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**SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.**  
**AT THE 30<sup>TH</sup> APOLINARIO MABINI AWARDS**

**Delivered by Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin**

[Delivered at the Heroes Hall in Malacañan Palace, Manila | 18 July 2023]

A good day to all!

I am honored to address everyone on the occasion of the 30th Apolinario Mabini Awards.

This prestigious event brings together individuals, groups, and agencies who have made remarkable contributions to the empowerment and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the country.

I commend the Philippine Foundation for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled for promoting measures to prevent disability, protect, and rehabilitate the disabled, and equalize opportunities for PWDs.

Through the Apolinario Mabini Awards, you have inspired us to go beyond our perceived limitations, embrace the immense potential within each of us, and foster a more inclusive Philippines.

Each of our awardees we honor today embodied these aspirations by dedicating their lives to enhance opportunities and advocate for our disabled individuals.

They have also helped create a society where disability is not seen as an obstacle but as a unique outlook that enriches our shared experience.

I thus thank this year's Mabini Awardees for breaking down barriers and championing the rights of persons with disabilities. All of you are beacons of hope, lighting the path towards a society that fully embraces all.

As President, I assure you that the government remains dedicated to addressing the challenges faced by our PWDs so that they can fully participate in shaping our society.

I trust that the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the Department of Health, our local government units, and all our partner-agencies shall continue to strengthen our programs and services that encourage PWDs to take part in nation-building.

Continue your various advocacies that reduce prejudice and promote the acceptance and empowerment of our PWDs to eliminate stigma, discrimination, and exclusion.

I also call on the private sector to create inclusive workspaces that will provide equal employment opportunities for PWDs and will uphold a culture that values diversity and equality.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Mabini Awards reminds us that disability does not define a person's worth.

Instead, it is a spark for innovation, resilience, and ingenuity that enables people to do better and to do more.

We not only find our innate strength, but also discover our true selves whenever we are willing to go beyond our limitations.

So, let us tear down barriers and replace them with bridges of opportunity, empathy, and understanding.

This way, we can write our own stories that will inspire us to work harder for a new Philippines that will leave nobody behind.

Once again, congratulations to this year's Mabini Awardees.

*Mabuhay po tayong lahat! [applause]*

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