



MALACAÑAN PALACE  
MANILA

## MESSAGE

Today marks the fifty-fourth year since the Philippines, together with the other founding members of ASEAN, formed what would become Southeast Asia's preeminent regional organization and one of the world's most successful institutions.

The creation of ASEAN in 1967, in a period of great power rivalry and tensions, was indeed a bold, visionary step towards enduring peace and shared prosperity for the region. With more than five decades of community building, ASEAN has gone from strength to strength as the friendship and cooperation among its members deepened.

Today, ASEAN is without doubt an indispensable institution for the promotion and preservation of peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region. ASEAN, with its considerable market and dynamic workforce, is also an important economic hub contributing to global growth and development.

We in ASEAN are no stranger to difficult times that test our capacity to act together and surmount challenges. But our enduring bonds of amity and solidarity have always pulled us through.

Notwithstanding the difficulties we face as the COVID-19 pandemic enters its second year, I am confident that ASEAN will prevail as it has done so many times in the past. ASEAN will continue to rise to present challenges and lead the region with renewed sense of purpose and an even firmer commitment to the ideals of peace, freedom and prosperity.

As we celebrate our collective achievements and reflect on how far we have come as one community, may we always remember and value how much stronger we are together than on our own.

Mabuhay ang ASEAN!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Rodrigo Roa Duterte".

RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE

MANILA  
8 August 2021