

**PRESIDENT FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.'s
SPEECH AT THE 125th ANNIVERSARY OF THE
FIRST PHILIPPINE REPUBLIC**

Malolos City, Bulacan
January 23, 2024

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Maraming salamat sa ating Executive Secretary, Lucas Bersamin, sa iyong pagpapakilala.

Please take your seats.

Ang ating Senate President, Juan Miguel Zubiri, at nandito rin ang ating ibang miyembro na Senador; ang Speaker ng House of Representatives, Ferdinand Martin Romualdez at ang iba pang mga congressman at congresswoman na nandito ngayong araw; andito rin ang National Historical Commission of the Philippines Chairman Emmanuel Calairo; at ang ating butihing gobernador, Governor Dan Fernando; Malolos City Mayor Christian D. Natividad; at ang Parish Priest ng Barasoain Church, Reverend Father Domingo Salonga; mga kasama ko sa lingkod-bayan; mga kagalang-galang na panauhin; mga binibini at ginoo.

Maligayang ika-125 anibersaryo ng Unang Republika ng Pilipinas! [applause]

We are gathered here today where the cornerstone of our Republic was first laid, where our journey to nationhood was catapulted forward by the unstoppable will of our people to be free.

We draw strength from what has transpired on these hallowed grounds 125 years ago. This same force drives us today to attain the vision that was set forth by our founding fathers.

Under challenging times, in a changing world, with complex problems, the history made here continues to inspire us to overcome the obstacles that stand in the way of our nation's march to progress.

The architects of Asia's First Republic chose this church to unfurl before the world our blueprint for a nation, with a complete plan designed to shelter people under a canopy of rights, wide enough to host diverse ideas and strong enough to protect lives, freedom and property.

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They enshrined democracy's vibrancy and virtues in the constitution as they wrote a Bill of Rights, an elected legislature, an independent judiciary, which today, are hailed as some of civilization's greatest achievements.

In these halls, the new nation is made and its debut before the world unveiled a democratic order based on the rule of law.

To a world skeptical of a former colony's capacity for self-rule, the Malolos Republic erased all doubts. To the Filipinos who liberated their own selves by blood but were doubtful that the promises of the revolution could be redeemed, the Malolos Republic raised their hopes once again for a brighter tomorrow.

We continue to live in the infrastructure of the state that they had envisioned. The rent we pay, so to speak, is what is expected of us as stewards of that legacy: making our economy sound, our democracy stable, our future secure and our nation strong.

So today, as beneficiaries of their heroism, we pledge to continue to pay those dues. For that is the only way that we can honor those who founded this Republic, those who fought for its ideals and those who fell in the war.

And the fight continues up to this day, because while the great cause of freedom endures, it still faces threats, some shocking, some subtle, but all met with the same resolve.

To those who "trample our sacred shores," the Spirit of Malolos commands us to resist you, for the territory our forefathers fought for is unconquerable.

But the wars we fight today involve no armies to be crushed or trenches to be overwhelmed. They require no bloodletting, no rushing of barricades. They are harder to vanquish and they exact a toll of poverty, hunger and disease that claim more lives than any armed conflicts. Their defeat requires new weapons of the day, forged by patriots, to be wielded against enemies neither take no prisoners nor cease or cede any ground.

We have been waging a war against hunger, with farms as battlefields, because a Republic that does not feed its people will be consumed by their anger. We have been building better and more hospitals and schools, for our democracy can only be healthy and informed if we are free from sickness and ignorance.

We have been bringing water and energy to every home, for freedom cannot bloom when people are parched and their homes remain dark. We have been working for the higher income and better jobs to emancipate our people from the bondage of poverty, for a Republic is impoverished if only a few are enriched.

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The fruit of democracy tastes bitter to those who cannot partake. We have been striving for equal treatment before the law, for rich and the poor alike and for the speedy dispensation of justice. After all, if justice can be bought or delayed, so too can freedom.

We have been cleaning and lighting our streets to free our people from fear, for crime and disorder do not only affect life, liberty and economy, they paralyze our people, shred our social fabric and prevent the pursuit of happiness.

We continue to be unrelenting in securing peace from all quarters, for freedom cannot thrive in chaos. It cannot exist with those who preach intolerance or seek tyranny. Most importantly, we have been working to forge a national unity based on ideals larger than ourselves, for a cause higher than we are.

A divided Republic can never prosper. When fractured into tribes, cliques and factions, its attention is divided by the petty and its energy is distracted away from the grand dreams we have for our nation. These cracks were present when the Malolos Republic was born.

Nonetheless, these fissures did not prevent our cohesion into a Republic, but on the contrary, it fueled the imperative that our fragmented islands shall rise as a united nation.

This remains the vision with which we are guiding our nation today.

Bagama't mahigit isang siglo na ang nakaraan, isinasabuhay natin taun-taon ang diwa ng kabayanihang ipinamalas sa atin ng ating salinlahi.

Higit pa sa mga pagsariwa ng kanilang kadakilaan at mga sakripisyo, binibigyang-buhay natin sa ating puso at mga gawa ang kagitingan, katapatan at pagmamahal sa bayan. Ngunit hindi maikakaila na patuloy pa rin ang laban ng bayan sa banta ng sakit, ng kahirapan, kalamidad at iba pang uri ng mga panganib.

Kaya naman, makakaasa kayong magiging karamay ninyo ang pamahalaan sa pagharap sa mga pagsubok na ito. Patuloy kaming nagsisikap na pangangalagaan ang ating mga kababayan sa iba't-ibang uri ng katiwalian, pang-aabuso, kawalan ng katarungan.

Ang bagong mukha po ng pamahalaan sa ilalim ng Bagong Pilipinas ay may mga matang mulat sa mga suliranin, may mga taingang taimtim na nakikinig ng hinaing ng sambayanan, may boses na handang magtanggol sa naaapi, at higit sa lahat, may pusong naglilingkod para sa mas maginhawang buhay ng Pilipino.

Bawat isa sa atin ay maituturing na bayani ng ating makabagong panahon. Tayo ang tagapangalaga ng ating henerasyon.

Kagaya ng mga haligi ng Republika ng Malolos, paigtingin nating lalo ang pag-ibig sa bayan upang maisulong natin ang isang mapagpalaya, mas maunlad at tunay na maginhawang Bagong Pilipinas.

Mabuhay ang mga Pilipino!

Mabuhay ang ating Republika!

Maraming salamat at magandang umaga po sa inyong lahat. [applause]

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