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SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR. AT THE GABI NG PARANGAL AT PASASALAMAT PARA SA MGA BAYANING ATLETANG PILIPINO: WELCOME AND AWARDING CEREMONIES FOR THE MEDALISTS OF THE ASIAN GAMES 2023

[Delivered at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum in Manila| 25 October 2023]

Maraming, maraming salamat. Proud to be Pinoy! *[cheers]*

Wala tayong masabi. Magpasalamat tayo sa mga atleta natin at pinaalala niyo sa lahat ng buong Pilipinas at sa buong mundo kung gaano kagaling ang mga Pilipino kapag nagkaisa at sabay-sabay nagtutulungan, ganito ang nagiging resulta. Kaya naman...

Palagay ko noong sila'y lumalaban, naririnig nila 'yung boses natin. Dahil hindi ko alam sa inyo, ako nanunuod ako sa telebisyon, napaos ako, sinisigawan ko 'yung TV, inaantay ko na lang na sumagot, inaantay ko na lang na magbigay ng medalya. Ito na, ito na ang ating mga idol. *[cheers]*

Alam niyo po kapag mayroon tayong mga nakuha na ganitong mga medalya, na ganitong mga award, karapat-dapat talaga na tayo ay bigyan natin ng pugay ang ating mga atleta. Ngunit, huwag po nating kakalimutan ang nakikita lang po natin nandito, sila'y lumalaban, silang tumatanggap ng medalya kapag nanalo. Ngunit, huwag natin nakakalimutan, maraming-marami ang tumulong diyan, maraming nag-sakripisyo sa bawat isa ng atletang 'yan. Ang mga coach, ang mga trainer, ang mga nutritionists, ang mga physiotherapist, ang mga driver, at ang mga magulang. Kaya naman, talagang team effort itong lahat. Team Philippines talaga ang nilaban natin.

Kaya to our hardworking coaches, the leaders of the various sports associations, and of course, to our athletes, congratulations at maraming, maraming salamat sa inyong ginawa. *[applause]*

Alam niyo po, itong napakatagal nating nag-antay, napakatagal tayong nag-antay na makapag-celebrate tayo nang ganito dahil alam niyo naman kung minsan hindi masyadong maganda ang ating resulta. At sinasabi namin noong umalis sila papuntang Hangzhou, ay sinabi – ay sabi natin siguro mayroon naman tayong magagawa kaunti. Hindi namin akalain ganito karami ang medalya na makukuha natin. Hindi namin akalain na ganito ang resulta na ibibigay ng ating bayaning atleta para sa minamahal nilang Pilipinas. We welcome you back from your very successful campaign during the 19th Asian Games.

Let us, again, offer a round of applause. Palakpakan natin ang 393 athletes na lumaban sa Hangzhou sa China. *[applause]* Siyempre nandiyan ang mga atleta natin na nag-uwi ng 18 na medalya para sa Pilipinas.

On behalf of a proud and a grateful nation, I salute and I recognize the excellent performance that you displayed in the 19th Asian Games.

Of course, again, we must recognize the efforts ng ating mga coach, ng inyong mga pamilya na malaki ang kanilang sinakripisyo na hindi lang ilang araw, hindi lang ilang linggo, kung hindi ilang taon upang kayo ay maging ganyan kagaling, upang tulungan kayo na makuha ninyo ang inyong pinapangarap na mga medalya para sa Pilipinas.

But more than just a personal feat, your victory has boosted our people’s morale. Nagdala kayo ng ligaya sa Pilipinas. Marami tayong hinaharap na kung minsan ay nakakalungkot. Ngunit, dahil sa ginawa ninyo, nakangiti ang buong PIlipinas noong kayo ay bumalik galing sa 19th Asian Games. Mataas ang morale ng Pinoy ngayon, lalo na kayo, kayong mga bata, 'yung mga magiging atleta rin, 'yan ang magandang halimbawa, 'yan ang ating mga idol.

They strive for excellence, not just in international and national competitions, but in all that they do.

