

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK**

**SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR. AT THE TAN-OK NI
ILOCANO 2023: THE FESTIVAL OF FESTIVALS**

[Delivered at Ferdinand E. Marcos Memorial Stadium, Laoag City | 24 February 2023]

Maraming salamat. Thank you to the First District Congressman, Congressman Sandro Marcos for your kind introduction. Iyon lamang eh may kasama sinubo mo ako doon sa isang milyon doon sa ano... But I'm the willing victim... *[Oh, please sit down.]* I'm the willing victim of your generosity.

Nandito po kasama po natin ang ating Kalihim, ang ating butihing Secretary of the Department of Tourism Secretary Christina Frasco. Isinama ko siya. I wanted her to see the traditional culture of the Philippines at ito'y nagiging mahalaga para sa kanyang mga pinaplano para ipagmalaki ang kultura ng Pilipinas, ipagmalaki ang mga Pilipino sa buong mundo ng sa ganoon ay tayo'y matulungan sa pag-aahon sa ating ekonomiya sa pamamagitan ng turismo. Ang ating host, our host for the evening is Ilocos Norte Governor Matt Manotoc, whose brainchild really this is and I congratulate you for this wonderful achievement; Ilocos Norte Vice Governor Cecilia Marcos; LMP President Joefrey Saguid; ang aking mga kasamahan sa pamahalaan; ating mayores, bise mayores, konsehales, ang aking minamahal na kababayan, ayaatek nga kailan, naimbag nga rabii yu amin. *[applause]*

I could not find a better time to come back to Ilocos Norte but to join in celebrating the Tan-ok ni Ilocano: The Festival of Festivals to show off to the world the best that Ilocanos can offer.

It is always with great pleasure that we see the different municipalities and cities of Ilocos Norte coming together in one grand event to showcase —with pride, with vigor — our history and our cultural heritage.

We must acknowledge the efforts of the local government units, ang ating mga iba't ibang bayan na nag-contribute dito sa ating makikita ngayong gabi; to the event organizers for bringing together the people, the visitors and alike to partake in our abundance.

In the past three years, we have been severely hit by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, forcing us to retreat into our homes, put our lives on hold.

And yet, here we are today, holding our heads up high, ready to usher in a new era not only for our province, but for the entire country as well.

The darkest hours of the pandemic we pray are over, and now, we are ready to reclaim

the time and opportunities we have lost for the last few years as we now emerge stronger than ever.

Beyond today's revelry, this event is expected to stimulate economic activity and support Ilocano families by driving tourism industries, sustaining local livelihoods.

A festival will put a spotlight on our local artists, small-scale workers who will display their skills for art and serve as a gateway to our rich and dynamic culture.

I thus encourage you—our next generation of Ilocano artists—be proud of your identity, integrate our rich customs and traditions into the art that you showcase.

Let us share with our fellow Filipinos, and the rest of the world, the story of our roots in the upland indigenous communities and the vibrant communities of Ilocos, many of which have been crucial in molding us into what we are as a people today.

Remember these roots with every idea and masterpiece that you create with your minds and hands.

This year's festival is more special even as we are here at the newly renovated Ferdinand E. Marcos Sr. Memorial Stadium.

Named after my father, this stadium speaks well of the strength, the brilliance, the resilience of every Ilocano.

I am certain that my father is now watching us proudly to see how far we have fared as a people. *[applause]*

I feel in my bones that we all share the same blood and patriotism that have allowed us to achieve these things together.

On this note, my sincerest gratitude goes to all the people behind this stadium's rehabilitation.

Agyamanak la unay kadayo kailian!

Indeed, this facility will become an iconic landmark that will not only showcase a design excellence,
but also project our shared aspirations as a people.

I assure you that the government's commitment to strengthen the domestic tourism industry remains a top priority and Ilocos Norte will play a very large part of that.

The number of visitor arrivals is recovering. It is my hope that, by working together, we restore Ilocos' vibrancy in tourism to pre-pandemic levels and beyond.

Our lines are always open to your fresh and innovative ideas to help propel the tourism sector further into the future.

So, as we commence this joyous occasion, let us hope that you will respond to this Administration's call for participating in the rewarding but challenging tasks ahead.

Let our spirits be ablaze with unity and may the Almighty bless us for our journey towards a brighter and better Ilocos for the present and for the future generations.

Muli, maraming, maraming salamat po! Agbiag kayo amin! Dios t agngina. Naimbag nga rabii yu amin *[applause]*

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