

Remarks of Ambassador ENDO Kazuya at the Signing of the Exchange of Notes for the Metro Manila Subway Project Phase 1 (IV) and Central Mindanao High Standard Highway Construction Project (Cagayan de Oro – Malaybalay Section) (Engineering Services)

27 March 2026, Department of Foreign Affairs, Double Dragon Tower

Magandang umaga po sa inyong lahat.

I am truly delighted and honored to be here with all of you today, to sign the agreements for these important projects—the Metro Manila Subway Project (Phase 1) (IV) and the Central Mindanao High Standard Highway Construction Project (Cagayan de Oro – Malaybalay Section) (Engineering Services).

First, I would like to highlight the significance of Japan’s support to the Philippines through Official Development Assistance. It goes beyond financial support; it represents a strong partnership that deepens the trust between our two countries and promotes sustainable economic development and social stability. Supporting the Philippines’ development is not only vital for the country itself, but also for the stability and prosperity of the wider region. In this spirit, Japan remains firmly committed to continuing its cooperation. While our security cooperation is growing rapidly, development cooperation remains the cornerstone of the entire Japan-Philippines relationship.

Secondly, I may not need to reiterate the significant impacts of Metro Manila Subway, but I will. It is expected to ease traffic congestion across the Metropolitan Manila while reducing environmental impact. By enabling faster and more efficient mobility, it will stimulate economic activity and enhance the overall quality of life of Filipinos. With the appropriate arrangements including counterpart funding by the Philippines side, I trust that we will see the steady and smooth implementation of the project.

Thirdly, the Central Mindanao High Standard Highway Construction Project is expected to promote regional economic growth and social inclusion in Mindanao. By improving access to rural areas and strengthening connectivity between regions, it will help unlock opportunities in underserved communities. Together with the ongoing Davao City Bypass Project, the Central Mindanao Highway will form an indispensable foundation for the region long-term, sustainable growth.

Fourthly, as I always emphasize, this year marks the 70th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and the Philippines. As we

reflect on the tireless efforts of our previous generations, and as we face even more complex and uncertain international environments, it is clear that we must continue to strengthen our strategic partnership in the years ahead. Beyond economic cooperation, our countries are expanding collaboration in areas such as security, culture, human resource development, and many other fields, working hand in hand to promote peace and prosperity in the region.

In closing, I would like to express my wholehearted appreciation to all those who have worked hard to reach today's ceremony. I sincerely hope that today's signing will serve as a catalyst to deepen the bonds between our two nations even further.

Maraming salamat po. Mabuhay ang Bagong Pilipinas. Mabuhay ang ating pagkakaibigan!