

# Philippine national day

## The Philippines and Japan: Rising together

Manuel M. Lopez  
AMBASSADOR OF THE PHILIPPINES

Today, a rising and grateful Philippines celebrates 117 years of nationhood.



On June 12, 1898, the Philippine flag was unfurled before the Filipino nation and the world, marking the beginning of our people's journey to self-determination. That path has proven to be an arduous one, yet the Filipino's strength of spirit and kind hearts have always shone through and conquered all odds.

The Philippines is now at an important point in its journey as a nation. The administration of H.E. President Benigno S. Aquino III has resolutely steered the nation onto the daang matuwid (straight path), which brought the Philippines' democratic heritage and an unmitigated commitment to good

governance to bear on the drive toward national development and inclusive growth.

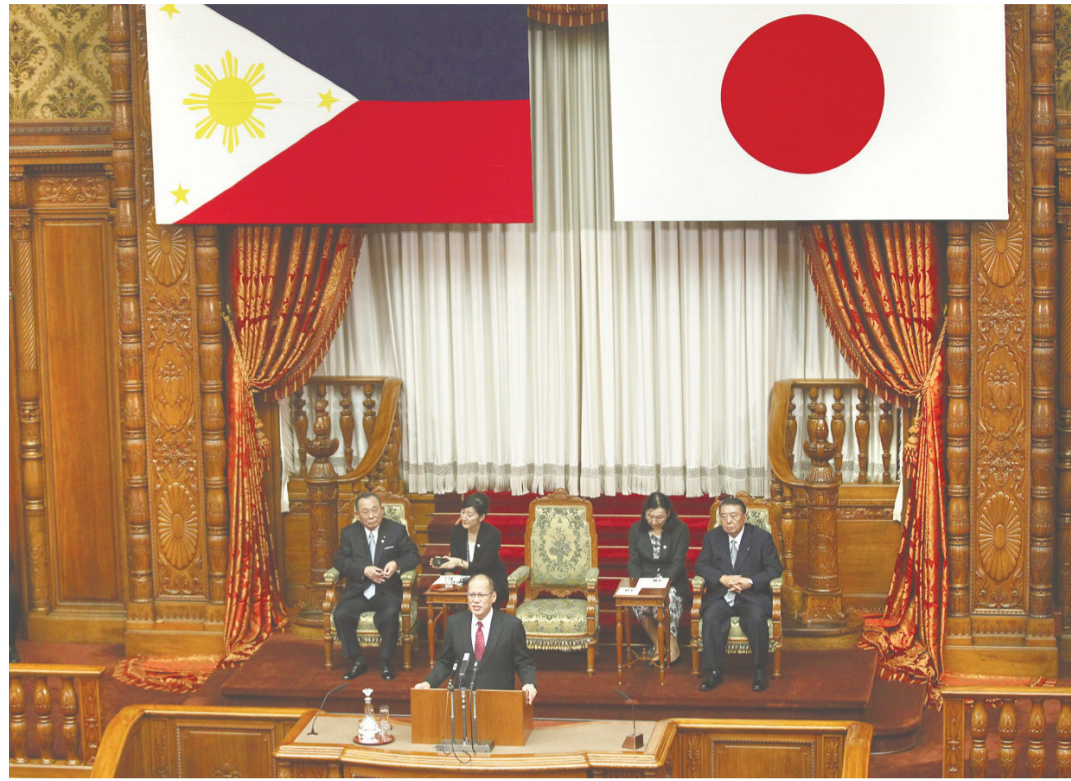
This philosophy of governance has empowered the Filipino people, and the results have been outstanding. The Philippines now rides a sustained wave of unsurpassed economic growth, stability and international confidence. Over the last five years, growth has averaged 6.3 percent, making the Philippines one of the fastest growing nations in the world. Our strong economic fundamentals and robust fiscal position are confirmed by the investment-grade ratings and further upgrades assigned by Standard & Poor's, Fitch Ratings, Moody's Investor Service and the Japan Credit Rating Agency.

With this backing, it's no wonder that in 2014, foreign direct investment into the Philippines reached a new high of \$6.2 billion. But even as the Philippines' attractiveness is at its highest, President Aquino's government is working hard to

further boost competitiveness and further secure the foundation for future growth.

Japan, our Strategic Partner in Asia, has done much to fuel the Philippines' rise and will continue to be our most important regional partner in the years to come.

