

**JOINT PRESS STATEMENT BY**  
**PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.**

**AND**

**MALAYSIAN PRIME MINISTER DATO' SERI ANWAR IBRAHIM**

[Delivered at the President's Hall of the Malacañan Palace in Manila | 01  
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**PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.:** Your Excellency Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim; Honored Members of the Malaysian and Philippine Delegations; Members of the Press Corps; ladies and gentlemen, good evening.

Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim and I had a cordial and productive discussion on Philippines-Malaysia bilateral cooperation, reaffirming our two countries' desire to revitalize relations as we traverse past the pandemic then through the years towards a new normal.

As immediate neighbors, the Philippines and Malaysia recognize the importance of maintaining peace and security in our region.

As such, we agreed to continue our cooperation on political and security matters, rekindling the Joint Commission Meetings and joint initiatives to combat transnational crime and terrorism.

With the ongoing impacts of the pandemic and geopolitical upheavals challenging our national economies and the prospects of a global recovery, we agreed to reinvigorate trade and investment exchanges, with a special focus on the *halal* industry, agriculture and food security, and the digital economy.

Our shared historic roots are deep, and our cultures enjoy natural affinity to one another.

As such, we spoke of further deepening our people-to-people ties through continued cultural exchanges and tourism. I acknowledged the role of the Filipino diaspora in Malaysia and their contribution to both our economies.

As founding members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA), the Philippines and Malaysia have ASEAN Centrality embedded into our regional outlook. We have thus resolved to support development and peace-building initiatives within this group, including the importance of achieving a resolution to the situation in Myanmar.

We commended the progress made towards achieving sustainable and inclusive peace in Mindanao. It is the culmination of years of effort and sincerity amongst all parties, which will soon realize the dividends of peace.

We have recognized the great contribution that Malaysia has made to the peace process in southern Philippines. And we hope that this support that they have shown over the past few years will continue and will continue to contribute to the success of the peace process and the establishment of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region.

I therefore invited Malaysia to continue supporting the Philippine government's efforts to bring development and enhancement to the livelihood of Mindanaoans.

Once again, I thank Prime Minister Anwar for coming to the Philippines, the first Head of Government I have had the pleasure of receiving during my administration.

Your visit is a testament to our enduring friendship as ASEAN brothers, who share the same vision of prosperity and of peace.

**MALAYSIAN PRIME MINISTER DATO' SERI ANWAR IBRAHIM:** Thank you, Mr. President. On behalf of Azizah and the delegation, let me express my profound thanks and gratitude for the warm welcome and I believe and concur what you have expressed the need to -- not only to reaffirm our commitment to work together but to enhance Malaysia and Philippine relations.

Guided by shared interest, multidimensional bilateral cooperation and vibrant people-to-people interaction, President Marcos Jr. let me assure you that the new administration in Malaysia will be more than happy to further enhance this collaboration.

Our bilateral cooperation is multisectoral covering trade and investment, education, health, agriculture, health, tourism, and culture. And I have

alluded to earlier how our first generation of Malaysian professionals benefitted immensely from the work at Los Baños and some of the known centers of learning in the Philippines.

Our defense and security ties are also strong and growing. We share common borders and to an extent quite porous. Therefore, the collaboration needs to be further enhanced.

We agreed to resume the 8<sup>th</sup> Joint Commission Meeting to be led by both foreign ministers this year at a mutually convenient date. It's our turn to host this meeting and I have advised the colleagues in the Foreign Ministry to facilitate and accelerate this process.

We also discussed areas for further collaboration – new and important sectors such as *halal* industry, food security which you have placed so much importance and have actively taken impressive strides in this direction, digital economy, and among the key areas that I proposed as potential cooperation.

The President and I also agreed that both countries should intensify efforts to increase the volume of trade and investments. We had a very good beginning but there is no excuse why we can't further increase both trade and investment. That would be of tremendous benefit to both our countries.

We also agreed that we should deepen the existing strong people-to-people ties through closer cultural and tourism collaboration, education, and sports. Malaysia stands ready to explore potential new collaboration with the Philippines in this regard.

Now the peace process in Mindanao, I must express again my profound thanks and gratitude. This has been a century-long contentious issues that invariably affect the region and in particular Malaysia too.

And under your leadership President, you have seen great strides in this direction. And I think it's only our duty as a good neighbor to support and facilitate the process and I stand guided whatever things need to be done at the bilateral, multilateral level to support this endeavor. It has to succeed in the interest of the Philippines and Malaysia and the region and then utilize this enormous potential to the benefit of our people.

Malaysia will also continue to offer assistance to the Bangsamoro people through various capacity-building programs including through our Malaysia Technical Cooperation Program.

In my meeting with the President, I have asked the Philippines' assistance and cooperation to expedite the commutation of nationals so that they can be repatriated to the Philippines in a timely manner. And I am pleased that - their willingness to facilitate this arrangement in a mutually agreed fashion.

We also reiterated our commitment to continue supporting and enhancing cooperation with the BIMP-EAGA including hosting the Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines Facilitation Center.

I did express my concern about the contentious unresolved Myanmar issue which is affecting Malaysia adversely due to the huge number of refugees exceeding 200,000 people now in Malaysia.

Now the President in his wisdom has reiterated the need for the Five-Point Consensus but I would certainly suggest with his experience of wisdom to explore new areas how Myanmar junta can be persuaded to work and collaborate as a team within ASEAN and resolve the outstanding issues which cannot be considered as purely internal because it's affecting the security and welfare of the region.

We did discuss the South China issue and I shared President Marcos Jr.'s concern that due to the complexity and sensitivity of the issue, we should try and engage and take the position at a multilateral level between ASEAN so that we have a comprehensive approach and achieve an amicable resolution to this outstanding problem.

Maraming salamat po, Mr. President. I am extremely pleased. I must reiterate again that I was first here in Malacañan Palace when President Marcos was the President, as the young Minister of Agriculture, and how pleased I am to be back here with Marcos Jr. Bongbong to be there.

And thank you very much for this hospitality. And I'm of course deeply touched by your kind words and support. Thank you. *[applause]*

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