

12 June 2014

**MESSAGE**

On this joyous occasion celebrating the birth of our republic, we look back at all the sacrifices made by our forefathers who nobly fought to lift the yoke of tyranny imposed by a foreign nation on our lands. The theme of the 116<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Declaration of Philippine Independence is "*Pagsunod sa Yapak ng mga Dakilang Pilipino, Tungo sa Malawakan at Permanenteng Pagbabago.*"

These words remind us that as responsible citizens, we should not merely commemorate heroism from a bygone era and express appreciation for our history's gift of freedom. The Filipino nation has the ever present opportunity to write more heroism in our collective history. We have the ability to give meaning to the victory of those who founded our country. We must not be passive characters in our own national epic.

The challenges may be different from those encountered during colonial times, but the stakes are just as high. We have to fight against the enemies of today which hold us down in our march towards positive change and national progress.

Poverty. Corruption. Unemployment. Peace and order problems. These are modern ills besetting developing nations.

Only a nation determined to rise against these will truly move on towards being a strong republic. It is in us to do this. This is written in our history. This is in our blood. This is why we take a day in the year to look back and remind ourselves that it was our forefathers who made the great sacrifices and fought the good fight in the name of the Filipino nation.

*Mabuhay ang Pilipinas!*



**NARCISO T. CASTAÑEDA**  
Ambassador