

INTERVENTION OF PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.
42ND ASEAN SUMMIT (RETREAT SESSION)
[11 May 2023]

*Your Majesty,
Excellencies,*

ASEAN is at the cornerstone of our Philippine foreign policy.

We believe that our voice in the international community can only be stronger when it is part of a chorus that represents our collective purpose.

*Your Majesty,
Excellencies,*

The decisiveness of ASEAN, and the effectiveness and capacity of the ASEAN-led regional architecture in demonstrating and asserting its Centrality in the region will determine whether ASEAN truly matters.

This goal can only be achieved insofar as ASEAN is able to come up with an innovative and flexible system that would facilitate decisive, effective, and timely decision-making in ASEAN.

As a hub for dialogue and cooperation that brings together a multitude of states under the principle of ASEAN Centrality, ASEAN has the responsibility to manage and navigate the rising tensions among major powers.

ASEAN must play a leading role in shaping an open, inclusive, and rules based international order that is underpinned by the principles of sovereignty, justice, equity, and good governance.

While multilateral cooperation is key in tackling global challenges, regional perspectives need to be taken into account in formulating a global response to shared concerns.

The acceleration of human trafficking in our region has shown that the misuse of technologies can be utilized as fuel for the explosive growth of organized crime.

As the Lead Shepherd for cooperation against Trafficking in Persons, the Philippines will strengthen engagement with our partners in safeguarding the security and well-being of our peoples.

The road to peace in our region starts at home. The Philippines recognizes that the path towards reconciliation in Myanmar can only begin through an inclusive and constructive dialogue between all stakeholders.

The Philippines strongly urges the utmost restraint and immediate cessation of violence in Myanmar.

We continue to call on Myanmar to abide by and implement the Five-Point Consensus, and for our external partners to complement ASEAN's efforts in the context of the Five-Point Consensus.

We fully support Indonesia's initiatives on the implementation of the Five-Point Consensus.

The Philippines consistently underscores the need for the DPRK to abide by prevailing UN Security Council Resolutions and to engage in dialogue with concerned parties towards the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

The Philippines remains deeply concerned over the humanitarian crisis and the continuing economic impact caused by the Russia-Ukraine war, especially the possible escalation of the conflict through the use of nuclear weapons.

We urge the countries concerned to search for a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

As an archipelagic maritime nation, the Philippines advocates a rules-based maritime order anchored on the 1982 UNCLOS.

The Philippines has been clear and consistent about its serious concerns over recent developments in the South China Sea, especially infringements on our sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction. These incidents have palpable consequences for the safety and welfare of our people, particularly our fisherfolk and coastal communities.

Despite the continued incidents of Filipino vessels in our waters and attempts to deny and obstruct our ability to exercise our sovereign rights in our Exclusive Economic Zone, the Philippines will remain firm in upholding and protecting our entitlements under UNCLOS.

The Philippines is committed to the full and effective implementation of the DOC, and the early conclusion of a COC.

We will continue to urge all to abide by the 1982 UNCLOS, as "the constitution of the oceans." We must ensure that the South China Sea does not become a nexus for armed conflict.

We must avoid the ascendance of might and the aggressive revision of the international order. In an increasingly volatile world, we require constraints on power contained by the force of the rule of law.

The rules-based regional architecture should be underpinned by the Centrality of ASEAN towards inclusive engagement in the Indo-Pacific, as exemplified in our Outlook on the Indo-Pacific.

The four priority areas of cooperation of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific serve as our guideposts in fulfilling our vision for the Indo-Pacific as a region of development, peace, and prosperity for all.

*Your Majesty,
Excellencies,*

The future of this region must be determined by ASEAN and ASEAN alone.

In this decisive moment, let us continue to work together to ensure that ASEAN truly and undoubtedly matters. **END**