned, we are partners of longstanding. The official relationship between Singapore and the Philippines started in 1969 but the cultural, ethnic, and trade connections have gone back perhaps many millennia. And this—again this friendship has manifested itself in unique way as this morning we were invited to the Botanical Gardens of Singapore.

And my wife and I, the First Lady and I, were given the singular pleasure and honor of having an orchid named after us. I can say--*[applause]* I can say that I have been lucky to be a recipient of many honors of different sorts around the world. But never have I had a beautiful, such a beautiful orchid named after myself and the First Lady, thank you very much. *[applause]*

Singapore's developed economy besides—Singapore's developed economy presents a viable opportunity and has presented that opportunity for thousands of Filipinos, 200,000 now who have chosen to make their lives in Singapore to the betterment of themselves, or their families, and also of the Philippines.

It serves as a second home to them now. And it is my pleasure to be able to share with you the comments that I have heard from our Filipino nationals here in Singapore. And they are as a group, I can say they are happy and content with their decision to come to Singapore to make their lives here with you.

Because the Singaporeans have been open and warm in the relations with our Filipino workers here in Singapore. And for that, once again, I thank the Singaporean government and I thank the Singaporean people.

As a strong partner at the bilateral and regional levels, the context of our larger ASEAN community, Singapore is certainly part of our journey. We see our future, of the Philippines as being-- as having Singapore beside us, forging ahead to the future. Singapore—as part of our

journey in maintaining political stability and economic prosperity in the region, we are one with you in proving to the world that the strength of a country is not in its size, but in the quality of the lives and the ties that it forges with the members of the community of nations guided by the tenets of sovereign equality and independence.

On a historical and slightly personal note, my relations with Prime Minister Lee has special historic resonance. I remember very well that in the discussions I was still a young boy but always listening and trying to—trying to find out what was going on in my father's office. I remember listening to him speaking on the telephone with then prime minister Lee Kuan Yew and they were talking about the formation of ASEAN. And as heads of their respective countries back then they laid the groundwork for the ASEAN in 1967. What used to be a fledgling idea has now evolved into a dynamic and truly relevant ASEAN community.

As a matter of fact, we can say that ASEAN has grown into the strongest, most viable political aggrupation in our region. We are therefore optimistic that Philippine-Singapore relations both bilaterally and within ASEAN, and within the ASEAN context will continue to grow and become even stronger in the years ahead.

I look forward to closer ties and stronger ties between our two countries. Our candid exchange of views, constructive discussions in the governments that were signed this morning have given us renewed optimism for an even brighter future. And so on this, I invite you now to rise and to join me as we toast to the continued success and prosperity of the Republic of Singapore, the enduring friendship between the Philippines and Singapore spanning 53 years of strong and vibrant relation.

And the continued good health of Her Excellency President Halimah Yacob and His Excellency Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, cheers, mabuhay po kayong lahat!

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