

**Presidential Communications Operations Office
Presidential News Desk**

**SPEECH OF
PRESIDENT FERDINAND “BONGBONG” ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.
DURING HIS INAUGURATION**

[Delivered at the National Museum of Fine Arts in the City of Manila | 30 June 2022]

His Excellency David Hurley, Governor-General of Australia, and First Lady Linda Hurley; their Excellencies, Special Envoys and Heads of Delegations; His Excellency Most Reverend Charles John Brown and the esteemed members of the Diplomatic Corps; Vice President Sara Duterte *[applause]*; President Fidel Ramos; President Joseph Ejercito Estrada; President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo; Senate President Vicente Sotto III and the honorable members of the Philippine Senate; House Speaker Lord Allan Jay Velasco and the honorable members of the House of Representatives; Chief Justice Alexander Gesmundo and the honorable justices of the Supreme Court; of course, First Lady Liza Araneta *[cheers and applause]* and my children: Alexander, Sandro; Simon and Vincent *[cheers]*; I cannot proceed without a special greeting of course to the former First Lady Imelda Romualdez-Marcos *[cheers]*; other distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen; my friends; ang aking minamahal na mga kababayan *[cheers]*; magandang tanghali po sa inyong lahat.

This is a historic moment for us all. I feel it deep within me. You, the people, have spoken, and it is resounding. When my call for unity started to resonate with you, it did so because it echoed your yearnings, mirrored your sentiments, and expressed your hopes for family, for country, and for a better future. That is why it reverberated and amplified as it did, to deliver the biggest electoral mandate in the history of Philippine democracy. *[cheers and applause]*

By your vote, you rejected the politics of division. I offended none of my rivals in this campaign. *[cheers and applause]* I listened instead to what they were saying and I saw little incompatibility with my own ideas: about jobs, fair wages, personal safety; and national strength; and ending want in a land of plenty.

I believe that if we but focus on the work at hand, and the work that will come to hand, we will go very far under my watch. You believed that, too. *[cheers and applause]* At pinakinggan ko ang tinig ninyo na ang sinisigaw ay “Pagkakaisa... Pagkakaisa... Pagkakaisa!” *[cheers and applause]*

We will go farther together, than against each other; pushing forward, not pulling each other back — out of fear, out of a misplaced sense of weakness. But we are the farthest from weak. The Filipino diaspora flourishes even in the most inhospitable climes, where they're valued for their quality. The changes we seek will benefit all and will shortchange no one.

I was not the instrument of change. You were that; you made it happen. *[cheers]* I am now. You picked me to be your servant, to enable changes to benefit all.

I fully understand the gravity of the responsibility that you've put on my shoulders. I do not take it lightly but I am ready for the task. *[cheers and applause]* I will need your help; I want to rely on it. But rest assured, I do not predicate success on the wide cooperation that's

needed.

I will get it done. I once knew a man who saw what little had been achieved since independence, in a land of people with the greatest potential for achievement; and yet they were poor. But he got it done; sometimes with the needed support; sometimes without. So will it be with his son. You will get no excuses from me. *[cheers and applause]*

I am here not to talk about the past; I am here to tell you about our future. *[cheers and applause]* A future of sufficiency even plenty; of readily available ways and means to get done what needs doing — by you, by me.

We do not look back but ahead; up the road that we must take to a place better than the one we lost in the pandemic: gains made and lost; opportunities missed; well-laid plans superseded by the pandemic.

Indeed, ours was the fastest-growing economy in ASEAN by ways now outdated. We shall be again by radical change in a way the world must now work to recover what we have lost in the fire. And move on from there.

We face prospects of the spread of the war abroad, of which we are totally blameless. We seek friendship with all. But countries like ours will bear the brunt of it. And if the great powers draw the wrong lessons from the ongoing tragedy in Ukraine, the same dark prospect of conflict will spread to our part of the world.

Yet there is more out there, like going forward by new ways of doing the pandemic forced us to adopt. A stronger resilience, quicker adaptability, they are our best prevention, they are our best protection.

Quiet reflection in a rough and tumble campaign — of a breadth and intensity never experienced, revealed some of them. Such as a willingness to listen despite the noise; the hesitation to quarrel over differences; and to never, ever give up hope of reconciliation. These gave me the peace to ponder deeper. There are hints of a road not taken that could get us out of here quicker, to something better, something less fragile. There is also what you, the people did to cope. But this time empowered by new techniques and more resources.

