

**SPEECH OF PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE DURING THE OPENING CEREMONIES OF THE  
BOAO FORUM FOR ASIA**

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His Excellency President Xi Jinping and Madame Peng Liyuan, their Excellencies, Heads of States and Government who are here at the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference, other distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Good morning and thank you for inviting me to speak before you today.

I come to the Boao Forum for Asia, convinced that the collective prosperity is not just a dream but a reality that we can achieve --- For our nations, for our peoples and for our regions.

There is reason for hope: Asia is projected to continue its growth through the year 2050. By then, our generation is seen and the region itself to account for more than half of the world's GDP.

The building blocks are there: Asia's major economies are providing models [from] which smaller ones can learn. Developing economies are slowly hitting the demographic sweet spot. They are also making steady strides in economic growth and human development.

And increasingly, regional institutions such as ASEAN are moving towards integration in many forms.

As an engine of growth, Asia is poised to make a larger footprint on the global economy. And every country in Asia – big or small – has a role to play and its own contribution to make.

Far too long, the Philippines has nurtured the dream of a comfortable life for our citizens. We want a society where there are opportunities for all. We want a nation where the hard working, the talented, and the law-abiding can advance together and move up [the] socio-economic ladder.

We are slowly making the Filipino dream a reality. As we strive to [push] our economy forward, we encounter challenges. But we will not be deterred. We seek to partner with responsible businesses --- home-grown and foreign based --- to drive the progress we envision.

We have made considerable headway: We have improved the peace and order situation; we have sustained the battle against corruption; and, we are strengthening the policy framework for businesses to thrive.

To me, along with the illegal drug trade and terrorism and corruption, which are pernicious and rotten social disease that devours my country.

With Good Governance as a basis of our sound economic policy, the Philippines will do more to increase investments in the country, particularly in infrastructure, innovation and interconnectivity.

Our milestones are ambitious: We will spend five to seven percent on infrastructure. We aim to reduce poverty from 22 percent in 2015 to 14 percent by 2022. We intend to achieve growth of seven to eight percent every year up to 2022.

Our “Build, Build, Build” program will provide the solid backbone for growth. This will continue to upgrade the infrastructure, connect more people and communities and create more jobs. Already we have started a three-year rolling program amounting to over US\$69 billion until 2022.

We are investing on innovation – in government processes, in technology and in human development. By 2022, the Philippines sees itself as joining the top one-third [in] the Global Innovation Index. We will empower more Filipinos with better skills and expertise and with our Innovation Council under the Department of Science and Technology, we will improve the competitiveness and productivity of our MSMEs.

With greater access to technology and financing, we will apply Science, Technology and Innovation in agriculture and the [service] industries.

We will invest in improving research and development and intensify international cooperation in this area. We are willing to learn from others.

Finally, the Philippines will remain committed to interconnectivity, both in functional terms and in political engagements and cooperation with our friends and neighbors. We will harness the potential for shared growth in our region and beyond.

As ASEAN Chair, we helped in the building of the rules-based and ASEAN-centered regional architecture to continue to pursue this goal.

Bilaterally, the Philippines is showing how complex relations are but not a bar to positive and mutually beneficial engagement.

With China, we stand together in the war on criminality and illegal drug trade. We are shoulder to shoulder in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism. Make no mistake: there can be no progress without stability in Asia’s lands and waters.

As sovereign equals, the Philippines and China are partners in the building of the much-needed infrastructure. [We are building] bridges of greater understanding between our peoples. We are working together on strengthening economic complementarities.

Let me say it again: the Philippines’ destiny is in Asia. The Philippines is ready to work with all nations in the region to seek friendship and cooperation.

We have a stake – as well as responsibilities – in [the] forging of a more prosperous continent and world. This is what [nations] – big or small - should act on collectively when we leave Boao: Cooperate, coordinate [and] collaborate. So we can achieve our shared dream of prosperity for all.

Thank you. *[applause]*

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