

**OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY
PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK**

**SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.
AT THE MEETING WITH THE FILIPINO COMMUNITY**

[Delivered at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in New Jersey, USA | 18 September 2022]

Maraming, maraming, maraming salamat po sa inyong lahat sa inyong napakainit na salubong na ibinigay sa aming lahat sa delegasyon namin, kaming mag-asawa na si Liza, at ang delegasyon natin ang mga Cabinet minister, ng Cabinet secretary na nandito para sa pagpunta namin sa United Nations.

Ngunit pinakamahalaga lahat po kayong mga Pilipino na natitira dito sa East Coast, marami pong salamat. At kahit papaano alam ko naman na busy kayong lahat at kahit papaano kayo po ay nakahanap ng kaunting panahon upang makadalaw dito sa ating patipon-tipon ngayong hapon na ito. Maraming salamat po sa inyo. *[cheers]*

[Please --- please take your... Umupo na po kayo at mahaba-haba itong speech ko.] [Crowd cheers BBM!]

Babatiin ko lang po ang ating mga kasamahan. Ang ating kasama sa Philippine delegation na nandito ngayon. Nandito po ang Speaker natin, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez. *[Si Ben Diokno nandiyan?]* Nandito rin ang isang kababayan kong tiga-Ilocos Norte rin, Public Works and Highways Secretary Manny Bonoan; ang ating Secretary ng Department of Trade and Industry Alfredo Pascual; ang ating bagong Tourism Secretary, Tourism Secretary Maria Esperanza Christina Frasco; at ang ating Department of Transport, ang ating bagong naging kalihim, Transportation Secretary Jimmy Bautista; ito po ay 'pag titingnan po ninyo, makilala ninyo ito parang mabait ito pero masyadong mabagsik ito ngunit kailangan naming magsipsip dahil siya ang nagre-release ng pondo, ang Secretary po ng Department of Budget and Management, Secretary Amenah Pangandaman.

Ito po ang isa pa noong siya'y na-appoint nagpasalamat siya sa akin at sabi niya thank you at may tiwala ka sa akin. Eh sabi ko sa kanya maghintay ka ng anim na buwan, pagdating ng anim na buwan tingnan natin kung magpapasalamat ka pa sa akin dahil napakalaki ng trabahong ibibigay ko sa iyo, ang ating DICT, Information and Communications Technology Secretary Ivan John Uy. Ang kalihim ng pinakabago at sa ating mga OFW ito na palagay ko ang pinakamahalaga na department, ang Department of Migrant Workers, ang namumuno po ngayon diyan ay si Secretary Toots Ople.

Ang namumuno naman ng ating National Economic Development Authority, ang siyang nagpapalano para sa ating ekonomiya, Secretary Arse Balisacan. Nandito rin po ang ating Press Secretary, ito 'yung nakikita ninyo sa press conference at saka pagka may announcement kami siya ang lumalabas, Press Secretary Rose Beatrix Cruz-Angeles. Sa Presidential Management Staff naman po, siya ang namamahala doon sa iba't ibang pangangailangan sa Office of the President, Presidential Management Staff Secretary Ma. Zenaida Angping. *[Is she here?]* At ang ating Special Assistant to the President is Secretary Antonio Ernesto Lagdameo Jr. who happens to be the son of our Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Antonio Manuel Lagdameo Sr. Ang Bangko Sentral Governor natin, ito isa pa sa pinaka --- sa mga importante nating economic manager, Governor Felipe Medalla of the Bangko Sentral ng

Pilipinas. Ang ating Special Envoy na dati pang nag-represent sa Pilipinas para sa United Nations Children's Fund, Monica Louise Prieto-Teodoro. Ito dumating na si Secretary Naids ng PMS.

At siyempre hindi maaaring matapos ang aking pagbabati kung itutuloy 'yung pagbati ng ating Ambassador sa Washington DC ang ating... Akala niya pagkatapos ng panahon ni PRRD eh makakauwi na siya. Ang problema maganda 'yung trabaho niya masyado sabi ng mga Amerikano huwag niyo siya munang paalisin at maganda siyang makisama dito sa amin kaya't nandito pa rin siya, ang ating ambassador, Ambassador Babes Romualdez.

