

《菲律宾前总统拉莫斯访华》

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Former Philippine President, Fidel Ramos, has arrived in Hong Kong for talks aimed at rekindling ties with China. Relations between the two countries had become strained due to territorial disputes in the South China Sea.

Speaking to media outside Hong Kong International Airport, Ramos said he had come to renew the friendship between China and Philippines.

"We are here as a special envoy of our new president, Rodrigo Duterte, a very good man. We want only to renew our friendship, or as he said in his statement, to rekindle the goodwill, the harmony and the crossed ties of the Philippines and China."

Ramos has been appointed as a special envoy by Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte to repair its soured ties with China.

The appointment came in the wake of Manila's unilateral move to bring the South China Sea dispute to an arbitral tribunal in The Hague.

China dismissed the ruling issued on July 12 as "null and void with no binding force", and refused to take part in or recognize the arbitration case.

It also stressed that it stands ready to continue to resolve disputes peacefully through negotiation and consultation on the basis of respecting historical facts and in accordance with international law.

This is the 88-year-old former Philippine President's first trip to Beijing in his role as envoy.

Speaking at a news conference before his departure, Ramos said he would play the role as an icebreaker to rekindle, to warm up again his country's good friendly, neighborly relation to China.

He said it'll also be beneficial to ease the ongoing regional tension brought by the territorial disputes.

"My initial thought on the preliminary phase, eventually - I am sure you will hear this from high officials in Manila and other departments - eventually, there will be formal, bilateral talks. And the objective is the same objective as me, which is to bring about a condition of peace, sustainable development, and harmony in our Asia-Pacific region."

Ramos also noted that his visit was more private in nature, and unofficial.

He's due to meet some old friends and also hold initial talks with Chinese officials, which could be the first step towards restarting bilateral relations.

Ramos served as the Philippine president from 1992 to 1998 and has maintained good ties with China even after stepping down from office.

He was also instrumental in the creation of the Boao Forum for Asia in 1998, a non-government and non-profit international organization, for which he also served as a chairman.

The forum, inaugurated in south China's Boao city in Hainan, meets annually to discuss the most pressing issues in the region and the world at large.

