

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE  
PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK**

**SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.  
AT THE 10TH YEAR YOLANDA COMMEMORATION ANNIVERSARY**

[Delivered at the Tacloban City Convention Center, Tacloban City | 08 November 2023]

Thank you for that introduction, Speaker Martin Romualdez. *[Please take your seats.]*

The Excellencies and other members of the Diplomatic Corps who are here representing the countries who came to our aid in the depths of our difficulties after Yolanda. I know that everyone here had a part to play in the recovery but we cannot overstate the importance of the efforts of the different countries who came to the Philippines to assist – the NGOs, the international NGOs, the local NGOs that came and helped with the rebuilding and the rehabilitation and the recovery.

I remember very well how we were at a complete loss in the days following Yolanda. How do we – where do we get relief goods? How do we bring them? How do we transport them to the people that are in need?

I remember when I first arrived in Tacloban, there were three vehicles in the whole of Leyte that were still functioning and these were the people who came, the NGOs, the different countries. Even the private corporations who came and helped us in every way that they could, in both the relief – both in the rescue and even in the rehabilitation and the rebuilding of Tacloban.

And for that, they would come and they would bring all that we needed. They would bring relief goods. They will bring water. They would bring water purifiers. They would bring fuel. They would bring transportation. And we could not have survived without that.

And so it is impossible to overstate how important it is to us what you did for us after Yolanda and in the years subsequent to Yolanda where you never left us. You stayed with us and stayed with us for years until you could see that we had recovered. And for that, we owe you a debt of gratitude that we will never be able to repay. *[applause]*

Also here is – we will introduce our now DENR Secretary who was then in the Manila Observatory. She was – nauna po siya. They were the first to forecast how strong Yolanda was going to become. And we could not believe the figures that she was saying that umabot ng 370 km gusts. And up to now, we have not seen that kind of weather anywhere around the world and that is why we have now recognized that this was the onset of the worst effects of climate change.

Nandito rin ngayon, Senator Francis Tolentino. Kailangan po natin batiin dahil MMDA siya, Metro Manila Development Authority. Napakalayo po. He was far away. But the first heavy equipment that arrived in Tacloban was the MMDA heavy equipment. Nauna pa sila sa lahat ng ibang

government agencies. *[applause]* Kaya't karapat-dapat na nandito siya, nakasama natin na tumutulong dito.

Nandito rin si then Secretary Mark Villar na pinagpatuloy noong panahon ng nakaraang administrasyon, noong siya ang Secretary ng Department of Public Works ay siya'y nagpatuloy ng reconstruction at ginawa niyang prayoridad. Kaya't kami na tiga-rito ay muling nagpapasalamat sa inyo. *[applause]*

And of course, ang ating Housing Secretary na naging kasama, nandito rin si Joeben Tai ng NHA. Lahat sila ay tumutulong para pagandahin. Dahil 'yung unang ginawang reconstruction ng mga bahay ay hindi pumasa kay Mayor Alfred.

At sabi niya, hindi pupuwedeng tirahan ito kaya't binalikan po natin. We went back and we made sure that the facilities that were being created are now suitable for the families that lost their homes. And that is why they continue – the recovery, the rehabilitation, the rebuilding still continues.

Nandito rin po ang ating Secretary ng DILG, Secretary Benhur Abalos. Dahil alam niyo 'yung pinaghirapan po natin, the suffering that we went through during Yolanda will not go to naught because we have shown the rest of the country and the rest of the world what needs to be done. The suffering that we went through is now a bellwether of what the world needs to face when we talk about climate change.

Kaya po ito po ang naranasan natin dito sa [Eastern] Visayas. Hindi lamang po Tacloban, hindi lamang Leyte pati Samar Island ay malakas ang tama hanggang Ormoc tinamaan ng Yolanda. Lahat 'yan, ang kahirapan na dinaanan natin ay marami tayong naituro sa buong Pilipinas at sa buong mundo na kaya natin harapin ang mga nagiging problema dahil nga sa ating climate change.

At noong panahon 'yun si Speaker Romualdez ay Majority Floor Leader pa lang. Hindi pa siya Speaker noon. At nandito kami, ako naiwan dito, senador ako noon. Naiwan ako dito sa Tacloban. Doon ako naka-camping doon sa bahay ni Congressman Martin. At siya naman, sinabi ko sa kanya, magpa-iwan ka diyan sa Maynila para lahat ng pangangailangan namin dito sa Tacloban, lahat ng pangangailangan dito hanggang Guiuan, hanggang – lahat ng Samar – lalong-lalo na sa pag-release ng mga emergency funds, sa kanya ko pinapasa. At 'yun naman ang kanyang nilalakad kaya't na-releasan (release) tayo kaagad ng 130 billion na binigay. Iyon ang unang pumasok na pondo para makapagbigay tayo. *[applause]*

Tapos nandiyan po 'yung ating mga tumulong noong medyo nasalba na natin lahat ng mga survivor at nakuha na natin ay nandiyan naman po 'yung ibang NGO nagsimula ng cash-for-work program para naman linisin na ang mga gusali, linisin na ang mga nagkalat. At ito po ay lahat ng ating mga kaibigan ay hindi na natin sinasabing kaibigan na lang kung hindi ito po ay ating mga naging kapatid na dahil sa lalim ng pinagsamahan natin at hindi po tayo iniwanan hanggang

nakita nila tapos na ang trabaho nila dito sa atin sa [Eastern] Visayas, sa Tacloban, sa Leyte. [applause]

Ten years have gone by and yet the memory of this tragedy remains indelible in our hearts and in our thoughts.

