

**MESSAGE OF AMBASSADOR KAZUhide ISHIKAWA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE
TURNOVER AND COMMISSIONING CEREMONY OF THE
“MARITIME AND SAFETY CAPABILITY IMPROVEMENT
PROJECT
FOR THE PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD”**

12 October 2016 3:00pm

PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE;

COMMANDANT WILLIAM MELAD;

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

It is my great pleasure and honor to join this auspicious ceremony and to extend my heartfelt congratulations on the turnover and commissioning of BRP Tubbataha. Tubbataha is the first of ten (10) multi-role response vessels financed and built by Japan for the Maritime and Safety Capability Improvement Project for the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG).

This Project aims to improve the PCG's capabilities to quickly address maritime operation such as patrol, search and rescue, and law enforcement.

As demonstrated by this Tubbataha vessel, we see so many significant developments in our relations.

In the summit meeting between President Duterte and Prime Minister Abe held on September 6th in Vientiane, Laos, the two leaders had wonderful discussion on wide range of issues, including the importance of the rule of law. They also confirmed that they will strengthen the cooperation to resolve disputes in a peaceful manner based on international law.

In addition, at this summit meeting, Prime Minister Abe announced his intention to provide a new yen loan for the construction of two (2) larger patrol ships.

This year, we are celebrating the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Japan. Last January, as you recall, Their Majesties Emperor and Empress visited the Philippines as state guests. This visit surely elevated our strong friendship to a much higher level.

Later this month, President Duterte is scheduled to visit Japan. On this occasion, two leaders will further discuss ways to enhance friendship, ranging from peace and security, fight against terrorism, economic cooperation such as infrastructure development and people to people exchanges.

I boarded the “Tubbataha” last month and I am convinced that the “Tubbataha” is a great symbol of friendship between Japan and the Philippines. I would like to conclude my remarks by saying that we will work together with the Government of the Philippines to further deepen our relations.

Thank you and *Mabuhay!*