

**Presidential Communications Operations Office  
Presidential News Desk**

**INTERVENTION OF  
PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE  
AT THE 23<sup>RD</sup> ASEAN PLUS THREE SUMMIT**

[Malago Clubhouse, Malacañang Park, Manila | 14 November 2020]

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

President Moon Jae-in,

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga,

I would like to welcome Premier Li Keqiang,

Partnerships are tested in times of crisis.

This pandemic, in particular, has exerted unbelievable pressure on many nations to go alone.

But the ASEAN Plus Three have chosen to do things together.

And convincingly, APT has defined itself as a secure forum for discussion, a sound platform for cooperation, and a stable ground for meaningful actions to take place.

But challenges remain and the task of addressing the adverse effects of COVID-19 pandemic is still tremendous.

Foremost on our agenda is bringing our countries and peoples back on track to full socio-economic recovery.

We must act swiftly on the APT Plan of Action on mitigating the economic impact of COVID-19 and our statement on strengthening economic and financial [resilience].

We have to ramp up our individual and collective capabilities against COVID-19 and other pandemics.

The establishment of the APT Reserve of Medical Supplies for Public Health Emergencies is a strategic move that will benefit us all.

The contributions of China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea to the ASEAN COVID-19 Response Fund and through the APT Fund meantime help shore up financial capabilities of ASEAN [Member] States.

To this, I say: Thank you.

Equally important is protecting our important resource: Our peoples. And to protect one, we need to protect all.

Safe and affordable vaccines, diagnostics, and treatments for COVID-19 are, therefore, essentials for the new normal.

At the Special APT Summit, we made the urgent call to make vaccines available to all. We reiterate this call again now.

We thank China for its expressed commitment to make safe vaccines a global public good once available. ASEAN should be among the first to benefit.

We thank Japan for opening Fapiravir (Avigan) treatment trials to neighboring countries, including the Philippines.

Your Majesty, Excellencies:

We must affirm our commitment to keep our markets open and ensure the free flow of goods.

This has allowed the movement of critical medical equipment and supplies, staple food, and other essential products.

This will likewise be the key to increased economic activities.

We thank the Republic of Korea for its timely assistance of medical supplies as well as rice stocks that benefit our communities directly.

Your Majesties,

The pandemic has opened new opportunities that would [optimize] the region's economic advantages.

Our Plus Three partners can invest more in the development of ASEAN's e-commerce and financial technology inter-operability.

Digital platforms have increasingly supplied the demand for goods, services, and information. These are new areas for investments and engines for economic growth.

But the platform cannot be the exclusive domain of big businesses.

To fully harness the digital platform's potential contributions to economic growth and recovery, I must ensure --- or we must ensure Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises to have full access and participation.

Despite technological advancements, however, human presence and interaction will still be required to achieve full economic recovery.

Facilitating the safe conduct of persons across borders will be vital.

The Philippines welcomes the possibility of expanding the proposed ASEAN Travel Corridor and Travel Bubble concepts to include China, Japan, and Republic of Korea.

Your Majesty, Excellencies:

A reinforced regional financial [safety] net is required in order to effectively respond to disruptions of our financial systems.

We welcome the entry into force of the Amended Chiang Mai Initiative [Multilateralization] Agreement that will enhance coordination between the CMIM and the IMF.

The Asian Bond Markets Initiative on the other hand, is a step forward in developing local currency bond [markets].

Your Majesty, Excellencies:

An open and fair and rules-based multilateral trading system remains key to achieving shared prosperity.

The Philippines welcomes the conclusion of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

RCEP will be an important driver of growth and development.

Your Majesty, Excellencies:

The path toward recovery remains long. But the horizon [does appear] to be closer.

Challenges will remain.

Yet together, we will be sure to reach our destination with no one left behind.

And rightly so this defines the ASEAN Plus Three partnership and the reason why it is very much valued.

Thank you.

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