Japan's special position in the Philippines' success was evident between June 2 and 5, when President Aquino was received as a state guest by the government of Japan. President Aquino was warmly welcomed by Their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, who graciously held a state banquet in his honor. The president and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe also held a summit meeting, the outcome of which promises to inaugurate a new era in bilateral relations. The president also delivered a much-lauded address before a joint session of the Diet, met with key government and business officials and commemorated Philippine National Day



President of the Republic of the Philippines Benigno S. Aquino III delivers a speech at the Diet on June 3 during his state visit to Japan. EMBASSY OF THE PHILIPPINES

with the Filipino community in Japan.

That visit resulted in the Joint Declaration on "A Strengthened Strategic Partnership for Advancing the Shared Principles and Goals of Peace, Security, and Growth in the Region and

Beyond" and an action plan mapping out initiatives designed to further fortify the relationship.

The state visit was an occasion for the Philippines to thank Japan for its full and sustained support for Philippine development and in advancing the cause for lasting peace in Mindanao. More importantly, it was an occasion to renew the longstanding friendship between our peoples. Over 222,000 Filipinos live in Japan. In 2014, 184,204 Filipino tourists visited

this country, posting the highest growth in ASEAN tourism to Japan, at 70 percent. Japanese tourists rose to 463,744 in 2014, and record-breaking arrivals are on the horizon.

As the Philippines celebrates 117 years of its foundation, and as both countries approach the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2016, we thank Japan for building with us one of the strongest relations and most dynamic and mutually beneficial economic partnerships Asia has ever seen.



## Moving forward on path of inclusive growth for all

Benigno S. Aquino III  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

My warmest greetings to my fellow Filipinos and the Philippines' friends and partners in Japan, as we celebrate the 117th Anniversary of the Proclamation of Philippine Independence.

This year's commemoration assumes great significance, as the Philippines celebrates its emergence as one of Asia's fastest growing economies. Challenges remain, but improving economic indicators, rising international confidence and the continued optimism of the Filipino people leave no doubt that the Philippines has inexorably shifted to a sustainable and dynamic path toward inclusive growth.

Japan figures prominently in this revitalized chapter of our history. Our friendship, which is founded on respect and shared interest in key regional issues, has been further strengthened by my state visit to Japan earlier this month. The Japanese people's enduring regard and the faith of Japanese business and industry all complement our official engagement, providing an unshakable foundation on which our relations will thrive in the coming years.

The Philippines is well on its way toward becoming a modern and prosperous state. I am confident that our bilateral Strategic Partnership will continue to bolster this growth and serve our common desire to advance peace, prosperity and the rule of law within our nations, the larger region and beyond.

## President's state visit deepens partnership

Kenji Kosaka  
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-PHILIPPINES  
PARLIAMENTARIANS' FRIENDSHIP  
LEAGUE

On the occasion of the 117th Independence Day of the Republic of the Philippines, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the government and people of the Philippines on behalf of the Japan-Philippines Parliamentarians' Friendship League.



His Excellency President

Benigno S. Aquino III of the Republic of the Philippines paid a state visit to Japan from June 2 to 5 at the invitation of the Japanese government. Their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko received the president at the Imperial Palace, holding a welcome ceremony, state call and a state banquet in honor of Aquino.

The president held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who also hosted a dinner for him. His activities during the four-day visit included an address to the Diet, an address to a special session of the Nikkei Future of Asia

Conference and attending an economic forum in Tokyo on investments in the Philippines.

In recent years, Japan and the Philippines have enjoyed closer relations than ever, and I am convinced that Aquino's latest visit to Japan significantly deepened, and will continue to deepen, the bilateral relationship.

Members of the Japan-Philippines Parliamentarians' Friendship League, for their part, had an opportunity to hold a meeting with the president, exchanging opinions on subjects of interest to both sides.

Our league is grateful to President Aquino — whose six-

year presidential term will expire in June 2016 — for his devotion to enhancing the strategic partnership between Japan and the Philippines. I look forward to seeing the partnership expand further in the years ahead.

As this year marks the 70th year of the end of World War II, I am pleased to acknowledge that Japan and the Philippines have promoted bilateral relations by overcoming difficult times. The Japan-Philippines Parliamentarians' Friendship League remains committed to further strengthening the good relationship between Japan and the Philippines.

