

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK**

**SPEECH OF PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.
AT THE AWARDS RITES FOR THE OUTSTANDING GOVERNMENT WORKERS OF 2023
AND THE PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF MERIT**

[Delivered at the Ceremonial Hall in Malacañan Palace |14 February 2024]

Thank you very much to our Executive Secretary, Luke Bersamin for his kind introduction.

[Please, take your seats.]

The Civil Service Commission Chairperson, Karlo Nograles and the other CSC commissioners present,
National Commission for Culture and Arts Chairperson Victorino Mapa Manalo,
the Science and Technology Secretary Renato U. Solidum
and the other cabinet secretaries that are here present today.

Of course, the most important group here today are our outstanding awardees who are my fellow workers in government,
and other distinguished guests,
ladies and gentlemen,
Good afternoon!

Today, we recognize our fellow civil servants who have honored their oaths of office with remarkable and honest work that has made a positive impact on the lives of the Filipino people.

Standing solidly on our nation's bedrock belief that public office is a public trust, our 2023 Outstanding Government Workers project the image of an ideal Filipino government worker. They did not set out to do things that would earn them praise or to reap awards. Rather, they consistently deliver quality public service, regardless of their position or their pay, because it is what they feel is their duty, the duty they owe to the people.

Our Dangkal ng Bayan awardees have proven that they can exercise the highest standards of work even in the face of risks or temptations. You are our examples of commitment to public interest, professionalism, and responsiveness to the public.

One of our awardees, Mr. Fernando Viado, became partially deaf because of a work-related incident. Nonetheless, he continued to be the best mechanic he could be for the City Government of Antipolo. *[Applause]*

When they see opportunities—when these public servants see opportunities to make a difference in the lives of the people they serve, our awardees respond with audacity, turning bold ideas into reality. You go the extra mile to provide creative and innovative solutions to emerging challenges, such as in the areas of food security, education, social development, climate and disaster resilience, science and technology, and financial literacy.

The CSC Pagasa awardees have made their workplaces and their communities better with the projects and programs that you have introduced to address gaps and to elevate public service in your respective areas.

We have a group awardee that championed authentic honey and honey products, operationalized food innovation across the country to boost food technology, have helped hundreds of farmers across Central Luzon with the introduction of diversified integrated rice-based farming systems.

Meanwhile, our Presidential Lingkod Bayan awardees are those who have worked and had a nationwide impact in their respective fields. And we congratulate our professors, master teachers who make up the majority of the awardees this year, as well as our group awardees who battled the COVID-19 pandemic through the strategic use of technology.

We recognize the accomplishments of the Lead Contact Tracing Team from the City Government of Baguio—[Mayor] Benjie Magalong is here to join us for these festivities—for they have introduced an effective and efficient contact tracing system; we also the LANDBANK Agent Banking Program Team for introducing branchless banking to promote financial inclusion; *[applause]* and as we have mentioned before, the S-PaSS Core Team for helping ease movement during the pandemic.

In Bagong Pilipinas, we want to increase their tribe, in line with our efforts to build a resilient government driven by agile and future-ready civil servants.

This government will always support efforts that will improve your welfare.

So, let me reiterate the administration's commitment to enhance your—to support and work and enhance your working conditions to support professional development in civil service.

We also, today, recognize Apo Whang-Od. *[Applause]* She is one of the few of the remaining master mambabatok from Buscalan.

In 2018, she was awarded the Dangal ng Haraya award for Intangible Cultural Heritage by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts.

Today, we continue that recognition and award her the Presidential Medal of Merit. *[Applause]*

Her contributions to the preservation of Philippine traditional arts and practices cannot be overstated.

We are honoring Apo Whang-od for works that have made her and the country famous, for other achievements that make her a Filipina worthy of our respect and of our admiration.

She is a pioneer in shattering gender stereotypes, venturing into tattooing when it was just a man's exclusive preserve.

She is a keeper of oral traditions and a mentor, teaching a new generation of artists, thus ensuring that her art form lives on to tell tales of her community's history.

Her craft and stature as an internationally recognized artist raised international awareness of our country's rich cultural heritage. As Apo Whang-Od's works appeal to diverse cultures and across political divides, she becomes an enabler for unity and an example of an idea that binds us all. She is truly a national treasure.

To all our awardees, may your achievements inspire our countrymen to bring positive transformation to their own communities. Be assured that this government continues to support every initiative to further strengthen our research and development environment, to enhance the country's quality of education, and to preserve our culture and our heritage.

So, once again, congratulations to the awardees,

You embody the spirit of a progressive and innovative Bagong Pilipino. Ang inyong dedikasyon ay isang inspirasyon sa itinatatag nating Bagong Pilipinas at para sa ating kababayan at sa buong Pilipinas.

Maraming maraming salamat po sa inyong lahat at magandang hapon po sa inyo!

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