

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK**

**INTERVENTION OF PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.
AT THE 26TH ASEAN-CHINA SUMMIT
6 September 2023**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Your Majesty

Your Excellencies,

His Excellency Premier Li Qiang,

I am happy for this opportunity to the 26th ASEAN-China Summit. It is an important opportunity to reaffirm and build on our relations under the framework of the ASEAN-China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of China's accession to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia. An invaluable commitment by our countries to universal multilateralism and the rules-based international order.

Such cooperation can only help achieve our aspiration that once again ASEAN will be the epicentrum of growth. The ongoing ASEAN-China Free Trade Area 3.0 Upgrade Negotiations will also encourage stronger ties between ASEAN and China. It is also our hope that we identify and leverage on complementarities between China's Belt and Road Initiative and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific.

To further expand mutual trade, efforts at enhancing ASEAN connectivity and supply chains must come to fruition. Among the priority areas of the AOIP, maritime cooperation is especially significant to the Philippines as an archipelagic nation.

We must emphasize that practical cooperation in the maritime domain can only flourish with an enabling environment of regional peace, security, and stability, anchored in international law.

The Philippines therefore continues to uphold the primacy of the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea as the framework within which all activities in the seas and oceans are conducted. We once again reaffirm our commitment to the rule of law and peaceful settlement of disputes.

We are pleased that at the last negotiations on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) held in Manila a few weeks ago, that some progress was made in discussing the milestone issues and a preliminary review of the Single Draft Negotiating Text (SDNT).

The early conclusion of an effective and substantive COC that is in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS, remains the goal for ASEAN and for China.

Excellencies,
Your Majesty,

Universal multilateralism is our only recourse in an interconnected and interdependent world. This is in a context set against a backdrop of geopolitical challenges and macroeconomic fragilities.

The Philippines is keen to contribute to the implementation of the SOMTC-China Work Plan on Cooperation to Combat Transnational Crime for 2024-2028. As the Voluntary Lead Shepherd on trafficking in persons under the SOMTC, the Philippines looks forward to facilitating closer ASEAN-China cooperation to operationalize the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Combating Trafficking in Persons Caused by the Abuse of Technology.

Meanwhile, the designation of 2024 as the ASEAN-China Year of People-to-People Exchange goes to the heart of ASEAN's Community-building. The Philippines welcomes initiatives and programs under this banner, with the aim of deepening interaction and cultivating greater understanding among our peoples.

We continue to keep as a guiding principle China's long-standing commitment to ASEAN Centrality and unity as a guiding principle once again in all its engagements with ASEAN in these discussions. Therein, in our view, lies the path of peace and progress for us all. Thank you.

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