You got by; getting some of what you needed with a massive government help. And for this, I thank my predecessor for the courage of his hard decisions. But there is a way to put more means and choices in your hands. I trust the Filipino. *[cheers and applause]*

Imagine how much more you'd achieve if government backstops instead of dictating your decisions. Always there to pick you up when you fall; giving what you need to get past a problem. Imagine if it invested in your self-empowerment to bring it closer to taking on whatever challenges come. Imagine, a country that, in almost every sense, is you. Now imagine what you and government can achieve together.

We did it in the pandemic. We will do it again. But again, I will not predicate my promise to you on your cooperation. You have your own lives to live, your work to do — and there too I will help. Government will get as much done alone without requiring more from you. That is what government and public officials are for. No excuses; just deliver. It was like that, once

upon a time. *[cheers]*

I did not talk much in this campaign; I did not bother to think of rebutting my rivals. Instead, I searched for promising approaches better than the usual solutions. I listened to you. I did not lecture you who has the biggest stake in our success. And the forthcoming State of the Nation will tell you exactly how we shall get this done.

In this fresh chapter of our history, I extend my hand to all Filipinos. Come, let us put our shoulders to the wheel; and give that wheel a faster turn — to repair and to rebuild; and to address challenges in new ways; to provide what all Filipinos need; to be all that we can. We are here to repair a house divided; to make it whole and to stand strong again in the Bayanihan way, expressive of our nature as Filipinos.

We shall seek, not scorn dialogue; listen respectfully to contrary views; be open to suggestions coming from hard thinking and unsparing judgment. But always from us Filipinos. We can trust no one else when it comes to what is best for us. Past history has often proven that.

Solutions from outside divided us; none deepened our understanding; they were always at our expense. Never forget we are Filipinos, one nation, one republic indivisible. *[cheers and applause]* We resisted and never failed to defeat foreign attempts to break up our country in my father's watch. His strongest critics have conceded that.

So let us all be part of the solution that we choose; in that lies the power to get it done. Always be open to differing views but ever united in our chosen goal. Never hesitating to change it, should it prove wanting. That is how agile, resilient republics are made.

Our future we decide today. Yesterday cannot make that decision anymore, nor can tomorrow delay it. The sooner we start, the surer and quicker the prospect of achieving our future. *[applause]*

These are troubling times; what's happening to others can happen to us; but it will not. We see what's happening. We are witness to how it is being stopped. And we have seen the glory that crowns struggle against all odds. Giving up is not an option. We've been through times of bitter division; but united we came through to this when it shall begin again. But better.

The campaigns I've run have taken me here where I stand today. I listened to you; and this is what I have heard.

We all want peace in our land. You and your children want a good chance at a better life; in a safer, more prosperous country. All that is within reach of a hardworking, warm, and giving race. Your dreams are mine; *pangarap niyo ay pangarap ko. [cheers and applause]* How can we make them come true? How can we do it together?

But I will take it as far as anyone with the same faith and commitment can — as if it depended entirely on himself.

Sa pangarap na maging mapayapa ang ating bansa! Ang pangarap niyo ay pangarap ko! *[cheers]* Sa pangarap na maging maunlad ang ating bansa! Ang pangarap niyo ay pangarap

ko! *[cheers]* At sa pangarap na maging mas masinang ang kinabukasan natin at ng ating mga anak, ang pangarap niyo ay pangarap ko! *[cheers and applause]*

We are presently drawing up a comprehensive, all-inclusive plan for economic transformation. We will build back better by doing things in the light of the experiences that we have had; both good and bad. It doesn't matter. No looking back in anger or nostalgia.

In the road ahead, the immediate months will be rough; but I will walk that road with you.

The pandemic ravaged bigger economies and ours. The virus is not the only thing to blame. What had been well built was torn down. We will build it back better.

The role of agriculture cries for the urgent attention that its neglect and misdirection now demands. Food self-sufficiency has been the key promise of every administration. None but one delivered. There were inherent defects in the old ways and in recent ways, too.

The trade policy of competitive advantage made the case: that when it comes to food sufficiency, a country should not produce but import what other countries make more of and sell cheapest. Then came Ukraine. The most vulnerable when it comes to food are the countries farthest away from the conflict; those bearing no blame for provoking it. Yet they face the biggest risk of starvation. If financial aid is poured into them — though it never is, there is nothing to buy.

Food is not just a trade commodity. Without it, people weaken and die; societies come apart. It is more than a livelihood; it is an existential imperative and a moral one. An agriculture damaged and diminished by unfair competition will have a harder time, or will have no prospects at all, of recovering.

