

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK**

**REMARKS BY
PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.
FOR THE JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE
[Delivered at the Octagon Hall, Prague Castle in Prague, Czech
Republic | 14 March 2024]**

Thank you, Mr. President. I wish to convey first of all, my warm appreciation to His Excellency President Petr Pavel and the government of the Czech Republic for this very kind invitation for me to come to the State Visit that we are here for today.

President Pavel and I had a very productive meeting this morning, discussing a range of topics, foremost being the ways in which the Philippines and the Czech Republic can strengthen our bilateral relationship and cooperation and our multilateral partnerships.

I am pleased to note that our countries have been enjoying warm and friendly relations for the past five decades. In fact, this visit of mine to the Czech Republic now, invigorates our ongoing celebration of the 50th anniversary of our diplomatic ties which was established in October of 1975.

We are only just beginning to appreciate the huge potential of our cooperation in various areas of mutual interest to our two countries.

In my talks with the President, we explored various opportunities for future partnerships in trade and investment, agriculture, green economy and renewable energy, space and aerospace, education, tourism, defense, and cybersecurity, and of course labor, amongst others which manifest the hopes of many opportunities that we have to strengthen our partnership with the Czech Republic.

We discussed the potential in increasing the bilateral trade between our two countries.

I also highlighted to the President the Philippines' remarkable economic performance, that making it an attractive destination for Czech investment in the areas of IT-BPM, in electronics, manufacturing, food and agriculture, and automotive / EV manufacturing, amongst others.

I am optimistic that we will be able to attract more Czech traders and investors to do business with the Philippines as a result of this increased engagement between our respective business sectors.

We look forward to the convening of the 2nd meeting of the Philippines-Czech Republic Joint Committee on Economic Cooperation in Manila that will occur later this year.

I took note of the Czech Republic's announcement that you have increased the quota for Filipino workers from 5,500 to almost double that from January 2024 to 10,300 per year starting in May of 2024.

But just before this press conference, President Pavel and I witnessed the signing of the Joint Communiqué to establish a labor consultations mechanism between the Philippine Department of Migrant Workers and the Czech Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

We shared with President Pavel the latest development on the West Philippine and South China Sea. And I understand that the Philippines' position on the South China Sea remains consistent, and clear, and firmly anchored in the 92 UNCLOS.

While it is unfortunate that there are persistent incidents of aggression and harassment in the South China Sea, we continue to engage all our neighbors and stakeholders through diplomacy and dialogue.

I thank President Pavel for the Czech Republic's support as a like-minded partner, in upholding peace, stability, and the rules-based international order.

I am very pleased to also reiterate my sincere appreciation to the Government and the people of the Czech Republic for the warm welcome that you have afforded—accorded to myself, the First Lady, and, of course, the rest of the Philippine delegation.

This State Visit reaffirms the Philippines' commitment in further cultivating the bonds and friendship which the Czech Republic and cementing the enduring ties between our countries and our people with a very special connection in terms of the time that our national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal, spent here in Prague together with his friend, Ferdinand Blumentritt. And it is something very well appreciated by all of Filipinos and it is something that provides us a foundation on which to build upon.

Thank you very much.

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