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SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR. AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE BAGONG PILIPINAS ONE-STOP OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKER (OFW) AGARANG KALINGA AT SAKLOLO PARA SA MGA OFW NA NANGANGAILANGAN (AKSYON) CENTER

[Delivered in Makati City | 17 December 2024]

Thank you, Secretary Hans Cacdac for your introduction.

[Please take your seats.]

The excellencies of the Diplomatic Corps who are representing the different countries that are taking very, very good care of our overseas workers, and for that, I always extend our thanks for the way that you have taken to your hearts the Filipinos in your countries, who have made a choice to work and live in your countries and who you have taken as your own. And, to the great advantage of both our countries. Once again, thank you for all of that.

The honorable members of the Cabinet that are here; the OFW Party-list Representative Marissa Magsino; the officials and employees of the Department of Migrant Workers and the OWWA; my fellow workers in government; and of course, the reason that we are all here --- we are all here because of our modern-day heroes of the Philippines, our overseas workers; of course, First Lady Louise Araneta-Marcos; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon to all of you.

May isang kuwento tayong laging naririnig na hindi naluluma, hindi nawawalan ng halaga. Ito ang kuwento ng ating mga manggagawang Pilipino sa iba't ibang bansa. Sila ang mga kababayan nating handang suungin ang lahat ng hamon, basta para sa kanilang mga pangarap,para sa kanilang pamilya, mabuting oportunidad, at maayos na kinabukasan para sa mga mahal sa buhay.

Ngunit saanman sila nakakarating, dala-dala nila ang init at diwa ng pagiging Pilipino—ang pagiging masipag, mapagmalasakit, at laging [inuuna] ang kapakanan ng kanilang pamilya. Sila ang nagiging tulay sa pagitan ng kanilang bagong mundo at ng bansang iniwanan nila pansamantala.

Sa kabila ng hirap, sakripisyo, at pagkakalayo sa pamilya, hindi nila nakakalimutan ang kanilang pinagmulan. Kaya naman, mahalaga na kahit gaano man sila kalayo, maramdaman nila na may gobyernong handang salubungin sila sa kanilang pagbabalik at ito ang dahilan kung bakit tayo'y nandito ngayon.

Ngayong araw, masaya kong ipinapahayag ang pagbubukas ng --- itong Bagong Pilipinas Agarang Kalinga at Saklolo para sa mga OFW na Nangangailangan (AKSYON) *Center* at ng bagong opisina ng Department of Migrant Workers dito sa Makati.

Ang AKSYON *Center* ay hindi lamang isang opisina. Isa itong simbolo ng mabilis, maayos, at pinagsama- samang serbisyo para sa ating mga OFW. Layunin nitong gawing mas madali ang

kanilang proseso—mula sa reintegrasyon, legal na tulong, hanggang sa pagsasanay at iba pang serbisyong kailangan nila.

Kasama rin dito ang tinatawag na *Migrant's Brew*, ang isang espasyong magbibigay ng libreng lugar para makapagpahinga ang ating mga kababayan habang ini-*enjoy* ang kape at ang mga pampalamig. Isa itong maliit lamang na makabuluhang hakbang sa --- na nagsasabing, "Salamat, salamat, salamat sa inyo." *[applause]*

Ang bagong opisina ng DMW dito sa Makati ay espesyal. Ito ang karugtong ng kanilang central office—naka- posisyon nang maayos upang mas mabilis na matugunan ang mga pangangailangan ng ating mga kababayan sa timog NCR.

Hindi lang ito opisina; isa itong *one-stop shop* na naglalaman ng mahahalagang serbisyo para sa ating mga OFW. Ang gusaling ito ay magbibigay ng *frontline services* tulad ng pagpoproseso ng dokumento ng mga balikbayan, OWWA *membership, renewal*, iba pang mga serbisyo na hinahanap sa ating DMW.

Bukod dito, makikipagtulungan din ang AKSYON *Center* sa iba't ibang ahensiya tulad ng PhilHealth, Pag-IBIG, SSS upang masigurong mabilis at walang aberya ang pagkuha ng mga dokumento at benepisyo [ng] ating mga kababayan. Sa madaling salita, aalisin nito ang komplikasyon ng burukrasya at gagawing maayos ang sistema para sa ating mga manggagawa.

Sa ating mga OFW na nagbabalik bansa, sa halip na maabala pa kayo sa mahahabang pila't magulong proseso, bubungad na sa inyo ang maayos at mabilis na sistema upang makuha ninyo ang serbisyo, benepisyo, at programa ng ating pamahalaan.

Gayon din, para sa isang kababayan nating magsisimula ng paglalakbay bilang OFW, matutulungan kayo dito sa bawat hakbang sa inyong pag-a-*apply*. Simula sa kontrata, legal na proteksyon, hanggang sa pagsasanay—tinitiyak natin sa bawat sulok ng mundo, may gobyernong handang tumulong sa inyo. Hindi po sa gusaling ito nagtatapos ang aming misyon sa --- na paglingkuran ang ating mga OFW.

