

**Remarks of Ambassador ENDO Kazuya at the Inauguration of Pasig City's
Circular Economy Hub**

26 January 2026

Magandang umaga at Manigong Bagong Taon po sa inyong lahat.

It is a great honor and pleasure to join you today at the inauguration of the Pasig City Innovation for Circular Economy (ICE) Hub.

I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations on the opening of this facility, and pay tribute to Pasig City and all those involved for their dedication to advancing a circular economy.

Many countries including Japan have all struggled with serious challenges of waste management. Environmental problems such as pollution and odors from waste were common. Tokyo had also experienced what was called the “garbage war,” a conflict between municipalities over waste disposal. During the era of mass production and mass consumption, citizens and governments alike worked thoroughly to solve waste problems. Thanks to those efforts, Japan—and Tokyo in particular—has reached its current state.

Today, waste issues are no longer confined to local areas but have become a global

challenge. For example, urban waste flows into the sea through rivers, crossing national borders. Marine plastic pollution affects wildlife, ecosystems, living environments, tourism, and fisheries worldwide.

For these reasons, the Japanese government is actively addressing this issue. In 2023, through the initiative “Accelerating Nationally Determined Contributions through Circular Economy in Cities”—a collaboration between the Government of Japan, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)—we handed over a mobile material recovery facility and a bio-gas digester to Pasig City as displayed here.

When President Marcos visited Osaka last year, he met a Japanese company with sophisticated Waste-to-Energy technology.

Furthermore, Japan has also taken a leadership role in broader international cooperation efforts towards marine plastic issues. This includes proposing the "Osaka Blue Ocean Vision," which aims to reduce additional marine plastic litter to zero by 2050, and actively participating in the ongoing negotiations for the Global Plastics Treaty. Japan is also advancing wide-ranging cooperation in the Philippines, including the development of a waste-to-energy facility in Davao

City, and technical cooperation through JICA.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight that this year marks the 70th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and the Philippines. Earlier this month, our Foreign Minister Motegi Toshimitsu visited the Philippines, including the cooperation site in Pasig City, for the Pasig-Marikina River Improvement Project, marking a start to the commemorations of this important milestone.

As this special occasion coincides with the Philippines' chairmanship of ASEAN, we look forward to further strengthening our partnership and enhancing high-level exchanges in the years to come.

In closing, I would like to reaffirm Japan's commitment to strengthening our partnership with the Philippines, not only in the circular economy but also across various fields that contribute to the sustainable and prosperous development of this region.

Maraming Salamat. Mabuhay kayong lahat.