

**Message of Hon. Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr.
Secretary of Foreign Affairs**

**On the occasion of Japan's National Day
and Birthday of His Majesty Emperor Naruhito
23 February 2022**

His Excellency Ambassador Koshikawa Kazuhiko,

On behalf of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte and the Filipino people, I am honored to extend warmest greetings to His Majesty the Emperor Naruhito of Japan on his 62nd birthday, and to the people of Japan on their National Day.

As the symbol of the Japanese nation, His Majesty The Emperor unites its people, inspires them in their pursuit of excellence in almost all their pursuits, and provides them with a steadfast sense of wellbeing and of pride in being Japanese.

Under His Majesty's guidance, Japan has been an exemplar in generosity. Most recently, Japan provided generous humanitarian assistance when the Visayas was devastated by Typhoon Odette; it gave us life-saving vaccines and funding support in our continuing fight against COVID; and it has always stood by us as a dependable economic and development partner.

Japan is also the Philippines' first Strategic Partner. We value its commitment to strengthen our security and defense cooperation, and its determination to uphold the rule of law in our maritime sphere.

May the Chrysanthemum Throne continue to flower in beauty and strength. I wish His Majesty Emperor Naruhito good health and continued wisdom on this auspicious occasion and in the year ahead. The celebratory nature of today brings hope to the Japanese and Filipino people in our long and unfailing friendship. END.