Kasabay rin ng pagsulong ng makabagong teknolohiya, inilunsad natin ang tinatawag na "eGov PH app." Ito po ay inilunsad ng gobyerno para mas mapadali, mapabilis, at mapalapit ang serbisyo namin sa inyo gamit lamang ang inyong mga *smartphone*.

Gamit ito, maaari na po kayong makakuha ng birth certificate, driver's license; pwede na rin kayo magbayad ng buwis o kaya man eh makakuha ng impormasyon ukol sa status ng loan ng mga GSIS o ng SSS. Mas mabilis din ang pag-deklara sa eTravel pass ng inyong byahe palabas o pabalik ng Pilipinas gamit ang eGov PH app.

Ang mga hakbang na ito ay hindi lamang pagbuo ng mga gusali o simpleng paggawa ng *mobile application*; ito rin ay may mga simbolo ng ating [hangarin] na magkaroon na ng Bagong Pilipinas.

Sa ilalim ng ating pamahalaan, tinitiyak natin na ang bawat Pilipino—lalo na ang ating mga manggagawa sa iba't ibang bansa ay makaramdam ng malasakit at mabilis na serbisyo mula sa ating pamahalaan. *[applause]*

Higit pa rito, ito ay isang paalala ng mas maliwanag na kinabukasan na itinataguyod natin para sa bawat Pilipino. Isang bansang hindi kailangang lisanin pa para makahanap ng disenteng trabaho. At para sa mga pumipiling magtrabaho sa ibang bansa, sigurado sila buo ang suporta ng pamahalaan.

Habang patuloy na tinatahak ng ating mga manggagawa ang mas malalayong pampang, gusto nating masiguro ang kanilang uuwiang bansa ay mas maunlad, mas maganda, at mas maayos.

Nawa'y ang sentrong ito ay magsilbing paalala na ganun man kalayo ang kanilang narating o kataas ang kanilang naabot, ang kanilang bayan ay laging naririto upang salubungin sila. *[applause]*

Sa ating mga masisipag --- sa ating masisipag at matatapang na OFW, tandaan ninyo: Nandito ang inyong gobyerno para sa inyo.
Patuloy tayong magtutulungan upang buuin ang isang Bagong Pilipinas. Sama-sama nating itaguyod ang kinabukasang puno ng pag-asa, pag-unlad, at pagkakaisa.

Ito po kahit na --- my quick translations for our guests.
This is really our --- this is really our effort --- this is one of many centers that we have established all around the country that are attached to the OWWA or the Office of Overseas Workers for the Philippines, and it is really just to facilitate all of the --- all of the processes that they have to undergo when --- from the very beginning, from the start to the --- from the start of their applications, to make sure that the documentation is in place, that all the needed clearances, permits, etcetera are --- they are assisted in acquiring loans and to make their life easier for the … There have been many cases where Filipinos go abroad and because of their lack of knowledge or the incompleteness of the process that they have undergone, they run into trouble and we want to avoid that.

The real… One of the… The real reasons why we started this was because of --- well it was actually the idea of the former DMW Secretary, Secretary Toots Ople, who unfortunately is no longer with us. But it was her idea and she said we have to simplify the work or rather we have to simplify the process with which we assist our OFWs. Not only, in terms of the processes that they have to go through, but more so also and became a critical point when we had --- it really started with Arab Spring when we had to bring many, many people home.

And they … Many of them were very preoccupied, very worried that they could not --- they would no longer have jobs. And many of them, I remember we were talking to some of our workers in Libya and over the phone we could hear shooting. And then we said, "Is there shooting going on?" and they said "Yes, actually we're on the floor talking to you and there's shooting, there's fighting around us." And here's the thing, I said, do you want to come home? "No."

And the reason they didn't want to come home is that they are worried they would no longer have jobs when they return. If they came back to the Philippines, that they would have no jobs to return to. And that immediately triggered our thinking and we said, " Well, then we must." Because just for their safety that we have to provide them the opportunities.

And so, that's why the one-stop shop includes retraining, reskilling, upskilling, and to find job placements wherever. Not solely in the Philippines but also abroad. And that is why, that's what gave birth to this whole system that we have put together today. And although our ceremonies

here, such as they are, are really rather simple and the facilities that you see are very straight forward and rather simple, quite pleasant but nothing overly elaborate.

It belies the importance of what we are doing here. Parang if we look at these oh, we put up a rest area, we have some offices but the effect of this is going to be very, very significant, in terms of the support that we provide our OFWs.

So, I'm very, very happy that we are able to now, especially now that it is Christmas time. Simply because, at Christmas we all know that all our --- as many of our OFWs that can come home, do come home. And so we are ready for them when they do come home for whatever their needs might be, so that they may continue in their work or to change, and come back home and find work here. So, I'm extremely happy that we are here today to have this --- to open this facility. *[applause]*

I thank all of you who have played a part in this and I am very, very certain that what we have started here today or what we have opened here today will be of great benefit to our OFWs, our heroes of the modern age.

Maraming salamat po. *[applause]*

Mabuhay ang ating mga OFW!

Mabuhay ang Bagong Pilipinas!

Maligayang Pasko! Manigong Bagong Taon!

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