

**Remarks of Ambassador ENDO Kazuya On the Occasion of the
BEACON EXPO 2025**

01 October 2025 at SMX, MALL OF ASIA, PASAY CITY

Magandang umaga po sa inyong lahat!

Isang karangalan na makasama ko kayo nagyong umaga. It is an honor to join you today at BEACON 2025, here by the beautiful scenery of Manila Bay which has long witnessed the triumphs of the Philippines' maritime development.

I would like to thank our friends from the Maritime League for inviting me to speak on this important occasion, and for the knowledge-driven 3-day program that has gathered leaders, experts, and practitioners of the maritime domain to discuss the future of our shared seas.

I would first like to express my deepest sympathy to those who have been affected by the earthquake last night in Cebu and other province in Visayas. We stand in solidarity with the Filipino friends during this challenging time. I also pay my respect to all the military and civilian officers working tirelessly on the rescue.

Japan, like the Philippines, is obviously a maritime nation. Our economy depends on the sea, our security is shaped by the sea, and our very future is bound to the sea. For this reason, allow me to share with you the past, present, and future of Philippine–Japan maritime defense and

cooperation, and how both our nations are determined to strengthen these bonds.

PROGRESS OF PH-JP MARITIME DEFENSE & SECURITY COOPERATION

The seas sustain our people and drive our economies. That is why stable, secure, and open sea lines of communication, anchored in the principle of freedom of navigation, is essential to our collective prosperity and security.

As Japan's major energy supply route, the waters surrounding the Philippines, particularly the South China Sea and the Bashi Channel north of the Luzon Island, serve as critical sea lines of communications which Japan also calls as "Sea Lanes". The strategic importance of these routes cannot be overstated as approximately 80% of Japan's crude oil imports pass through the South China Sea.

Yet today, these seas face mounting challenges. We see growing pressure on the rule of law, shifting power dynamics and evolving geopolitical currents. Layered upon these are the forces of globalization, rapid technological advancement, and the shared threat of climate change. Our international community is now standing at a major crossroad, one that tests our collective resolve, cooperation and commitment to a stable and rules-based maritime order.

In response, Japan in 2016 advocated for the vision of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific. Since then, countries around the world have championed this vision and I am proud that the Philippines is one of its strongest supporters. Together, we recognize that the South China Sea is at the heart of the Indo-Pacific, where the principles of international cooperation must prevail.

As neighboring maritime nations, Japan and the Philippines have steadily deepened our defense and security cooperation. The rising number of high-level exchanges between our countries led by Secretary Teodoro, Secretary of Foreign Affairs Teresa Lazaro, National Security Adviser Eduardo Año, AFP Chief of Staff General Romeo Brawner, and PCG Commandant Admiral Ronnie Gil Gavan is a clear testament to our resolute commitment in enhancing not only our maritime cooperation but also strengthen Philippine maritime capability.

The progress we have made has been resoundingly felt over the years, not only in policy but also in practice.

Since April 2024, the Maritime Cooperative Activity, or MCA, has been conducted 11 times, with Japan proudly participating in 9 of those operations. This initiative brings together our common ally, the United States, alongside like-minded partners such as Australia, Canada, and New Zealand.

Our maritime presence has also grown significantly. Over the past year alone, 13 Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) vessels have

made a port calls at Manila and Subic Bay, making them familiar waters for our sailors.

Since 1998, our collaboration in maritime law enforcement has been enriched with both personnel and material exchanges. The Japan Coast Guard (JCG) has worked hand in hand with the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) through joint training, knowledge sharing, and patrol support. Utilizing the Overseas Development Aid (ODA), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) dispatches JCG officers as long-term experts to work closely with the PCG. The JCG's Mobile Cooperation Team also regularly deploys to the Philippines to conduct joint training in maritime law enforcement, as well as in search and rescue tactics, techniques, and procedures.

