

Remarks of Ambassador ENDO Kazuya at the 2026 FINEX Inaugural and Induction Ceremonies

21 January 2026

Magandang gabi at Manigong bagong taon po sa inyong lahat.
Isang karangalan na makasama ko kayo ngayong gabi.

It is a great honor for me to stand before all these finance executives at this remarkable celebration of the 2026 FINEX Inaugural Meeting and Induction Ceremonies.

As just introduced, the year 2026 also coincides with the 70th anniversary of the Normalization of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and the Philippines.

To commemorate the fruitful decades of Japan and the Philippines' friendship, we have adopted the theme "Weaving the Future Together: Peace, Prosperity, Possibilities."

As close neighboring countries sharing fundamental values, the exchanges and cooperation we have built over many years across diverse fields—culture, economy, politics, and more—have enriched the relationship between our two nations, much like threads woven together to form a tapestry.

Interactions at various levels have been among the main threads of this durable tapestry, the robust lifeline of our vibrant relationship.

President Marcos Jr. was the first foreign leader whom our Prime Minister Takaichi met after her inauguration.

Additionally, the Philippines was among the countries visited during our Foreign Minister Motegi's first round of bilateral meetings last week.

Through multilayered interactions, we have woven another thread that unites our two nations.

It is the thread of economic cooperation.

During his stay, Minister Motegi held talks with DTI Secretary, Cristina Roque, Dep Dev Secretary Arsenio Balisacan, DoTr Secretary, Giovanni Lopez and other senior officials.

They agreed to further strengthen Japan-Philippines economic relations and to form the foundation for a resilient and mutually beneficial strategic partnership.

The Philippines is a key partner of Japan in advancing economic partnership in this region.

While uncertainties and challenges exist in the global and regional order, the Philippines and Japan share common values in multilateralism, free trade, and the vision of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP).

In terms of Official Development Assistance (ODA), Japan takes pride in being by far the top donor to the Philippines for many decades.

We have been committed to addressing some of the country's challenges.

In improving transportation infrastructure, projects like the Metro Manila Subway, the North-South Commuter Railway and Davao City Bypass are currently under way.

In disaster risk reduction, JICA is conducting detailed planning for disaster risk reduction and management projects related to earthquakes and tsunamis in Metro Manila.

We also work together on digital and energy transitions.

Strengthening digital infrastructure in the Philippines also holds significance from the perspective of Japan's own economic security.

Asia Zero Emission Community, or AZEC, initiative and the bilateral credit mechanism are expected to contribute to the pathway to decarbonization of the Philippines.

While the intergovernmental cooperation remains significant, actual business operations and economic activities are conducted by the private sectors of both countries.

And, for Japanese companies, recognizing some challenges, the Philippines is still clearly an attractive business partner.

The demographic dividend is projected to continue until 2050, and the Philippines' economy and its domestic market are expected to continue to grow in years to come.

In this context, Japan is a major investor in the Philippines.

Approximately 1,600 Japanese companies have established operations in the Philippines.

Investment is particularly notable in PEZA, the Philippine Economic Zone Authority.

Cumulative investment exceeds 800 billion pesos, creating direct employment for over 300,000 Filipinos.

Over 700 of the registered companies are Japanese, and last year, Japanese firms accounted for more than 10% of the total 260 billion pesos in investments approved by PEZA, ranking first among all investing countries.

These investments organically contribute to employment and regional development.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to pay respect to the administration's continuous efforts to improve the business environment for

the foreign direct investments, particularly those led by Secretary Go. The passage of the CREATE MORE act marked significant progress, which we have since welcomed.

We continue to look forward to seeing more clarity and predictability, particularly in taxation, so that Japanese companies will be able to contribute better to the Philippines' economic development.

We also find the recently announced commitment, Big Bold Reforms, to be encouraging.

Japan strongly supports this initiative and is willing to contribute to it.

Thus, this weaving process to strengthen our business ties is never-ending.

By adding new threads, we make this year an opportunity to reaffirm the enduring journey of friendship between our two nations and to jointly envision the path forward.

This step-by-step weaving of threads to build a friendship woven in confidence aligns closely with FINEX's 2026 theme of "Catalyzing Confidence."

I sincerely hope we can actively promote cooperation and collaboration not only through government-to-government exchanges but also with FINEX members, leading finance executives, as we create new threads for the future.

Once again, allow me to extend my warmest salutations and heartfelt congratulations to the new President and new Board Members of FINEX for 2026.

Maraming salamat po.
Mabuhay ang FINEX.
Mabuhay ang pagkakaibigan ng Japan at Pilipinas!