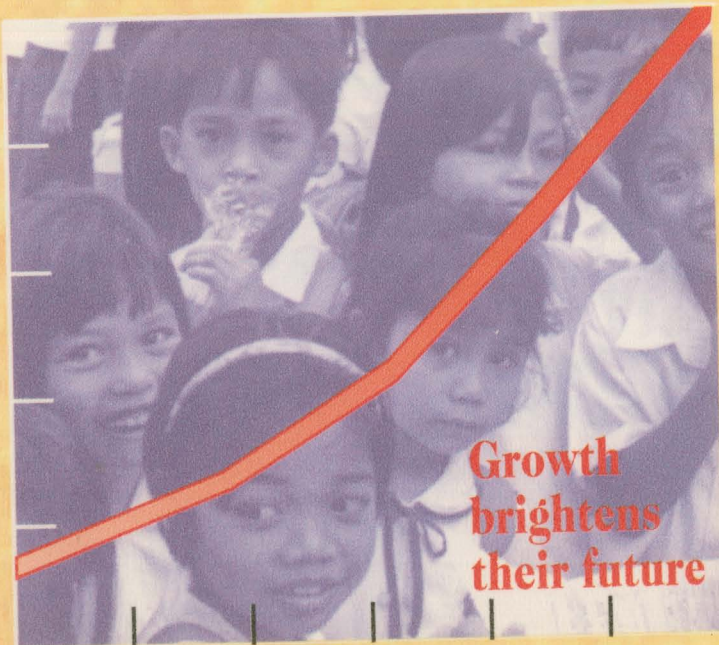


# OUR TIME HAS COME

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THE GOALS WE SET OURSELVES  
TO OBTAIN FOR OUR PEOPLE  
ARE NOW WITHIN OUR REACH

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**FIDEL V. RAMOS**

To: H.E. Prime Minister Dato Seri'  
Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohammad (Malaysia)  
Best wishes & Mabuhay/longlife!

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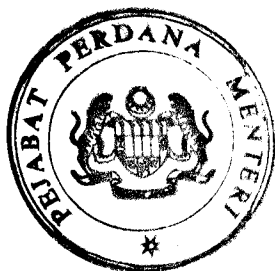
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**FIDEL V. RAMOS**



A fifth collection of speeches  
by the President of the Republic  
of the Philippines

17 May 1996



PUSTAKA PERDANA



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# Preface

**M**ID-TERM in my Presidency, we Filipinos have come some way toward the future we envision for ourselves and for our children. We can now see the emerging shape of the nation we can become.

The economic indicators tell us exactly what we accomplished these last three years. But economic growth by itself is not the truest measure of what we have been able to do. More important is that we have restored ordinary people's faith in our capacity to accomplish things together: we have reawakened popular optimism. *Kaya natin—Pilipino tayo!*

For me it is even more heartening that what we were able to do these past three years we did without doing violence to our civil liberties—without dismantling the constitutional checks and balances. We showed not only the region but ourselves that we can develop as a democracy. This too is important—because political freedoms enable ordinary people to share in the fruits of growth.

I would be the last to claim we have achieved all that we set out to do. Growth is still largely concentrated in the cities—and among those social groups best-equipped by wealth and education to seize the opportunities generated by deregulation and liberalization. But we now have the leisure to think and plan beyond our most immediate needs.

We can now begin to ensure today's growth transforms the economy for tomorrow. This transformation Government can help along by charting the right directions and set-

ting down the correct incentives: for instance, its policies can encourage people to save and to invest. The rest is best left to the workings of the free market, to the interplay of competition on a level playing field.

Increasingly, Government must attend to the impartial enforcement of the law: far too many things are still being arranged through political connections. We must bring our democratic practice closer to democratic theory.

And we must have a special care for the poorest among our people. We must break the cycle of extreme want, apathy and despair that has oppressed them for generations. This social task is all the more urgent because there will be even fewer jobs for unskilled workers in the knowledge society we are entering. Once our tax reforms take hold, we should have the money to give our poorest communities the health care, the basic education and the job opportunities they need to help themselves.

I have always been doubtful of social visions that promise the believer an uprooting of all injustice and every privilege—a reign of virtue—a whole new world. Our shared vision rejects such utopias. But I believe we can organize for ourselves a society where ordinary people need depend on no patron's charity—where they need defer to no one else's superior dignity—where they can have the chance to realize the possibilities of their lives, in a community of peace, freedom and equality.

These are the goals we set ourselves to obtain for the least among our people: and now they are within our reach.



FIDEL V. RAMOS  
*Malacañang*  
October 9, 1995