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**JOINT PRESS STATEMENT BY
PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.
AND
CZECH PRIME MINISTER PETR FIALA**

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PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.: To the members of the press; ladies and gentlemen, all the distinguished guests who are here with us today.

I am honored to stand before you today alongside Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala to announce the successful conclusion of our bilateral meeting in Manila. This meeting marks an important milestone in the 50 years of diplomatic ties between the Czech Republic and the Philippines. And as we celebrate our anniversary of bilateral relationship, this makes our discussions even more significant.

During this meeting, Prime Minister Fiala and I discussed a range of issues of mutual interest, including defense cooperation, trade and investment, university-to-university linkages, and labor cooperation. We also exchanged views on regional and international issues of common concern.

I express our commitment to strengthening the bilateral relationship between our two countries. We recognize the importance of building on the existing areas of cooperation and exploring new opportunities for collaboration.

I also emphasized the Philippines' strategic location in Southeast Asia and its potential as a gateway to the region, to ASEAN, to the Asia-Pacific.

We shared positive developments in the Philippine economy, including our

high GDP growth rate and strong economic outlook, in context of a difficult and volatile world economic situation.

We had a very interesting exchange of views regarding regional and international issues, including the West Philippine Sea and Cross Strait Relations and the war in Ukraine, amongst others. We both emphasized our countries' shared commitment to democracy, to human rights, and the rule of law.

I look forward to the continued strengthening of the bilateral relationship between the Philippines and the Czech Republic in the years to come.

Thank you.

CZECH PRIME MINISTER PETR FIALA: Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. Dear Mr. President, thank you once again for your invitation to Manila.

I'm very pleased to be the first head of government from Europe who is visiting the Philippines since your election. Our countries are celebrating 50 years of diplomatic relations but our connection is much longer.

Jose Rizal and Czech Professor Ferdinand Blumentritt, they're friends long before that. Our soldiers also defended Manila side-by-side during the Second World War.

And I'm proud that the Czech people have the Philippines win their freedom.

The Philippines are a close partner of the EU and the Czech Republic. ASEAN and the EU are natural allies. I am glad that we are working together and our cooperation is stronger than ever.

Philippines is the starting point of my 10-day Asian tour. It shows that your country and your region are very important for the Czech Republic.

Ladies and gentlemen, I met President Marcos today. We talked about areas where our countries should cooperate more. I have delegation of Czech businessmen with me here in Philippines. We hope that our visit will be a new start for successful cooperation between our companies.

Our companies offer solutions in many fields, many areas, agriculture, aviation, transportation, or space technologies. Defense and security cooperation is very important in our relations.

I fully support the talks about [inaudible] transport aircrafts and other projects in aviation sector.

Our company Česká zbrojovka offers extensive modernization to the Philippine Armed Forces. This project also includes transfer of technology.

I am glad that we are cooperating into area of agriculture. Czech companies provide technological assistance and expertise to the Philippine National Dairy Authority.

Czech companies can also offer technologies for storing raw milk and its processing.

We also highly appreciate the Philippine system of the recruiting of workers for work in other countries. Czech companies are very satisfied with Philippine citizens. We are discussing the possibilities to expand migration for work.

In the end, I would like to thank to all Filipinos for a warm welcome and to all our partners for great cooperation in every possible fields, every areas, not only during [inaudible].

I believe our meeting and visit will be a new impulse for stronger collaboration and we will be very happy to cooperate this Philippine government and companies much more.

Thank you very much. Thank you Mr. President. *[applause]*

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