

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 Proteksyon “- 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!