

**Remarks of Ambassador ENDO Kazuya at the Japan National Day  
Reception 2026**

3 March 2026 at the Grand Hyatt Manila

*Magandang gabi po sa inyong lahat! Maraming salamat po sa inyong pagdalo!*

We would like to first express our appreciation to USEC Herrera-Lim for his esteemed presence today. Our sincere gratitude also goes to Secretary Lazaro for sending a message we will show later, amid her pressing duties this evening.

Tonight, we celebrate the 66th birthday of His Imperial Majesty, Emperor Naruhito, the 70th Anniversary of Philippine-Japan Friendship, as well as Japan's Hinamatsuri, celebrating the growth and happiness of girls.

With much to celebrate, I wish a Happy Birthday to His Majesty, a Happy Anniversary to all of us, and a Happy Girl's Day to my beloved beauties.

Also joining us in this historic evening is a total lunar eclipse above Manila, which we should see as we celebrate this special day.

I am honored to reintroduce our Commemorative Logo for this Year of Friendship, themed "Weaving the Future Together: Peace, Prosperity, Possibilities." Japan's shimenawa rope and the Philippines' abaca rope intertwine to represent the strong friendship woven over seven decades.

Our history is marked by our commitment to peace, reconciliation and cooperation. President Elpidio Quirino's 1953 decision to grant pardon for Japanese prisoners of war and the 1956 Japan-Philippines Reparations Agreement paved the way for mutual respect.

Visits by the Imperial Family, beginning with His Imperial Highness Crown Prince Akihito and Princess Michiko in 1962, and their return as Emperor and Empress in 2016, have symbolically demonstrated our strengthened ties.

Today, recent high-level exchanges reaffirmed Japan's strong commitment to our partnership. Prime Minister Takaichi's first meeting with a foreign leader was with none other than President Marcos. This was followed by Foreign Minister Motegi's recent visit to Manila.

Since the 1960s, Japan has been a steadfast partner in the Philippines' development through Official Development Assistance. Japan continues to support critical infrastructure projects: from the Metro Manila Subway to the North-South Commuter Railway.

In 2025, our business ties continued to flourish. Japan was the second largest trading partner and the largest investor for the Philippines. About 1,600 Japanese companies contribute significantly to the Philippine economy and employment.

Japan has long been a strong supporter of peace and prosperity for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao.

Our security cooperation has grown with increased joint exercises and relief efforts under the Reciprocal Access Agreement. Japan's Official Security Assistance has also contributed to the strengthening of the Philippines' defense capabilities. Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreements were also signed earlier this year.

Our efforts also extend to multilateral cooperation. Together with the Philippines, the U.S., and other like-minded partners, Japan conducts numerous Maritime Cooperative Activities, and held its first-ever trilateral coast guard exercise in Japan with the Philippines and the U.S. These cooperations reaffirm our commitment to realizing a Free and Open Indo-Pacific.

Likewise, people-to-people connections have deepened our friendship. Tonight, we are honored to have Gymnast Carlos Yulo here today. Trained in Japan, he went on to win two gold Olympic medals in Paris, exemplifying our ties through sports.

Travel has brought our peoples closer. Last year, nearly 900,000 Filipino friends visited Japan, reflecting the warmth and curiosity that strengthen our ties.

I also welcome the Philippine Government's participation to the Green Expo 2027 in Yokohama, Japan. I look forward to the Philippines showcasing biodiversity, sustainable agriculture practices, and its natural beauty there.

Before concluding, I would like to thank the 28 companies and organizations present here, whose booths have made this reception special. I hope our dear guests enjoy seafood, wagyu beef, strawberries, sake, (my favorite of course!), and other gourmet selections straight from the heart of Japan.

I would also like to thank the "Annex Chorale Ensemble" for their wonderful singing, and our Toramai and Shishiodori performers from Japan's Sanriku Region. Next week marks 15 years since the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. I am happy to report that the Sanriku Region has shown remarkable resilience recovering from the devastation in the last 15 years.

I thank my Embassy's team for making this reception possible, and the entire Grand Hyatt Manila team for their warm hospitality.

Finally, allow me to express my personal appreciation to my wife, Akiko, who has tirelessly supported me for more than thirty three years. Since her arrival in Manila, she has already made herself well-known for her warmth. So, I sometimes introduce myself as the husband of Madame Ambassador.

With 70 years of friendship behind us, let us make our tapestry of friendship a lasting heritage of harmony, one future generations can cherish.

Ipagpatuloy natin ang ating dedikasyon para sa bagong henerasyon.

Mabuhay ang ating matatag na pagkakaibigan! ありがとうございますございました!