



DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
KAGAWARAN NG UGNAYANG PANLABAS

MESSAGE

118<sup>th</sup> Commemoration of the Anniversary of the  
Proclamation of Philippine Independence

One hundred eighteen years ago, bound by the desire for liberty, equality and justice, our forefathers valiantly took a collective stand to break free and fight for self-rule, and triumphed with the birth of the Filipino nation and our people's independence.

To this day, we continue to walk the path of our heroes. Against every difficulty, we always have come together as a people, united by our selfless love for the country and the strong sense of duty to our fellow Filipinos.

In the past six years, the administration of President Benigno S. Aquino III has worked tirelessly to deepen the meaning of our freedom to each and every Filipino. Bold structural reforms were taken to successfully deliver on our renewed hopes for better lives.

With the conviction that transparent, open and streamlined processes allow for greater growth, programs were directed to broaden civic engagement and participation in governance, and to fortify the highest standards of integrity, accountability, and trustworthiness in the country's public leadership.

As a result, the Philippines is now widely acknowledged for its steady rise as a dynamic economic growth hub with sustainable inclusive development, a vital and responsible member of the global community committed to uphold and abide by the rule of law, and as a stronghold for democracy with its constituent values that places primacy on the dignity and worth of the human being.

In celebrating 118 years of Philippine Independence, the Department of Foreign Affairs remains resolute and determined to serve, defend, and advance our fundamental interests in the diplomatic frontlines: the peace and security of the nation, the growth of the economy, and the rights and welfare of our people overseas and even those at home.

It has been often said that for us to build the future, we must honor the past. In keeping with this year's theme of "*Kalayaan 2016: Pagkakaisa, Pag-aambagan at Pagsulong*," our celebration of our freedom is a powerful reminder of the true measure of our strength as a country; that is how we can bravely seize the challenges, and together - as one people passionately driven by a shared vision of greatness - we can prevail.

*Mabuhay ang Kalayaan at ang Sambayanang Pilipino!*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'JRM', written over a white background.

JOSE RENE D. ALMENDRAS  
Secretary of Foreign Affairs

12 June 2016, Pasay City