

PHILIPPINE EMBASSY PRESS RELEASE

India and the Philippines strengthen political, economic, cultural and defense ties

15 March 2011 (New Delhi, India) – Foreign Affairs Secretary (Minister) Albert F. Del Rosario of the Philippines and Minister of External Affairs Shri S.M. Krishna of India convened the 1st Philippines – India Joint Commission on Bilateral Cooperation at Hyderabad House in New Delhi on 15 March 2011. An **Executive Program on Cultural Exchange for 2011-2013** was signed, allowing the exchange of film technology, theater arts directors and managers, and literature exchanges, among others. Philippine cultural ties with India date back to the 14th century through the Sri Vijaya and Madjapahit Empires. Both sides noted that bilateral trade now stands at US\$ 1 billion and growing.

The Philippines and India have several avenues of cooperation that have been revitalized in recent times, most noticeably in the still-booming outsourcing industry where the Philippines hopes to advance from the voice-based BPOs to other ITES areas like animation and systems design. Tourist arrivals are increasing and six weekly Manila-Delhi flights by Philippine Airlines start this month.

The 9th Policy Consultations and 3rd Security Dialogue (28-30 October 2011) in Manila followed up on the results of the visits by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to the Philippines in 2006 and the visit of former Philippine President Gloria Arroyo to India in 2007. Since then, three Joint Working Groups on Tourism Cooperation; on Agricultural Cooperation and Trade and Investment have met in preparation for this Joint Commission.

Both countries look forward to the inaugural meeting of the Joint Working Group on Health and Medicine. Both ministers agreed to convene a Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism. A Joint Working Group on Renewable Energy is also in the works. Prime Minister Singh looks forward to the first visit by His Excellency President Benigno S. Aquino III, President of the Philippines, to India during the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit in 2012 which is an indicator of greater political, economic and cultural interaction between the two nations.

Strategic dialogue

On security and defense issues, the two countries reviewed the progress of the last (3rd) Security Dialogue and their respective national security outlooks, and agreed to rename the Security Dialogue as a “Strategic Dialogue” to broaden its scope. The Ministers urged the early convening of the first meeting of the Joint Defence Cooperation Committee (JDCC). Other areas of cooperation in the fields of defense and security (maritime security, anti-terrorism, transnational crimes and disaster management) were also touched upon. The India-Philippines Joint Defense Cooperation Committee will meet soon to flesh out their bilateral collaborative program. Finally, ASEAN-India cooperation, cooperation in the United Nations, including climate change, and nuclear non-proliferation among others were also discussed.

Both Ministers adopted a Joint Statement (attached) highlighting the result of their discussions and the way forward for Philippines-India bilateral cooperation. In the one-on-one conversation between Secretary del Rosario and Minister of External Affairs S.M. Krishna, Secretary del Rosario told Minister Krishna that he looked forward to the next JCBC to be held in Manila.

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Secretary del Rosario making his Opening Statement at the JCBC.



Minister of State Smt. Preneet Kaur listening to Secretary del Rosario at the JCBC.

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Amb. Ronald B. Allarey (2nd from left) signing the Executive Programme of the Philippines-India Cultural Agreement, while Secretary del Rosario (3rd from left), Minister of State Kaur (extreme right) and other officials including Undersecretary Erlinda Basilio (foreground) look on.



Minister of State Kaur (extreme right) hosts the Philippine Delegation led by Secretary del Rosario (2nd from right) to a Dinner following the end of the JCBC at Hyderabad House.