At eh siguro kulang naman ang pagbati ko 'pag hindi ko binati ang aking asawa na si First Lady Louise Araneta. Okay tapos na ha. *[Crowd shouts Sandro!]* Thank you! Thank you, salamat. *[Crowd shouts Sandro!]* *[Is he here? Where is he?]* Oh I'm sorry I forgot hindi ko nakita ang Department of Finance na Secretary, Secretary Ben Diokno. At ang kahuli-hulihan ayoko nang batiin, ayoko nang ipakilala, nawawalan ako ng papel 'pag nandito ito eh. *[laughter]*

Nakita niyo siguro noong during the campaign nali-livestream ninyo 'yung mga kampanya namin kung saan-saan. At ganyan din parang dito lahat ng puntahan namin, ayan palakpakan ang mga tao. Excited naman ako, sabi ko parang mananalo tayo. Pagtayo ko, maglalabas ba naman ng placard, "Nasaan si Sandro?" *[laughter]* "Ilabas si Sandro." "Iyo na boto ko, akin na si Sandro." *[laughter]* Ilang beses ko na malapit ipinamigay eh *[laughter]* maipanalò ko lang. Ang ating bagong kongresista sa Primera Distrito ng Ilocos Norte, Congressman Sandro Marcos. *[cheers and applause]*

Noong unang --- noong unang ayan... Noong unang sinisigawan si Sandro akala ko cute eh, ngayon hindi na ako nacu-cute-an. *[laughter]* Nagtatampo na ako sabi ko "sige ikaw na lang". *[Crowd shouts BBM!]*

Magandang, magandang hapon sa inyong lahat, ladies and gentlemen; distinguished guests. Tootoo po 'yang sabi ni Ambassador Babes na ang New York ay may special na kahulugan talaga 'yan sa aming mag-asawa *[cheers]* dahil dito kami nag --- sa New York kami nagkakilala. *[cheers]*

At siguro mga tatlong taon niya akong niligawan. *[laughter]* Dito talaga --- dito kami... Matagal na kaming hindi nakabalik parating kami from New Jersey papunta dito sa New York sa city, eh tinitingnan namin, 25 years na kaming hindi nakabalik. Siya'y nagtrabaho rito bilang abugado ng anim, pitong taon, parang ganoon.

Ako naman eh matagal ako dito --- matagal din pasok-labas ako dito sa New York at hindi lamang sa kakabisita eh 'yun na nga mayroon na nga akong napangasawa na Pilipina pero dito kami sa New York nagkakilala. Kaya't tuwang-tuwa kami noong papasok kami New Jersey Turnpike nakikita ko lahat nung mga dinadaan ko. *[cheers]* Dahil sa Philadelphia ako sa --- actually Cherry Hill, New Jersey. *[cheers]*

Doon ako nakatira noong nasa Philadelphia nag-aaral ako sa University of Pennsylvania, sa Wharton. At noong '86 si Liza ay isang abugada nga, nagkita kami sa ano --- nagkakilala kami in court, sa korte habang hinahantay ko 'yung kaso ng mother ko, siya naman ay bumibisita dahil kaibigan niya 'yung isang abugado naming at ayun. *[cheers]*

Kaya Sandro magpasalamat ka sa New York. Kung hindi sa New York, wala ka. *[laughter and cheers]*

Alam niyo po ang pagpunta namin dito ay naiba nang kaunti dahil po sinasabi namin, nag-uusap kami noong pinaplano namin ang pagpunta rito sabi ko magpasalamat naman tayo dahil hindi man tayo nakapagkampanya ay ibinoto tayo, sinuportahan tayo nang husto ng mga tiga-East Coast. *[cheers]* Mga tiga-West Coast din pero ng mga tiga-East Coast na pupuntahan natin.