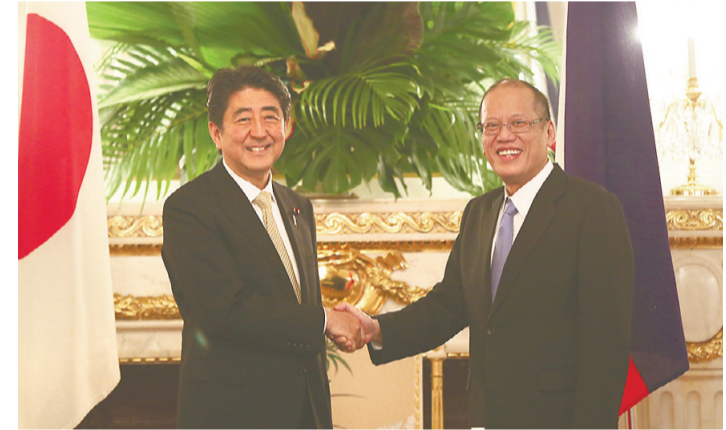
## Latest summit meeting charts new era in relationship

On June 4, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe held a meeting with President of the Republic of the Philippines Benigno S. Aquino III, who was on a visit to Japan as a state guest, at the Government Guesthouse. The outline of the meeting is as follows.

As outcomes of the summit meeting, the following documents were issued: "Japan-Philippines Joint Declaration: A Strengthened Strategic Partnership for Advancing the Shared Principles and Goals of Peace, Security, and Growth in the Region and Beyond;" "Action Plan for Strengthening of the Strategic Partnership;" and "Cooperation Roadmap for Quality Infrastructure Development in the Transport Sector in Metropolitan Manila Area."

### Bilateral relations

• **Political, security relations**  
Noting that Japan will continue to promote initiatives under its "Proactive Contribution to Peace," Abe explained the significance of legislation for peace and security that was submitted to the Diet and stated that he wants to further strengthen security cooperation with the Philippines against the backdrop of an increasingly severe security environment in Asia. In this regard, both leaders decided to initiate negotiations to conclude an agreement on the transfer of defense equipment and technology in order to promote defense cooperation in the areas of disaster relief and maritime security. With regard to assistance for the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), Abe welcomed the signing of a contract for the construction and



Philippine President Benigno S. Aquino III meets with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on June 4 in Tokyo during his state visit to Japan. EMBASSY OF THE PHILIPPINES

acquisition of patrol vessels and stated that the government of Japan wants to strengthen consultations toward the further enhancement of maritime domain awareness of the PCG.

• **Mindanao peace process**  
Abe expressed his support for efforts by the government of the Philippines to secure enduring peace in Mindanao, and stated that the government of Japan will promote the Japan-Bangsamoro Initiatives for Reconstruction and Development (J-BIRD II), in view of the establishment of a new autonomous political entity.

• **Variety of exchanges**  
Abe stated that the government of Japan will steadily implement the "Cooperation Roadmap for Quality Infrastructure Development in the Transport Sector in Metropolitan Manila Area," which was agreed upon this time to further promote trade and investment between both countries. Abe also requested further efforts by the

government of the Philippines to develop a business-friendly environment in the Philippines. In addition, Abe stated that Japan intends to support the North-South Commuter Railway project — with a total project cost of approximately ¥300 billion — by actively utilizing its finance and technologies. He also stated that Japan decided to provide assistance of ¥34 billion for the Metro Manila Priority Bridges Seismic Improvement Project and the Project for Davao City Bypass Construction.

In response, Aquino stated that Japan's assistance with its sophisticated technologies has been contributing to strengthening the infrastructure of the Philippines, and expressed his gratitude for Japan's support for each project. Both leaders shared the view that in the run-up to the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations next year they will further promote exchanges between the two countries, in-

cluding through tourism, the Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths 2015, the WA Project, and the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme.

### International issues

Referring to land reclamation activities in the South China Sea, Aquino expressed his gratitude for a statement issued at the G7 Foreign Minister's meeting, and explained that the Philippines is seeking a peaceful settlement of disputes under the rule of law, and the disputes should be settled through diplomatic efforts. He also explained that the Philippines is utilizing an arbitration procedure to settle the disputes and is hoping that a code of conduct that is legally binding will be formulated.

In response, Abe stated that Japan shares deep concern with the Philippines on unilateral actions to change the status quo, including large-scale land reclamation and the building of outposts in the South China Sea. Abe added that Japan will work together with other countries to achieve the rule of law, along with supporting the utilization of the arbitration procedure by the Philippines.

Also, North Korea issues and cooperation with the APEC meeting and U.N. Security Council reform were discussed.

Information derived from the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan

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On the 117th Anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of the Philippines, we congratulate the Filipino people.

