



**Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja**

**Press Release**

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**NIGERIA AND THE PHILIPPINES ADVANCE 65 YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP THROUGH HIGH-LEVEL DIPLOMATIC ENGAGEMENT**

The Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu, received in audience the Ambassador of the Philippines to Nigeria, His Excellency, Mersole J. Mellejor, as both countries reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral relations and expanding cooperation across multiple sectors of mutual interest. The meeting provided an opportunity to review the state of Nigeria-Philippines relations, which have continued to flourish since the establishment of diplomatic relations sixty-five years ago.

During the discussions, Ambassador Mellejor conveyed the goodwill and congratulations of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines to the Honourable Minister on her appointment. He described Nigeria as a strategic partner in Africa and commended the longstanding cordial relations that exist between the two countries. Both parties underscored the importance of South-South cooperation as a valuable framework for advancing shared developmental objectives. They noted that Nigeria and the Philippines, as two vibrant democracies with youthful populations and dynamic economies, possess enormous opportunities for collaboration in areas that directly impact economic growth and human development.

The meeting identified several priority sectors for enhanced cooperation, including education, labour mobility, skills development, information technology, business process outsourcing (BPO), tourism, hospitality, creative industries, trade, investment, maritime affairs, and people-to-people exchanges. Particular attention was given to educational cooperation, with both sides acknowledging the growing number of Nigerian students pursuing higher education in the Philippines. Ambassador Mellejor disclosed that approximately 9,000 Nigerian students are currently studying in various Philippine institutions, underscoring the significance of educational ties as a pillar of bilateral relations. Both

**countries reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring the welfare and academic success of Nigerian students in the Philippines. The Honourable Minister expressed appreciation for the support extended by the Philippine authorities to Nigerian students and welcomed the ongoing efforts to strengthen institutional mechanisms to improve the welfare of the students.**

**Speaking on opportunities for cooperation in the business process outsourcing industry, where the Philippines has established itself as a global leader, Ambassador Mellejor highlighted the enormous potential for collaboration between the Philippines companies and Nigeria's youthful and highly talented workforce, noting that both countries could benefit from strategic partnerships in the digital services sector. On trade and investment, both sides welcomed the significant growth in bilateral trade in recent years and expressed optimism regarding future expansion. The Philippine Ambassador noted that trade between the two countries had increased substantially, driven in part by the Philippines' importation of Nigerian liquefied natural gas, which contributes to the country's energy security.**

**The two sides further explored opportunities for partnerships between Nigerian and Philippine businesses in manufacturing, services, technology, agriculture, and other sectors capable of generating employment and promoting sustainable economic growth. Discussions also covered labour migration governance and manpower development. The meeting highlighted the importance of tourism and cultural diplomacy in fostering closer ties and also acknowledged the growing influence of Nigeria's creative industry and the opportunities for collaboration with the Philippines in film production, entertainment, fashion, music, and cultural exchanges.**

**The Honourable Minister commended the Philippines for its achievements in education, hospitality, labour mobility management, and human capital development, while also emphasizing Nigeria's commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation through existing frameworks, including the forthcoming Fourth Session of the Nigeria-Philippines Joint Commission, which would provide the opportunity to review key bilateral agreements including a Visa Waiver Agreement for holders of Diplomatic and Official Passports, mutual recognition arrangements in maritime affairs, and other instruments designed to facilitate greater cooperation and exchanges between both countries.**

**The Honourable Minister welcomed the growing engagement between Nigeria and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and took note of the Philippines' invitation for Nigeria to consider accession to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia as part of efforts to strengthen inter-regional cooperation and promote peaceful coexistence among nations.**

**Signed:**

**Kimiebi Imomotimi Ebienfa, anipr  
Spokesperson,  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja.  
Tuesday 16, June 2026**