

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK**

**REMARKS BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.
AT THE LAUNCHING OF THE EXPANSION OF THE VICTORIA INTERNATIONAL
CONTAINER TERMINAL (VICT)**

[Delivered at Melbourne, Australia| 4 March 2024]

Thank you, Secretary Fred Pascual for the introduction. [Please take your seat]

House Speaker Martin Romualdez; members of the Cabinet that are here with us; the Philippine Ambassador of the Philippines to Australia, Maria Helena Dela Vega; Victoria International Container Terminal Chairman, Christian Gonzales; International Terminal Services Inc. CEO, Mr. Ricky Razon; *distinguished guest; ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.*

Manila and Melbourne are both maritime cities which have been nurtured by access to the water and the open seas.

Port cities are lifelines of a country to the world at large, especially to this day, where supply chains have become essential to today's national requirements and our modern lifestyle.

I, for one, am very proud that the Port of Manila, with centuries of maritime history and expertise, became the birthplace of the *International Container Terminal Services, Inc. or ICTSI*, which would grow to be the largest independent terminal operator with 33 terminals located in 19 countries across 6 continents.

So, well done, Ricky. [applause]

He have become a shining example of Filipino expertise contributing to the smooth flow of trade and commerce in this globalized world that we live in today.

Since *ICTSI* came to Australia in 2014 to establish the *Victoria International Container Terminal (VICT)*, we are now seeing and are delighted to do so, to watch the application of cutting-edge technology and automation in improving efficiency and productivity.

Being the only fully-automated container terminal in the southern hemisphere is a great feat worthy of admiration.

VICT shows us that we need not be afraid of technology and automation.

Quite the contrary, we recognize that using modern equipment here in *VICT* has led to a safer working environment, minimizing old occupational hazards, and improving the health and lifestyles of those who work here.

We see it in Bruno and his very energetic team.

We are delighted to see that since *VICT* started operations in 2017, it has grown to become a major player in Melbourne, giving healthy competition to its peers.

This expansion we are witnessing today is a clear sign that Filipino companies can thrive in some of the most advanced economies in the world, and in the case of *VICT*, they are in it for the long-haul.

We look forward to *VICT*'s astounding success and continued growth.

I am also reliably informed that *VICT* takes its corporate social responsibility seriously.

Aside from providing jobs and hewing closely to sustainable practices here in Victoria, *VICT* has also been supportive of the Filipino seafarers that constitute a large proportion of the seafarers that pass through its facilities, as well as the 95,000-strong Filipino community in Victoria.

As *VICT* has supported numerous Filipino community events, including the harmonized celebrations of the 125th Anniversary of the declaration of Philippine Independence last June 2023, I would like to extend my thanks to Bruno and *VICT* for helping the vibrant Filipino community become more visible, more involved here in Australia.

VICT is a Philippine success story, and I hope it will only be the beginning.

With the *Strategic Partnership* that has been signed between Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and myself last year, I hope to have laid the groundwork for even more success stories like this in many different sectors and possibly two-way investments to allow Australian businesses to also take part in the exciting economic prospects that we are now witnessing in the Philippines.

Filipino investments in Australia are thriving, and there could be a lot more mutually-beneficial pursuits between our two economies that share many universal values.

I look forward to our economic relationship bringing about mutual prosperity to our two countries.

Today, we inaugurate a facility, remotely, that will be here for years to come. This facility is built for the long-haul, akin to the partnership of our two nations.

I am confident that it will be a witness to a future to be defined by closer economic cooperation, a more dynamic and fruitful collaboration between the Philippines and Australia.

So, once again, congratulations to all the individuals who worked tirelessly to achieve this exceptional success.

Congratulations to you all.

Thank you. Mabuhay and good afternoon. [applause]

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