



MESSAGE

A Call to Celebrate the Philippines' 116th Day of Independence

Today we commemorate our forebears' declaration—made 116 years ago—of the Filipino's right to freedom. We also celebrate the fact that this freedom endures to this day, giving each of us, regardless of where we are in the world, a chance to do better and break boundaries.

Independence, after all, is not merely the abolition of colonial rule or the assertion of sovereignty over our own territory. It also involves the exploration of new ground, the achievement of economic security, and the broadening of horizons.

I share with our countrymen in the Swiss Confederation positive news: of a flourishing Philippine economy, which posted one of the fastest growth rates in Asia last year at 7.2 percent, and one that is poised to continue its growth trajectory this year. Reports by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and Standard and Poor's (S&P) recognize the emergence of the Philippines as a dynamic market in the global economy, resilient amidst various economic uncertainties.

Crucial to sustaining this robust growth and fulfilling our national potential is the country's efforts to continue to improve the business climate in the Philippines. This is why the government is accelerating infrastructure spending, while remaining focused on efforts to practice prudent economic management and good governance. That is why we are developing industry-level reforms and implementing programs designed to encourage foreign investments, including those from the Swiss Confederation.

Switzerland is, in fact, one of the Philippines' most vital trading partners, ranking as our twentieth largest export market and twentieth largest source of investments. The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding to establish the Joint Economic Mission between the Philippines and Switzerland in 2013 has served to strengthen economic ties and underscore the strong bilateral relations between the two countries.

Indeed, we are poised for better times. The ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), set to be established next year, will transform Southeast Asia into a highly competitive economic region and the Philippines will ensure that we secure our fair share of the region's opportunities.

These opportunities are yours to seize!

Hence, as we mark our country's 116th Day of Independence, I would like to encourage you all to continue to participate in the Philippines' ongoing growth story. The native soil is fertile. Let boundaries and limitations constrain us no more. Let us honor our heroes' struggles and celebrate by demonstrating our freedom: freedom to do better, freedom to achieve great things for ourselves and our beloved homeland.

Happy Independence Day! *Mabuhay po kayong lahat!*


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