

**Malaysia, Philippines Agree To Scale Up Partnerships**  
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**From R. Ravichandran**

MANILA, Oct 15 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Philippines Monday agreed to scale up and enhance their dynamic and productive partnerships, among others through the Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) and economic and tourism cooperation.

This was achieved at the Expanded Bilateral Meeting between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and Philippine President Benigno Aquino III at the the President's Hall of the Malacanang Palace, here.

According to a Joint Statement released at the end of the meeting, both leaders agreed that Manila and Kuala Lumpur should take advantage of this bilateral mechanism, the JCM, to sustain the momentum in their partnerships and help set the future direction of relations and to explore potential areas of collaboration.

In this context, the statement said they looked forward to Malaysia's hosting of the 8th Philippines-Malaysia JCM in 2013.

On economic cooperation, both leaders noted the increased joint business undertakings and interaction between the two countries' investors and business people, and to sustain this momentum, they endorsed regular conducting of investment forums, exchange of trade and investment missions and related activities.

In support of Manila's efforts in consolidating peace and further fostering sustainable development in Mindanao, both leaders also agreed to tap the Philippines-Malaysia Joint Committee on Assistance for the Socio-Economic Advancement of Muslim Filipinos (JCASAMF) under the auspices of the two countries' JCM.

The leaders also called for the reconvening of the JCASAMF at the earliest opportunity, in order for it to come up with cooperative projects/undertakings in the fields of madrasah education, halal industry, Haj pilgrimage, Islamic banking, university twinning and student-exchange programmes, among others.

Najib also extended an invitation to Aquino to undertake a State visit to Malaysia at a mutually convenient time.

Both leaders also agreed that the Malaysian Prime Minister's visit was a significant milestone in bilateral relations and signalled a new phase of deeper and more robust ties between the two countries.

The statement said Najib also assured that Malaysia would work closely with Manila to implement the Framework Agreement on Bangsamoro signed here.

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