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**SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR. AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE
MACTAN-CEBU INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (MCIA) ALTERNATE RUNWAY**

Delivered at the Mactan-Cebu International Airport, City of Lapu-Lapu in Cebu
30 January 2025

Thank you very much, Secretary Jimmy [please, please take your seats] for your introduction.

Tourism Secretary – I was just thinking that while the Governor was speaking, *sabi ko ang daya naman nitong si Secretary Christina napakabigat ng mga pala niya at we know that we are in Cebu. Special Assistant to the President Secretary Antonio Lagdameo; the other members of the Cabinet who are also here to witness the opening of this parallel runway; the of course our good friend and partner in nation-building. I remember when I was commenting before I took office as President, I had always bewailed the fact that the phrase that I always used to hear in my father’s time was “nation-building”, and that we never heard it again. Well, I came to Cebu to visit with Governor Gwen and I heard it again. And that is why she very much a partner of the Philippines in terms of nation-building.*

Mactan Cebu International Airport Authority General Manager Julius Neri Jr.; my fellow workers in government; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen, *maayong adlaw.*

There really is something special about Cebu. It’s a place where history and progress come together very gracefully, where tradition converges with innovation, and where the grit and tenacity of its people shine brightly in every achievement.

Today, we celebrate a new victory in Cebu’s remarkable and ongoing story—one that shows why this province continues to inspire hope and progress for other provinces and certainly for the entire nation.

This new runway at the Mactan-Cebu International Airport reflects the very essence of Cebu: it is dynamic, promising, and always ready to take on challenges.

And just as Cebu has been a center of trade and tourism, this parallel runway symbolizes the unrelenting drive to connect, and to grow, and to lead.

Last year, this airport catered to 8.5 million domestic passengers, nearly three million – 2.8 million international passengers, and around 67 million kilograms of cargo, nearly a hundred thousand flights, 99,100 flights.

This airport has been instrumental not only in the development of this province but also of the Central Visayas region and other provinces that are served by flights from Mactan-Cebu International Airport. And in those we must include the destination that the feeder flights take not only to the Visayas region but down to Mindanao and even up back to Luzon.

As the first and only parallel runway in the Philippines, this runway is a bold leap forward. It will help in your competitiveness, in your connectivity, and in your capacity to take in visitors.

This milestone would not have been possible without the firm determination of the Mactan-Cebu International Airport Authority, the unwavering support of all the stakeholders, and the dedication of all the partners working together in concert and coming to this great achievement.

Amidst the immense challenges of the pandemic, each of you exemplified the strength and ingenuity of the Filipino people.

Because despite health risks and uncertainties, you pressed on with courage and commitment, striving for the completion of this very important runway.

So, on behalf of the entire nation, daghang salamat! [applause]

This occasion comes at a very important moment, aligning perfectly with our preparations to undertake critical repairs on the airport's first runway starting this May.

For the first time in our nation's aviation history, we embark on a major repair of an airport's first runway without impeding ongoing operations. It is a testament to what passion for excellence, meticulous preparation, and consistent efforts can achieve.

And as I was commenting to the Governor on our way over here, nauna na naman, inunahan na naman ng Cebu and Maynila dahil matagal na nating pinaplano 'yung sa Maynila. Pinag-uusapan pa lang 'yung sa Maynila, tapos na 'yung nandito sa Cebu Mactan. [applause]

By 2028, we expect the alternate – the parallel runway to be used simultaneously together with the original runway, ensuring greater efficiency and capacity to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving and growing aviation industry.

With two runways running full-time, the airport will now be – will have the capacity, the capability to cater up to 18 million passengers a year.

It's only a snapshot of all the exciting things that are happening in our airport infrastructure.

It is part of our broader vision to advance the development of our country's infrastructure.

This vision is anchored in the principles of good governance and a collective desire to uplift the lives of our people—recognizing that progress in connectivity translates to progress in opportunities.

Under the Aviation Infrastructure Program, we have allocated P7.7 billion under this year's budget for the upgrade of 15 airports nationwide. This underscores our resolve to modernize facilities and ensure connectivity across the archipelago.

Through this program, we can construct, rehabilitate, and enhance runways, taxiways, ramps, control towers, passenger terminals, while at the same time acquiring state-of-the-art navigational equipment.

No less significant is the implementation of our flagship PPP projects which aim to develop the gateways to our country.

Just last year, we signed the Concession Agreements for the Bohol-Panglao International Airport PPP Project and also the Laguindingan International Airport PPP Project. These initiatives will substantially increase the passenger capacity of both Bohol-Panglao and Laguindingan airports.

As we look into the future, let us remember that endeavors such as these are the stepping stones to a nation ready to take on unparalleled heights.

To our partners in the tourism industry, led of course by the – as described by the Governor “the pride of Cebu” – this is your chance to showcase once again and even more the best of Cebu and with that the best of the Philippines.

To our business community, this brings forth more opportunities to enter global markets and to attract greater investments.

To every Filipino, let this day attest to what we can attain when we set aside differences, focus on our shared goals, and work together for the common good.

So, as we officially open this runway, let us see it as opening new doors to progress, prosperity, and the realization of our shared dreams.

So, together, let us create a Bagong Pilipinas—a nation that transforms, that innovates, and inspires the rest of the world.

Daghang salamat. Mabuhí ang Cebu! Thank you very much and good afternoon. [applause]

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