The devastation we suffered included over six thousand lives lost, over twenty-eight thousand injured, over a thousand missing, and over three million families affected. And to this day, we still do not know the true scope of our loss because we grieve and we mourn those of our dead. But we must always keep a special place in our hearts for those who we lost, who are uncouned, who are unrecorded so that up to now we say 6,000 casualties, we do not know that for sure. We are certain that there were more but for whatever reason their deaths have not been recorded.

So, even if that is the case, let them not be unremembered. So when we grieve and when we mourn for our dead, keep a special place in your heart for those who have not been known to have gone but we know in our hearts, we know the loss that we feel. Let us always pray for them. [applause]

To the survivors who continue to move forward, we salute your indomitable spirit and character.

As we commemorate this 10th Year of Yolanda, let us continue to offer our prayers for our dearly departed, even as we find our own path towards peace, towards healing, [and] towards recovery.

And who could ever forget the extraordinary outpouring of love, of help, and compassion that came from all over the country and from all over the world.

The aid that came from all directions, the volunteerism, the heroism that overflowed in the affected areas, specifically in the rehabilitation of Tacloban.

Indeed, what we saw back then was the spirit of *bayanihan* in its truest form — moving without prompting, without hindrance, and without ceasing. And much to our surprise, we saw that Filipino bayanihan spirit coming from our friends from all other lands.

So, to all the national leaders, all the local leaders, then and now, the private sector, the international [and] local organizations, volunteers, [and] donors: Accept our eternal gratitude. [applause]

But the work is not done, there are still many who continue to await our assistance.

So, we have engaged the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development and the National Housing Authority to accelerate the provision of housing units and land titles to our beneficiaries.

And I also urge the Yolanda Response Clusters to work closely with concerned local governments to address the lingering issues of the different affected communities.

Let us continue to work hard so that we can provide them with the tools and the resources to rebuild their lives.

At this point, let me of course acknowledge the local government of Tacloban City for rising above this challenge and working hard to strengthen the locality's disaster resiliency. *[applause]*

Ang inyong Mayor po ay naging – he has become now the poster boy of climate resilience, not only in the Philippines but around the world. Kapag mayroon silang hinahanap na sino ang expert tungkol sa mga nagiging problema na dinudulot ng climate change, si Mayor Alfred Romualdez po ang hinahanap kung saan-saan. *[applause]*

Kaya't kinilala na, nakilala na ang Tacloban sa inyong tibay, sa inyong tapang, sa inyong galing, sa inyong sipag, at sa inyong pagmamahal.

I recognize your disaster risk reduction and the management efforts through the creation of contingency, public service, and the disaster response plans both at the barangay and city levels are now in place.

Your endeavors to establish emergency evacuation SOPs and emergency response teams are noteworthy and serve as examples for other local governments around the country.

Equally important is your collective action to protect and rehabilitate your communities through reforestation, river embankment and stabilization, and other environmental conservation programs.

It is also crucial to be reminded that climate change will keep exacerbating the impact of natural disasters.

As I have said, we must make climate change a vital component of our national policies.

We must make sure that we apply our knowledge on climate change to every plan, to every decision, and initiative so we can build stronger and more resilient communities.

Be assured that the government is always striving to ensure that such tragedies of this magnitude will be avoided and will be adapted to.

We continue to build disaster-resilient evacuation centers and emergency operations centers.

We are also putting in place more centralized and efficient early warning systems, incident command systems, and disaster response strategies.

The development and deployment of new technologies, such as GeoRiskPH and PlanSmart, along with the continuous conduct of information and education campaigns [and] simulation drills are also aimed to save lives.

I therefore call on our citizens to partner with us in bolstering our country's disaster preparedness, recovery, and resiliency so that we can overcome whatever storms we will face.

It is an opportunity to become stronger, wiser, and better as we a people and we as a country.

So, we mark the 10th Year of Typhoon Yolanda, let us also celebrate the unparalleled spirit of the Waray and of the Filipino.

Let us take pride in the fact that we triumphed over this calamity through our innate *bayanihan*, which inspired people all over the world.

Let us envision, let us dream, [and] let us work towards building a better nation—isang *Bagong Pilipinas*—in honor of those who have passed on and for the benefit of our future generations.

Thank you and good morning. *[applause]*

--- END ---