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**SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR. AT THE LUNCH
WITH THE VISAYAS GOVERNORS AND ONE CEBU OFFICIALS**
[Delivered at the Cebu Provincial Capitol in Cebu City | 30 January 2025]

Thank you very much, Governor Gwen Garcia, *[please be seated]* for your kind introduction. And I know that that is the standard phrase to use but I must say your introduction was particularly kind.

The honorable members of the Cabinet who are here with us today; Cebu 5th District Representative and Deputy Speaker Duke Frasco; the honorable members of the House of Representatives who have joined us; Aklan Governor Jose Enrique Miraflores; Guimaras Governor Joaquin Carlos Rahman Nava; Bohol Governor Erico Aristotle Aumentado; Negros Occidental Governor Eugenio Jose Lacson; Negros Oriental Governor Manuel Sagarbarria; Siquijor Governor Jake Vincent Villa; Eastern Samar Governor Ben Evardone; Samar Governor Sharee Ann Tan; my governor from Leyte, Leyte Governor Jericho Petilla; Southern Leyte Governor Damian Mercado who has – who seems to have survived the earthquake in good shape; Cebu Vice Governor Hilario Davide III and vice governor of the Provinces of the Visayas Region; Cebu City Mayor Raymond Garcia, mayors and the vice mayors of the provinces in the Visayas; the other elected officials here present; my fellow workers in government, maayong adlaw kaninyong tanan. (Good day to all.)

When the First Lady first came back from the trip that we saw in the video, and she said that she was so touched by the expressions of support that were made during her trip. Sabi niya: It was so touching, she said, that I cried, I shed a tear. And I was teasing her, I said, “Ikaw kasi masyado kang iyakin kaya madali kang paiyakin.” Well after today, after the overwhelming expressions of support that I have received today, well, I understand perfectly well why she shed that tear. Thank you. Thank you so much. *[applause]*

I would also like to add to the story of Governor Petilla because we have had the same experience of being a congressman, governor, and in my case, congressman again. And after I was governor, nag-graduate na ako, and I ran for congressman. And those of you – those governors who have become congressman will understand what I’m going to say next.

And I was looking at my other fellow governors na nag-graduate din, na nag-congressman, and we were saying, wala tayong ginagawa dito sa House, para tayong nag-aantay na nakikinig lang ‘yung speech at saka kung minsan hindi na nga nakikinig, basta kung ano-ano na lang ang ginagawa.

So, that was the opposite side of your story and I said, sabi ko – we were 18, I remember very well because I started to organize all the former governors. And ang sabi ko: “Alam ninyo, ito na ‘yung chance natin.”

Sabi nila, “Bakit?”

“Eh naging congressman tayong lahat, governor tayong lahat. Lahat ng problema natin sa mga congressman natin noon, ayusin na natin ngayon.” And that’s what we did.

So that we found a job for governors who had become congressmen. So, I’m very happy that we share the same experiences when it comes to local government.

As I have always tried to... People have called me a “champion for local government.” I don’t know if I am a champion for... I just like to point out the role that local government plays and to make people understand more deeply what it is that local government does.

And why local government is – can be effective, and is – needs to be supported. And in the ways that the national government, the national entities, agencies can support it.

And so that is why I have – the stories that you tell are something that are – are stories that are very familiar to me.

And I will only dispute one part of Gov. Petilla’s remarks, when he said na “sometimes nagsisisi ako”. Actually, hindi, not for one single moment. *[applause]*

Because even though there is much that needs to be done... Unang-una, iba ‘yung approach ko, ang dami mong problema—hindi problema ‘yan, trabaho ko yan, that’s my job. That’s not – these are not problems; this is the job that you meant to do.

And the reason that I never regret being in this position is that I have been in political life for most of my adult life. And I can say with great confidence that being President, being of this service at this level is the greatest honor and privilege that any human being can ever be granted by his own people. *[applause]*

When we have succeeded in making a – putting a program together and you begin to see what is – what are the effects of that program, I always think to myself and I say to the people around me: “Napakasuwerte natin na nagagawa natin ito para tulungan ang tao.”

And that is where I get my strength from, that is where I get my inspiration from. Not from the high levels of government but from watching ordinary people and knowing a way that somehow, somehow I have been granted a privilege and the opportunity to serve them and serve them well.

Governors know this too. Governors, mayors, local government people know this too because our actions as executives, our actions are direct.

And I say, you have to listen to local government because local – ang mga local government, mga LGU officials, ang kausap nila tao, hindi politiko. Ang kausap nila ‘yung ordinaryo na citizen. Kaya’t alam nila kung ano ‘yung iniisip ng tao kaya pakinggan ninyo ang local government. And that’s what I always say.

