

SPEECH BY

PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.

AT THE GROUNDBREAKING OF THE OFW HOSPITAL–BAGONG PILIPINAS CANCER CARE CENTER

[Delivered at the OFW Hospital, PEO Compound, Brgy. Sindalan in San Fernando, Pampanga | 10 December 2024]

Thank you to our Migrant Workers Secretary – ah Department of Migrant Workers Secretary, Secretary Hans Cacadac. *[Please be seated.]*

Pampanga 3rd District Representative Aurelio Gonzales – nauna ka pa sa pagbati ko sa Speaker *[laughter]* Speaker Martin Romualdez; and of course the driving force really – eh hindi natin masasabi na – sa aking palagay, I don't think it's an exaggeration na kung hindi sa kanya at ang kanyang pagpupursige dito sa nakapakahalagang project na ito, hindi po natin natapos, unang-una na ganito kabilis at ganitong kaganda ang itong project na ito, na tayo ay nagga-groundbreak pero nakikita na natin ang dami ng nagawa ang ating mahal na Provincial Vice Governor, Vice Governor Lilia Pineda *[applause]*; the Medical Chief of OFW Hospital Bagong Pilipinas Cancer Care Center Dr. Julius Mendoza and the members of his medical staff; sa ating mga bagong bayani, our OFWs na nandito at nakilahok sa ating groundbreaking ceremony; my fellow workers in government; ladies and gentlemen, magandang araw po sa inyong lahat.

It is with great pride and anticipation that I stand before you today to mark the beginning of a new chapter in our nation's commitment to our modern-day heroes: our Overseas Workers.

When I think about OFWs, I think about their extraordinary strength, their determination, their dedication, the sacrifice and love that they have for

their family. They embody what it means to sacrifice and persevere. It is only fitting that we give them the care and support that they deserve in return.

Since its inauguration in 2022, the OFW Hospital in Pampanga has stood as a testament to our commitment to care for and our commitment for them to be cared for by us, and not only for themselves but also for their families.

The hospital's daily outpatient capacity exceeds 160 patients, and vital areas like reception and admitting sections have been repurposed as triage zones. These challenges present an opportunity for us to reaffirm our dedication to the health and dignity of our OFWs and their families.

From January to May of this year, the Philippine Statistics Authority ranked cancer as the second leading cause of death now in the Philippines.

Aggressive as this terrible disease is, we need to be equally aggressive in providing treatment for our patients—to give them hope, to provide them with care, make them feel at home, at the time when they need it the most.

And this is why the hospital's second floor will be dedicated to the *Bagong Pilipinas* Cancer Care Center.

While the vision is clear, we acknowledge that work remains to be done to ensure that this facility will be equipped to serve those who are in need.

The construction of this new facility would not have been possible, of course, without the support of the Department of Health through its Health Facility Enhancement Program.

This endeavor is inspired by the vision of the late Susan Ople, who was our DMW Secretary and who dedicated her entire life to working for the rights of our workers and eventually also our migrant workers.

`Til the day she died, I know this for a fact, `til the day that she died, she was still working for our OFWs. And that is why we have to honor her memory and honor her legacy, and we do so today with this hospital. *[applause]*

Her legacy reminds us to approach every patient with compassion and care, assuring them that they are not alone in their fight.

The realization of this project will require the collective effort of the Department of Migrant Workers, the Department of Public Works and Highways, the Department of Health, and many other government agencies, and equally important are the private partners. I look forward to the completion of this facility and the procurement of the necessary medical equipment.

I noted that coming in marami sa inyong -- `yung mga OFW lalo ay nagpapasalamat. Hindi po dapat kayong magpasalamat sa amin. Kami ang nagpapasalamat sa inyo. *[applause and cheers]*

Sa inyong tulong na ibinibigay sa ating bansa, sa pagpapaganda ninyo ng inyong -- para sa inyong pamilya at sa inyong mga komunidad, napakalaking bagay po.

Sana – ito ay maliit lang na sukli – sinusuklian lang namin ang inyong sakripisyo at ang inyong tulong. Ito lang po ay – ito ang kaya naming gawin upang pagandahin naman at maging mas maginhawa ang mga buhay ninyo.

Dahil alam naman namin buong buhay kayong nagsasakripisyo. Hindi lamang para sa inyong mga pamilya, hindi lamang para sa inyong mga komunidad, kung hindi para sa buong bansa. *[applause]*

And we once again show, nothing is impossible when we unite together for a shared purpose.

Sa aming minamahal na OFWs, ang karagdagang pasilidad na ito ay para po sa inyo at sa inyong pamilya. Hindi naman natin hinahangad na magagamit ninyo ito, ngunit mas makakahinga tayo nang maluwag kung alam natin na may matatakbuhan na ospital ang ating mga OFWs sa oras ng inyong pangangailangan.

Nawa'y ang Cancer Care [Center] na ito ay maging simbolo ng ating mas magandang kinabukasan—kung saan ang sakripisyo ng ating mga OFWs ay masuklian, ang kanilang pangarap ay mabigyang katuparan, at ang kanilang kalusugan ay pinapahalagahan.

Habang nakatuon sa ating mga OFWs ang Cancer Center na ito, may dalawang Cancer Center din pong itinatag ng ating pamahalaan.

Ang isa ay 'yung University of the Philippines Philippine General Hospital Cancer Center sa Maynila. Ikalawa po, ang Philippine Cancer Center sa Quezon City.

Layon po natin na higit pang makapagbigay ng serbisyo sa ating mga kababayan na dumadaan sa karamdamang ito.

Together, we will build a *Bagong Pilipinas* that is strong, that is prosperous, that is compassionate.

*Maraming salamat po sa inyong lahat at mabuhay ang Bagong Pilipinas!
Magandang tanghali po sa inyo. [applause]*

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