Food sufficiency must get the preferential treatment the riches, free trade countries always gave their agricultural sectors. Their policy boils down to: don't do as we do, do what we tell you to. I am giving that policy the most serious thought if it doesn't change or make more allowances for emergencies with long term effects.

There is a parallel problem in our energy supply; sufficient fossil fuel-free technology for whole economies has yet to be invented. And it is not seriously tried by rich countries. Again, consider the response of the richest countries to the war in Ukraine. But surely a Free World awash with oil can assure supplies. Or we will find a way. We are not far from oil and gas reserves that have already been developed.

What we teach in our schools, the materials used, must be rethought. I am not talking about history. I'm talking about the basics, the sciences, sharpening theoretical aptitude and imparting vocational skills such as in the German example. Alongside the National Language; with equal emphasis and facility in a global language; which we had and lost. Let us give OFWs all the advantages we can for them to survive and to thrive. *[cheers]*

Our teachers from elementary up are our heroes fighting ignorance with poor paper weapons. We are condemning the future of our race to menial occupations abroad. Then they are exploited by traffickers. Once we had an education system that prepared coming generations for more and better jobs. There is hope for a comeback. Vice President and soon-to-be Secretary of Education, Sara Duterte-Carpio, will fit that mission to a T.

[applause]

We won't be caught unprepared, under-equipped, and understaffed to fight the next pandemic. To start with, we never got over the pandemic of poor if any free public health. The last major upgrade of a public health system, exemplified by the resources poured into PGH, predates the current shambles by three generations.

Our nurses are the best in the world. They acquitted themselves with the highest distinction abroad, having suffered even the highest casualties. With the same exemplary dedication at home they just got by. They are out there because we cannot pay them for the same risk and workload that we have back here. There will be changes starting tomorrow. I am confident because I have an Ople in my Cabinet. *[applause]* There were shortcomings in the COVID response; we will fix them — out in the open. No more secrets in public health. Remember, I speak from experience, I was among the first to get COVID; it was not a walk in the park.

My father built more and better roads, produced more rice than all administrations before his. President Rodrigo Roa Duterte built more and better than all the administrations succeeding my father's. *[applause]*

Much has been built and so well, that the economic dogma of dispersing industry to develop the least likely places has been upturned; development was brought to them. Investors are now setting up industries along the promising routes built. And yet the potential of this country is not exhausted.

Following these giant steps, we will continue to build. I will complete on schedule the projects that have been started. I am not interested in taking credit; I want to build on success that's already happening. We will be presenting the public with a comprehensive infrastructure plan. Six years could be just about enough time. No part of our country will be neglected. Progress will be made wherever there are Filipinos, so no investment is wasted. The recovery of Philippine tourism, with its emphasis on accessing nature's beauty, I am sure, will exceed expectations.

And bigger is not always better; but there is something to be said for economies of scale. And yet the country invites investments in fast rising industries with quick returns — and inflicts irreparable damage for future generations. We have yet to see large-scale practical solutions to pollution. Though some are beginning to emerge. But there are tried and proven new ways of mitigation. Blades have been turning over the sand dunes of Ilocos Norte, harnessing a power all around but unseen, long before this day. I built them. *[applause]*

The rich world talks a great deal but does a lot less about it than those with much less, but who suffer more death and destruction from climate change and lack of adaptation.

We will look to our partners and friends to help the Philippines, who, despite having a very small carbon footprint, is at the highest risk. First, spare victims; then help them recover; and move on to lessen the harmful impact of climate change. We too have our part to play; we are the third biggest plastics polluter in the world. But we won't shirk from that responsibility; we will clean up.

You will not be disappointed. So do not be afraid.

With every difficult decision that I must make, I will keep foremost in my heart and in my mind, the debt of gratitude I owe you for the honor and responsibility that you have conferred on me. *[applause]*

Whatever is in a person to make changes for the better of others, I lay before you now in my commitment. I will try to spare you; you have your other responsibilities to carry. But I will not spare myself — from shedding the last bead of sweat or giving the last ounce of courage and sacrifice. *[applause]*

And if you ask me why I am so confident of the future, I will answer you, simply that I have 110 million reasons to start with. Such is my faith in the Filipino. *[applause]* Believe, have hope: the sun also rises like it did today; and as it will tomorrow. And as surely as that, we will achieve the country all Filipinos deserve. God bless the Philippines, God bless our work. *[applause and cheers]*

Maraming, maraming salamat po sa inyong lahat! Mabuhay ang Pilipinas! Magandang tanghali po! *[applause]*

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