

**PRESIDENT FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS, JR.'s
SPEECH DURING THE PARIS OLYMPICS 2024 SEND-OFF CEREMONY**

Intramuros, City of Manila

June 21, 2024

(00:00:00)

Thank you to our Commission Chairman, Richard Bachmann.

Please take your seats.

I made sure that I am in the appropriate uniform for the event that we have this evening. [applause]

Senator Francis Tolentino, who was together with the Mayor, played a very large part in this; Senator Pia Cayetano who has not only been interested in sports, but a sportswoman herself. We were decrying the fact earlier and I told her, you know there was a time when we were still competing, the two of us. Ngayon, we just send people off to the Olympics. Iyon na lang ang trabaho natin.

The members of the Philippine Sports Commission; our friends and partners who have been so supportive of our athletes and our most important, our most important guests here for the evening, our Filipino Olympics and Paralympics athletes who are bound for Paris tomorrow; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen.

It was in 1924 that the First Filipino Olympic athlete carried with him the hopes and aspirations of a very young nation.

A world-class sprinter during his time, David Nepomuceno, who was mentioned earlier, was a beacon of potential and promise. He embarked on a journey that not only defined his life but also blazed a trail for future Filipino athletes. He laid the groundwork for these athletes who are going now. He

demonstrated that our nation could stand tall on the global stage when it comes to sports.

So, fast forward now to 100 years on, we gather here today to perpetuate the legacy of that determination and excellence that Philippine athletes have bravely demonstrated all throughout the years.

More than a send-off, this is an opportune time to get inspiration from the countless athletes who have carried our flag with pride throughout the years.

Imagine the scene at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Hidilyn Diaz-Naranjo stands before the barbell, the weight of history resting on her shoulders. And as she hoisted that heavy weight above her head, she lifted the hopes of the entire nation.

Her victory, the first Olympic gold medal for the Philippines, resonated across the entire country — a beacon of what can be achieved with perseverance and unwavering faith.

She was not alone.

Nesthy Petecio, Carlo Paalam, Eumir Felix Marcial, their silver and bronze medals, stood right next to her, embodying the same spirit of perseverance and sacrifice and discipline and excellence.

Their successes were not personal victories, only for themselves; they were a triumph for every single Filipino, especially young Filipinos who dared to dream of reaching such great heights, who dared to believe that they could achieve what could have been considered as impossible.

So, the athletes that we are sending to this year's Olympics embody the quintessence of that Filipino spirit — a spirit that knows no bounds, thrives on adversity, and dares to break any barriers put before them.

As we gather tonight to give the well-wishes to our athletes embarking on the 2024 Paris Olympics, my heart swells with pride and optimism.

I see before me men and women who have sacrificed countless early mornings, long afternoons, late nights in pursuit of perfection.

From humble beginnings to the world stage, each of you has woven a tapestry of courage, of discipline, of sacrifice, and of strength.

Your stories speak not just of feats of athleticism but your growth as a firm, relentless, and forever reaching your dreams like every Filipino.

And we have invested in those dreams: We have tried to support the sports movement here in the Philippines. We have granted 52 million pesos for the preparation, training and participation of Filipino athletes in the 2024 Paris Olympics.

For this year alone, over 1.1 billion pesos in sports, through the PSC, has funded the aspirations and future of Filipino athletes.

We continue to rehabilitate our major sports facilities, such as the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex, the PhilSports Complex, to give our youth a fitting stage to improve and to showcase their talents.

And, presently, we are finishing the National Academy of Sports System in Tarlac and the Philippine Sports Training Center in Bataan to train, to hone, and to develop present and aspiring athletes for future competitions.

(00:05:52)

So, on top of all these efforts, I direct the Office of the Executive Secretary to release to the Philippine Sports Commission any funds to help support the preparation and participation of our athletes in these upcoming Olympics.
[applause]

All of these demonstrate this commitment that we have to the advancement of Filipino athletes by equipping them with the tools and encouragement to realize their full potential.

I encourage all Filipinos to rally behind our athletes as they pursue and compete in the 2024 Paris Olympics. After all, we are not just chasing medals; we are sprinting towards making history, bringing honor to our country and inspiring us all.

