

**Presidential Communications Operations Office
Presidential News Desk**

**INTERVENTION OF PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
AT THE 38TH ASEAN SUMMIT (PLENARY)**

[26 October 2021]

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Your Majesty, Excellencies,

Allow me to welcome His Excellency Ismail Sabri bin Yaakob of Malaysia; His Excellency Phankham Viphavanh of the Lao People's Democratic Republic; and His Excellency Pham Minh Chinh of Viet Nam.

Mr. Chair,

It has been almost two years since the first COVID-19 case was recorded, but our region is still reeling from its impact.

Today's circumstances tell us one thing: The road to comprehensive and inclusive recovery will be long and difficult.

While we welcome and appreciate the support of our external partners, we as ASEAN Community must be able to stand on our own.

Hence, I urge the ASEAN Secretariat to expedite vaccine procurement through the COVID-19 Response Fund. If there are still available funds, then we should purchase more.

We must also have our own regional vaccine research and production facilities for us to be ready for future public health emergencies.

We must ensure the phased and comprehensive implementation of the broad strategies under the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework.

We also need to immediately establish the ASEAN Centre on Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases. It has been almost a year since we conceptualized the Centre. Our generous donors and partners are still waiting for us to choose the host country.

And we have to operationalize the ASEAN Travel Corridor Arrangement Framework to revitalize our economies soonest.

As we have said before, an open multilateral trading system and a clear roadmap are vital to economic recovery.

I congratulate Brunei Darussalam for its initiative on upholding multilateralism. This is indeed a timely action in the face of various challenges that require collective action.

The Philippines will do its share [by] ratifying the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership within the year.

We also support the declaration on the blue economy as it brings together all stakeholders in the sustainable and inclusive management and conservation of marine and coastal resources.

Your Majesty, Excellencies,

This pandemic has exacerbated inequalities within our societies.

We must therefore address the unique needs of vulnerable groups, particularly women, children, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and migrant workers, among others.

We call for the enhanced implementation of the ASEAN Consensus on the Promotion and Protections of the Rights of Migrant Workers. With or without the pandemic, migrant workers contribute to nation-building and to the socio-economic development of both the sending and the host countries. We have to treat them with dignity and respect.

The ASEAN Comprehensive Framework on Care Economy, the Declaration on the Importance of the Family for Community Development and Nation Building and the Declaration on the Elimination of Bullying of Children in ASEAN are also steps in the right direction.

And more than [social] rights, our children must not be made to pay for the long-term and adverse effects of climate change.

The ASEAN Joint Statement on Climate Change allows us to speak with one voice and call on developed countries to seriously and promptly address the climate crisis at the upcoming COP26 in Glasgow.

I urge fellow Leaders to continuously support the efforts of the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity to conserve, protect and advocate for the sustainable use of biodiversity. This includes the Centre's mapping of zoonoses in the region to prepare against future public health emergencies.

Your Majesties, Excellencies,

As we aim to promote the well-being of our peoples, we should work together towards a greener and better future.

In closing, I express Philippine support for the various outcome documents of this Meeting. They embody ASEAN's steadfast commitment to address the most fundamental concerns of our peoples today.

I congratulate Brunei Darussalam for its successful Chairmanship this year and welcome Cambodia which will soon take the helm of ASEAN.

Thank you at maraming salamat po.

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