

Philippine National Day Special

National development beside a prosperous friendship

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AMBASSADOR OF THE PHILIPPINES



I send my warmest greetings to our *kababayans* (fellow Filipinos) and Japanese friends on our special day, as we celebrate the 121st anniversary of the Proclamation of Philippine

Independence.

June 12 stands out on our national calendar not only as a day of remembrance of heroes past, but also of the courage they displayed to assert the rights of Filipinos, the dream of freedom in our own land and the lessons they left us in their tortuous quest to build our independent republic. This day also awakens recollections of the values and principles that endure and illuminate the path we need to walk in order to attain the future of which we dream. There is much work to be done, and we call upon our collective strength to achieve these goals.

Though there is much to celebrate, there is still much work ahead. In the midst of sustained and robust economic expansion,

the Philippines continues to make improvements in the business environment for the provision of jobs, the continued entry of capital, the growth of industry, and the sustainable use of resources. The Duterte government has worked tirelessly to ensure that the nation we continue to build is one that provides all Filipinos a comfortable, secure and well-rooted life.

The recent results of midterm elections in the Philippines testify to the strong faith of the people in the government's agenda of peace and development, and represent the people's command for the government to pursue national development at an even sturdier and uninterrupted pace. The results speak of the people's wish for the government to show political will to provide stability and resolute decision in the face of uncertainty.

But the world is in a state of flux, and transformative change is everywhere. This is perhaps most pronounced in Asia. We hope that our "Build, Build, Build" program will transform the face of the Philippines in accordance with the Ambisyon Natin 2040 aspirations. This is the investment we are making to ensure that as our population grows and the young enter the workplace and the marketplace, what they will find is a

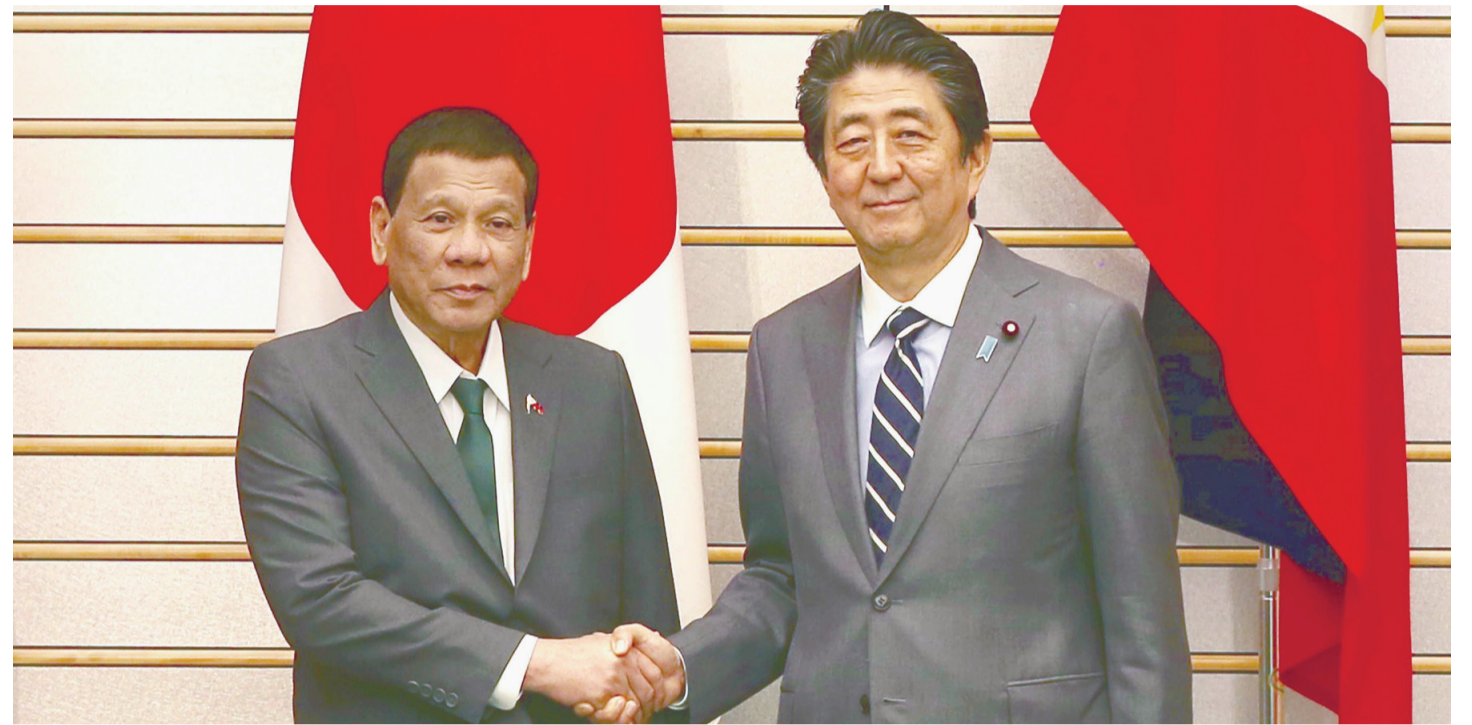
rapidly growing and efficient economy that is full of opportunity to accommodate their talents and respond to their needs.

