

## **PRESS STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA ON HIS STATE VISIT TO PHILIPPINES**

**Manila, October 18, 2019**

1. At the outset, I wish to express my profound gratitude to you, Your Excellency, for the gracious warmth and welcome extended to me and my delegation.
2. I convey my deepest condolences on the loss of life caused by the earthquake in Mindanao, and wish speedy recovery to those affected.
3. My visit to the Philippines is taking place in this landmark year when we are celebrating 70 years of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries. Our bilateral relationship has intensified since the visit of Prime Minister of India to Manila in November 2017. I was privileged to host you, Your Excellency, in India in 2018 for the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit. Our relations have grown from strength to strength. We have strong cooperation in political, defence and security, counter-terrorism, trade and investment as well as in agriculture, science & technology and health fields.
4. I had very productive discussions with President Duterte. These cover bilateral cooperation as well as regional and global issues of the day. Today, we have signed four agreements covering maritime domain, security, tourism, science and technology and culture. These would further intensify our cooperation.
5. We have decided to explore both our common future through cooperation in Space, as well as the past – through research of the history of our civilizational roots and commonalities in our culture and tradition. We look forward to receive experts from the Philippines to India to research and document our ancient links. Therefore, my visit to this beautiful country is quite aptly captioned as – “Philippines and India at 70: Ushering Infinite Possibilities”.

6. As two vibrant democracies that believe in a rules-based international order, respect for international law and sovereign equality of nations, the Philippines and India are natural partners in the pursuit of their respective national development and security objectives.
7. Both our countries have been victims of terrorism. As you know, India has been the target of cross-border terrorism for decades. We committed to work closely together to defeat and eliminate terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.
8. We also discussed issues related to use of technology to ensure good governance and tackle corruption, and provide quality and affordable healthcare to our people. In all these areas, we are cooperating in one way or another and the potential for this is enormous.
9. There is immense potential to further deepen the Philippines- India economic ties. I look forward to address the India-Philippines Business Conclave and the 4th ASEAN-India Business Summit tomorrow. The Philippines is emerging as an important focus country for India's corporate sector. I am accompanied by a strong business delegation that represents the major Chambers of Commerce of India. They will have business interactions with their counterpart Filipino companies in digital industries, innovation and start-ups, health and pharma and in the crucial area of agricultural development. India is also keen to participate in infrastructure development as well as in defence modernization of the Philippines. In both these areas, Indian companies have made their mark and attained global reputation. We also invite companies from the Philippines to invest in India's transformative growth and development.
10. While cooperation between governments is important, it is the people-to-people relations that form the bedrock of sound bilateral relations. India is one of the fastest growing source countries for tourists to the Philippines. Both sides are exploring to start direct flights, which will give boost to connectivity. With our highly

liberal visa regime, we look forward to more Filipino tourists visiting India.

11. As you may be aware, this year the world celebrated the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. I am delighted to have the opportunity during my visit to unveil a bust of Mahatma Gandhi in the land of Jose Rizal. Our two great leaders continue to inspire us.

12. The future presents us with new opportunities to bring our two nations closer. I believe that the time has come for the Philippines-India relationship to reach an altogether new level of engagement. I once again thank President Duterte for his warmth and hospitality. And I cordially invite him to visit India at a mutually convenient time.

Maraming Salamat! Thank you!