

[PROCLAMATION NO. 514, December 15, 2003]

**DECLARING THE PERIOD OF MOURNING OVER THE DEATH OF
FOREIGN SECRETARY BLAS. F. OPLE**

WHEREAS, Blas F. Ople, Secretary of Foreign Affairs, former Senate President and Secretary of Labor, had devoted decades of his life to selfless, dedicated and sincere service to our country and our people;

WHEREAS, his immense contributions to our nation's development include his fearless championing of workers' right, his pioneering drive to promote overseas employment, and his crafting of major foreign policy initiatives from the protection of our OFWs to our republic's prominent role in social and economic development issues, global alliance against terrorism and the vital programs of the United Nations;

WHEREAS, the untimely demise of Blas F. Ople, a guerilla, journalist, Cabinet member, constitutional commissioner, and statesman, is a great loss to our people, stirring deep sorrow among them as well as intense admiration and profound gratitude;

WHEREAS, it is fitting to set aside a period of national mourning to honor a great Filipino statesman, who during his public service, had gained great prestige for the Republic and provided service of lasting benefit to the Filipino people.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ALBERTO G. ROMULO, Executive Secretary, by order of Her Excellency, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, do hereby proclaim a period of mourning from December 15, 2003 until the day of his funeral. Flags in all government buildings and installations, at home and abroad, shall be flown at half-mast for a period of six (6) days. Furthermore, the flag shall remain at half-mast at the edifices of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Labor and Employment and the Philippine Senate and House of Representatives even beyond six (6) days until the day of Secretary Blas F. Ople's funeral.

I call on the Armed Forces of the Philippines to give Secretary Blas F. Ople a state funeral and burial at the Libingan ng mga Bayani if the Ople family so wishes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the Republic of the Philippines to be affixed.

DONE, in the City of Manila, this 15th day of December, in the year of Our Lord, Two Thousand and Three.

By the order of the President:
(Sgd.) ALBERTO ROMULO
Executive Secretary