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**SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR. AT THE 2025 OPEN
GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP (OGP) ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGIONAL
MEETING (APRM)**

[Delivered at the Bonifacio Global City in Taguig City| 06 February 2025]

Thank you very much, Secretary Amenah Pangandaman, for your kind introduction.

House Speaker, Speaker Martin Romualdez of the House of Representatives; Chief Justice Alex Gesmundo of the Supreme Court; Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo and the – we can already conduct a Cabinet meeting *[laughter]* we have a quorum here – all the members of the Cabinet who have joined us here today and the Excellencies of the Diplomatic Corps; distinguished delegates of the 2025 Open Government Partnership Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting; ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

On behalf of our proud and grateful nation, I welcome all of you to our country for the 2025 Open Government Partnership Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting.

We are proud to be among the eight founding members of the OGP in 2011 who made a bold commitment to ensure that governments around the world are transparent, accountable, and participatory.

Fourteen years later, it is our distinct honor to host, for the first time, this event of high significance and relevance.

This momentous occasion testifies to how we have embraced open governance as part of our national identity under a *Bagong Pilipinas*. This is complemented by our sincerest efforts to make government processes more responsive, inclusive, and transparent.

In fact, our socioeconomic transformation blueprint, the Philippine Development Plan 2023 to 2028, identifies OGP as a key mechanism to deepen participatory governance.

By actively involving our citizens in the decision-making process, we establish their significant influence on policy development, as it should be.

We are pleased to have the DBM Secretary Amenah Pangandaman as the Philippine-OGP Chairperson. She has been instrumental in pushing our Open Government Agenda further.

And in the true spirit of the OGP, I am also pleased to have our civil society organization or CSO Partner, Malayang Lapihan ng mga Kababaihan or what we call MALAYA KA, led by Ms. Aurora Chavez, who sits and stands by the government's side in this pursuit.

With the signing of Executive Order No. 31 in June 2023, we institutionalized the Philippine OGP as a multi-stakeholder partnership. Through this, local government units and civil society organizations are involved in the implementation of our commitment to open government and in the delivery of sustainable solutions on various social concerns.

Today, we have 4,000 stakeholders from local government and civil society organizations all over the Philippines who have all pledged their commitment to open governance through our nationwide advocacy campaign called "OGPinas!"

The Philippines also pursued the Citizen Participatory Audit Program, Grassroots Participatory Budgeting, and Open Data Portal. These programs allow our citizens to participate in the governance process, enriching policy and program implementation. Through these efforts, we have been recognized globally.

These initiatives stem from our belief that by creating spaces for civic engagement at all levels of our society, we can truly create transformative and impactful changes down to the grassroots level.

We, in the government, are keenly determined to sustain this momentum of best practices.

However, our people can only truly participate in governance if they have access to information. This access is made possible by government transparency, digitalization and the institutionalization of freedom of information through legislation—which is a constitutionally recognized principle.

The Public Financial Management Reforms Roadmap 2024-2028 that we launched in September of last year solidifies our dedication to the full digitalization of our bureaucracy.

This budget blueprint will facilitate the automation of our public financial management, from planning and procurement to the monitoring and evaluation of how we spend public funds.

We are now working on harmonizing our various budget management systems to eliminate redundancies and to achieve efficiency and accuracy in the management of our revenues and of our expenditures.

On the other side of the equation, we enacted the historic New Government Procurement Act last year, bolstering our fight against corruption and red tape.

Borrowing the words of the Budget Secretary, this is the biggest anti-corruption law in modern times.

And how is that? This landmark law simplifies, improves, and modernizes the decades-old Philippine government procurement system.

It enables open contracting, which requires the disclosure of data and documents at every stage of the procurement process. Representatives from civil society organizations will be invited to participate in that process, further strengthening their ability to monitor public fund expenditure and contract implementation.

This new procurement law has already positioned the Philippines as a leading model of transparency in Asia and a pioneer in open governance in the world.

Parallel to the reform of our procurement policy, we also leveraged on the latest technologies to further improve the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System or what we refer to as PhilGEPS. Government agencies can just “Add to Cart” supplies and pay the same online. Motor vehicles are now available in the system and we are adding more and more supplies in the coming months.

This means that government agencies can now procure goods in a more efficient, streamlined, and cost-effective manner from the comforts of their offices whilst being completely transparent to anyone, any citizen, and any member of government.

I am certain that our dear foreign visitors and friends who travelled all the way from their home countries have many powerful stories to tell us as well.

We look forward to hearing your experience, to learn from your best practices on fiscal transparency, digital governance, and climate resilience, among the other open government challenge areas.

Beyond our variances in our approaches, our shared vision is clear-cut: we want every budget allocation, policy decision, and program implementation to involve public participation—all in pursuit to the empowerment and to the upliftment of our people.

With this, I strongly call on all government agencies, local government units, and CSOs, as well as our international friends and partners: to let us continue to work hand in hand in this very important endeavor.

Let us foster a deeper trust amongst each other, that can only be earned through impactful dialogues, concrete actions, and genuine support.

So, as we chart our course to a more open and dynamic Asia-Pacific, let us be reminded of the powerful role of collaboration, especially in addressing complex challenges of governance in this 21st century.

May we see the grand opportunity we have today and use it to send a powerful message to the world: that open governance is fundamental to prosperity, to stability, and to security in a rapidly transforming world.

Join the conversation. Be advocates of accountability in your own communities. Be part of the global commitment to open governance.

Let our initiatives honorably reflect the aspirations of our respective citizens.

Thank you very much and once again, welcome to the Philippines.

Maraming salamat. Mabuhay kayong lahat!

Mabuhay ang Bagong Pilipinas! [applause]

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