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SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.
AT THE 123RD PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD (PCG) FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY
[Delivered at the National Headquarters Philippine Coast Guard (NHQ-PCG), Pier 15, South Harbor, Port Area in Manila | 22 October 2024]

Thank you very much to our Transportation Secretary, Secretary Jimmy Bautista. *[Please be seated.]*

The Commandant of the Philippine Coast Guard Admiral Ronnie Gil L. Gavan and officials of the Philippine Coast Guard; distinguished members – the Excellencies of the Diplomatic Corps; Ilocos Norte 1st District Representative Ferdinand Alexander Marcos and members of the House of Representatives here present; the AFP Chief of Staff General Romeo Brawner and the other major service commanders; Chief of the Philippine National Police General Rommel Francisco Marbil; and your newest recruit to the service, the First Lady, First Lady Louise Araneta-Marcos for whom I am *[applause]* --- of whom I have become very jealous because in my entire time in the military hindi pa ako nakapaglagay ng estrela sa shoulder board ko. *[laughter]* Sa kanya tatlo kaagad. *[applause]* Fellow workers in government; ladies and gentlemen, a pleasant day to all of you.

Congratulations to the Philippine Coast Guard on your 123rd Founding Anniversary!

With the theme, “PCG at 123: *Matatag, Handa, at Maaasahan Tungo sa Mapayapa at Mapanatag na Bagong Pilipinas,*” we are here to mark more than just a foundation day, we are also here to honor your legacy for over a century and to recognize the good work that you have done in the past few years in the changing climate, especially in the West Philippine Sea.

The story of the Philippine Coast Guard or PCG, mirrors the tale of our nation—a country defined by its relationship with the sea.

Our maritime borders have borne witness to foreign vessels sailing in, some carrying the promise of trade, others cloaked in conquest.

In fact, one of the earliest institutions established by the Americans upon their arrival was a coastal defense force—to safeguard our shores from outside threats and to keep an eye on our seas for smugglers and for contraband.

What began as a modest force of steamers patrolling the coastlines has now evolved into a dynamic organization that guards our borders, implements marine laws, and serves as the first responders in times of calamity.

The transition to a civilian agency in 1998 marked a significant change in how we approach maritime security and environmental protection.

With the shift from a solely military function to a civilian coast guard, you have been positioned to engage in broader collaboration with other nations—opening doors to cutting-edge

technologies and critical resources that now strengthen your ability to serve with greater competency.

Indeed, your emergence as a key player in our nation's maritime security reflects your commitment to service and exemplifies how to advance while remaining true to your core mission.

You protect our maritime borders, standing resolute in the face of those who would exploit our resources or threaten our way of life.

Rescuing our fishermen on the sea when typhoons strike and ensuring that our seas are not pillaged by illegal poachers, you are the steady hand that keeps us upright.

While some see waters as merely a boundary or a resource, you enlighten our people of its true significance—our seas connect us, sustain us, and are integral to our identity as Filipinos.

Every rescue mission and every enforcement of laws against illegal fishing or environmental degradation sends a powerful message, a message that: We can count on you whenever it matters most.

As we look ahead, we must recognize that the challenges you face are growing more complex.

Climate change, rising sea levels, and geopolitical tensions mean that the stakes have never been higher.

Patrolling a coastline that spans over 37 million kilometers and watching over our Exclusive Economic Zone is no small feat.

But to do this with the added weight of isolation, the dangers of unpredictable seas, and the constant pressure of protecting our resources—then it becomes more than just a job. It is a responsibility that speaks to the core of what it means to serve this country.

You are the vigilant stewards of peace and order upon our seas, ensuring that the rule of law prevails across our waters.

In the face of tension, it is your calm resolve that prevents disputes from turning into conflicts, demonstrating to the world that embracing dialogue and cooperation is the true essence of strength.

This is manifested as well by our awardees to whom I express my gratitude and my deepest congratulations.

Words and awards are always never quite enough to express our appreciation for your unwavering commitment and tireless service.

This Administration reaffirms its support to efforts that will improve your fleet and our air assets as well, to maritime domain awareness, weapons capability, and necessary infrastructure development. This will boost your capacity to respond to any operations.

Be assured you are never alone in carrying the weight of this mission.

Therefore, I enjoin you to work with other concerned agencies in fulfilling your mandate of ensuring the safety of life and property at sea, protecting our environment, and enforcing maritime laws.

Before I end, allow me to recognize our First Lady Liza Araneta-Marcos who recently joined the Philippine Coast Guard Auxiliary. *[applause]* This is not surprising because of her commitment to preserving our marine environment. May each of us also find it within us to be a member of the Philippine Coast Guard Auxiliary. *[applause]* And I see some of the prominent members who have also joined the First Lady in becoming part of the Coast Guard Auxiliary. Well done.

And so, as we mark this 123rd Anniversary, let us not simply celebrate the past; we must commit to the future—a *Bagong Pilipinas* where the Coast Guard continues to symbolize courage, resilience, steadfast dedication to our people.

Maraming, maraming salamat!

Mabuhay ang Philippine Coast Guard!

Mabuhay ang Bagong Pilipinas!

Magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat. [applause]

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