Ang pagpapanalo ng medalya ay hindi lamang doon noong panahon na kayo ay nasa sa Hangzhou, China. Ang nasa likod niyan ay ilang taon ng pagsakripisyo, ng disiplina, ng training, ng pagpipilit.

Alam niyo po ang hirap maging athlete dahil kung pagmamasdan po ninyo, marami doon sa bibigyan sana natin ng certificate at saka nung tseke ay wala rito. Nasaan sila? May laban na ‘yung iba, iyong iba nagte-training pa. Walang katapusan po. At ang atleta ay kahit na Christmas Day nagte-train ‘yan, papasok sa gym. Bukas lahat ‘yan nasa gym na naman. Magte-training na naman ‘yan dahil mayroon na namang laban na susunod.

So, we value the great influence that sports has in developing our society. That is why this administration continues to support initiatives and programs to promote sports development.

Marami na rin tayong nagawa. Ngunit, aasahan ninyo dadagdagan pa natin ang ating suporta para sa ating mga atleta *[applause]* at sa susunod makakaramdam naman tayo ng mas maganda pang resulta sa ating mga international competition.

I said this when I addressed our Southeast Asian Games and ASEAN Para Games medalists: We know and understand that for our athletes to succeed in these competitions, they all need all the help that they can get, especially from their government.

And that’s why the Philippine Sports Commission is implementing a Five-Year Sports Development Plan 2023-2028.

This Plan aims to address the long-standing concerns of Filipino athletes by encouraging participation in all levels of government and the private sector, ensuring – para makatiyak tayo na nandiyan ang suporta para sa ating mga atleta, ating mga sports association, at pinapaganda ang lahat ng nakikilahok sa sports at every level.

Lahat ng ating kayang gawin para suportahan ang ating mga atleta ay ating ginagawa. We provide assistance to state universities and colleges to fix and refurbish – para pagandahin ang sports facilities, we explore partnerships with the private sector to construct basketball courts in public schools, gyms, facilities. We encourage our LGUs to support sports in the development of their respective localities.

We are developing the New Clark City as a sports hub in the Philippines. *[applause]* Our national athletes and those training to represent the country in international sports will also utilize the training facilities of the New Clark City Athletics Stadium and the Aquatics Center for free.

We also need to take care of our athletes who are injured during training and competition. So, I direct the Philippine Sports Commission: work with PAGCOR and other agencies to strengthen our Medical Scientific Athlete Services unit. We need to help our injured athletes so that they recover quickly and they can get back in the game.

Finally, we are dedicated to fully developing future athletes who will proudly represent our country.

Sana sa susunod na ilang taon, 'yung iba sa inyo na nasa audience lang ngayon, sana naman ay makakasalubong ko kayo sa entablado na magbibigay din ng medalya. *[applause]*

Iyan ang mga ipapangarap natin at gagawin talaga namin. The government established the National Academy of Sports to promote the development of the athletic skills and talents of students through a secondary education program. The learning center and training facility at the New Clark City sa Capas, Tarlac ay itinayo at inaasahan natin na ang National Academy of Sports and the Bases Conversion and Development Authority will fast track and operationalize the Academy so that our athletes can immediately pursue their training in their chosen sport.

To those with influence and with resources who are helping our athletes in all that they do, I hope that you will continue to support them generously. *[applause]*

Sa ating mga atleta, ito, ganito ang hamon ko sa inyo: Keep aspiring, keep believing, keep working. Spare no effort to unlock your full potential and be the best versions of yourselves.

Know fully well that the government and the entire nation is with you every single step of the way.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my hope that the individual victories that we honor now will inspire our collective vision and pursuits for the future.

With our continued unity and continuing collaboration with all aspects of – of all parts of society, we will not only secure more victories for athletes, but we will also build a stronger and better, more prosperous Filipinos that will house the great ambitions of younger generations.

Again, congratulations to our esteemed delegates!

Mabuhay ang atletang Pinoy! [crowd cheers: BBM! BBM! BBM! BBM!]

Ang sarap, sarap isigaw: Proud to be Pinoy! Salamat po! Maraming salamat sa pagiging bahagi ng bagong Pilipinas! *[applause]*

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