Kaya't makita po ninyo ang nangyari ngayon dito ay medyo nagkabaligtaran naging baligtad ang sequence ng palakad ng eleksyon dahil nauna 'yung eleksyon ngayon lang kami mangangampanya sa inyo. *[cheers]*

Ngunit kulang po ang salita at kulang po ang magpasalamat nang kahit minsan lang o dalawang beses lamang o kahit isang daan beses. Kulang po ang pasasalamat ko sa inyo sa inyong naging suporta. Hindi man tayo nagkita. Hindi po tayo --- dahil nga sa pandemya hindi ko kayo napuntahan, hindi man tayo nakapag-selfie, hindi pa tayo nakapagkamayan pero sumuporta po kayo sa amin. At alam niyo po ay para sa isang pulitiko, para sa isang nasa serbisyo publiko, wala na pong kasing laking karangalan na ibigay ninyo ang tiwala sa amin, ibigay ninyo ang pagmamahal ninyo sa amin, at ibinibigay ninyo sa amin ang pag-asa ninyo sa kinabukasan. Maraming, maraming salamat po. *[Crowd cheers BBM!]*

Kaya't napakasaya. Matagal ko nang hindi nakita 'yang t-shirt na ganyan. *[cheers]* Alam niyo ba 'yan kung ano 'yan? Iyan 'yung kabataang barangay. *[cheers]* Pinamumunuan 'yan dati ni Imee, 'yung kapatid kong --- 'yung ate ko. Pero sabi niya dahan-dahan kayong mag-display ng shirt na ganyan dahil sabi ni Imee iba na raw ang kahulugan ng KB. Hindi na kabataang barangay, katandaang barangay na daw. *[laughter]* Kaya hindi bale basta't tatanggap pa rin tayo ng kabataan.

Napakasaya po na makasama kayong lahat ngayong hapon para sa ating pagtitipon ngayon. Kalalapag ko po lang kani-kanina lang mula Pilipinas at bagamat mahaba ang aming nilakbay patungo rito, ang pagod po namin ay nawala at natunaw, nalusaw nang mainit na pagtanggap mula sa inyo. *[applause and cheers]*

Ang aming mga kababayan hindi lamang dito sa New York at iba pang mga lugar dito sa US kundi pati na rin po sa ating mga kababayan na nagmula pa sa Canada. *[cheers]* Maraming, maraming... Sino 'yung mga galing Canada dito? *[cheers]*

I am humbled. Eh talaga naman I am overwhelmed with Filipino pride to see so many of you finding time kahit na busying-busy ang schedule ninyo na umano dito para sundan ang ating sigaw ng pagkakaisa.

Let me also take this opportunity to express to you my profound gratitude to our kababayan here in the United States who were among the 31 million Filipinos in the Philippines and in other parts of the world who gave me a resounding mandate to lead our country and our people in the next six years. *[applause and cheers]*

Maraming salamat sa inyong tiwala. But also just as important or maybe even more so I would like to pay tribute to all of you and the rest to the almost four and a half Filipinos here in the United States for the role you play and will continue to play in advancing the interest of the Philippines and the Filipino people here in this part of the world. Maraming, maraming salamat ho sa inyong lahat. *[applause]*

Kayo po ang nagdadala ng dangal sa ating bansa. Dito sa nakaraang pandemya ay wala po akong narinig na pagpuri ng mga heads of state ng iba kung hindi Pilipino lamang ang nababanggit. *[applause]*

Alam naman po natin na lalong-lalo dito sa East Coast ay matagal na kayong nandito sa --- nagsasakripisyo dito sa US para lang pagandahin ang buhay ng inyong mga pamilya, para pagandahin ang buhay doon sa Pilipinas, para tulungan ang ekonomiya ng Pilipinas. At hindi lamang 'yun dahil pagka nakausap ninyo ang mga kasama ninyo na katrabaho ninyo ay walang masabi kung hindi ang pagpuri sa galing, sa bait, sa sipag, sa husay ng mga Pilipino.

Kaya po kami kahit na nasa malayo kami ay pinapanood namin kayo, pumuputok po ang puso namin 'pag nakita namin ang inyong ginagawa at itinataas at pinapatingkad ang pangalan ng Pilipinas sa buong mundo. *[cheers]*

Ito na ang pangatlo kong pag-alis ng Pilipinas mula nang umupo ako bilang Pangulo. Before flying to New York, I was in Jakarta and then I went to Singapore to reaffirm our relations with two of our closest Southeast Asian neighbors.

Doon sa mga bisitang iyon nagkaroon naman ulit ako ng pagkakataon na makipagkita, makipagtipon sa ating mga kababayan at pasalamat din sila. Kagaya ng pasasalamat ko sa inyo sa lahat ng ginagawa ninyo para sa Pilipinas at para sa ating mga kababayan.

