

PHILIPPINE EMBASSY PRESS RELEASE



Philippines- India Joint Commission on Bilateral Cooperation

21 October 2013, Manila

JOINT STATEMENT OF THE SECOND MEETING

1. The 2nd Meeting of the Philippines-India Joint Commission on Bilateral Cooperation was held on 21 October 2013, in Manila. The meeting was co-chaired by the Honorable Albert F. Del Rosario, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines and His Excellency Salman Khurshid, Minister of External Affairs of the Republic of India.
2. Secretary Del Rosario and Minister Khurshid held comprehensive discussions on political, defense, security, economic and cultural cooperation, and reviewed the progress of the Joint Working Groups on Trade and Investment, Tourism, Agriculture, Health and Medicine, Joint Committee on Renewable Energy and of the Joint Defense Cooperation Committee. They emphasized that the opportunity to meet regularly at high level is important, to reflect their growing and dynamic bilateral partnership.
3. Secretary Del Rosario reiterated the invitation of President Benigno S. Aquino to H.E. President Pranab Mukherjee and H.E. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to visit the Philippines. Minister Khurshid welcomed the invitations and conveyed that the President of India looked forward to his visit to the Philippines in 2014.
4. The Ministers agreed that the next meetings of the Policy Consultations and Strategic Dialogue will be held in Manila, in 2014.
5. Secretary Del Rosario briefed Minister Khurshid on the GPH-MILF Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro and its Annexes. Minister Khurshid expressed India's support to the Philippine government's pursuit of a just and lasting peace in Mindanao.
6. Secretary Del Rosario also briefed Minister Khurshid on the developments in the West Philippine Sea. Minister Khurshid expressed support for a peaceful resolution of the West Philippine Sea/South China Sea dispute consistent with freedom of navigation and the rule of law.
7. The Ministers affirmed their condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and reiterated their commitment to expand and deepen cooperation in counter terrorism. In this regard, they agreed to convene the Joint Working Group on

Counter Terrorism, in New Delhi, in 2014 to discuss all issues related to terrorism and other transnational crimes.

8. Aware that the rise of transnational crime necessitates increased international judicial cooperation, they agreed to commence negotiations on Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty in Criminal Matters (MLAT) in December 2013 and consider a Transfer of Sentenced Persons Agreement (TSP). Secretary Del Rosario also committed to push for the immediate ratification of the PH-India Extradition Treaty.
9. On defense cooperation, the Ministers welcomed the convening of the 2nd Meeting of the PH-India Joint Defense Cooperation Committee (JDCC) in November 2013, in New Delhi. They also committed to increase exchanges in military training and education. Secretary Del Rosario thanked Minister Khurshid for the naval ship visits which strengthened relations between Philippine and Indian navy and coast guard forces. Minister Khurshid thanked the Philippines side for assistance to the sailing ship INS Sudarshini, on its voyage to mark the India-ASEAN Commemorative Summit in December 2012.
10. The Ministers agreed to step up cooperation in combating non-traditional threats through exchange of experiences and capacity building in the areas of disaster management, food security and pandemics. The Philippines side welcomed the cash support of US\$100,000 provided by the Indian side for disaster relief following the recent devastating earthquake in the Philippines.
11. The Ministers committed to increase bilateral trade and investments between their countries and to fully maximize the potential of the Joint Working Group on Trade and Investment to bring their bilateral trade to an even higher level. Minister Khurshid welcomed the encouragement provided by Secretary Del Rosario to facilitate the expansion of Indian investments in the Philippines to the sectors of textiles and garments, pharmaceuticals, agribusiness, tourism, renewable energy and automotive parts.
12. They welcomed the results of the 2nd Meeting of the Joint Working Group on Tourism and agreed to review the 1949 Bilateral Air Services Agreement.
13. The Ministers agreed to convene the 2nd Meeting of the Joint Working Group on Agriculture and the 2nd Meeting of the Joint Working Group in Health and Medicine at an early date.
14. They welcomed the convening of the first meeting of the Joint Committee on New and Renewable Energy in July this year, and called for the adoption of its Action Plan.
15. Noting the phenomenal growth and symbiotic relationship of Philippine and Indian Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES) companies, the Ministers committed to conclude at the earliest the proposed *Memorandum of Understanding in Information and Communications Technology*. They also agreed that the 1987 Agreement for Cooperation in Science and Technology must be tapped and implemented through a Program of Cooperation (PoC).

16. They also agreed to discuss a new Executive Program on Cultural Exchange, for the years 2014 to 2016.
17. The Ministers exchanged views on regional and international issues of mutual interest, including the forthcoming 11th Asia-Europe Foreign Ministers' Meeting to be held in New Delhi, and the India-ASEAN Summit and East Asia Summit (EAS) in Brunei.
18. The Ministers agreed that the 3rd Meeting of the Joint Commission will be held in 2015, in New Delhi.
19. Minister Khurshid thanked Secretary Del Rosario for the excellent hosting and the hospitality extended to him and his delegation during his visit.