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**Ref: Dir. Robertzon F. Ramirez**

**SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR. AT THE CEREMONIAL SIGNING  
OF THE PHILIPPINE MARITIME ZONES (PMZ) ACT AND THE PHILIPPINE ARCHIPELAGIC  
SEA LANES (PASL) ACT**

[Delivered at the Ceremonial Hall, Malacanan Palace in Manila | 08 November 2024]

Thank you very much, Executive Secretary Luc Bersamin. *[Please take your seats.]*

Senate President Chiz Escudero and the members of the Senate; the House Speaker Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez and members of the House of Representatives; the honorable members of the Cabinet; our key stakeholders and development partners in this effort that we are doing to safeguard the sovereignty of the seas of the Republic of the Philippines; other distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

Today, we gather for the signing of two very significant laws that emphasize the importance of our maritime and archipelagic identity: the Philippine Maritime Zones Act and the Philippine Archipelagic Sea Lanes Act.

With these pieces of legislation, we align our domestic laws with international law, specifically the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea or UNCLOS, improve our capacity for governance, and reinforce our maritime policies for economic development and for national security.

The first law is the Philippine Maritime Zones Act, which clearly defines the extent of our maritime entitlements and fully declares their metes and bounds in accordance with our Constitution and with the UNCLOS.

This is essential in establishing the extent of our maritime jurisdiction and to ensure that our rights and duties as an archipelagic state are well-defined in order that all Filipinos can rightfully enjoy the riches of our seas.

Our people, especially our fisherfolk, should be able to pursue their livelihood free from uncertainty and harassment. We must be able to harness mineral and energy resources in our seabed.

Maintaining the primacy of the UNCLOS and the 2016 Arbitral Award as our beacons in the maritime domain, the Philippines reaffirms its sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction in our waters.

By defining and asserting our maritime zones, we project to the international community that we are staunchly committed to nurturing, cultivating and protecting our maritime domain.

The second law, the Philippine Archipelagic Sea Lanes Act, complements both our maritime and aerial policies by establishing a route system in our country's archipelagic waters and as well the airspace above it.

The designated archipelagic sea lanes and air routes aim to facilitate safe passage for foreign ships and aircraft without compromising our national security nor diminishing our capacity for good environmental stewardship.

These sea lanes will offer continuous, expeditious, and unobstructed transit for vessels and air transports, while obliging them to comply with navigational regulations and procedures, as well as with the air rules of flight safety and protocols.

We are committed in implementing these ASLs in faithful accordance with the process found in UNCLOS, while firmly upholding the principles of reciprocity and mutual respect amongst States.

The passage of these two priority bills fully demonstrates our commitment as a responsible member of the international community and our advocacy to uphold rules-based international order.

In the same breath, these signal our resolve to protect our maritime resources, preserve our rich biodiversity, and ensure that our waters remain a source of life and livelihood for all Filipinos.

I convey my gratitude to our legislators for their steadfast commitment to safeguard the interests of the Filipino people. This includes the assertion of our rights as an archipelagic state while fulfilling our obligations under international law.

Bringing these bills forward took incredible commitment, as these have been deliberated since at least the 15th Congress.

This long journey has been led by our maritime champions in the House of Representatives and in the Senate, supported by our dedicated team of public servants, technical and legal experts, academicians, and other stakeholders.

To you who have collaborated and leveraged your wisdom and expertise to ensure the coherence and the soundness of these laws, I convey my appreciation and so with the Filipino people.

It is expected that the clarity of the extent of the maritime zones and the determination of the archipelagic sea lanes will impact domestic laws and regulations at the national and at the local level.

I, therefore, call on all concerned government agencies and the local governments to review rules and regulations against these new laws with a view of undertaking the necessary steps for their effective implementation.

As part of the 14th Congress that passed the Philippines Archipelagic Baselines Law in 2009, this matter is close to my heart because these measures prove not only our commitment to ensuring the safety and prosperity of our maritime domain, but also our firm faith in our identity as a maritime nation. It is a spirit that transcends administrations. It is an intrinsic and undeniable part of the national – the Filipino character.

It is my fervent hope that with the help of these two laws, we will continue to pursue and defend our maritime interests and navigate towards a brighter and stronger *Bagong Pilipinas*.

Maraming salamat sa inyong lahat at magandang umaga sa inyo. *[applause]*

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