



MESSAGE OF THE SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**On the Occasion of the 117th Anniversary of the Proclamation of
Philippine Independence**

As we celebrate the 117th Anniversary of the Proclamation of Philippine Independence with pride and poignant remembrance, we honor the sacrifices of our heroes who fought with incredible courage to secure our freedom as a nation.

From Dr. Jose Rizal, to Andres Bonifacio and Apolinario Mabini, our timeless champions continue to inspire the Philippines to be proud of its past, faithful to the present and confident about its future.

In the last five years under the Aquino administration's reform agenda dubbed, "*Tuwid na Daan*," our country has never been more optimistic about its future. Now, more than ever, the Philippines is assured of its role in the community of responsible nations.

This year's theme, "*Kalayaan 2015: Tagumpay sa Pagbabagong Nasimulan, Abot-Kamay na ng Bayan*" (Independence 2015: Triumphs through reforms, within nation's reach), therefore, comes with renewed international confidence in the Philippines' potential not only as one of Asia's growth engines but also in its emerging role as a lead advocate in the region on the primacy of the rule of law.

For its part, as the 'Department that never sleeps,' the Department of Foreign Affairs continues to embrace the ideals of our heroes in pursuing a principled, focused and forward-looking foreign policy; whether in terms of preserving national security, enhancing economic diplomacy or protecting the rights and promoting the welfare of our overseas Filipinos.

We continue to call on all our *kababayan* to do their share in building a progressive Philippines. We encourage investors and development partners to help us achieve a truly inclusive Filipino society. We envision the current and the next generation of Filipino leaders and social entrepreneurs to continue the reform agenda so that, in the words of President Benigno S. Aquino III, "no one is left behind."

In commemorating this year's Independence Day, let the lives of our national heroes remind us of the powerful lessons of choice, inclusiveness, and above all, the very nature that makes us all human – the capacity to do good and to achieve greatness.

Mabuhay ang Araw ng Kalayaan!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alfredo".

ALBERT F. DEL ROSARIO
Secretary of Foreign Affairs