I'm primarily here --- ang sadya talaga namin dito at ako'y magsasalita sa 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. I am also here to make sure *[applause]* eh ipapaliwanag natin kung nasaan na ang Pilipinas at kung ano ang mga maaaring gawin dahil sa aking palagay sa pagdating, paglabas natin ng pandemya at sinasabi na patapos na ay kailangan natin ayusin ang ating ekonomiya.

Kaya po ay kailangan nating makipag-partner at makipag-usap sa lahat ng iba't ibang bansa nang sa ganoon ay makapagtulungan tayo na makalabas, makaahon dito sa sitwasyon na ating rinaranasan ngayon.

And while we are here hindi lamang ang mga lider ng iba't ibang bansa kung hindi rin ang mga namumuno ng malalaking korporasyon, ng malalaking negosyo at para ipaliwanag sa kanila na ang Pilipinas ganito na at marami kaming binago, marami kaming pinaganda para sa inyong pagpasok sa inyong mga investment doon sa Pilipinas and sa ganoon ay baka masasabi natin patuloy na palapit na tayo doon sa ating pinapangarap na ang Pilipino ay hindi na kailangan umalis ng Pilipinas para maghanap ng trabaho. *[cheers and applause]*

Habang nandito ako, we will be working hard to get other things done for the country besides addressing the UN General Assembly on Tuesday, the same way my father, President Ferdinand Marcos, and my mother, Imelda Romualdez-Marcos, did on several occasions during his incumbency.

I will share our views on a number of global concerns and the role the Philippines will play as a responsible member of the family of nations in addressing these concerns.

I am hoping to be able to meet President Joseph Biden and other world leaders on the sides of the UN General Assembly. Alam niyo po 'yung nakikita natin kung minsan sa television doon sa malaking hall nila nagi-speech. Pagkatapos po ng mga malalaking speech ay nagkikita-kita, mag-uusap-usap kami na bilateral, multilateral, kung ano pa mga iba't ibang meeting. Kaya't

'yun ay napakaimportante rin kaya't ginawa namin na nakapagplano kami at humingi kami ng panahon dito sa mga napunta rito para sa General Assembly napunta sila rito ay sabi ko pagkakataon na natin at hindi natin sila mapupuntahan sa kanilang bansa, dito na natin silang kakausapin.

So aside from President Biden, I think we will be able to meet with some other heads of state and as I said some heads of big companies. After all, our bilateral alliance with the United States is possibly as important policy as there is in the Philippines. Our relations with the United States remain strong and I believe we will make them stronger in the coming years. *[applause]*

In the coming days --- so besides the meetings with the political leadership, it will also be for potential investors, other business leaders dahil gusto natin para paahunin nga natin, para pasiglahin natin ang ekonomiya na makapag-invest at 'pag nag-invest mayroong bagong negosyo. Kapag may bagong negosyo, may trabaho.

At iyon ngayon ang ating hinahanap dahil talagang maraming nahirapan, alam niyo naman 'yun. Alam ko na madalas kayong nakikipag-usap sa inyong mga kaibigan, mga kamag-anak, sa nakaraang dalawang taon at alam naman ninyo na wala naman siguro kahit sino sa buong mundo ang makapagsabi na hindi naramdaman ang kahit na anong epekto ng COVID.

Kaya naman ay kailangan naman natin pag-isipan kung ano ngayon ang magiging global economy at iyan ngayon ang aming pinag-aaralan. Kaya't napakahalaga na naisama natin ang ating mga economic managers na nandito at hindi lamang na sila ay ating economic managers kung hindi sila ay ang sa aming palagay ang pinaka may kaya, pinaka may karanasan, at pinakamahuhusay para magtimon sa ating ekonomiya pagkatapos ng pandemya.

I will also share with our friends my vision for the Philippines and in my discussion with the think tanks and the media that will certainly come up as well. In all my meetings here in New York, I hope to share our hopes and aspirations for our country and our people.

We have over 10 million kababayans all over the world and as your President I understand and know fully well the significant impact of the Philippine diaspora on our motherland, especially in terms of supporting our post-pandemic economic recovery.

