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**STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR. AT  
THE JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE**

[Delivered at the President's Hall, Malacañan Palace in Manila | 29 April 2025]

*His Excellency Ishiba Shigeru,  
Prime Minister of Japan,  
Esteemed ministers and officials of both  
the Philippines and Japanese delegations,  
Distinguished guest and fellow government workers, Members of the media,  
Ladies and gentlemen,*

It is my honor to welcome His Excellency Ishiba Shigeru, the Prime Minister of Japan, today here at the Malacañan Palace.

Our uninterrupted exchange of high-level visits over many years has demonstrated the importance that we accord to our bilateral relations, and to provide a platform to build upon our engagements for the stability, harmony, and shared benefit of our people. These are the hallmarks of a truly golden age in our bilateral relationship.

Prime Minister Ishiba and I earlier discussed the many aspects of our diplomatic, political, security, and defense cooperation. We looked forward to a robust relationship, as our diplomatic relations enter their 70th year of normalization in the year 2026.

With the spirit of reconciliation, brotherhood, and amity as foundational to our relationship, the fruits of seven decades of engagement attest to a deeply meaningful relationship where our two peoples slowly built a shared history and multifaceted cooperation.

It has been seven decades now that generations of Filipinos and Japanese have felt the benefits of our stable and wise diplomacy.

The Philippines accords great importance to its relations with Japan as its reliable and steadfast partner in the region. Japan is our second largest economic partner.

With the *Philippines-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (PJEPA)* that we have in place, we continue to look for ways to strengthen our business ties with Japan to broaden economic opportunities for Filipinos.

Japan is one of the top bilateral partners that we have for trade, investment, and development cooperation.

We appreciate Japan's development assistance, which we see as the gold standard for development cooperation. It is primarily because it supports our maritime domain awareness, infrastructure, food security, improved climate change adaptability, digital transformation, agriculture, space, cyber technology, health, energy, and many others.

Our development cooperation has also played a significant role in the *Mindanao Peace Process*, which will uplift the lives of Filipinos and promotes economic competitiveness in Mindanao.

On defense and security cooperation, it is of note that the Philippines is the first recipient of Japan's *Official Security Assistance (OSA)*, and even as a new initiative, barely three years old, the OSA has allowed our security agencies, especially the Department of National Defense, to achieve meaningful upgrades.

Japan has been of great assistance in helping us achieve our aspiration for peace and friendship with all nations with strength and with integrity. Further, we have agreed to start negotiations on an *Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA)*.

I recall that when I visited Japan in 2023, our two countries committed to building a future-facing relationship. With strategic focus, my discussions with Prime Minister Ishiba today have indeed laid the groundwork for that resonant and inspiring future across many, many sectors, so that our two peoples see meaningful outcomes in their everyday lives and in the lives of their families.

I look forward to continuing our Strengthened Strategic Partnership with Japan, a country that shares our ideals and aspirations of upholding democratic institutions and a rules-based international order.

Thank you, Prime Minister Ishiba and the members of your delegation, for this fruitful and uplifting visit.

Thank you very much. *[applause]*

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