

**Presidential Communications Operations Office
Presidential News Desk**

**SPEECH OF PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE DURING THE
CONFERMENT CEREMONY FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS' ORDER OF SIKATUNA AND GAWAD MABINI AWARDEES**

[Delivered at the Reception Hall in Malacañan Palace, Manila |
29 November 2021]

Kindly sit down. Salamat.

I know that you have waited for quite a while. Galing kami sa Antipolo for the bakuna. And I have to go home to change because in Malacañan, whenever I'm here, I cannot wear a casual --- kailangan naka-barong talaga ako.

Secretary of Foreign Affairs Teodoro Locsin Jr. and other Department of Foreign Affairs officials; Cabinet Secretary and Acting Presidential Spokesperson Karlo Alexei Nograles; Senator Bong Go --- nagkampanya; previous Presidential awardees; our honorees and their proud families --- good afternoon.

Friendship, goodwill and cooperation between peoples are the foundations of peace.

This is as true today as during the time of the blood compact between Datu Sikatuna and Miguel Lopez de Legazpi, depicted in the painting behind us. *Ininom nila ang dugo diyan? Maniwala ka?*

The *sandugo* ritual may be a thing of the past, but its [symbolism] and goals remain true and ever-present in the Philippine Foreign Service:

In the global community --- to represent our nation with honor, dignity, and pride;

In the face of challenge and uncertainty --- to pursue national interest with courage, diplomacy and skill; and

In the midst of opportunities --- to forge strong and lasting partnerships on the basis of equality, goodwill and mutual interest.

Today's awardees have demonstrated [all of the above] qualities for the benefit of our country and people.

Your unwavering sense of duty and unrelenting efforts have contributed much in upholding our country's independent foreign policy and in ensuring the welfare of Filipinos at home and abroad.

Indeed, you have contributed in real terms to securing our national security and political, economic and socio-cultural goals, and to furthering international amity and cooperation.

Today, I am honored and humbled to recognize distinguished members of the Philippine Foreign Service who have been brave in facing severe difficulties --- including mortal challenges --- principled in advancing our foreign policy, and creative in solving seemingly vexing problems.

With the weight of Apolinario Mabini's legacy on your shoulders and the interests of our nation in your minds and deeds --- you have done our nation proud.

It is my fervent hope that you and your colleagues in the Philippine Foreign Service will continue to serve the Philippines to the best of your ability and without reservation.

The Filipino people deserve nothing less.

Congratulations at mabuhay po kayong lahat. *[applause]*

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