Dollar remittances have in fact hit an all-time high of 34.88 billion dollars in 2021. *[applause]*

Kung hindi diyan, this represents a 5.1 percent increase from the 33.19 billion dollars recorded in 2020. Our kababayans here, kayo lang dito sa United States, halos 40 porsiyento ng remittance noong 2021 ay galing dito sa Amerika. *[applause]*

Alam niyo po ay siguro kung dahil noong 2020 at saka '21 lalo ay talagang bagsak ang ekonomiya, walang trabaho, naka-lockdown tayo doon sa Pilipinas at 'yung remittances na pinadala ninyo, alam ko ang iniisip ninyo ay tulungan ang mga pamilya ninyo. Pero kahit hindi niyo nararamdaman malaking naitulong ninyo sa ekonomiya ng Pilipinas. At siguro hindi lang malaki ang naitulong, binuhay ninyo ang ekonomiya ng Pilipinas. Kaya't ulit ay ipinagmamalaki talaga namin ang mga OFW natin. *[applause]*

You set this record-breaking figure even when many of you were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Maraming salamat sa inyo sa lahat ng ginagawa ninyo. Maraming salamat sa inyong remittance na ginagawa na para pagtulong sa ating ekonomiya.

Maraming salamat sa lahat ng ginagawa ninyo para pagandahin ang reputasyon ng Pilipino at ng Pilipinas dito sa Amerika at sa buong mundo. Maraming salamat sa inyo sa inyong tuluyang... Kahit na kayo'y napalayo na at nasa ibang bansa ay hindi niyo kinakalimutan ang Pilipinas at hindi nawawala ang init ng inyong pagmamahal sa ating bansa. *[applause]*

It is clear here in the United States as in all the other countries that Filipinos are --- Filipinos continue to make a positive contribution to society. Our kababayans have been doing so since our sailors set forth from the Philippines onboard Spanish galleons established the first Filipino settlements in the coastal wetlands of Louisiana more than 250 years ago.

To date, the almost four and a half million-strong Filipinos across the United States, the third largest Asian population in the country, continues to demonstrate the qualities that global Filipinos are known for.

Your excellent work, your ethics, your integrity and the Filipino virtues of malasakit, aruga, at kalinga. *[applause]*

Siguro hindi natin mapapag-usapan ang mga OFW lalong-lalo nga naranasan natin ang COVID-19 sa nakaraang dalawang taon, siguro hindi maaari na pag-usapan ang OFW na hindi pag-usapan at bigyan ng special recognition ang ating mga nurses at other healthcare workers *[applause and cheers]* who have fought bravely on the frontlines against COVID-19, especially in New York City and its environs, which was the epicenter of the pandemic when it first broke out in the spring of 2020.

During this extraordinary and unexpected health crisis, many of our kababayans lost their lives in the process of fulfilling their oath to care for the sick. Filipino nurses in the United States make up four percent of all registered nurses but this proportion, a third of the more than 200 nurses who died from the virus were Filipinos.

In New York City alone, at least 30 Filipino healthcare workers succumbed to the virus. I take this opportunity to extend my condolences to the grieving families and friends here and back home.

I can promise you that this heroism of yours, of our kababayans will not fade into obscurity. Their legacy we will make live on as they continue to inspire our kababayans to show the world *[applause]* what it means to truly be Filipino.

So may I ask the nurses and other frontliners, doctors, medical professionals, mga teacher, mga emergency response workers, service employees na nandito, tumayo muna kayo para mapalakpakan namin kayo. *[applause and cheers]*

Sa gitna ng trahedyang kayo ang naging haligi ng pag-asa, kayo ang bagong bayaning Pilipino. *[applause and cheers]* Maraming, maraming salamat muli sa inyong serbisyo at sa inyong sakripisyo.

Since the day I took office, I have been inspired by the commitment of overseas Filipinos like yourselves to your families back home and to the work that you perform here as you strive to provide for them.

