



Proposed Keynote Message for APO

**Asia Pacific Pathways to Progress Foundation, Inc. Dialogue
with the Griffith Asia Institute of Griffith University,
Australiaⁱ**

25 June 2018 | Monday | 9:15 AM | Astoria Plaza, Pasig City

[PLEASANTRIES]

OFFICERS AND STAFF OF THE AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY LED BY AMBASSADOR AMANDA GORELY;

THE ORGANIZERS OF THIS GATHERING—OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF ASIA PACIFIC PATHWAYS TO PROGRESS FOUNDATION LED BY MR. RAPHEL LOTILLA, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, AND MS. AILEEN BAVIERA, PRESIDENT AND CEO;

PROFESSORS FROM GRIFFITH ASIA UNIVERSITY;

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN—GOOD MORNING!

THE PHILIPPINES AND AUSTRALIA HAVE BEEN FRIENDS FOR MORE THAN SEVENTY YEARS NOW. IN THOSE YEARS, COOPERATION HAS SPANNED IN THE AREAS OF POLITICAL RELATIONS, ECONOMIC RELATIONS, DEFENSE COOPERATION, PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE LINKAGES, AMONG OTHERS.

OUR EARLY RELATIONSHIP BEGAN IN THE FORM OF TRADE, FOLLOWED BY MIGRATION OF THE FIRST FILIPINO WORKERS TO

WORK IN THE PEARLING INDUSTRY IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA. DURING THE ONSLAUGHT OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR, AUSTRALIANS ALSO JOINED THE FILIPINOS AND OTHER ALLIED COMRADES IN LIBERATING THE PHILIPPINES—THIS SHOWS THAT OUR COUNTRIES STICK AROUND WITH EACH OTHER EVEN IN BAD TIMES.

OUR FORMAL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS STARTED IN 1946 WHEN THE AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE GENERAL OFFICE WAS PUT UP AT THE MANILA HOTEL, AND WHEN THE PHILIPPINES WAS ALSO ABLE TO ESTABLISH ITS FIRST PHILIPPINE MISSION IN SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA IN 1947. SINCE THEN, THERE HAVE BEEN MANY HIGH-LEVEL VISITS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES, AND OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS INDEED HAVE BECOME EVEN STRONGER UP TO THIS DAY.

WE ALSO HAVE STRONG ECONOMIC TIES THAT ARE STRENGTHENED BY OUR BEING BOTH MEMBERS OF THE ASIA PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND EAST ASIA SUMMIT, AND WITH THE ASEAN AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (AANZFTA) SUPPORTING OUR TRADE RELATIONSHIPS.

WE ALSO HAVE STRONG DEFENSE RELATION, WHICH HAVE FLOURISHED SINCE THE SECOND WORLD WAR. THE PHILIPPINES AND AUSTRALIA HAVE STRONG SECURITY TIES THAT INCLUDE NOT JUST REGULAR INTERACTIONS LIKE EXCHANGES AND EXERCISES BUT ALSO CAPACITY-BUILDING ESPECIALLY IN

AREAS OF MARITIME SECURITY AND COUNTERTERRORISM; ASSISTANCE TO PEACE PROCESS IN THE SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES; AND MORE ADVANCED FORMS OF TRAINING AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT.

THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR BILATERAL DEFENSE RELATIONSHIP WITH AUSTRALIA WAS GREATLY EVIDENT AND REINFORCED DURING THE MARAWI SIEGE THAT ERUPTED IN MAY 2017. WE ARE GRATEFUL AS WE WILL ALWAYS BE THAT THEY OFFERED VARIOUS FORMS OF SUPPORT WHICH ASSISTED OUR TROOPS ON THE GROUND.

WE RECOGNIZE THAT TERRORISM AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM ARE TWO OF THE MOST PRESSING CONCERNS FACING COUNTRIES IN THE REGION, AND THE LONG PROTRACTED BATTLE IN MARAWI HIGHLIGHTED THE NEED FOR SECURITY COOPERATION AMONG LIKE-MINDED STATES IN ORDER TO ADDRESS SUCH THREAT.

IN THE RECENT YEARS, THE AUSTRALIA-PHILIPPINES DEFENSE COOPERATION HAS GROWN SIGNIFICANTLY, WITH A MORE RECENT FOCUS ON COUNTER-TERRORISM, MARITIME SECURITY, AND ASSISTANCE TO THE PHILIPPINE DEFENSE REFORM (PDR) PROGRAM.

