

PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK

SPEECH BY

PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.

AT THE 2023 NATIONAL ELECTION SUMMIT

[Delivered at the Grand Ballroom of Sofitel Philippine Plaza in Pasay City | 10 March 2023]

Thank you very much. Thank you Secretary Anton Lagdameo Jr. *[Please take your seats]*

Our Information and Communications Technology Secretary Ivan Uy; Comelec Chairman George Garcia and of course our commissioners: Commissioner Socorro Inting; Commissioner Marlon Casquejo; Commissioner Aimee Ferolino; Commissioner Rey Bulay; Commissioner Ernest Maceda; Commissioner Nelson Celis; Pasay City Mayor, our proverbial host, Mayor Emi Calixto-Rubiano *[applause]*; my fellow workers in government; other distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

I am very pleased to be with you today as we hold this first-ever National Election Summit.

I congratulate the COMELEC for successfully holding its event to provide a platform for a national dialogue and interaction amongst election stakeholders in developing policies, plans, and programs in poll administration, enforcement, and adjudication --- a process that I feel has been too long delayed and we have been waiting for for a very long time.

It is encouraging to know that prior to this summit, the preparatory consultations with various stakeholders in the public and private sectors were conducted nationwide.

From these pre-summit meetings, it has come to the attention that several reforms in the election process must be made.

And given these findings, let us take these matters seriously as the outputs obtained from these activities are indisputably significant.

We must act on it decisively and enforce concrete measures to turn our plans into reality.

Driven by the commitment to strengthen the people's trust and confidence in the COMELEC, I ask you to open yourselves to the recommendations of our experts and Filipino voters, who are [our] partners in ensuring free, orderly, honest, and credible elections.

As a democratic and republican government, we derive our power from the people, we recognize that sovereignty is exercised by its citizens through suffrage.

On this note, I underscore the COMELEC's critical role as the guardians of our people's sovereign will in ensuring the integrity of the electoral process.

Hence, we should ensure accurate and unalterable results so as to maintain the sanctity of the polls and the people's trust.

In ensuring excellent results, we must continue to discuss the nitty-gritty of our processes, including recalibrating the capacity of our teachers as electoral board members, and integrating voter education in the curricula of K to 12, tertiary level, and the National Service Training Program.

So as we engage with discussions amongst our students and the Filipino youth, we likewise promote and encourage them to form and cast an informed vote, as well as discerningly choose the leaders of our society.

It is therefore timely that we hold this summit to enhance the preparations for the upcoming *Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan* Elections in October this year, and all our other future electoral exercises.

Now that we use modern technologies to advance and make our election system more reliable, I am sure that we can implement positive reforms and make election result transmission faster and maintain its accuracy.

I call for the active cooperation of stakeholders, experts, and civil society organizations to ensure free, fair, credible elections in our country, in strong partnership with an enlightened and informed citizenry.

Let us learn from the areas we need to improve and explore solutions to make things work better for our beloved country.

I wish you a productive and meaningful summit.

Mabuhay kayong lahat! Maraming salamat po at magandang hapon po sa inyo. [applause]

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