

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE**

**PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK**

**SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.**

**AT THE BATAAN-CAVITE INTERLINK BRIDGE (BCIB) MILESTONE CEREMONY**

[Delivered at the Auditorium, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Center for Advanced Maritime Studies Building, Maritime Academy of the Asia and the Pacific (MAAP), Kamaya Point, Barangay Alas-Asin in Mariveles, Bataan | 31 March 2023]

Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Speaker Martin Romualdez. *[Please take your seats.]*

Well, the head agency for this extremely forward-looking program that we are seeing today, Secretary Manny Bonoan of the Department of Public Works and Highways.

You can see how important this event is as we have very many Cabinet secretaries here. We have Secretary Fred Pascual of the DTI; we have Secretary Toni Yulo-Loyzaga of DENR; and looking over her possible potential future tourist sites is your Secretary Christina Frasco of the Department of Tourism; the Secretary for Transportation, Secretary Jimmy Bautista; ang ating partners sa local government, of course we heard from the governor, Governor Jose Enrique Garcia, and the vice governor, Vice Governor [Cristina Garcia], the Mayor of Mariveles, Ace Jello Concepcion; Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific President Eduardo Ma. R. Santos, he took us to the simulator before we came here and they simulated a short cruise under the bridge which was very realistic and quite impressive that you have this capability, which is going to be very – which of course is very important for the proper training of our seafarers. There was only a slight point of concern dahil habang umaandar ‘yung barko may lumulubog na barko doon sa tabi. *[laughter]* Sabi ko siguro kasama ‘yan sa search and rescue na training nila. My fellow workers in government; our partners in the private sector; ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

As we are gathered to celebrate the progress of another massive infrastructure project in the works, I wish to first bring our attention on the following:

Every peso our predecessors have shelled out and every peso that we will continue to spend to construct public roads and infrastructure are investments meant for many generations.

There are two sides to that statement. And that when you talk about infrastructure, it takes the planning from the very beginning – from planning, from detail, the engineering, feasibility studies, et cetera, et cetera, it takes maybe about 10, 12 years for you to do all of that if you do it well.

However, what sometimes people do not remember is that whatever you build now, you will have to live with for an average 80 years. So you must look very far forward and just think this will be good for the next five years. Because as we have seen, the infrastructure does not disappear in

five years unless we have lots of funding and puwedeng gibain kahit bago pa, puwedeng gibain para makapagpatayo ng mas maganda. But that's not necessarily the case.

And so projects such as this – and that is why even the extra minutes that we spend on them are results of the decisions made years, even decades ago. And they are the cause – have been caused by many different elements, not least of which is the progress that the two provinces at either end of this bridge, Cavite and Bataan, have developed so rapidly and so well.

So every day that we leave our houses to pursue our careers, our passions, and our responsibilities, we traverse the paths constructed by the dreams and resolve of those who have come before us.

Therefore, since we know first-hand the benefits and the rippling effects that come when massive visions for the country turn into reality, it is of course our responsibility to keep aspiring and persevering for bigger victories for our people.

The reason for our gathering here today—the Bataan-Cavite Interlink Bridge—is truly a monumental undertaking of a scale not seen before in our country.

So coming here, marking the milestones related to it thus far, is an opportune time to remember the past and dedicate the present [hard work and resilience] to the fruition of this project.

Let me extend my deepest gratitude as well to the T.Y. Lin International, who has been our partner in this project [*applause*]; Pyunghwa Engineering Consultants, Ltd.; Renardet S.A.; and DCCD Engineering Corporation as without your efforts we would not have come to this point in fulfilling this program.

The expertise and professionalism in infrastructure development that all of you are known have made us confident that this bridge will be constructed with the highest standards in mind, with quality and within the planned timeframe.

Let me also of course express our continuing gratitude to the Asian Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank [*applause*] for committing to finance the BCIB Project from its inception to its construction in the foreseeable future.

For many years, you have played an active part in the development of my country, not only economic but even in the social sector. And you have advanced our infrastructure systems, and it is always exciting to see that these partnerships can produce such fruit after as long as we are cooperating together.

If this bridge is any indication of what comes next, then I should not be the only one who looks forward to the future with great optimism.

One does not need to be well versed in construction and engineering to realize the magnitude of this endeavor.

Imagine the complexity of the design. Well, most of you do not have to. You actually were involved in the complexity of design. And that design that is needed to accommodate the length of the BCIB and the depth of the Manila Bay where it will be constructed.

It is an enormously difficult and complex plan that we will have to constantly commit to achieving, which are, of course, [for] great benefits that Filipinos will enjoy.

From Central Luzon to CALABARZON—Bataan to Cavite: these are two provinces that, currently, have more than five hours' worth of driving between them.

With the BCIB, it is projected that that five hours trip will now become as close – as quick as 30 minutes, reducing by as much as 86%, and we are reducing it to maybe 45 minutes of travel.

That will be an incredible feat when it happens and would significantly help in decongesting Metro Manila as motorists will be able to travel without passing through the metropolis.

It will also help in bringing prices down for goods and services as the transport and logistics costs will decrease, thereby generating immense savings all around.

And facing the challenges, it was prescient that we continued with this project until we got to this point and I am sure until it is finished. It is prescient because at the time we did not think of supply chain problems that now that we have. And this kind of improved connectivity is the perfect solution to that.

New opportunities will likewise be opened to Bataan and Cavite and their surrounding provinces because of the easier access that will be made available.

It is also impressive to think about how this project will support the development of seaports in the said provinces, making them potential international shipping gateways of the country.

Again, it always feels good to look forward to the promise of better days ahead.

However, it is the now that we [must] focus on.

It is today and all the succeeding days of work ahead of us that should receive our dedication and attention so we will attain the vision of a well-connected and fully thriving country.

I thus remember all the men and women who have been and will continue working for the detailed engineering design of this bridge and I wish for your inspiration, comfort, and safety as you complete this ambitious project, especially on the days you will have to carry out your work amidst unfavorable climate conditions and other difficult forces that will be impacting upon you.

In a few years' time, all your efforts and sacrifice[s] will translate to the construction of this extremely important infrastructure – something that will be known across the archipelago and across the world, where the rewards of which will be felt by people in their daily lives.

Having said all this, let me call once again on the officials and employees of the DPWH as well as all the consultants to remain committed to finishing this project on schedule.

Do your best always to ensure that civil works for this bridge will commence by October this year.

Do your best also to deliver what we have proposed so that our people and their localities may live out the picture we have painted as our goal as soon as possible.

See to it as well that the bridge, once completed, will have sufficient links with major thoroughfares in Cavite and Bataan so that it will truly be a facilitator of interconnectivity and linkages among our people and our provinces.

I believe that the kind of infrastructure that this country requires are those that come from a profound and genuine understanding of the needs of our people.

As such, I assure you, we will remain committed to developing a highly interconnected network of transport [infrastructure] that will serve as the backbone and strong driving force of our rapid, inclusive, and sustainable [economic] growth.

In recognition of all the achievements of our country that has led us to pursue projects like this, and in anticipation of all the breakthroughs that are yet to come, I enjoin everyone to support and take ownership of all that we are doing for our beloved country.

Once again, congratulations to one and all. Thank you very much for your time, your sacrifice, your skill, your industry, and your dedication.

Mabuhay kayong lahat! Maraming salamat po at maganda pong tanghali sa inyo. *[applause]*

**--- END ---**