

# **On the Occasion of the Reciprocal Access Agreement Exchange of Notes Ceremony**

12 August 2025

*Magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat!*

It is a great honor for me to be with you today as we mark a transformative step forward in Japan–Philippines relations through the Exchange of Notes regarding the Japan-Philippines Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA).

Following its approval by the Philippine Senate in December of last year, the RAA was approved by the Japanese Diet early June. We are pleased to announce that, with the exchange of Note Verbales today, the RAA will officially enter into force on 11 September 2025. This swift and decisive progress speaks to the urgency and strategic value both our nations attach to our security and defense cooperation.

Japan recognizes the Philippines as an indispensable partner, strategically positioned at the heart of the Indo-Pacific and united through our shared core values of freedom, democracy, and the rule of law.

Amid the challenging security environment, the RAA provides a practical framework for mutually beneficial defense cooperation by facilitating mutual visits of our forces for joint training, humanitarian assistance, and disaster response. It strengthens the interoperability between our forces and affirms our mutual readiness to decisively respond to emerging challenges and opportunities.

This agreement goes beyond being a bilateral milestone. It is a momentous contribution to the realization of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific, in close cooperation with the Philippines, the United States, and other like-minded partners.

To our distinguished partners gathered here today, I extend my deepest gratitude for your tireless efforts and commitment in supporting the full achievement of this agreement, which also showcases our shared resolve to contribute proactively to regional peace, security, and stability.

As we look ahead, next year marks the 70th Anniversary of the Normalization of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and the

Philippines. Let us build on this momentum and continue working hand -in-hand. Ensuring that the RAA and our broader cooperation leave a lasting legacy where our nations stand stronger together, and our region thrives in peace, prosperity and unity.

*Maraming salamat po sa inyong lahat at mabuhay ang pagkakaibigan ng Japan at Pilipinas.*