

## **OPENING REMARKS**

**1Sambayan Townhall Meeting**

**26 May 2021 at 8PM**

**Our dear friends and kababayans, good evening.**

**On behalf of 1SAMBAYAN, I would like to welcome you all in this town hall for our fellow Overseas Filipino Workers. The theme of this town hall – “Karapatan, Serbisyo at Proteksiyon “- is very much aligned with the principles of 1SAMBAYAN.**

**We, in the 1SAMBAYAN believe, that human rights, particularly labor rights, are an essential fabric in every democratic nation. I thank you for the sacrifices you have offered to the country. Your contribution in the economy of our nation is undeniable.**

**A World Bank report has cited the Philippines as the fourth-highest recipient of inward remittances in 2019.**

**The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas likewise said in a recent report that personal remittances from our OFWs amounted to 2.8 billion dollars in March 2021.**

**Despite massive decline due to mass retrenchments brought about by the pandemic, your remittances had made up to 9 percent of our country's Gross Domestic Product in 2020.**

**Behind these figures are ordinary Filipinos – fathers, mothers, sons and daughters who have left their family and loved ones behind for better job opportunities abroad. This, I believe, makes you our nation's modern heroes.**

**Let me reiterate the goal of our coalition, that is, to avoid splitting of votes by choosing a singular slate in the 2022 elections. We are in the process of choosing our candidates based on character and competence.**

**The exchange of ideas that you will have in this town hall is vital in determining the qualification, character and competence of our next set of leaders.**

**Thus, we would like to listen to your stories and concerns. Your voice is important in our selection process. Together, let us choose a set of leaders who have character and competence. We, Filipinos, deserve better.**

**Finally, I would like to thank the organizers of this town hall for giving our OFWs a voice not only in 1SAMBAYAN but in the Philippine society. Our coalition is not complete without the Overseas Filipino Workers.**

**Thank you and mabuhay po kayo!**