It's a pleasure for me to be with you today to celebrate the values of the French Republic here in the Philippines.

I would like first of all to thank the management of the Fairmont Hotel for agreeing to accommodate us this evening at short notice, given the weather conditions, and for welcoming the Sofitel team to work together to make this Bastille Day celebration a success!

This celebration this year also marks the end of my tenure in Manila. I will be leaving in three weeks’ time with the feeling that I have accomplished the mission that the President of the Republic entrusted to me when he appointed me here two and a half years ago.

President Marcos Jr reminded me that I arrived in the midst of the COVID crisis and restrictions. As soon as it was over, thanks to my team, we relaunched the bilateral relationship full steam ahead.

I believe deeply in this relationship. As you know, France is an Indo-Pacific nation with 200 million inhabitants in this zone, so close to the Philippines geographically and in terms of values. We believe deeply in democracy, a rules based international order, and diplomacy.
We have just celebrated the 7th anniversary of the landmark 2016 arbitration award in favor of the Philippines, based on UNCLOS. Join me in paying tribute to Ambassador Albert del Rosario, who successfully led this legal battle.

Both our countries also believe in protecting our planet and ecosystems, especially our oceans. Here, in the Philippines, climate change can be witnessed constantly; here in the Philippines there is no plan B or planet B.

This is why our French President is so committed to this issue, as exemplified by the Shark Fin Bay project led by Frédéric Tardieu in Palawan on biodiversity and coral reefs restoration.

“Dear Franco-Philippine friends, you are the key players in building this bilateral relationship!”

Allow me to congratulate Philippines Airlines, Captain Stanley Ng is with us this evening, on the acquisition of 9 A350s and on the project to open a direct route between Manila and Paris.

The interest of French companies keeps growing in all areas, with the number of projects and investment also growing, which is a true testament to the success of our partnership.

Energy, for example, TotalEnergies' excellent solar farm project in the province of Isabella, the prospects opened up by Hydrogène de France in Mindanao.

I think of the infrastructure sector, with the successes of Alstom and Colas Rail, as well as the Matière Group, or the maritime sector, both strategic, with Naval Group's bid to co-build a submarine with the Philippine Navy, and civil, with OCEA's long standing cooperation with the Coast Guards.
This political and economic partnership could not exist without a third, most important, partnership.

The partnership of hearts.

Filipinos and French people share many passions, gastronomy, cinema, singing and music, sports, especially basketball, and many others, all celebrated during the 75th anniversary of our relations! But we now need to go even further.

Romain Gary, the great French diplomat, thought a lot about the power of imagination.

“You must always know the limits of what is possible. Not to stop, but to attempt the impossible under the best possible conditions.”

Tonight, my friends, let us follow Romain Gary’s word. I invite us, to be more imaginative, more ambitious in bringing the Franco-Philippine relationship to the next step. This relationship will of course be focused on young people, on student mobility, where we can do more and better, like doubling the number of Filipino students in France by 2025. We count on the new generation to breathe more life in all these areas with ambition and imagination.

Let me also mention the Paris Olympic games next year, where we hope to host a large Philippine delegation and your gold medallist, Hidilyn Diaz.

Let me now extend my sincerest thanks to the representatives of the 30 Filipino and French companies. May this 14th of July celebration be above all yours, with your guests, with whom you have been keen to share this moment.
Dear friends,

Just a few days before I leave you, I don’t want to say farewell, as I may well be coming back to the Philippines to see you again.

I’m leaving so many friends in this magnificent country, and will treasure exceptional memories.

Let me seize the opportunity to thank my amazing team at the Embassy and at the Residence, who performed so remarkably, and to pay tribute to them this evening. Nothing could have been achieved without their dedication.

This country has given me so much, and you have all given me so much over the last two and a half years. This is a magnificent country, but it is the Filipinos who give it this unique character, this human warmth, humour and generosity that I have never seen anywhere else.

With you tonight, I’m taking a piece of the Philippines with me.

Thank you so much!
VISIT OF MINISTER OF STATE CHRYSOULA ZACHAROPOULOU TO THE PHILIPPINES
30 juillet - 1 août 2023

French Minister of State for Development, Francophonie and International Partnerships Chrysoula Zacharopolou visit to the Philippines follows the historic visit of President Emmanuel Macron in the Pacific region – in the French overseas territory of New Caledonia, then Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea.
Minister Zacharopolou and Undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs and International Economic Relations Carlos Sorreta tackled cooperation on sovereignty and food security, noting that France had dispatched two delegations of agriculture experts in December last year and March this year.
Secretary Herbosa thanked the French delegation for their aid in the country’s COVID-19 response. Under the COVAX platform in 2021, co-chaired by Minister Zacharopoulou, France gave a total of over 6 million vaccine doses to the Philippines.
Minister Zacharopoulou discussed the French government’s wish to increase cooperation, through the French Development Agency (AFD) and the private sector.

They also talked about specific matters in climate and development finance, particularly climate response, children’s nutrition, infrastructure, transport, renewable energy, and investments in the green and blue economy.
With the President of the European Commission, Mrs. von der Leyen, we discussed ways the Philippines, the EU and France can do more together for sustainable development, through the Global Gateway Strategy, as well as trade and investment.
Opening of the PLASTIC FLAMINGO FACTORY
Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga

Minister Zacharopoulou inaugurated The Plastic Flamingo plastics recycling plant in Muntinlupa City, which is founded by French nationals. This constitutes the concrete proof of France’s commitment to combating climate change and a key priority for cooperation between France and the Philippines.

“This project shows the strength of cooperation involving civil society, the private sector, and local authorities, particularly to eliminate plastic pollution, a fight that must mobilize all of us.”
French Minister of State for Development, Francophonie and International Partnerships Chrysoula Zacharopolou, along with French Ambassador Michèle Boccoz, held a press conference at the French residence to conclude her three-day official visit to the Philippines.

The Minister of State recounted her meetings with Philippine government officials, which she described as opportunities to strengthen France-Philippines cooperation in security and sovereignty, sustainable development, and global issues, including climate, biodiversity, and health.