Mindanao is rising. Optimism is in the air and in the hearts of those who live in the rich lands of Mindanao with one of its sons attaining the presidency. The promise

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of peace is real with the ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law. For the first time in our history, parts of Mindanao are now growing at a faster pace than the National Capital Region. Business is flourishing, and its heartbeat is steady and strong. To grasp the opportunities represented by these changes, the Philippines counts on its friends and allies everywhere. President Rodrigo Duterte and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe met in Tokyo recently, and their meeting was a confirmation of their will to strengthen an already sterling partnership. Japan is exemplary in our constellation of friends, one the president has qualified as a "friend closer than a brother." We share a deep understanding, perhaps deriving from our common endowments as archipelagos, where the people have an innate connection with the seas and an abiding respect for the power of mother nature.

As a major actor in key initiatives in the Philippines — from the infrastructure sector, defense and security, to human development and capacity-building, from science and technology, and industry to agriculture and the environment — Japan has become the standard of development assistance by which we measure all other partnerships. We are starting to reap the dividends of



President Rodrigo Duterte and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Tokyo on May 31. THE PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS OFFICE

peace and development through Japan's staunch and steady support of Mindanao over many decades.

Japan itself is in the midst of transformation. We extend our warmest felicitations to His Majesty Emperor Naruhito and Her Majesty Empress Masako. In the year of Emperor Naruhito's ascension to the throne, Japan is filled with fresh energy and confidence. For its friends like the Philippines, this ascension calls to mind Japan's radiant stability, and bestows upon its friendships and commitments an enduring quality.

There is much to look forward to as Japan prepares for major events in its own calendar. The Philippines would like to be an active participant in many important decisions Japan will take with its partners, through the Group of 20, the Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Devel-

opment (TICAD VII), as well as the Olympic and Paralympic Games next summer. Bilaterally, we look forward to an expanded agenda for joint action and cooperation.

One of the most promising developments is in the new arrangements for welcoming foreign workers. Through the cooperation of the two governments, we look forward to ensuring that both our nationals and their adoptive country enjoy the benefits arising from these new policies.

And while these new cooperative mechanisms allow Filipinos to meaningfully participate in Japan's economic and social life, their experiences in Japan will strongly influence their own sense of country when they return to the Philippines.

Already 280,000 strong in Japan, Filipinos have lived and worked in Japan for decades. Second and third generation Japanese Filipinos love this great country

they call home. And they have made substantial contributions to their local communities, often away from the glare of the media spotlight. For many years, they have silently cared for many members of their host communities, and have stood by them even through difficult times. We are very proud of our countrymen in Japan, because they highlight the best qualities of the Filipino individual.

On the basis of common endowments and shared values, we hope our people flourish under this strengthened strategic partnership. We would like to ensure that all citizens are able to reap the benefits of a cooperative and fraternal relationship. This day of reminiscence and anticipation is a good day to imagine the shared future we desire.

Mabuhay tayong lahat! Long live everyone!



