

## **JOINT PRESS STATEMENT**

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**PRIME MINISTER ANTHONY ALBANESE OF AUSTRALIA:** Australia sees the Philippines as a central player and a crucial partner for us in Southeast Asia. So, it's great to welcome you here today on your first official visit to Australia as President of the Philippines, and it was a special honour to host you for your historic address to Parliament.

Australia is honored to count the Philippines as a close friend and strategic partner. For more than three quarters of a century, our nations have been bound by strategic trust and mutual cooperation. Our ties are strengthened by warm and close personal connections, including through the over 400,000 Australians with Filipino heritage who make a wonderful contribution to modern multicultural Australia.

As I said to last year's Shangri-La Dialogue and to the Lowy Institute in December, my government backs Australia's agency in, and contribution to, our region. Our foreign policy and national security depends on investing in our capabilities, but also investing in our relationships. Hosting President Marcos today is a great example of us putting this into action and I also very much welcome the First Lady.

President Marcos and I have had very productive discussions focused on driving forward our close collaboration as Strategic Partners. We are ambitious for what we can achieve together and I'm pleased that we are working actively to build a peaceful region where international law is respected and waterways are open for trade.

I'm pleased that with our new MOU on Enhanced Maritime Cooperation, which we've signed today, we'll collaborate even more closely to promote our shared vision for the region, including in civil maritime security, marine environment protection, maritime domain awareness and promoting respect for international law. We'll also continue our maritime cooperative activities as regional partners committed to doing our part to sustain peace and stability in our region.

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We also discuss strengthening cooperation on cyber and critical technology, and we'll work together to promote the open and secure use of cyberspace through a new MOU, which we have signed today-

We've also signed a new MOU between our competition commissions to enhance cooperation on competition law and policy, highly relevant issues in both of our countries, given the cost-of-living pressures that our people are facing.

Australia's economic future lies with Southeast Asia and we're determined to drive growth in trade and investment in line with our Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040, which I launched at the ASEAN Summit last year. And that will be a focus point of the business summit on the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit that's being held in Melbourne next week.

The Philippines is one of our fastest growing economies in our region and there's great potential to deepen our two-way trade and investment links. To give just one example, this week the Philippines-based company, International Container Terminal Services, will open a new 235 million dollar expansion to its facilities at the Port of Melbourne. This will bring these investments in Melbourne to a billion dollars, a welcome example of the opportunity available to grow our economic ties.

Australia and the Philippines share a vision for an open, stable and prosperous region where disputes are settled through agreed rules, norms and institutions. ASEAN centrality is critical to this and it will be a great honor to host all the leaders of Southeast Asia in Melbourne next week for the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit. This will mark 50 years of dialogue between Australia and ASEAN and is another example of my government investing in our relationships and prioritizing this, our region. Deepening Australia's engagement with Southeast Asia continues to be a priority. We're invested in and committed to this region.

For many years, Australians spoke about the tyranny of distance from the great economies and markets of the United States of America and Europe. Now we speak about the proximity of opportunity, located as we are at the heart of the fastest growing region of the world in human history and that presents such an opportunity for us.

Our Strategic Partnership with the Philippines is a key pillar of the commitment to building those relationships in our region and I look forward to continuing to work with the Philippines and with President Marcos to meet the challenges of our times and realize our shared vision for an open, peaceful, stable and prosperous region. Mr. President.

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**PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.:** Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister.

Today, Prime Minister Albanese and I had a very engaging discussion on a wide range of opportunities and issues under the ambit of our Strategic Partnership.

I certainly am very honored on a personal and on official level for the invitation as Guest of the Australian Government and, therefore, the opportunity to personally convey our commitment to this partnership and to reiterate Filipino friendship.

Our conversation centered on ways to maximize the enhanced status of relations between our two countries, including on defense, maritime cooperation, non-traditional security concerns, trade and investment, development cooperation, multilateral collaboration and people-to-people linkages.

Defense and security remains a key area of cooperation between the Philippines and of Australia. We look forward to amplifying our joint activities and the capacity-building efforts in this regard.

On economic cooperation, we anticipate greater bilateral economic cooperation that will allow us to withstand shocks, to be resilient against economic coercion, and to provide an enabling environment for our respective businesses and labor markets to further flourish under the ambit of this Strategic Relationship and Partnership.

At the same time, we look forward to our robust people-to-people ties to drive greater cooperation between our two countries and our peoples.

The significant Filipino diaspora, the fifth largest immigrant community here in Australia, has contributed significantly to the economic and cultural wellbeing not only of our country, but yours as well.

It is also an undeniable indicator of Australia's openness to embrace a globalized and interconnected world.

Both the Philippines and Australia welcome future consultations and dialogues as we explore and map the uncharted waters that can bring in new opportunities for a closer and stronger relationship between our two countries.

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To this end, I had earlier the distinction of delivering my Address to the Australian Parliament, an honor befitting a partnership between two equal sovereign states and a vital opportunity for the Philippines to express our vision for this cordial and warm friendship.

I had the opportunity to expound on a critical role of peace and security in our continued march towards prosperity.

And as mentioned in my speech and as discussed with the Prime Minister, both Philippines and Australia emphasized the importance of observing and promoting the rules-based order governed by international law and informed by the principles of equity and of justice.

Stability in the Indo-Pacific region is of utmost priority for both our countries.

The Philippines recognizes Australia's indisputable role as a regional stabilizer. As a flourishing democracy and a staunch advocate of the rules-based order and rule of law, Australia responsibly discharges its economic and strategic capacity, thereby sustaining the regional framework that has allowed us to experience unprecedented growth and peace.

The Philippines fully adheres to the same set of values, making our two countries natural partners in the region.

As we are situated in such a dynamic regional security environment, I would like to assure our Australian friends that the Philippines will continue to partner with Australia in promoting predictability of actions in the international arena.

The Philippines is fully ready to continue upholding its commitments as your Strategic Partner and as one of your oldest friends in the region.

In the same vein, we recognize Australia's steadfast commitment to positive engagement with the ASEAN region and we wish Australia success in its upcoming hosting of the Special Summit to Commemorate the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN-Australia Dialogue Relations.

I look forward to the active participation of the Philippines in the four important thematic tracks of the Special Summit.

The three agreements exchanged today shall enhance information sharing, capability building, and interoperability between our relevant government agencies in the maritime domain and maritime environment, cyber and critical technology, and competition law.

The three agreements add to the more than 120 agreements that our two countries have signed through the decades. And these are in various fields, including defense cooperation, air services, education, research, scientific and cultural cooperation, amongst others.

The Prime Minister and I both agreed to continue to look for ways to explore every option possible, to bring our countries closer than ever and collectively,

with optimism and a hopeful outlook, to be a force of good, unity, stability and prosperity in our region.

Thank you.

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