

UK Minister Visits Manila for 80th Year of Bilateral Ties

5.3.2026 - | Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

UK Indo-Pacific Minister Seema Malhotra visited Manila to deepen cooperation, marking 80 years of ties and advancing work on security, growth and climate.

Manila - UK Minister for the Indo-Pacific Seema Malhotra visited Manila to deepen UK-Philippines cooperation. This comes as the two countries mark 80 years of bilateral relations, as well as the 5th anniversary of the UK's status as an ASEAN Dialogue Partner.

A key feature of the visit was the third UK-Philippines Strategic Dialogue. Co-chaired by the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Leo Herrera Lim, the Dialogue provided an opportunity to review developments on shared priorities and discuss next steps for strengthening bilateral engagement.

In 2025, the UK elevated its relationship with the Philippines with a Joint Framework on the Enhanced Partnership, which focused on growth, security and climate cooperation. At an event marking the 80th anniversary of UK-Philippines bilateral relations, Minister Malhotra said:

I want to thank the Philippines for hosting our visit. We recognise and appreciate your leadership on economic growth and regional security as well in the chairing of ASEAN this year.

The Minister further highlighted the importance of partnerships, stating:

We know we are in an increasingly fragmented world where partnerships matter. Partnerships based on trust and ambition. That's why I am incredibly proud of what the UK and Philippines have achieved together and for the opportunity for a renewed focus for our goals of security, prosperity and climate in the interests of both of our nations.

The Minister also delivered remarks at the UK-Philippines Growth and Investment Partnership event which brought together UK experts and delivery partners to support the Philippines' investment ecosystem.

At the Blue Economy symposium, Minister Malhotra emphasised the importance UK-Philippine collaboration on ocean conservation and joint implementation of the High Seas Treaty, essential for protecting marine biodiversity. The Minister also visited the Philippine Coast Guard to highlight its role in regional maritime security, reiterated the UK's support for the rules-based international system.

Building on these, British Ambassador to the Philippines Sarah Hulton OBE stated:

Minister Malhotra's visit highlights the strength and ambition of our long-standing partnership. From trade and investment to maritime security and protecting our oceans, the UK and the Philippines are working together to deliver real benefits for people in

both countries and to deepen collaboration across the Indo-Pacific.

The visit included bilateral meetings between Minister Malhotra and the Secretaries of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Industry, Finance, and Undersecretary of National Defense, exploring concrete ways to strengthen UK-Philippine partnership trade and investment, security and sustainable development initiatives.

The visit demonstrates the UK's continuing commitment to the Philippines and to building a stronger, resilient partnership across Southeast Asia.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-minister-visits-manila-for-80th-year-of-bilateral-ties>