With this inspiration, I must work harder than ever, not for recognition, not for glory, but for you my beloved kababayans and for our country. *[applause and cheers]* *[Crowd cheers BBM!]*

Every Filipino who leaves the country to work abroad and whose sacrifices by leaving their families in the Philippines should have a government that they can call home while they are away from the motherland. At iyan ang magiging katungkulan ng Department of Migrant Workers at ang Department of Foreign Affairs. *[applause and cheers]*

Sa pamamagitan ng ating mga embasiya, consulate sa buong mundo ay iyan ang kanilang gaganapin. They will serve as the refuge for our distressed kababayans amidst a world of insecurity, uncertainty, and tight competition.

I have given --- we have come to an understanding with our Secretary of Migrant Workers Toots Ople to conduct a systems review on how best the government can serve the needs of our kababayans abroad, especially those who may find themselves in distress.

I have also asked Foreign Affairs Secretary Ricky Manalo to make sure our Foreign Service posts remain responsive to the needs of our Filipino nationals, especially in the delivery of passports and other consular services. We will give our overseas Filipino workers all the advantages that we can provide them to survive, and not only survive but to thrive. *[applause and cheers]*

We will not condemn the future of our race to menial occupations abroad. We intend to bring back an educational system that prepares coming generations for more jobs and better jobs.

Our Vice President and Secretary of Education Sara Duterte-Carpio... *[cheers]* Si Inday Sara dahil nakita nga niya na napakalaki rin ng problema, pareho kami nakita ko ang laki ng problema sa agrikultura, ako na ang --- in-appoint ko na 'yung sarili kong Secretary ng Agriculture. *[applause]*

Si Vice President Inday eh sabi nga niya napakalaking problema nung education kaya't sabi niya ako na lang --- kung papayag ka kahit mahirap ang trabaho, ako na lang ang papasok diyan. And she's doing a great job. *[cheers and applause]*

So siya ang namamahala para ibalik --- dalhin ang mas maganda na sistema ng edukasyon para naman ang ating mga kabataan ay handang-handa na pumasok ng trabaho kahit saan sa mundo, kahit saan sa --- kahit anong klaseng trabaho at tayo naman ay tiga-suporta sa kanila. *[cheers]*

We must take care of the Filipino youth because they are the future. Our children must be equipped with the best that we can possibly provide. We cannot scrimp on the amount. Hindi tayo puwedeng nagtitipid at lahat ng maaari nating ibigay sa kanila, ibibigay natin sa kanila so that they get the best quality of education that we can afford without being wasteful.

We will provide teachers the materials necessary for effective teaching in this day and age. Ngayon hindi na workbook na lang at saka lapis at saka papel. Kailangan may device, kailangan may WiFi, kailangan may mabilis na sistema. Kaya't 'yung ating DICT Secretary ay nalalagas na yata 'yung buhok niya dahil kakaisip *[laughter]* kung papaano gagawin --- kung papaano gagawin lahat ito.

Pero gagawin po natin 'yan dahil hindi po tayo makapag-compete, hindi po tayo makipagsabayan sa mga iba't ibang bansa kung hindi po natin gawin 'yan. At ito'y parang naghahabol pa lang tayo. Eh tayo nais natin sa ating paghahabol ay hindi lang makapagpantay kundi lumabis pa sa pinagkaroonan natin at sa ating mga kaibigan. *[applause]*

We must do --- in education, we must do better in international rankings, especially when it comes to the so-called STEM subject: Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics. This is necessary for our young people to be able to compete in this highly technological and competitive world.

Our bureaucracy, the administrative heart and soul of the government is also in need of review. And I will make sure that we eliminate the inefficiencies in our bureaucracy to enhance public service. *[applause]*

For instance, progress is being made in terms of making private and public transactions less cumbersome. I myself I'm familiar with stories of our countrymen who dread dealing with our government agencies because of red tape, who are forced to engage the services of fixers *[applause and cheers]* thinking that it is the easiest way to get things done in government.

A single national ID for Filipino citizens including dual citizens *[applause]* will now pave the way to promoting ease of doing business.

Kung 'yung Amerikano may social security bakit tayo wala? Hindi ba? Hindi naman mahirap gawin 'yun. Ayan nalalagas na naman 'yung buhok ng ating DICT chairman. *[applause]*
We target 92 million national IDs to be issued by the middle of 2023. *[applause]*

For dual citizens and Filipinos abroad, you can register with --- you will soon be able to register with the Philippine embassy or consulate general nearest to you. As we continue to search for more solutions to revitalize our beloved country, it is not the time to look back at the past. It is now time to look to the future. *[applause and cheers]*

And the future looks bright. The economy we expect to grow by six and a half to seven and a half percent this year. We will implement tax reforms that will be responsive to the development of the digital economy and will increase revenue collection.

