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SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.
AT THE AWARDS RITES FOR THE 2024 OUTSTANDING GOVERNMENT WORKERS
[Delivered at the Ceremonial Hall, Malacañan Palace in Manila | 18 September 2024]

Maraming salamat to our Executive Secretary Chief Luc Bersamin for his kind introduction. *[Please take your seats.]*

Civil Service Commission Chairperson Karlo Nograles and the other CSC commissioners present; Presidential Communications Office Acting Secretary Cesar Chavez; awardees of the 2024 Outstanding Government Workers *[I'm sorry, I have picked up what everybody else seems to have, which is a cough and a cold, but it will not slow me down.];* my fellow workers in government; other distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

And a happy 124th Philippine Civil Service Anniversary to my fellow workers in government! *[applause]*

Perhaps in the past when people hear of "government service," they tend to picture long lines, rows of desks, piles of papers, and faces weary from the daily grind. That's still true. That is the kind of atmosphere, this is the environment that we have to work with.

However, we all know that the truth is far more nuanced than that image.

This is because, even when we deal with routines, serving in government can be challenging, exciting, and rewarding, especially when we are at the forefront of something innovative or when we are changing people's lives.

We serve because we make a difference. We serve because it is in our DNA. We serve because we love the Philippines.

Today, however, we are shining a light on our fellow public servants whose extraordinary acts of service have contributed to the efficiency, to the economy, and to the improvement of government operations and the provision of services.

Created under the Civil Service Act of 1959, our annual Search for Outstanding Government Workers started as the Employee Suggestions and Incentives Awards System.

It was later fortified by my father, then President Ferdinand Marcos Sr., through Presidential Decree No. 807 of 1975, which created the Presidential or *Lingkod Bayan* and *Silangan* Awards, the Civil Service Commission or *Pagasa* Award, and the Agency or *Kapwa* Award.

We continue to administer these national honor awards today through the Honor Awards Program.

It has been 65 years since we began this practice, and while the acronyms and the titles attached to these awards may have changed, the purpose remains the same: To recognize and to honor those who have made an outstanding contribution in the field of public service.

We are fortunate to be in the presence of these outstanding exemplars and to hear tales of feats and achievements.

And I think you have noticed that when we were together on stage, we were having some very animated discussions because I have to say that we are all very, very impressed by the quality of the work that was exhibited by the winners. And no doubt those who did not win this year but will one day do so, the quality of the work and the initiative that people have shown really belies the general image of the civil servant as being a bit of a drudge and being not terribly imaginative, you know, and just going about their very ordinary work and mundane work. Well, this proves to everyone that we know that that's not the case. We know that in our life everyday is different, everyday is interesting. Unfortunately, we have to add to that, everyday is hard.

But now when we see the different awardees and the reasons why they have been awarded today, I cannot avoid having a --- to express how impressed I am and I think we all are by the quality of work. And if we continue with this kind and keep the bar this high, I have --- once again my optimism for the future of the Philippines is like a balloon and goes up higher and higher and higher. *[applause]*

Our Presidential *Lingkod Bayan* awardees have shown us that it is possible for public servants to make a deep and lasting impact beyond the confines of our communities and our institutions.

One of our awardees, a Municipal Department Head in Iloilo, whose vision drove him to transform a 15-hectare abandoned fishpond into an eco-park. His hardwork and dedication inspired more than 217 volunteer groups or a thousand volunteers to contribute into planting 150,000 mangroves.

Through this initiative, it improved the economy and it engaged to protect the forest, elevated the quality of coastal waters, lessened the damage caused by storm surges and typhoons.

Just a little thing, just --- which started just as an idea in the head, in one's head and if you are -- if we are determined to make it happen, to make it work, you will find that there are many people who are also willing to sacrifice, to volunteer, and to help you, so long as they feel that it is in a good cause.

Ganyan naman kasi ang ugali ng Pinoy. Talagang alam mo 'yung sinasabi, akala natin kung minsan dahil hindi naman masyadong nababanggit at napakakumplikado na ng buhay ay 'yung sinasabi --- ang tanging katangian ng Pilipino ay 'yung nagbabayanihan. And that is where we need leaders such as these awardees to lead the way and to inspire people, to come and to do this work. And again, I have always found that there are very, very many --- Filipinos by nature are helpful. Filipinos by nature love the Philippines. Filipinos by nature love Filipinos.

And if this a --- if it is a very sincere effort that has a very good chance of success, Filipinos will rally behind whatever it is that you are doing, especially if the quality of the work, once again, is the way at the level that we have shown with these awardees and with all of those --- I am sure, there are still so many that are not recognized today but are doing very important work and are doing --- making a very big difference in their communities. *[applause]*

Furthermore, among our group of awardees—the pioneers of the Health Beyond Bars Program—which provides a competitive healthcare to persons deprived of liberty, promoting their well-being through activities, training, and educational programs.

Our CSC *Pagasa* awardees have demonstrated that innovation and excellence in public service could benefit more than one department of government.

Our *Dangal ng Bayan* awardees embody not only the image of an ideal public servant but of the ideal Filipino, showing us that we can transform and save lives even in our day-to-day activities.

So, let me congratulate this year's Outstanding Government Workers. Your exceptional service, complemented by your principles, your virtues, your hardwork, has truly inspired everyone to strive to make a difference in our society.

You serve as the pillars upon which our government can draw its confidence and to build its momentum in achieving a *Bagong Pilipinas*.

So, let us remember that the impact of our work does not lie in the recognition that we receive or the laurels that we are given.

It lies in the hearts that we have touched, the communities that we have reached, and the lives that we have changed.

After all, government work is about making our people, our country, and our world better than when we found it.

Let us continue to live by our constitutional mandate that public office is a public trust. We should remain transparent, accountable to all our people and to serve them with integrity, loyalty, and efficiency.

So, as we push back the boundaries of public service, let us strive to be *Bagong Pilipino*—one who will make our vision of a prosperous, progressive, and equitable society a reality within our lifetimes.

Once again, thank you for all the good work that you all do and I hope that this small recog --- this small recognition that we do today to our awardees just serves to remind us of the army of people who are working quietly, who are not recognized but continue to go to work everyday and do their job the best way that they can. And for that, I thank you all who are in the civil service. *[applause]*

Maraming salamat po at magpatuloy po tayo sa paglilingkod at sa pagbuo ng isang mas maliwanag at mas masaganang kinabukasan para sa ating bansa.

Mabuhay ang tunay na diwa ng paglilingkod!

Mabuhay ang serbisyong sibil ng Pilipino!

Magandang tanghali po sa inyong lahat. *[applause]*

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