

PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK

STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR. AT THE JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE

[Delivered at the President's Hall of the Malacañan Palace | 15 August 2024]

To our friends in the media; Ladies and gentlemen, good evening.

It is my distinct honor and pleasure to once again thank His Excellency President Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Head of State of the Republic of Singapore, for accepting my invitation to visit the Philippines. In this regard, I am pleased to inform all of you [of] the results of our successful meeting with the President, that we just had in our bilateral meeting.

We had very open, frank, and wide-ranging and I think it's safe to say that we literally went beyond the agenda that was laid out before us and covered so many subjects and I think had we not been signaled by our protocol officers, we could have gone on for a very long time.

But that is indicative of the state of Philippines-Singapore bilateral cooperation.

The State Visit was undertaken at a most opportune time, as this year marks the 55th anniversary of our countries' diplomatic relations, and comes upon the heels of several high-level visits, in which both sides have undertaken since the year has begun.

Our bilateral relations have come a long way and have undergone immense transformation since they were established over five decades ago. Our meeting today was an opportunity to reaffirm and [renew] our bonds of friendship and see how we can build upon them further.

The ties that bind us go beyond geography and are based on our strong people-to-people connection. This has given rise to the strong, multi-faceted relationship, which we enjoy today.

As we have discussed before, Singapore continues to be an essential trade and investment partner of the Philippines, with Singapore businesses venturing into a wide sector of industries in the Philippines ranging from the hospital industry to the renewable energy sector.

In this spirit, we have just witnessed the exchange of the *[Memorandum] of Understanding for Collaboration on Carbon Credits Under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement* between the Department of Environment and Natural Resources of the [Republic of the] Philippines and the Ministry of Trade and Industry of the Republic of Singapore.

Hopefully, with this memorandum, we will be able to incentivize both industries and individuals to actively work to reduce their carbon footprint, while allowing the government to mobilize financial resources to boost fiscal space.

We also witnessed today the exchange of the *Memorandum of Understanding on the Recruitment of Filipino Healthcare Workers*.

Our Ministries have worked hard on this MOU in order to ensure that a balance is achieved between the needs of the healthcare sector of both countries as well as the need for personal development and growth of our healthcare workers.

Through this MOU, we express our confidence in Singapore's legal and judicial system, which will ensure that the rights, welfare, and well-being of our *kababayan* OFWs will be protected as they pursue their careers in Singapore.

In addition to the MOU stated above, another MOU on Health Cooperation is presently being negotiated by our Health Ministries so that when the contracts of our OFWs are nearing completion, they will be able to reintegrate into the Philippine economy with ease.

There will also be the planned signing of MOUs by Philippine local government units and their Singapore private sector partners, a collaboration of [a] Philippine national government agency and the Singaporean private sector, and a business-to-business agreement.

Aside from bilateral issues, we also discussed regional issues of mutual interest. As geographical neighbors in Southeast Asia, the South China Sea / West Philippine Sea holds great importance to both our countries.

So, we look forward to the opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to maintain and to promote peace, security, and stability in the region as well as our strong support [to] the peaceful resolution of any such disputes.

Furthermore, as fellow founding member states of ASEAN, the Philippines and Singapore have discussed and shared our concerns on [the] developments in Myanmar, which had undoubtedly affected both Singaporeans and Filipinos alike. We have continued to speak on this in all the ASEAN fora and we have all come to the consensus that a peaceful solution, as prescribed under ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus, is more urgent now than ever before.

To this end, I thank President Tharman and his wife, Mrs. Jane Ittogi [Shanmugaratnam], for taking the time to come to the Philippines and wish to express my heartfelt appreciation for this meaningful and timely visit.

Thank you very much.

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