We also have formulated our medium-term fiscal strategy to achieve measurable medium-term macroeconomic and fiscal objectives such as a 6.5 to 8 percent real GDP growth annually between 2023 and 2028. We also target a 9 percent or single digit poverty rate by 2028. *[applause]*

We target the reduction to just three percent of our national government deficit to GDP ratio by 2028. A less than 60 percent national government debt-to-GDP ratio by 2025 and the attainment of upper middle-income country status by 2024. *[applause]*

I have tasked the NEDA, the National Economic Development Authority, to come up with a 5-year development plan. I am confident that Secretary Arse and the rest of his team will deliver the best strategy for us to pursue in the coming years just as they did during his first stint as a country's Socioeconomic Planning secretary.

The backbone of an economy is its infrastructure. I have said it before, I say it again, I will continue the Build, Build, Build flagship infrastructure program *[applause]* of the previous administration and wherever possible we will expand it.

We must keep the momentum going. We will also raise the level of our other systems of transportations in key cities throughout the country. Investing in modern and efficient

infrastructure will remain a very high priority of this administration as it is a necessary element to accelerate economic growth by generating jobs, improving many sectors such as tourism and especially agriculture. *[applause]*

Ang ating mga kababayan dito sa New York, dito sa United States, at sa lahat ng ating mga kababayan sa buong mundo will still play a very critical role in the economic transformation of our country. Kahit na malayong-malayo kayo sa Pilipinas ay ito ay sinasabi ko sa inyo, ang inyong minamahal na Pilipinas ay kailangan pa rin kayo lalo na ngayon.

Kailangan kayo ng ating mahal na Inang Bayan. I stand here before you today to invoke the quintessential Filipino spirit, the spirit of bayanihan, and to challenge each and every one of you to contribute meaningful change back home. *[applause]*

Let us follow in the footsteps of a number of exceptional Filipino members of the Filipino community across the United States who have been carrying out very impactful projects for the benefit of our kababayans back home.

We have seen many of them: lead medical missions in far-flung barrios; construct school buildings, houses for the indigent; provide not just scholarships, but books and school supplies to the poor and deserving students; others who have the resources have been funding research efforts to find cures for rare diseases affecting Filipinos. Some have gone beyond raising funds to respond to typhoons and other disasters back home, to donate drones and assist in rapid disaster assessment and needs analysis or providing livelihood assistance to allow affected communities to bounce back.

Initiatives that our kababayans in the United States and elsewhere in the world could launch in support of our efforts to develop our agricultural sector are very much welcome. As we all know, agriculture development is a top priority of this administration. *[applause]*

We live in uncertain times. Our food security can easily be impacted by disturbances taking place in others parts of the globe. Hindi naman natin akalain sino ba ang magsasabi na magkakagiyera sa eastern Europe, sa Ukraine, maaapektuhan ang Pilipinas na napakalayo?

Ngunit ang lahat ng inputs na tinatawag para sa agrikultura ay naapektuhan at nagtataasan ang presyo. Kaya't nakakaawa kung minsan at nakikita natin hindi na talaga kaya ng mga namimili ang presyuhan kaya't kami ay iyan ang isa sa una naming ginawa ay tiniyak namin na ang suplay ay nandiyan --- ng pagkain ay nandiyan.

Ngayon ay kailangan natin ayusin ang ating produksyon ng agrikultura para dumami ang produksyon natin at makatiyak tayo na kahit ano pang mangyari, magkagiyera man, magkapandemya ulit, kung anuman ang mangyari pa ay handa tayo na sapat ang suplay natin ng pagkain para ipakain sa ating mga kababayan. *[applause]*

It is a challenge. Attaining food sovereignty is not impossible with your help. I count on our agriculturists, our specialists abroad to contribute to this endeavor. I call on you and other Filipino overseas to invest in agribusiness ventures in the Philippines and become what they call now agripreneurs, yourselves, to help revitalize our countryside.