To our athletes: You carry our hopes and dreams to Paris, you also carry with you the banner of our nation that believes in you, stands proudly beside you, and celebrates your every triumph, and is with you through any obstacle.

Whether in the boxing ring, on gymnastics floor, sculling in the — rowing, or in any area that you compete in, you exemplify the very best of what it means to be a Filipino — we are competitive, courageous, and determined. But we do it with a smile on our face.

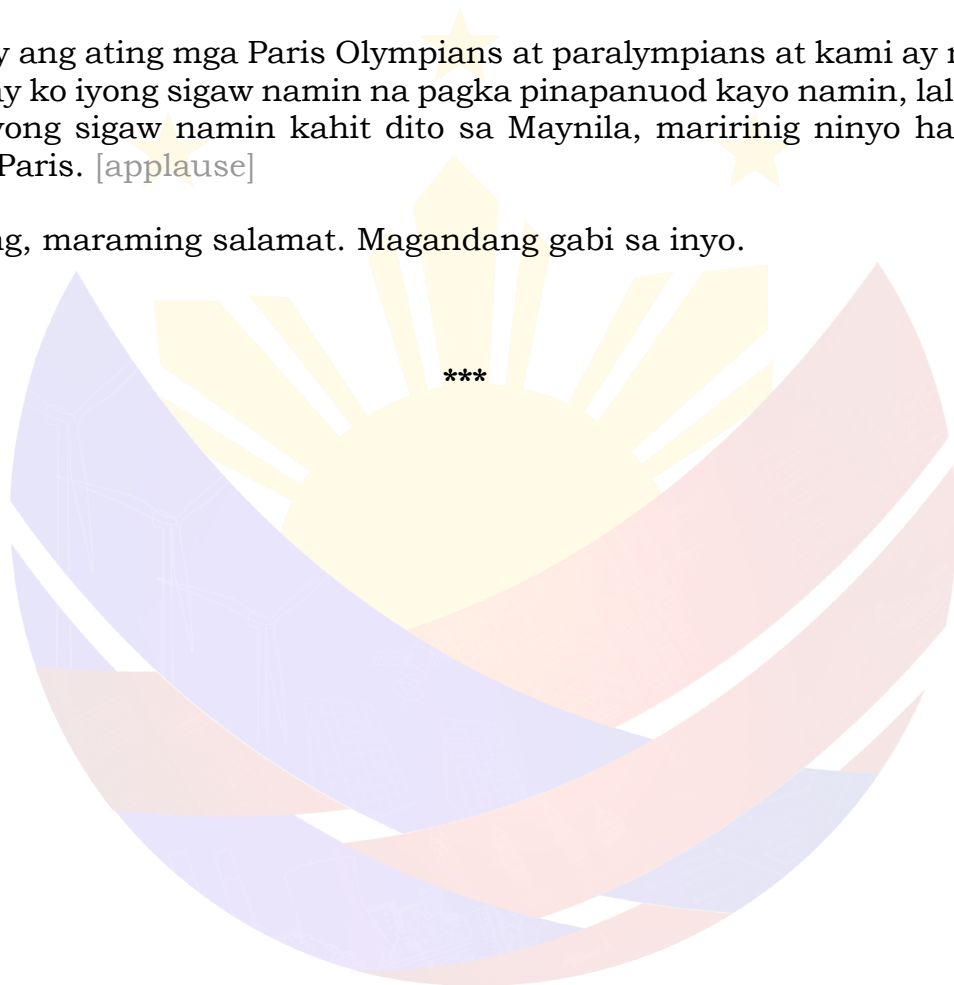
As you step onto the global stage, hold our flag high and show the world what a Filipino is made of.

We believe in you. We are proud of you. And we will be with you every step of this remarkable journey.

Mabuhay ang mga atletang Pilipino! [applause]

Mabuhay ang ating mga Paris Olympians at paralympians at kami ay nandito at palagay ko iyong sigaw namin na pagka pinapanuod kayo namin, lalakasan namin iyong sigaw namin kahit dito sa Maynila, maririnig ninyo hanggang doon sa Paris. [applause]

Maraming, maraming salamat. Magandang gabi sa inyo.
(00:08:09)



BAGONG PILIPINAS