

**PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE'S SPEECH  
DURING THE OFFICIAL DINNER HELD IN HIS HONOR  
DURING HIS OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE  
KINGDOM OF THAILAND  
Thai Government House, Bangkok, Thailand  
March 21, 2017**

Your Excellency, Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha, happy birthday, sir. (applause) Senior officials of the Royal Thai Government, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, good evening.

I take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to Your Excellency, Prime Minister, for the excellent arrangements extended to me and my delegation.

The hospitality was very warm, I am truly humbled by the reception.

I take this opportunity to convey my congratulations to the assumption and proclamation of His Majesty, the King. May His Majesty's reign bring closer peace and prosperity to the Kingdom of Thailand and closer friendship between our peoples.

Excellency, the Philippines and Thailand share a special and enduring ties. With 67 solid years of diplomatic relations behind us, we can only achieve so much and more. We certainly can achieve more than what we can really see and envision.

Today, I see, we can look forward to brighter and better (inaudible) with our friendship strong and our respect for each other solid. We will continue to make progress, great progress.

On many fronts and in various areas, we can see the resolve of the things to higher frame.

Regular exchange of visits, government-to-government interaction, and meaningful dialogue enabled us to take stock of developments even as we chart ways to take our ties to greater heights.

Today, we take several steps forward together as we resolve and intensify cooperation in agriculture, science and technology, trade and investment, national security and law enforcement.

Indeed, the opportunities for even more collaboration are expansive. As we surge ahead, we need to rely on each other and we need to work even more closely together.

Only by doing so can we safeguard the gains we have achieved over these years and secure the blessings that our peoples deserve.

This is true as we face traditional and emerging threats, including transnational crimes such as terrorism, violent extremism, piracy and the scourge of illicit drug trade.

While there continue to be many challenges, we cannot—we must not waiver in our resolve. We should always remember that the reason for all of these efforts is the improvement of our people's lives and the upholding of the greatest good for our region.

As Thailand continues to its own onward advance, rest assured that the Philippines will be there as a friend and as a brother to support. As I have said earlier, we are a faithful friend, sir.

And as a brother, I would like to thank the Kingdom of Thailand for hosting the growing number of Filipinos engaged in many fields of productive undertakings. They contribute to the socio-economic development of their host country and also back home.

Your Excellency, my visit to Bangkok completes the round of my introductory visits to the ASEAN region.

I truly have come full circle to a destination that is (unclear) with meaning and significance as the Philippines prepares to host the 30<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit and related meetings next month in Manila.

Fifty years ago, the Bangkok declaration was signed, a routing future of cooperation. It was a landmark document that saw our region move from threats of discord towards the promise of cooperation.

Now, we are one nation, community. We stand proud and we stand tall. Our values and principles define us as one community, our dreams and aspirations drive us to accomplish even more.

The Philippines take on the ASEAN chairmanship during the Association's golden anniversary. There are opportunities to be had yet, there remain challenges to be addressed.

We will remain steadfast in our vow to do our utmost to make ASEAN stronger. With the theme, “Partnering for Change, Engaging the World,” we reaffirm our strong resolve to consolidate our community for our peoples.

With a sense of togetherness and common identity, ASEAN must be ready and able to take our rightful place in the global community of nations.

I count on Thailand and our ASEAN brothers to be more active partners in this common quest to make a positive and significant difference in the lives of our people.

Let us draw inspiration from the struggles that we have surmounted as independent and sovereign nations. We have much to learn from each other as we have much to gain from ensuring our friendship goals from strength to greater strength each year.

On this note, may I invite everyone to join me in a toast: to the success of His Majesty, to his reign, to the success and good health of Your Excellency, Prime Minister, and happy birthday again, and I propose a toast:

To the peace and prosperity of the Thai people and the Kingdom of Thailand;

To the friendship and amity between our peoples and continued excellent relations between our two countries;

Mabuhay ang Thailand!

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