

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK**

**SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.
AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE SAMAR PACIFIC COASTAL ROAD PROJECT**

[Delivered in Palapag, Northern Samar |14 July 2023]

Thank you, DPWH Secretary, Secretary Manny Bonoan. [Please take your seats.]

Your Excellency Lee Sang-hwa, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the Philippines; Special Assistant to the President Secretary Anton Lagdameo; Northern Samar Governor Edwin Marino Ongchuan; fellow workers in government; ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

Maupay nga adlaw sa iyo nga tanan! (A good day to all of you!) [applause]

I'm glad to be with you all today to preside over the inauguration of one of the final parts of the Samar Pacific Coastal Road Project.

Let me first extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Korean Government—through the [Export-Import] Bank of Korea—for your support for this project and the other initiatives in the Build Better More program.

Indeed, you have helped us lay the groundwork for a more progressive and prosperous Philippines.

If you have noticed Secretary Manny Bonoan and I were looking at a piece of paper and what it was is this. This is a chart of the projects that Korea is funding here in the Philippines. There are 21 of them. [applause] We anticipate even an increase of that. And Korea has always been a very good friend to the Philippines. The Ambassador mentioned about the time in Yolanda, about the recovery and the relief that we were... Korea was one of the first countries to send a sizable contingent to come and to help us. [applause]

And furthermore, not only did they come to help us to bring the relief goods, to bring water, they helped us very much with the water supply and the relief goods, and they brought their own vehicles and they assigned many of their soldiers to come and be of assistance, and there were also engineers.

But the further thing that Korea did for us when maybe 80 percent of the other aid programs had already left the province, Korea stayed for another three years, for three years. And what they did was not --- because the effort to bring relief goods was already finished. They were now rebuilding the water systems, rebuilding the electrical systems and they did not leave us until those buildings were complete and that is why I say, thank you once again to our very, very good friend in Korea. [applause]

It has been an honor to build this partnership with you. I look forward to more collaboration and more flagship projects for the greater good of the Filipino people.

I'm certain that this undertaking will only further strengthen the cooperation between the Philippines and South Korea.

The completion of this key infrastructure initiative links the so-called “Pacific towns” of Samar and establishes a circumferential road around the entire island connecting markets, industries, and communities.

With the opening of this road and its bridges, the development of Northern Samar’s rich agricultural lands and bountiful fishing grounds will follow suit.

It will also expedite the delivery and movement of our basic goods and services, which will hopefully boost our people’s quality of life.

This undertaking strengthens the government’s resolve to improve the peace and order situation in the province and ensure that our economic gains and basic services reach everyone in the island.

So it is something that we... And it is the reason why I was explaining to the Ambassador that this is approximately a 30-year-old project. We have been waiting and hoping. Everything that could happen to a project happened to this project. The storms came, there were security problems. Matagal na nating inaantay ito.

We have been talking about this but then when it was starting to move again, the pandemic hit. So, tigil na muna. And so that is why, it was so important for me to come and to be able to see exactly what finally we have been able to complete, that to all of us here from Eastern Visayas have been waiting to see.

Because it is not only Samar that will be helped. When the economic activity in Samar is increased, then of course, the peace and order situation should improve. And then of course, the government, the local governments will have more options, will have more ability to take on their initiatives and this will help the entire region.

And of course, in Leyte, all these business will go through Tacloban. So, that’s also good for Leyte. It is a very important development that we are witnessing today.

So, let me also recognize the work of the provincial government, together with various national government agencies, in delivering services for the people of Northern Samar.

There is nothing that we can do in the national government without the full cooperation and assistance of local government. Hindi namin kayang gawin kung kami lang. At marami kaming nakukuha na tulong, advice, experience na nanggagaling sa local government. That is why I have always told my colleagues in the national government, you listen to the local government officials and we did. And that cooperation strengthened and that is why we are here today.

The local government can be assured of this government’s continued unconditional support in your efforts to alleviate poverty, to promote good governance, secure the health and well-being of your citizenry, and usher inclusive development in your province.

Allow me as well to reaffirm the national government’s commitment to continue implementing high-impact infrastructure projects throughout the archipelago.

I therefore urge the officials and employees of the DPWH to stand firm on our mission to establish a seamless and inclusive inter-island connectivity through national and local linkages.

Through our determined efforts, we can build projects that will spur the growth of our local industries, boost our trade and our commerce, create more opportunities for our people.

So, let's never cease to reach out for bigger, grander, and more ambitious goals that we can give every Filipino the future that they heartily dream of and justly deserve.

Damo nga salamat! Mabuhay kayong tanan!

(Thank you! Mabuhay kayong lahat!)

Thank you and magandang umaga po sa inyong lahat. [applause]

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