



LOS ANGELES

**MESSAGE**

I wish to extend my warm greetings to the Filipino communities of Southern California, Southern Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas on the occasion of the 111th Anniversary of Philippine Independence.

Congratulations to the various Filipino associations and civic organizations whose *Araw ng Kalayaan* celebrations are keeping the ideals of June 12, 1898 alive in your respective communities.

The theme for this year's celebration of the 111th Anniversary of Philippine Independence is "*Kagitingan, Kagalingan at Kasipagan Tungo sa Tunay na Kalayaan.*" These inherent Filipino traits that helped us achieve our independence 111 years ago have also contributed immensely to the success of Filipinos in the United States in major sectors of American society. The same traits, amplified by such core Filipino values as *Pagkamakabayan*, *Pakikipagkapwa* and *Pagkamakatao* provide the impetus for Filipinos overseas to contribute to our homeland's growth by way of knowledge and resource transfer, investments, and philanthropic activities.

The Filipino communities in Western and Southwestern United States, in particular, are increasingly realizing their desire to play a more active role in our nation's future. They are enthusiastically seizing the opportunity for greater engagement provided by Philippine Government programs for Filipinos overseas, such as the Citizenship Reacquisition and Retention Act of 2003 and the Overseas Absentee Voting Law of 2003. I am pleased to report that the Philippine Consulate General in Los Angeles has garnered the second largest number of new OAV registrants among Philippine missions abroad since voter registration started early this year.

Let us continue to be guided and inspired by our forefathers' shining examples of bravery, excellence and industriousness in our collective efforts towards building a more progressive and economically emancipated Philippines.

Mabuhay ang Pilipinas!


MARY JO A. BERNARDO-ARAGON
Consul General

12 June 2009