So, we are happy – I’m very, very happy that I am amongst kindred spirits when I come here and from those kindred spirits those – this overwhelming, inspiring expression of support from all the provinces in the Visayas at all levels in those provinces. Thank you very much for that and it is something that I will carry in my heart to my dying day.

And it is fine that we do it all here today in Cebu, solidified by our collective role as partners in service to the Filipino people.

So, I appreciate your expressions of appreciation and your trust, your confidence, and support to this Administration.

Public service becomes fulfilling when we are joined by like-minded public servants—each of us committed to the noble goal of building a more reliable, a more efficient, a more compassionate government.

Sa loob ng dalawa't kalahating taon ng ating pamumuno, marami na tayong naisulong at naisagawang mga programa at proyekto na naglalayong mapabuti ang buhay ng bawat Pilipino.

But through your leadership and the assistance of the national government, the Central Visayas Region has ranked as the fastest growing region in the country, growing at 7.3 percent in 2023. At the national level, ambisyon lang namin 'yan na umabot ng 7.2 percent. Congratulations for the good work that you have been doing. *[applause]*

Eastern Visayas has also shown a remarkable 6.4 percent growth, faster than the country's GDP in the same year.

This growth supports the development of industries, creates jobs and livelihoods for our people.

That is why we are not stopping here. We are doing more. We will do more. Our duties as public servants are never-ending so we continuously push not only to maintain this growth but also to leverage on the momentum that it has given us.

Patuloy pa natin ipapalago ang iba't ibang industriya, gaya ng turismo, agrikultura, manufacturing.

Sa pangunguna ni Department of Tourism Secretary Frasco na isang proud Bisaya and Cebuana, patuloy ang panghihikayat natin sa mga turista na bisitahin ang mga mala-paraisong isla sa Cebu, sa Aklan, sa Bohol, Iloilo, Samar Island, Leyte, Southern Leyte at iba pang mga magagandang lugar nandito sa Visayas.

Ilan sa mga inaabangan nating proyekto dito sa Cebu ay ang New Cebu International Container Port; [pagpapalawig] ng Cebu Bus Rapid Transit Project na pinag-usapan namin nang matagal sa RDC kanina at sana naman ay magawan natin ng paraan para ito ay mabuo nang maganda; at ang pagsimula ng pang-apat na tulay ng Cebu-Mactan at Coastal Road Construction Project.

We are also implementing projects to improve the airports of Bohol, of Dumaguete City, of Iloilo, Antique, Siquijor, [and] Tacloban.

We are implementing road and bridge projects, improving the connectivity in Panay, Guimaras and Negros; Bohol; Siquijor; Biliran; Northern Samar; Eastern Samar; Samar; Leyte; and Southern Leyte.

The Administration's development plans are ambitious, but I am confident that with your leadership, coupled with our strong collaboration, we will transform these plans into reality.

It cannot be discounted that disagreements and contradicting views are inevitable, but let us be reminded that our shared commitment is to the greater good and that must be our unifying force.

Ladies and gentlemen, our people cannot afford to wait for the benefits of economic growth to trickle down and to translate into improved services, modern infrastructure, and better livelihood.

We must take the initiative so that distribution of wealth is – has a mechanism because without such a mechanism there is no such thing as trickle down. And the economists amongst us have – I've seen this in the past where the theory was that if big corporations are wealthy, that wealth will trickle down.

Well, it will only do so with the initiatives that are brought in by our local government officials and our public servants. It does not happen by itself. It happens because you all make it happen.

We must not waste precious time to deliver the reforms that people need.

Let's not be distracted by issues that would only deter our work and affect the people who are counting on us.

Our effectivity as elected public officials is defined by how we remain true to our mandate to serve, to lead, and empower our fellow Filipinos.

Let us remember that the true essence of our democracy unfolds not just in the casting of the ballot, but in the everyday actions and decisions that we make as lawmakers and policy implementers in the service of the public.

Kaya naman ang aking panawagan ay masusi ninyong pag-aralan ang bawat programa at proyekto na inyong ipapatupad; planuhin nang maayos ang pagpapatupad ng mga ito; at tapusin at maumpisahan sa tamang schedule, lalong-lalo na ang mga priority development project. Tiyakin natin na ang mga susunod na henerasyon ay makikinabang sa ating mga nasimulang pagbabago.

We cannot stress this enough but let us always, let us always serve with integrity, with responsibility, and passion in our hearts. I know that if we are guided by the highest ideals of good governance, we can never go astray.

Once again, I thank you from my deepest part of my heart for your very kind and overwhelming and inspirational support.

Let us continue to deliver services that are expected from our *Bagong Pilipinas*.

Let us continue to be reliable public servants. Let us continue our good work.

Ipadayon nato ni. Let us continue this.

Daghang salamat.

Mabuhay ang Visayas Region!

Mabuhay ang Bagong Pilipinas! [applause]

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