

Statement of Filipino-Amerasians on 2011 Filipino-American Friendship Day

We are the United Philippine Amerasians – a group representing Filipino Amerasians from the cities of Angeles, Olongapo, Castillejos, Zambales and National Capitol Region. We were formed after a two-day conference on 2-3 July in Angeles City with the theme “Amerasians: Partners in Development”. The United Philippine Amerasians greets the Philippine and American governments on the commemoration of 2011 Filipino-American Friendship Day.

We recognize the goodness brought about by the friendship of these two countries to the lives of many Filipinos and Americans in the Philippines and other parts of the world. With this recognition comes the reminder to both countries, especially to the American government, that this friendship bore children who have been left for decades to live in abandoned streets and communities in the Philippines when the military base was dismantled. We are the children abandoned by one or both parents and we are looking for the caring of American soldier fathers whom we have not known for a long time.

We wish to let the American and Philippine governments know the following:

Most of us who were abandoned, especially black Filipino Amerasians, grew up continuously experiencing discrimination since childhood. Some of us lived for a long time deemed despicable and unworthy of opportunities due to the color of our skin.

We encourage the Philippine government to enact an Anti-Discrimination law that provides protection to and respects the rights of an individual whatever his/her color, race and ethnicity. Meanwhile, we also encourage the local governments to enact an Anti-Discrimination ordinance in order to respond to the need for protection of their Amerasian citizens.

We also call the attention of the Department of Education, media and other social sectors to help us explain discrimination and its effects to the general population. Join us in creating a campaign that combats discrimination against Filipino Amerasians.

Many of us Filipino-Amerasians are mired in poverty. Born by mothers who are impoverished from the beginning and abandoned by our fathers. The generation born inherited and lived in endless poverty. Many of us did not finish school and were thus unable to find jobs. We wish that this cycle of poverty stops with us.

We call the attention of the American government to recognize their children neglected here in the Philippines. Give us moral and financial support such as scholarships so we can finish college and open the doors for job opportunities and rise from the morass of poverty.

May our fellow Filipinos not forget us as well. May you help thousands of Amerasians who are your neighbors, relatives, friends, classmates, fellow voters hoping for support to stand on our own. We ask for expansion of skills training, entrepreneurship programs and micro-finance assistance to help Filipino Amerasians establish their own livelihood.

We also call the attention of the business sector and other employers to provide space in your offices, factories or stores where Filipino Amerasians can work. We suggest that the "minimum qualifications" of some jobs be reviewed and revised in order to provide many of us who did not finish school the opportunity to apply.

We are presenting the condition of Filipino-Amerasians steeped in prostitution, prohibited drugs (or rugby), addiction to alcohol and even those experiencing depression and mental problems. The reasons are varied from poverty, discrimination and closed opportunities that brought them to such condition.

We request that ample government service and civil society support be provided to our fellow Amerasians in order to rescue them and give them opportunities to have a new life.

We wish to relay to the Philippine and American governments that Filipino-Amerasians are already tired of begging for mercy and attention. Some personalities or groups in our view also use us and our issues for their personal interests. In forming the organization United Philippine Amerasians we recognize the need to contribute to the solution of our problems that is why we will coordinate with institutions that can help our ranks. We ourselves will take steps to know the opportunities and services society will open for us. This will also serve as the organization that will provide support to our fellow Amerasians.

In conclusion, we insist that the requests we mentioned should not be considered as alms which we should not beg for. It is our right as children of the Philippines and America. May the Philippine and American governments in the 2011 Filipino-American Friendship Day wake up to the responsibilities they escaped from and continue to turn a blind eye on.

Stated and signed this fourth of July 2011.

Participants:

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10. Ashley Claire Descallar, Angeles City
11. Mark Muega, Angeles City
12. Martin M. Obong, Angeles City
13. Mark Gilbore, Angeles City*
14. Joana Marie Canete, Angeles City
15. Barry Gregor Wirth, Angeles City
16. Christine Shane Jackson, Angeles City
17. Lenires Jones, Angeles City
18. Brenda Moreno, Olongapo City
19. Moises Aragon, Angeles City
20. Margie Sertimo, Angeles City
21. Eugene Ceguerra, Quezon City
22. Jessica Cubilla, Angeles City
23. Anthony Dizon, Angeles City
24. Alwyne Cahilig, Angeles City*
25. Domdie Moore, Angeles City
26. Cristalyn Aquino, Olongapo City
27. Fri-gel Capua, Olongapo City
28. Jamaica Bitonio, Angeles City
29. Michael Morales, Angeles City
30. Temman Ecler, Angeles City
31. Melynn Inciso, Angeles City
32. Mary Ann Riley, Angeles City
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Translated from the original Filipino by Ariel Valerio