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**SPEECH OF PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR. AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE
PANGUIL BAY BRIDGE**

[Delivered at Barangay Silanga in Tangub, Misamis Occidental | 27 September 2024]

Thank you, Secretary Manny Bonoan, for your briefing and kind introduction.

[Please take your seats.]

The Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the Republic of the Philippines, His Excellency Lee Sang-Hwa. This is becoming more and more often, where we are opening new projects. I hope we can not only continue but even accelerate all of that we are trying, all of that we are doing.

The Mindanao Development Authority Secretary Leo Magno; the Misamis Occidental First District Representative Jason Almonte; Misamis Second District Representative Sancho Fernando “Ando” Oaminal; Lanao del Norte Second District Representative Sittie Aminah Dimaporo; well, we have heard from the Provincial Governor of Misamis Occidental, Henry Oaminal; and Provincial Governor of Lanao del Norte “Angging” Dimaporo. After her speech, sinasabi ko sa kanya, ‘wag mo masyadong binabanggit na Lanao del Norte is very high on the list of priorities baka magtampo. Nagtatampo na si Governor Henry Oaminal. Sabi niya nagseselos na siya sa atin. Tangub City Mayor Ben Canama, and a surprise visitor, a pleasant surprise that we all have is the arrival and accompanying me the First Lady, First Lady Liza Araneta.

My fellow workers in government, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen...

Before I continue, I have to also acknowledge the presence here of the representatives of the Eximbank, the contractors from Korea, the local contractors who have worked together to make this --- I can only describe is, a dream come true. Good morning to you all.

Let me start by saying, ang tagal na nating [hinintay ito], hindi ba? I just said we waited for this such a long time.

If I had a peso for every time someone asked me, “When will we finish the Panguil Bay Bridge?” I would already be able to fund a second bridge by now. But today, the waiting is ended.

We are here for the Inauguration of the Panguil Bay Bridge Project—a day that we have long looked forward to.

If we take all the time from the very moment of conception of this bridge until today, it is been four decades. And that is why we continuously are commenting on the fact that the --- how happy all of us are to be here today to open this bridge so that it can service both the Misamis Occidental side and the Lanao Del Norte side, and the advantages that it will bring.

Years of planning, months of hard work, countless hurdles, and now we stand before the realization of one of the infrastructure flagship projects of this Administration.

Costing more than Php8 billion, this 3.2-kilometer project is now the longest water-spanning bridge in Mindanao. *[applause]*

The bridge connects two provinces, more importantly, we all know that the increased economic activity is going to be --- are very important development building block for both the provinces and for the entire island of Mindanao. But more than just a physical bridge, we are connecting the dreams and aspirations of the people of Lanao del Norte and of Misamis Occidental.

For far too long, our brothers and sisters here have had to deal with over two-hour commutes across the bay. Ang layo ng iikutin bago makarating dito sa Tangub, dito sa kabila. It is --- it has always taken a very long time, now, those two hours can be spent on work or on simply living their lives.

With this bridge, what once took two hours will now take seven minutes and will benefit [more than 10,000] travelers a day.

I heard the story of Architect Romeo Quicio, a proud resident of Tubod, Lanao del Norte. He grew up hearing about a bridge that would one day connect the town of Tangub, Misamis Occidental. And for years, it was just a dream, something people would talk about but we never finally saw.

In the past, he imagined how life would change if that bridge would come to reality. And now, he is a witness to this dream of all of us being fulfilled.

It is undeniable that this journey has not been easy.

From the 1998 pre-feasibility study conducted on the bridge to the moment that we broke ground in 2018, this bridge encountered very many challenges.

When the pandemic hit—the DPWH had to pause, and had to recalibrate, and revisit, and create techniques and strategies on how they could move forward with this project. And just when they thought that there was a way to continue the construction of the bridge, funding issues stopped it again and slowed it down again.

Pero hindi tayo nagpapatinag nang basta-basta. We do not get intimidated or discouraged by obstacles that are put in our way.

We worked harder, pushed harder, [and] never lost sight of why we are building this bridge. And while we are celebrating this monumental achievement, I would like to highlight the ripple effect it will have on local businesses.

Take for instance, the story of a remarkable local entrepreneur that we encountered recently.

This inspiring woman, Ms. Erlinda Mojica, runs a small business, dedicated to providing fresh produce to her community.

Before, when the barge closed at night, there was no choice but to take the long route around [Panguil] bay, wasting a great deal of time. Now, they can transport their goods whenever they need, no time lost, according to their own schedules.

Imagine the frustration: Fresh produce ready to go, but her dreams were held hostage by prolonged delays.

With the opening of the bridge, she expressed her excitement, saying that her goods would now reach the market in minutes [instead] of hours, alleviating her worries about spoilage and missed sales.

Iyong mga saging hindi na magiging ketsup.

The bridge is a gateway to a world where distance no longer limits our dreams, where aspirations can take flight, and where the ambitions of entrepreneurs fuel growth and prosperity.

This achievement reflects our collective strength and manifests our continuing determination.

And to that end, I want to acknowledge our partners in the Korean government and the Korean Eximbank—thank you very much. Your unwavering support has been instrumental in turning this dream into a reality.

And before lest anyone think, that the projects between the Republic of Korea, the Economic Development Cooperation Fund and through Eximbank of Korea that this is one of the --- this is an isolated project. I would just like to show everyone how many EDCF projects are ongoing in the Philippines [*applause*].

There are 21 ongoing projects and two upcoming project. And some of these are the biggest projects and that is how involved and how much the Economic Development Cooperation Fund of Korea has been part of all our development programs and all our aspirations for making our people live in a much safer, much more efficient and much more helpful lifestyle.

To the DPWH, Secretary Manny Bonoan, and all the people who committed to the completion of the Panguil Bay Bridge Project, your efforts are self-explanatory whenever we would cross this bridge or even see a picture of this bridge. You have shown once again that perseverance pays off.

As we celebrate this feat, let us remember that the Panguil Bay Bridge is indeed the foundation on which we can build more bridges—bridges that connect not just places but connects opportunities and communities.

Let us make this success a launchpad for further development to ensure that this project opens new doors to progress and prosperity.

Hindi po tayo nagtatapos dito sa ating pag-uusap ngayong araw na ito.

It is just the beginning. We are building a Bagong Pilipinas—one where every Filipino, no matter how far, no matter how remote, is somehow connected.

Together, we will welcome the dawn of a future where every dream has the wings to soar, every entrepreneur has a path to success, and every child can aspire to greatness without the burden of travel and long distances.

Daghang salamat kaninyong tanan ug mabuhay ang Bagong Pilipinas!

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