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SPEECH BY

PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.

AT THE 2024 GALING POOK AWARDS (GPA)

[Delivered at the Ceremonial Hall, Malacanan Palace in Manila | 25 October 2024]

Thank you very much, Secretary. Naninibago pa ako. Secretary Jonvic... *[Please, please take your seats.]* Secretary Jonvic Remulla of the Department of Interior and Local Government for your kind introduction.

The Galing Pook Foundation Chairperson Mel Sarmiento, who has been doing this good work for a good long time, quietly lang. But it is important to recognize the good work that people are doing around the country so that they can serve as examples for other local governments and other entities. Of course, the 2024 Galing Pook finalists and awardees, congratulations; my fellow workers in government; partners in the private sector, who have also been very active for very many years in providing this recognition to those – the exemplary service that’s provided by our public servants; other distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen, I am --- I almost good morning but it is a bit too rainy for that. So, welcome na lang to the Palace.

Before we start, I would like to express my sympathy for our fellow Filipinos who have become victims by Tropical Storm Kristine. We are grateful for the resilience, leadership, and proactive measures undertaken by our local government units, which have saved many, many lives. Being first responders, the local government units are those – are the ones – are the entities that we count on for that very first response. And they have as usual come through and have done everything that is possible – that’s humanly possible to do – to provide relief, to provide rescue, and to provide assistance to all those who are in peril.

We, in the National Government, are working around-the-clock to provide all the assistance needed by our LGUs and our people affected by this storm.

Unfortunately, Kristine is just a sample of how powerful and how more frequent these storms and cyclones have become. What used to be a one-in-a-hundred-year occurrence is now happening with much greater frequency and ferocity, due to climate change.

Allow me to take this opportunity since we are here and I know, especially our LGU executives that they are very concerned about what is happening, allow me to give you a quick update.

Let me start with an AFP – OCD rapid deployment, especially to Bicol because, of course, Bicol has become one of the areas where the flooding has not – taking time to go away simply because of the topography of the Bicol River Basin.

In any case, I am happy – I might be able to say that a C-130 left Manila at 6:49 today and with the following assets: the satellite communication, gensets, gensets for the satellite communication, water filtration units and other personnel. The 525th ECB, Philippine Army, 20 SAR operators, search and rescue operators; two inflatable rescue boats have been deployed. Fourteen rescue boats with [unclear] motors have also been deployed. The C-130 that left at 6:49 has arrived – arrived at Bicol International Airport at 7:49.

And there is another element of Black Hawk helicopters that are in Legazpi and are attempting to go to Naga. We have a weather window of about two days for air operations in Bicol and we will try to take full advantage of all that.

We have put at the disposal of the NDRRMC all of the assets of the AFP, especially airlift assets dahil ‘yung mga ibang kalsada papasok ay hindi pa natin magamit kaya’t marami pang naging stranded.

So, in CamSur right now as of about one hour ago, of the 36 towns, nine towns are still fully submerged; around six towns are partially submerged. But the province has been very, very quick in distributing house-to-house food distribution and every area has already been reached. And we are augmenting the provinces’ food supplies so that patuloy ang ating relief. Mayroon na naman tayong nailagay na forward placement kung tawagin. Mayroon na tayong nailagay kaya’t sapat naman.

lyon lang ang problema is how to transport them because many of the roads are still closed. That is where the airlift capability will come in. We have set up triage camps on both sides of Maharlika Highway that is presently now still cut off. So, those are providing food and medicines onsite.

And we are in constant contact with our local government units so that we are in close coordination with the first responders who are, of course, those who guide us in where the most critical areas are. We will continue to do this.

We are just unfortunately the – Kristine is expected to leave to go – to leave the Philippine Area of Responsibility – mukhang matagal pa. The problem with Kristine is specific. Hindi masyado ‘yung hangin, ang problema ‘yung tubig. Ang lakas talaga ng pinabagsak na tubig.

And the area that is covered by Kristine – isipin mo hanggang Siargao may – Negros, nagbaha sa Negros. Ang layo ng center of the storm kung tutuusin pero ang laki talaga ng coverage. Ang tinamaan – malaking tinamaan – ang unang tinamaan was Bicol. And Bicol is quite far away kasi nag-landfall ‘yung storm sa Isabela. So, napakalayo na pero inabot pa rin. And that’s the new feature of this climate change weather that we are experiencing.

So, that is why – kahit na iniisip namin na hindi natin itutuloy ito dahil talagang... I know that the local government executives and all the other officials kahit na ‘yung ating mga kasama sa private sector ay nais bumalik at gawin talaga ito.