THIS DIALOGUE WILL HIGHLIGHT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE THE ELEVATION OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS TO A COMPREHENSIVE PARTNERSHIP ENTERED INTO IN 2015 AND

THAT WE SHOULD STRENGTHEN AND EXPAND THIS PARTNERSHIP IN LIGHT OF NEW AND RE-EMERGING CHALLENGES THAT CONFRONT OUR TWO COUNTRIES. THIS EVENT WILL APPRISE US OF THE REGIONAL SECURITY UPDATES, SUCH AS THE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE KOREAN PENINSULA, THE SEEMING EROSION OF U.S. LEADERSHIP AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE REGIONAL ORDER, U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS, RE-EMERGENCE OF SECURITY INITIATIVES LIKE THE QUAD, AMONG OTHERS.

WE ALSO HOPE TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES ON MARITIME SECURITY AND COOPERATION AND CYBERSECURITY THROUGH THIS DIALOGUE. MARITIME SECURITY, IN PARTICULAR THE SOUTH CHINA SEA, REMAINS A KEY CONCERN FOR MANY COUNTRIES IN THE REGION. THERE IS A STRONG NEED TO RESPECT AND UPHOLD THE RULES-BASED ORDER AMONG THE COUNTRIES IN THE REGION AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS. ON CYBERSECURITY, ON THE OTHER HAND, WE WILL HIGHLIGHT THE IMPORTANCE OF FORGING COOPERATION IN THE STRATEGIC AREA OF THE “FIFTH DOMAIN” ESPECIALLY THAT THE CYBERSPACE IS BECOMING THE NEW AREA OF COMPETITION.

ASIDE FROM UNDERSCORING THE STRONG BILATERAL TIES SHARED BY OUR TWO COUNTRIES, THIS EVENT IS ALSO ANCHORED ON OUR SHARED VALUES AND COMMON INTERESTS. WE HOPE THAT THE RESULTS OF THIS DIALOGUE CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE POLICY DISCUSSION AND, ULTIMATELY,

WILL BRING ABOUT THE DEEPENING AND EXPANSION OF OUR COMPREHENSIVE PARTNERSHIP.

THE PHILIPPINES' DEFENSE DEPARTMENT ALSO HOPES TO EXPLORE OTHER AVENUES FOR COOPERATION WITH AUSTRALIA ESPECIALLY ON GREATER MARITIME SECURITY COLLABORATION. THIS IS AS WE KNOW THAT WHEN IT COMES TO MARITIME AND TERRITORIAL DISPUTES, AUSTRALIA HAS BEEN VERY COMMITTED TO ABIDING BY THE RULE OF LAW AND PROMOTING PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT IN THE REGION. WE CAN ALL TESTIFY ABOUT AUSTRALIA'S COMMITMENT TO THE PRINCIPLES THAT IT ADVOCATES IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA AS WELL AS TO ITS COMMITMENT IN REGIONAL PEACE AND STABILITY. WE NEED TO HAVE AN ENHANCED COOPERATION WITH AUSTRALIA ON THIS ASPECT ESPECIALLY NOW THAT REGIONAL TENSIONS HAVE BEEN FUELED BY CHINA'S AGGRESSIVENESS AT PRESENT.

WE ARE ALSO LOOKING FORWARD TO STRENGTHEN TIES THROUGH HIGH LEVEL DEFENSE CONSULTATIONS; COLLABORATION IN MUTUAL DEFENSE EXERCISES; STRENGTHENED ENGAGEMENT IN LAW, JUSTICE, EDUCATION, AND DEVELOPMENT; AND CONSTANT SUPPORT TO HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RESPONSE ACTIVITIES. WE ALSO LOOK FORWARD TO AUSTRALIA'S UNWAVERING ASSISTANCE TO THE PHILIPPINES' ARMED FORCES MODERNIZATION PROGRAM AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE.

THE SECURITY SITUATION IN THE REGION ALSO GIVES OUR COUNTRIES INCENTIVES TO FURTHER ENHANCE OUR COOPERATION AND INCREASE OUR PREPAREDNESS, SO WE ARE STRENGTHENING OUR TIES IN COUNTERING TERRORISM, PARTICULARLY IN INTELLIGENCE-SHARING AND CAPACITY BUILDING IN JOINT URBAN WARFARE, AS WE ARE ALSO REINFORCING OUR COOPERATION IN OTHER STRATEGIC AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES.

I REMAIN CONFIDENT THAT AUSTRALIA AND THE PHILIPPINES WILL STRENGTHEN OUR FRIENDSHIP BY BUILDING ON OUR PREVIOUS PARTNERSHIPS AND BY EMBARKING ON NEW ONES.

BEFORE I END, I WOULD LIKE TO COMMEND THE ASIA PACIFIC PATHWAYS TO PROGRESS FOUNDATION FOR ORGANIZING THIS DIALOGUE AIMED TO ENHANCE CAPABILITIES AND PROMOTE PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS IN REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DISCOURSES ON RELEVANT ISSUES.

THANK YOU AND I WISH YOU ALL A PRODUCTIVE DIALOGUE!

ⁱ With inputs from Cabinet Cluster on Security, Justice, and Peace