**Mabuhay!**

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# Philippine national day



The rice terraces in the mountains of Banaue are designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site. EMBASSY OF THE PHILIPPINES

## Endless reasons to visit the Philippines

The Philippines is set to become the ultimate destination this year with the launch of the Department of Tourism's (DOT) "Visit the Philippines Year 2015," (VPY 2015) an invitation for all to experience the enduring promise of "It's More Fun in the Philippines." Encouraging nationwide participation, DOT hopes to inspire 10 million foreign tourists to discover, explore and fall in love with the Philippines.

Japanese visitors will not run out of reasons to visit the Philippines as 2015 proves to be an exciting year. From the Papal Visit in January, the Madrid Fusion-Manila in April, the MTV Music Evolution Manila in May to the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Ministerial Meetings and Leaders' Summit in November, VPY 2015 will feature a mix of fun events and activities, as well as the unveiling of more historic treasures, natural won-

ders and unforgettable adventures. Information about upcoming events is posted at [www.visitph2015.com](http://www.visitph2015.com), where a yearlong calendar can be used as a reference for any visitor who wishes to experience the best of what the country has to offer in the arts, business, sports and travel scene.

Japan continues to be the third-largest source of travelers to the country with 463,744 Japanese visiting the country in 2014; 9.59 percent of the total number of tourists. The first quarter of 2015 saw an all-time high of 130,374 Japanese visitors, 8.69 percent higher than in 2014.

In commemoration of VPY 2015, DOT has increased the momentum of their promotional activities over previous years. DOT started 2015 with a bang with train advertisements on Metro Lines and JR East Japan Lines. This was followed by the country's participation



White sand beaches and resorts are among the Philippines' major tourist draws. EMBASSY OF THE PHILIPPINES

in Japan's largest snow festival, the Sapporo Snow Festival, where a 13-meter replica of the Manila Cathedral made of snow was the centerpiece attraction of the Hokkaido Broadcasting Company's Philippine Square.

DOT's endeavors brought the Philippines into the spotlight as a tourist destination for the Japanese public. Manila and Cebu ranked among the top 10 destinations during

Golden Week according to JTB's airline reservations. Manila rose from 16th place to ninth place while Cebu jumped from 33rd to eighth place. Cebu is also ranked third in destinations with the highest growth in reservations according to Expedia.

Indeed, VPY 2015 is a great opportunity to finally share with the world the unique experiences and adventures our country has to offer.

## Remarkable growth energizes economic exchanges

Toshiyuki Shiga  
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-PHILIPPINES  
ECONOMIC COOPERATION  
COMMITTEE

As the representative of the Japan-Philippines Economic Cooperation Committee, I would like to congratulate the Republic of the Philippines on the occasion of the 117th anniversary of its independence.



Under the strong leadership of President Benigno S. Aquino III, the Philippines has seen remarkable economic development over the past five years and achieved an excellent growth rate worthy of note

even among the high-growth community of ASEAN.

Comparing economic statistics in fiscal 2011, one year after Aquino assumed office, to those of last fiscal year, we see that GDP per capita stood at \$2,379 in fiscal 2011 and rose to \$2,865 in fiscal 2014. The GDP growth rate also jumped from 3.6 percent to 6.1 percent. Total exports from the Philippines expanded from \$48.3 billion to \$61.8 billion over the same period, while Philippine exports to Japan increased dramatically from ¥712.1 billion to ¥1,076 trillion.

Since taking office, the president has adopted the slogan of "If no one is corrupt, no one will be poor," and both of these goals have become reality.

Trade and investment, as

well as human exchanges between Japan and the Philippines, are becoming more and more active every year. In February, a mission from the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry paid a call on Aquino. In March, the 33rd Joint Meeting of the Japan-Philippines Economic Cooperation Committee was held in Tokyo and saw an exchange of concrete and detailed views between Japanese business representatives and Philippines business leaders and the secretaries of Philippine government departments related to the economy.

During Aquino's visit earlier this month as a state guest to Japan, the president addressed the Diet and the Philippines Investment Forum. From his

speeches, I am confident that Philippine-Japan relations will go from strength to strength in the future.

The Philippines is the ASEAN member geographically closest to Japan. This proximity is proving to be not just in terms of distance but also in terms of the economy and human exchanges, as well.

This is the final year of the vision Aquino announced when he took office. Strong foundations for Japan-Philippines ties have been built and I am confident that the path forward will be increasingly solid.

In closing, I would like to express once again my congratulations to the Republic of the Philippines on the 117th anniversary of its independence.

### Congratulations

on the 117th Anniversary of  
the Independence of  
the Republic of the Philippines



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