

Remarks given during Board of Investments Flag Ceremony, March 26, 2001, upon the First Official Day of Government Service of Trade and Industry Undersecretary Vince Pérez

### **A Brand New Day**

This morning, we honor our country by raising the flag and singing our national anthem.

Why are we here today? *Bakit kayo naririto ngayon?*

Our flag is an emblem of our unity, our people, our power, and our purpose as one nation. What does it symbolize for you?

Sometime in 1992, when I was still working in New York, I was invited to attend a luncheon in honor of then President Ramos at the Plaza Hotel, where he was staying. Since the Plaza Hotel was only a few blocks from where my office was, I decided to walk instead. When I turned the corner in front of the hotel, I suddenly stopped when I saw a huge flag of the Philippines above the main entrance to the Plaza Hotel. It was such an uplifting moment for me, to see our flag waving proudly and announcing to any passerby that the head of state of the Republic of the Philippines was present there.

Why are we here today? *Bakit kayo naririto ngayon?*

In the Bible, especially in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, it talks about how the Apostles felt honored to be servants of God in spreading the words of Jesus Christ. The Apostles felt that giving service to God was the most noble of all professions a person can undertake. I presume we all agree on that. But for me, an equally noble profession is that of government service. Each one of us joined the government, because deep down in our hearts, we dream of changing the world.

It is noble to honor one's country with words, but it is nobler to serve one's country with actions.

Why are we here today? *Bakit kayo naririto ngayon?*

We are here today, to serve our country by deeds and actions and not just by words. We are here to serve the common good, the greater good and, the higher good.

Let me say without hesitation that I join all of you with great honor in serving our country. I enter upon my duties as Undersecretary of Trade and Industry and as Managing Head of BOI with a sense of humility, with an awareness of my obligations, and with some anxiety that my abilities might fail to keep pace with my enthusiasm to render the service you expect from me. It is a brand new day for all of us.

Let's help each other change the world. Thank you.