

**REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
ON THE OCCASION OF UNVEILING OF THE BUST OF
MAHATMA GANDHI**

Quezon City, October 20, 2019

1. I am delighted to be visiting the Philippines. Our ties with your country and your people are not just special, but one that we keep very close to our hearts. It is a friendship that we celebrate and cherish always.

2. This year the world celebrated the 150th birth anniversary of the Father of the Indian Nation, the apostle of peace and non-violence, Mahatma Gandhi. Today, I feel honoured to unveil his bust in the Philippines – the land of the brave Jose Rizal. I thank Miriam College for giving a place of respect to Mahatma Gandhi in its campus. Both Mahatma Gandhi and Jose Rizal believed in the power of peace and non-violence. The avenue in New Delhi named after your national hero continues to inspire and motivate us.

3. I deeply appreciate this opportunity to celebrate the legacy of the Mahatma at the Centre for Peace Education – a Centre that promotes a culture of peace through education and advocacy. The venue could not have been more appropriate. No doubt, generations of students who pass through your gates will continue to be inspired by his legacy, of being just and ethical in conduct; compassionate and humble in treating fellow human beings; and standing up and championing truth and truth alone, even in most trying times.

4. I was also touched to hear the rendition of Mahatma Gandhi's favourite hymn – Vaishnava Jana To Tene Kahiye – by the famous Filipino singer, Grace NoNo. This year, the hymn was sung in over 150 countries, as a fitting tribute to a man who embraced entire humanity as one indivisible family. The hymn describes a good

human-being as one who reaches out to those in pain and suffering. Indeed, the world would be a much better place if only we had such empathy for each other.

5. This bust of Mahatma Gandhi is a gift from the people of India to you. But the Mahatma belongs to all peoples, all cultures and all societies. May he continue to guide us in our shared journey of peace, harmony and sustainable development for all.

6. I would once again like to thank Miriam College and all those who have contributed to organizing this special event. I depart from the Philippines tomorrow, but will always treasure your warmth and friendship.

Thank you!