



MESSAGE

One hundred and fifteen years ago, Filipinos stood victorious and proud as the Philippine flag was raised for the first time to signify the birth of an independent nation. It was a time when the task of nation-building, daunting as it was, served to form a shared vision of a free, prosperous and just society that would be worthy of the pride of every Filipino.

This year's theme, *Kalayaan 2013: Ambagan tungo sa Malawakang Kaunlaran*, reminds us that each of us has a role to play in turning the vision of a prosperous Philippines into reality. With the principled leadership of President Benigno S. Aquino III, the Philippines endeavors to achieve inclusive growth that will ensure an improving quality of life for all.

We call on Filipinos all over the world to join in our country's march towards economic development and social progress. By investing in the Philippines and engaging in entrepreneurship, overseas Filipino workers can be more powerful drivers of growth. Our collective efforts will eventually transform overseas employment from a necessary means of survival to a real economic choice.

The Department of Foreign Affairs remains steadfast in its resolve to contribute to nation-building. Guided by the three pillars of Philippine foreign policy – the preservation of national security, the enhancement of economic diplomacy, and the protection of the rights and welfare of Filipinos overseas – we continue to engage the international community and represent Philippine interests abroad to ensure an environment that is conducive to growth.

Today we commemorate the sacrifices of the men and women who valiantly fought for our independence. From their example, we can draw strength and inspiration for the work that lies ahead. As we celebrate our Independence Day, let us all come together in forging a bright future for our country.

Mabuhay at Maligayang Araw ng Kalayaan!

ALBERT F. DEL ROSARIO
Secretary of Foreign Affairs

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Pasay City