

REMARKS OF SND
DND 75th Anniversary Kick-off Ceremony
Flag Raising, August 18, 2014; 7:30 A.M.; GHQ Canopy, CGEA, Q.C

UNDERSECRETARY HONORIO AZCUETA; GENERAL GREG CATAPANG, JR; HEADS OF OTHER *DND* BUREAUS; AFP OFFICERS, ENLISTED PERSONNEL, AND CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES; FELLOW WORKERS IN OUR DEFENSE DEPARTMENT; LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, *MGA KABABAYAN*:

IN HIS VERY FIRST *STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS* ON NOVEMBER 25,1935, THE THEN PRESIDENT MANUEL QUEZON SPOKE BEFORE THE *NATIONAL ASSEMBLY*, ON THE FULFILLMENT OF HIS CONSTITUTIONAL DUTY TO PRESENT TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, FROM TIME TO TIME, INFORMATION ON THE *STATE OF THE NATION*.

HE SAID: “*IN THE FULFILLMENT OF THIS DUTY, I AM ADDRESSING THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TODAY ON THE FUNDAMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY OF A STATE-- ON A QUESTION INVOLVING OUR VERY EXISTENCE WHEN WE BECOME A FREE MEMBER IN THE FAMILY OF NATIONS. THIS QUESTION IS THAT OF ASSURING THE FUTURE SAFETY OF OUR BELOVED COUNTRY*”.

PRESIDENT QUEZON FURTHER SAID: *“SELF-DEFENSE IS THE SUPREME RIGHT OF MANKIND, NO MORE SACRED TO THE INDIVIDUAL THAN TO THE NATION, THE INTERESTS OF WHICH ARE IMMEASURABLY OF GREATER SIGNIFICANCE AND EXTENT. A THREAT AGAINST THE NATION INVOLVES NOT ALONE THE LIFE OF ONE INDIVIDUAL, BUT OF MILLIONS; NOT THE WELFARE AND FORTUNE OF A SINGLE FAMILY, BUT OF ALL. AND ABOVE ANYTHING ELSE, DEPENDING UPON THE EXERCISE OF THE RIGHT OF NATIONAL SELF-DEFENSE IS FREEDOM ITSELF, THE MOST PRECIOUS REWARD FROM HEAVEN TO THE WORTHY”.*

“I WOULD BE RECREANT TO MY DUTY DID I NOT COME TO YOU, IN MY FIRST APPEARANCE BEFORE THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, TO ASK YOUR UNGRUDGING SUPPORT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SOUND SYSTEM OF NATIONAL DEFENSE. THIS IS OUR FIRST AND MOST URGENT NEED”.

THE PRIMACY OF THE DEFENSE OF OUR NATION AND OUR PEOPLE THEREFORE WAS GIVEN UTMOST CONSIDERATION BY OUR FOREFATHERS. AS AN IMPORTANT STEP TO NATION BUILDING, WE NEEDED TO PROVE TO THE REST OF THE WORLD THAT WE

FILIPINOS CAN HOLD AND PROTECT WHAT WE OWN, STAND BY OUR IDEALS, AND ENSURE THE SECURITY AND SAFETY OF OUR COUNTRY AND PEOPLE.

IT WAS NO SURPRISE THEN THAT THE FIRST EVER LAW PASSED BY THE PHILIPPINE COMMONWEALTH WAS THE “*NATIONAL DEFENSE ACT*” OF 1935, WHICH LAID THE FOUNDATION FOR OUR COUNTRY’S NATIONAL DEFENSE POLICY.

THIS LED TO THE PASSAGE OF COMMONWEALTH ACT NO. 430 ON MAY 31, 1939 AND IMPLEMENTED BY EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 230 ON OCTOBER 31, 1939, PAVING THE WAY FOR THE CREATION OF THE *DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE* AND ITS FORMAL ORGANIZATION ON NOVEMBER 1, 1939.

SEVENTY FIVE YEARS LATER, WE ARE STANDING HERE AS MEMBERS OF THIS GREAT INSTITUTION. WE ARE HERE CONTINUING THE WORK STARTED BY OUR FOREBEARS, THE VERY FIRST DEFENSE PERSONNEL, LED BY SECRETARY TEOFILO SISON. OUR DUTIES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND FUNCTIONS MAY HAVE EXPANDED AND EVOLVED OVER TIME, BUT THE CORE REASON WHY WE EXIST REMAINS THE SAME.

FOR 75 YEARS, WE HAVE BEEN PART OF THE LEGACY OF SERVICE THAT CONTINUES TO PROTECT THE FILIPINO NATION FROM THOSE WHO WOULD DO IT HARM. JUST BARELY TWO YEARS AFTER THE DEPARTMENT'S CREATION, OUR RESOLVE AND METTLE WERE TESTED, AND OUR PLACE IN HISTORY HAS BEEN ETCHED INDELIBLY IN THE ANNALS OF WAR.

WE HAVE REMAINED STEADFAST IN OUR COMMITMENT TO SERVE THE FILIPINO NATION AND PEOPLE, FAITHFULLY DOING OUR JOBS DAY IN AND DAY OUT.