In terms of physical assets, ten (10) 44-meter-class and two (2) 97-meter-class patrol ships from Japan are already serving under the Philippine Coast Guard, with five (5) more 97-meter-class vessels on their way. In a remarkable milestone, just this June, the PCG's 97-meter-class patrol vessel *Teresa Magbanua* sailed to Kagoshima Bay in Kyushu to participate in the first-ever Philippines–Japan–United States Coast Guard trilateral exercise. A powerful symbol of our growing interoperability and trust.

This enduring cooperation is supported not only by ODA, but also by Japan's Official Security Assistance (OSA) framework launched in 2023. Designed to enhance the security capabilities and deterrence posture of like-minded partners, OSA has found its first and steadfast partner in the

Philippines. Under this initiative, the Philippines has received coastal surveillance radars, Automatic Identification Systems, rigid-hulled inflatable boats (RHIB) and other key assets to further enhance the Philippines' maritime domain awareness and operational capabilities.

In terms of defense equipment transfers, tangible progress continues to be made. The C-90 aircraft, transferred from the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force to the Philippine Navy, now plays a crucial role in supporting Maritime Domain Awareness operations, while Japanese-made radars provide vital Air Domain Awareness over the South China Sea. As discussions continue to explore even greater avenues for cooperation, these capabilities when combined, strengthen deterrence and enhance stability.

Most importantly, these are not one-way efforts. They are mutually complementary where respective efforts reinforce each other. As Japan supports the Philippines' maritime capacity, the Philippines, in turn, ensures that the waters that sustain both our nations remain stable, peaceful and prosperous.

We are also deepening cooperation in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR). The seas, as much as it sustains us, also brings disasters. The rise in sea surface temperature due to climate change transforms typhoons and tropical monsoons into more powerful phenomena each year. And both our nations know this power too well. Japan endured the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami, and the Philippines survived the devastation of Super Typhoon Yolanda in 2013. These

experiences remind us that disaster preparedness is not a theoretical exercise, it is a lived reality for both our nations uniting us to build stronger cooperation on HADR.

The Reciprocal Access Agreement, which came into force last month, marks a major step forward. It facilitates mutual access for the forces of both countries, promoting HADR training and providing a framework for rapid deployment of forces in the event of a disaster. It also activates participation in bilateral and multilateral military exercises held in both countries, enhancing interoperability, strengthening deterrence, and contributing to regional peace and stability.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

Looking ahead, our challenge now is to build on these achievements and ensure that Philippine–Japan maritime cooperation continues to grow in scope and strength.

In disaster response, Japan has pioneered the concept of disaster reduction. Recognizing that while we cannot prevent all threats, whether natural or man-made, we must concentrate our resources and efforts in controllable areas, acknowledging the limits of human control, and focusing resources where they can save lives and accelerate recovery by working together. This concept applies equally to maritime security. By joining forces, Japan and the Philippines can mitigate man-made disasters, deter

unlawful actions, and keep our seas open for trade, livelihood, and cooperation.

History offers us a powerful metaphor. Centuries ago, the Philippines stood at the heart of the Galleon Trade, connecting Asia to the Pacific and beyond. Advances in shipbuilding allowed vessels to sail even against headwinds, propelled forward by ingenuity and perseverance. In the same way, the Philippines and Japan today are like a ship navigating uncertain waters. Our defense capabilities form the hull that withstands the waves. Our diplomatic engagement acts as the sails and rudder that guide us toward a safe and prosperous course. Together, we must steer toward calmer seas and brighter horizons.

CONCLUSION

Ladies and gentlemen,

Every one of us gathered here today, regardless of actual sailing experience, are crew members of the same vessel. We are all sailing the same seas, facing the same storms, and striving for the same destination: a region of peace, stability, and prosperity.

With this, bolstering Philippine-Japan maritime defense cooperation is the natural course for two maritime nations.

So let us continue to strengthen this partnership. Let us ensure that the South China Sea remains a sea of peace and cooperation, not conflict.

Let us work together so that future generations will remember us not as passive observers, but as active stewards of the seas.

Maraming salamat po sa inyong lahat!

Mabuhay ang pagkakaibigan ng Japan at Pilipinas!