Officials of Japan and the Philippines at the groundbreaking ceremony of the Metro Manila Subway System in Barangay Ugong in February. THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION OF THE PHILIPPINES



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Philippine National Day Special

Celebrating another year of amicable ties, cooperation

TEODORO LOCSIN JR.
SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



I wish to send my warmest greetings to my *kababayans* (fellow Filipinos) and our dear Japanese friends who join us in celebrating the 121st Anniversary of the Proclamation of

Philippine Independence.

The Philippines enjoys another fruitful year of achievements, accomplished on the back of decades of hard work and heroism of our people. We recall the commitment of Filipinos who have worked together in shared purpose to move the nation closer to its dream of achieving peace and prosperity for all.

2019 has been a year of many meaningful deeds and fulfillment. We have recently concluded midterm elections, the results of which gave the administration of President Rodrigo Duterte a stronger mandate to pursue national development at greater speed. Aspiring and inspiring young leaders have emerged to take the helm of regional development, while brilliant young talents are taking center stage in realizing our dreams of excellence in national endeavors — in the arts and sciences, in technology and innovation and in business and social enterprises.

These developments are multiple roads that lead to the same horizon — a nation that will leave no one behind, progressing to uplift everyone. These dreams can only draw upon the courage and vision of our people, and Filipinos everywhere have begun to respond to the call of the republic to continue to support and contribute to the greater good.

By the same token, we continue to see stronger partnerships, alliances and friendships with nations everywhere. And we need not look far, for in our neighborhood is that one bright star that continues to inspire and support us.

As a friend closer than a brother, Japan holds a special place in the hearts and minds of Filipinos. Today, the Philippines sees Japan as one of its most trusted partners in the world, and this relationship of trust pervades all undertakings of our



Foreign Minister Taro Kono (forth from left) and Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. (fifth from left) at a Japanese school in Davao on Feb. 10. DFA-OFFICE OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND RESEARCH

nation. From infrastructure work and humanitarian assistance to security partnerships, with initiatives that span the whole Philippine archipelago, Filipinos see, through decades of cooperation and outreach, a Japan that has demonstrated a sincere commitment to help our country and the wider Southeast Asian region become one of the world's most prosperous and stable.

After a very successful visit to Japan of our president in May, the relations of the Philippines and Japan are even stronger and more mutually beneficial than they have ever been, as we work to ensure that positive results will be felt quickly by Filipinos and Japanese alike.

Rising from the ashes of a more difficult time, Japan has proven itself to be a steady hand for peace and development in the region. Hence, it is the most sought-after partner in the Philippines. Both in the public and private sectors, Japan's engagement has become the gold standard of all our bilateral relationships, and we look forward to the stability of this relationship to bring us into a new decade of friendship and mutually beneficial endeavors.

I feel privileged to witness in 2019 a pivotal year for Japan, as it fetes the imperial succession. The Philippine government

and the Filipino people send their sincerest best wishes to His Majesty Emperor Naruhito and Her Majesty Empress Masako. The world celebrates with Japan, recognizing in this historic event the essence of Japan's stability, and by extension, the source of its constancy towards its partners.

With several more crucial events coming up in Japan, we in the Philippines look forward to meaningful outcomes that have the power to transform the lives of ordinary people.

And as our Independence Day celebration is a deep reflection on the past and the future we aspire to have, we send our message of goodwill and friendship to Japan and our kababayans who live and work far from home, who continue to be a force for change. And with courage and compassion, in sincere and friendly engagement with our partners and friends, Filipinos everywhere celebrate their independence and heritage on this special day.

Mabuhay ang ating kalayaan! Long live our freedom!

This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.



The city of Vigan in the island of Luzon is a Spanish colonial town from the 16th century. THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM OF THE PHILIPPINES



The Blue Lagoon beach in the Ilocos Norte province of Luzon Island. THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM OF THE PHILIPPINES



MassKara Festival is a festival held annually in October in Bacolod, Visayas. THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM OF THE PHILIPPINES



A Philippine eagle, an endangered species, from Davao in the southern island of Mindanao. THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM OF THE PHILIPPINES

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