But it is important that we recognize --- because this is exactly what we are recognizing you for.

For your compassion that you have shown to our people in the different programs that you have initiated, which are very much --- very innovative and as they say, demonstrate out-of-the-box thinking.

And in these challenging times, our country needs leaders, innovators, and true public servants to step forward and to lead the change --- change that will help us create a more resilient and better future for our children.

This room is filled with those very leaders and visionaries. At the conferment of the 2024 Galing Pook Awards, we stand at the heart of governance—where big ideas from our local government units and development partners come to life.

Let me begin by extending my warmest congratulations to all the finalists and awardees of the 2024 Galing Pook Awards.

From 147 applications from 111 LGUs across the country, down to 18 remarkable finalists, and now we honor the Ten Outstanding Local Governance Programs.

These programs prove that when local leaders rise to the occasion, when they embrace creativity and resourcefulness, real change can happen.

To the winners, let this be your moment. After all the hard work and dedication that you have put in, take this as a well-deserved congratulations.

But remember, aside from recognition and honor, this award also comes with a challenge to surpass what you have already accomplished.

I am also confident that you can. Because if you have come this far, there is no limit to what else you can achieve.

What I particularly admire about the Galing Pook Awards is that it is not about checking boxes or meeting quotas—it’s about creativity and courage in governance.

And in the new world --- in the new world that we have come upon after the pandemic, innovation and creative thinking are going to be the key in every aspect of our lives.

It tells us that it is not enough to govern for the people; one must govern with the people.

Community participation empowers our citizens by giving them the opportunity to inform, to influence, to monitor, and assess government decisions and policies.

It is a key instrument of good local governance.

The range of programs we acknowledge today demonstrate exactly how the ingenuity of LGU and community partnerships can be used to respond to diverse challenges and more.

What we are witnessing is nothing short of a collective commitment to progress—diving into the work and crafting solutions that address critical areas such as education, sports, health, tourism, culture and heritage, social services--- the whole gamut of the services that local government is intended to provide.

This diverse approach demonstrates the resourcefulness, determination of our local leaders to uplift their communities.

At these awards, we celebrate the achievements of our local government units, recognizing the impact of their efforts in the vital sectors of their community.

I am very proud of what you have accomplished. And so should you be.

You did not wait for solutions to come from the national level; you took the initiative and handled it effectively.

And that is what local government is able to provide.

And national --- the national government is able to see the larger picture. But, of course, it is... Each community has its own needs, has its own circumstances. And that is --- that information and that creativity to address those situations are what we are needed from our LGUs and that is what we are recognizing today.

At a time when it is easy to get lost in bureaucratic procedures, you found the way to work through the system, around the system, and in some cases, reimagined the entire system.

There's nothing wrong with that. That is something that maybe we all have to do.

The Galing Pook Foundation deserves our applause as well.

For 30 years now, you have been our constant partner in elevating the bar of local governance.

From the time this award was first conferred here in 1994 to this very moment, you have consistently pushed our LGUs to innovate, to adapt, and to lead with resilience.

Thirty years is no small feat—so, to the Galing Pook Foundation and all its partners, congratulations for sustaining this endeavor and continuously raising the standard for LGU public service.

The Galing Pook Awards give us a roadmap for a better Philippines. At their core, these awards are about how these programs can improve lives—how they create jobs, protect environment, promote women and children’s rights, enhance education, strengthen our communities.

Let this be a reminder that government is not a spectator sport. It is a collective effort, where every single player— the mayor, the barangay captain, the regular citizen— everyone has a very important role to play.

And unless we engage all sectors, we cannot succeed. And that is why we have adopted the whole-of-government approach and taken it a little --- another step beyond. And adopted a whole-of-nation approach where even the private sector, not just the government, the private sector and all other entities can come in, and the civil society can come in. But together we can – no single area, no single entity, no single organization can do this. But together, we certainly can.

So, as we close this ceremony, my challenge to all of you is this: Let us keep pushing. Let us keep innovating. The work of governance does not end. There is always more to be done, more people to serve, more ways to lead, more problems to solve, more initiatives to put into place.

Congratulations once again to the 2024 Galing Pook Awardees, to the finalists, and the communities you serve.

Mabuhay ang ating mga lokal na pamahalaan! *[applause]*

Mabuhay ang Galing Pook at mabuhay ang Bagong Pilipinas! *[applause]*

Maraming salamat po. Magandang umaga po sa inyong lahat. *[applause]*

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