

**Presidential Communications Operations Office  
Presidential News Desk**

**INTERVENTION OF  
PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE  
DURING THE SUMMIT FOR DEMOCRACY**

[10 December 2021]

I thank the United States for convening this Summit for Democracy at a time when the world faces great challenges.

These challenges call for the close examination of our democratic institutions while holding fast to the values and principles we have sworn to uphold.

The Philippines was the first republic in Asia and the inspiration of all Asian struggles for independence. Today, we have a vibrant democracy and an open and diverse society. Freedom of expression and of the press are fully enjoyed and the regular transfer of power is guaranteed through free and honest elections.

While we are the oldest democracy in Asia, our system of governance is not perfect. Corruption, poverty, and peace and order issues have always been and continue to be our major challenges. They weakened our institutions and deprived many Filipinos of democratic agencies.

A democracy needs peace to survive and progress to be sustainable. When I was elected President, I pledged meaningful change, I aspired for a government that really works for the Filipino people, especially the poor and the marginalized.

Hard but necessary reforms needed to be made, deep wounds of divisions needed to be healed, and stark inequalities needed to be redressed. All difficult undertakings but we did what we could and should.

My government worked to give the Filipino people the basic means to lead a life of dignity. This entails creating jobs, safeguarding peace and security, and instituting social safety nets.

We have made significant headways especially in economic expansion but COVID-19 struck and reversed many of our hard-earned gains.

My government also sought to broaden democratic participation through federalism but my constitutional project did not get Congress support. So be it. I respect the separation of powers vital for democracy.

In the remaining months of my term, we will forge ahead with reforms ensuring that no one is left behind as my country recovers from pandemic.

I am proud to be at this Summit for Democracy to tell you about the Philippine experience. Philippine democracy is indeed a work in progress. But the Filipino is free. The Philippines is free.

I step down in June 2022. The work of our imperfect democracy will certainly continue.

My administration will ensure an honest, peaceful, credible, and free elections in May. It will be my highest honor to turn over the reins of power to my successor knowing that in the exercise of my mandate I did my best to serve the Filipino nation.

Thank you.

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