

Philippine President's Visit

President's inaugural visit affirms strategic partnership

Marian Jocelyn R. Tirol-Ignacio
CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE
PHILIPPINES

Since the normalization of Philippine-Japan relations in July 1956, reciprocal visits and dialogues at the highest levels have been among the hallmarks of our bilateral ties, shaping and providing momentum to one of Asia's strongest bilateral relationships.



With the recent elevation of relations to a full-fledged strategic partnership, such high-level visits and leader-level meetings have not only increased in frequency, but also yielded tangible and substantial outcomes. In the process, they have become occasions for affirming and underscoring the mutually beneficial cooperation, and the shared values and perspectives that bind the

Philippines and Japan.

It is therefore auspicious that, as we mark the 60th anniversary of normalized ties, President Rodrigo Duterte of the Republic of the Philippines is in Japan on an official visit upon the invitation of H.E. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe from Oct. 25 to 27. The prime minister first extended his invitation in his congratulatory letter to the president upon the latter's election. The president accepted the invitation on the occasion of their first meeting, which took place in Vientiane, Laos, on Sept. 6. It is President Duterte's first visit to Japan since assuming office on June 30.

The government of Japan sincerely welcomes the visit of the president and hopes it will further strengthen the friendly relations between Japan and the Republic of the Philippines.

During his stay in Japan, the president is expected to make a state call on His Majesty Emperor Akihito, who just last January undertook a successful

and historic state visit to the Philippines together with Her Majesty Empress Michiko. It is the president's first opportunity to meet His Majesty, and the president is expected to bring with him the felicitations and best wishes of the Filipino people for Their Imperial Majesties.

The president is also scheduled to hold his second summit meeting in less than two months with Prime Minister Abe, who will host a dinner in his honor.

At their first meeting, the prime minister assured the president of Japan's commitment to the socioeconomic development of the Philippines, to the advancement of the two countries' defense cooperation and the provision of quality infrastructure to the Philippines. The forthcoming meeting between the two leaders is expected to further the two countries' traditionally close and deep engagement across a wide scope of endeavors, spanning the fields of security, economic and developmental cooperation, Japanese high-quality infrastructure support, law enforcement cooperation, maritime capability-improvement assistance for the Philippines and various other forms of capacity-building assistance through overseas development assistance.

Japanese support for peace and development programs in Mindanao, the island from which the president hails, is also expected to figure prominently in the discussions, together with the special history of friendship of the president's home city of Davao with Japan. Japan's role in supporting the peace process and the development of Mindanao has been peerless. The president himself has acknowledged on numerous occasions the important contributions Japan has made

to the island. The president's visit is expected to see Japan further raise its level of engagement with the Philippines in supporting Mindanao and realizing the great promise of the island and adjoining areas in the southern Philippines.

The president plans to have the occasion to meet an enthusiastic and charged audience of over a thousand Filipinos residing in Japan in what is expected to be an emotional gathering. Like many other expatriate Filipinos around the world, Filipinos in Japan, who voted overwhelmingly for President Duterte in the last presidential elections, are passionate about their new leader.

With the Philippines riding the wave of sustained and record economic growth, the dynamism of economic, business and people-to-people exchanges will continue to be central to both countries' shared future. Economic and business engagement remains the most active, dynamic and visible pillar of Philippine-Japan bilateral interaction. Accordingly, the president is expected to participate in a full economic agenda over the course of two days. He plans to address and meet with the creme de la creme of corporate Japan, and witness the conclusion of new and solid foreign direct investment commitments that promise to buttress his administration's economic program for the Philippines.

Doubtless, the president's sojourn to Japan — a country with which the Philippines has traditionally shared the values of mutual respect, cooperation and adherence to the rule of law — constitutes another high point for the ongoing celebration of the 60th year of normalized Philippine-Japan relations. It will be an opportunity to

highlight Japan's standing not just as a trusted and dependable friend, but also as the Philippines' pre-eminent partner. Above all, it will set the tone for the future of our ties, opening new doors for the further cultivation of the Philippine-Japan strategic partnership, molding it into one that serves the interests of every Filipino and the interests of the larger region.

On behalf of the Filipino community in Japan, the Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines in Tokyo welcomes the president on his official visit to Japan.

Mabuhay!



The Makati skyline MARC HENRICH W. GO



The Bluewater Sumilon island resort is about 20 minutes by boat from a whale shark watching site.

Heartiest Welcome

to President Rodrigo Roa Duterte

of the Republic of the Philippines

on His Official Visit to Japan

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