AS YOUR 35TH SECRETARY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE, IT HAS BEEN MY HONOR TO LEAD OUR DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE IN THE PURSUIT AND FULFILLMENT OF OUR CONSTITUTIONAL MANDATE AS CITIZENS OF THE STATE.

IN SIMILAR REMEMBRANCE, IT HAS BEEN MY PLEASURE TO JOIN OUR DEDICATED MEN AND WOMEN, WHO CONTINUOUSLY PLACE THEIR LIVES ON THE LINE IN THEIR DEVOTED SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY AND CITIZENRY.

NAGKAKAIISA SA ATING ADHIKAIN, ANG KAGAWARAN NG TANGGULANG PAMBANSA AY, *“PITUMPU’T LIMANG TAONG SANDIGAN NG MAMAMAYAN, TAPAT NA NAGLILINGKOD SA BAYAN”*.

IN CELEBRATION OF THIS YEAR’S MILESTONE, WE WILL UNDERTAKE VARIOUS ACTIVITIES OVER THE NEXT THREE MONTHS. THESE EVENTS ARE MEANT TO HIGHLIGHT OUR DEPARTMENT’S COMMITMENT TO HONOR THE PAST, SECURE THE PRESENT, AND PLAN FOR THE FUTURE.

WE WILL CONDUCT A SERIES OF *DND-WIDE BLOODLETTING ACTIVITIES* FROM AUGUST TO NOVEMBER WITH OUR VETERANS, RETIREES, AND SOLDIERS ON ACTIVE DUTY AS OUR MAIN BENEFICIARIES. THIS IS OUR MODEST WAY OF PAYING HOMAGE TO THE PATRIOTIC DEEDS OF OUR VETERANS AND RETIREES AND, AT THE SAME TIME, SERVING THE NEEDS OF OUR SOLDIERS ON ACTIVE DUTY AND THEIR DEPENDENTS.

AS PART OF *DND'S* CONTRIBUTIONS FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE, WE WILL ENGAGE IN *DND-WIDE TREE-PLANTING ACTIVITIES* IN VARIOUS LOCATIONS NATIONWIDE. WE AIM TO PLANT MORE THAN 300,000 SEEDLINGS, SO AS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE REHABILITATION AND RESTORATION OF OUR ENVIRONMENT, IN COORDINATION WITH THE *DENR* AND THE IMPLEMENTORS OF OUR *NATIONAL GREENING PROGRAM*.

IN THE WEEK LEADING TO OUR MAIN ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION ON *NOVEMBER 10*, WE WILL HOLD A *RECOGNITION DAY* ON NOVEMBER 3, 2014 TO ACKNOWLEDGE LOYAL AND OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEES OF OUR DEFENSE DEPARTMENT FOR THIS YEAR.

WE WILL ALSO SHOWCASE WHAT OUR DEFENSE DEPARTMENT IS ALL ABOUT WITH OUR *STATIC DISPLAY AND BUREAU EXHIBITS* ON *NOVEMBER 9 AND 10*. THE GENERAL PUBLIC, THE FILIPINO PEOPLE—OUR BOSSES—WILL BE INVITED TO THIS UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY OF GETTING TO KNOW THEIR DEFENSE DEPARTMENT BETTER.

LIKEWISE, AS PART OF OUR *DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY* CELEBRATION, WE WILL CONDUCT A JOB FAIR FOR *DND-WIDE VACANT POSITIONS*. WE WILL OPEN OUR DOORS TO QUALIFIED AND DESERVING FILIPINOS WHO WANT TO SERVE OUR NATION THROUGH OUR DEFENSE DEPARTMENT ON NOVEMBER 9, 2014 AT THE *AFP PARADE GROUNDS*.

THE SPECIFIC DETAILS OF THESE ACTIVITIES WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN THE DAYS TO COME. I AM THEREFORE GLAD TO ENJOIN ALL *DND-WIDE* PERSONNEL, BOTH CIVILIAN AND MILITARY, TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN OUR *75TH ANNIVERSARY* ACTIVITIES, SO THAT WE CAN REALLY PORTRAY THE ESSENCE AND IMPORTANCE OF THIS HISTORIC OCCASION.

LEST WE FORGET, LET US CONGRATULATE THE WINNERS OF OUR *DND 75TH ANNIVERSARY THEME AND LOGO CONTESTS* WHO WE AWARDED THIS MORNING.

YOU ARE NOW PART OF *DND* HISTORY AS YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS WILL BE HEARD, SEEN AND FELT IN THE COURSE OF OUR COMMEMORATION. ONCE AGAIN, CONGRATULATIONS!

IN CLOSING, LET ME REITERATE TO YOU OUR SOLID COMMITMENT TO THE TRUE FULFILLMENT OF OUR THEME *“PITUMPU’T LIMANG TAONG SANDIGAN NG MAMAMAYAN, TAPAT NA NAGLILINGKOD SA BAYAN”*.

THANK YOU AND GOOD MORNING!