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SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.
AT THE PRESENTATION OF THE SIGNED ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP AGAINST
HUNGER AND POVERTY JOINT MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR

[Delivered at the Heroes Hall, Malacañan Palace in Manila | 28 October 2024]

Thank you, Executive Secretary Chief Luc Bersamin. *[Please be seated.]*

Social Welfare and Development Secretary Rex Gatchalian; the other members of the Cabinet that are here present; members of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Zero Hunger; Food and Agriculture Organization Representative in the Philippines Dr. Lionel Dabbadie; World Food Programme Country Representative and Officer-in-Charge Hannes Goegel *[Did I do that right? Okay.]*; fellow workers in government; ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon to you all and welcome to the Palace.

Today, we seal a very significant commitment that moves us closer to achieving our vision of a hunger-free nation.

Here at the Presentation of the Signed Enhanced Partnership Against Hunger and Poverty or EPAHP Joint Memorandum Circular, we gather to renew a promise: that no Filipino should go to bed hungry, and that no community will be overlooked in our fight against poverty.

This partnership started in 2016, when the DSWD, the DA, and the DAR united to launch the Partnership Against Hunger and Poverty. This program was expanded in 2019, becoming what we now call EPAHP.

This year, we directed all government agencies and encouraged all local government units to support its implementation to bolster our efforts towards zero hunger, food and nutrition security, and sustainable agriculture.

Through this, we can improve farm productivity, link farmers, fisherfolk, other food producers to larger markets, provide secure income—ensuring that our children, our mothers, our most vulnerable have access to nutritious food.

Recently, I learned of the heartfelt sentiments of various federations of Sustainable Livelihood Program Associations or SLPAs in Davao de Oro. Their gratitude towards the DSWD and our local government units for tapping them to supply food items under the Supplementary Feeding Program, which underscores a partnership that goes beyond business—it is a true lifeline for our farmers and for our communities.

As we nurture this opportunity provided by this partnership, we unlock the potential to rise above poverty—particularly for our hardworking farmers.

With the signing of this Joint Memorandum Circular, we are bringing in a coalition of 34 partners—from national agencies to international organizations—each one committed to making zero hunger a reality in the Philippines.

We are also setting the guidelines for the adoption and implementation of the EPAHP Program by national and local governments as well as partners to harmonize programs, projects, and activities under this initiative.

At the core of this partnership lies our approach: we provide credit and insurance assistance and directly connect community-based organizations or CBOs to government feeding programs and to broader markets.

As of May 2024, by strengthening CBOs, we have generated more than 200 million pesos worth of sales and contracts between 122 CBOs and government feeding programs.

With the Digital Mapping System, developed with the technical support of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, we are leveraging technology to link these organizations with prospective markets such as the DSWD feeding programs.

Additionally, we will form a 14-member EPAHP Steering Committee, chaired by the Secretary of the DSWD, ensuring necessary leadership, coordination, and accountability are in place, as well as the continuous and effective implementation of all the measures under EPAHP.

To guarantee that we stay on track, transparency and accountability must remain paramount. Hence, the quarterly monitoring and evaluation of the program will be useful to ensure that resources are being used for activities that will achieve our intended goals for EPAHP.

To all our partners in this program—government agencies, financial institutions, international partners, local officials, our partners in the private sector, in civil society organizations—thank you. Your support is vital to the success of this endeavor.

We have yet to achieve zero hunger. But your dedication to this mission assures me that we are all united in this effort, ready to build a better nation for all, especially for those who need it the most.

Sa sama-sama nating pagkilos, darating din ang kinabukasan kung saan ang gutom ay isang malayong alaala na lamang.

Mabuhay po tayong lahat. Mabuhay ang Bagong Pilipinas!

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

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