



Office of the President of the Philippines

STATEMENT

Telephone Call with His Excellency KISHIDA FUMIO PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN 17 November 2021

President Rodrigo Roa Duterte and Prime Minister Kishida Fumio of Japan renewed commitment to further deepen the Strategic Partnership between the Philippines and Japan in a telephone conversation held on 17 November 2021.

President Duterte congratulated Prime Minister Kishida on his election and the Government of Japan on the success of the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympic Games.

The President also recalled Prime Minister Kishida's visit in Davao in August 2016 when the latter paid a courtesy call as Foreign Minister of Japan. Prime Minister Kishida was the first Foreign Minister received by President Duterte.

"Japan is unrivaled among our bilateral partners," said the President, as he acknowledged Japan's support for the administration's Build, Build, Build program, the peace process and grassroots development in Mindanao and the ongoing transition process of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region.

President Duterte said Japan has shown that it is *"indeed a friend closer than a brother"* through its timely assistance in the Philippines' COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery efforts.

President Duterte also said he looks forward to the successful implementation of projects and activities aimed at enhancing Philippines-Japan cooperation in maritime security, particularly maritime domain awareness, maritime connectivity and preservation of the marine environment.

For his part, Prime Minister Kishida said that Philippines-Japan relations have indeed reached its golden age under President Duterte's administration. Japan will continue supporting the Philippines' peace and development agenda in Mindanao, Build, Build, Build program and efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prime Minister Kishida also conveyed his Government's readiness to further strengthen Philippines-Japan partnership in maritime security, including by supporting the upgrading of the country's maritime law enforcement capabilities.

President Duterte and Prime Minister Kishida agreed that it is high time for the Philippines and Japan to pursue deeper security engagement and coordination by launching a Foreign and Defense Ministerial Meeting or 2+2 meeting.

The two Leaders also agreed to undertake an exchange of visits at a mutually agreed time to further reaffirm the Philippines-Japan partnership and personal friendship.

They likewise exchanged views on regional developments and multilateral issues, including the South China Sea issue, the situation in Myanmar and the Korean Peninsula and non-proliferation.

The Philippines and Japan celebrate two milestones this year – 65 years of normalized diplomatic relations and 10 years of Strengthened Strategic Partnership.
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