You can encourage your young relatives back home to take college courses related to agriculture. If you have idle lands in the Philippines, ask your families to take care of them and help them develop them for agriculture. Have them plant ube and kalamansi which are in

demand abroad but we have very little supply. Every initiative to secure a bountiful harvest counts.

Walang masyadong maliit na pagtulong na hindi binibigyan ng halaga.

I also urge all our brilliant minds, our scientists, engineers and technical experts to return to our country under the Balik Scientist Program of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST). *[applause]*

Let us reverse the brain drain. Ibalik natin ang galing ng Pilipino sa Pilipinas. And help bring the Philippines to heights it has not reached before.

I urge also our teachers, our doctors, our nurses, other professionals as well to continue sharing what they have learned here in the United States when they come home to their kababayans in the Philippines. There are so many initiatives that all of you could launch to help propel us further forward.

When I arrived this afternoon, I was invigorated by the hundreds of ambassadors of the Philippines present in this hall. You heard me right. As soon as you step foot on American soil, lahat kayo automatic 'yan, you have become special envoys of the Philippines --- all of you. *[cheers and applause]*

Lahat kayo including the caregivers, housekeepers, babysitters, others in the informal sector *[applause]* can do just as much as our diplomats could do by inviting your employers to visit the Philippines not just to enjoy the beauty and hospitality of our country and our people but also to explore possible trade investment opportunities there.

All of you are encouraged to bring home your friends to allow them to experience for themselves why the Philippines has become one of the top tourism destinations in Asia that offers the best islands, *[applause and cheers]* the most amazing beaches, and stunning landscapes that cannot be found, cannot be bettered anywhere in the world. Most importantly, introduce them to the grace, the kindness, the hospitality, and the graciousness of all Filipinos. *[applause]*

As a matter of fact, ngayon na puwede nang bumiyaha, you yourselves should be balikbayans and book that long overdue trip back home. Magkita tayo sa Pilipinas. *[applause]*

All of you are enjoined to continue investing in the Philippines. Do not stop buying condominium units and other real estate back home. *[cheers]*

Invest and open businesses, maliit, malaki, sari-sari store, malaking kompanya, lahat puwede. Makakatulong lahat 'yun. *[applause]*

This will all contribute to create much-needed jobs and build a better life for all our people. And if you know someone who is interested to open a business in the Philippines, let our embassies or our consulates know so we can pursue and finally close the deal. *[applause]* As I said, every little bit counts.

When you get home after this gathering, I would like for you to list down three things that you can do for your country and commit yourself to make them happen. We have a long and bumpy road, full of risks and perils ahead of us as we face this turbulent time in global history.

But as your President, I remain confident that with your three things, no matter how small they are, those three things will make us succeed if we all agree to unite and to work together. Kaya't pagkakaisa pa rin ang ating sigaw. *[applause and cheers]*

Hindi natin makakamit ang hinahangad nating pag-unlad ng ating Inang Bayan kung tayo ay watak-watak. Ito ang mensaheng dala --- ito ang mensahe na dala ko para sa inyo: pagkakaisa ang kailangan para sa pag-unlad ng ating bansa.

Kayang-kaya kung sama-sama. *[applause and cheers]* I spoke often during the campaign of the spirit of the bayanihan, and I invoke that spirit again, the spirit of bayanihan that burns bright in the hearts of every member of the Filipino community here in the United States and all around the world.

All Filipinos back home, all the 10 million overseas workers basta't Pilipino mayroong puso ng kabayanihan, may puso na malasakit ang Pilipino na hindi na matatanggal dahil 'yan ang ating ugali, iyan ang ating kultura, *[applause]* 'yan ang ating tibay, 'yan ang ating galing. So with all that, with all the little things and the large things that we can all do, let us build this brighter future for the Philippines, and let us look back and say that we did everything that we could possibly do to help our beloved country, to help our beloved countrymen. *[applause]*

Magbayanihan po tayong lahat. Mabuhay ang Pilipino! *[Crowd: Mabuhay!]* Mabuhay ang Pilipinas! *[Crowd: Mabuhay!]* Mabuhay po kayong lahat at maraming salamat at magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat. *[applause and cheers]*

--- END ---