

**Remarks of Ambassador ENDO Kazuya at the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP) Graduation Ceremony**

3 June 2026, Kamaya Point, Brgy. Alas-Asin, Mariveles, Bataan

*Magandang umaga po sa inyong lahat.*

*Isang karangalan na makasama ko kayo ngayong umaga.*

It is a great honor for me to be invited today, as the Ambassador of Japan, to the graduation ceremony of the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific.

I am truly delighted to be able to celebrate this special day together with all of you.

My heartfelt congratulations to all the graduates as you set sail on a new voyage, having overcome years of rigorous training and dedicated study.

The early morning drills, the navigation exercises, the international regulations you memorized time and again — all of it has led to this very moment.

I also wish to express my heartfelt respect and gratitude to the families of our graduates for their enduring support and steadfast presence throughout this remarkable journey.

Today, approximately 90% of the world's trade is transported by sea.

The smartphones we use, the food served on our tables, the medicines that save lives in hospitals every day and night— all depend on ships crossing oceans safely and efficiently.

Behind every vessel, every voyage, and every successful delivery are dedicated seafarers, men and women like you.

In recent years, however, maritime shipping has been facing new challenges.

The escalating tensions in the Middle East have sent ripples across the entire global economy, leading to rising transportation costs, delivery delays, and impacts on energy prices.

Some years ago, it was pandemic of COVID-19 that distracted international trade and transportation.

It is precisely because of these situations that highly trained and skilled seafarers like you are needed more than ever.

You are truly "the people who move the world."

Please keep that pride close to your heart, and let it guide you throughout your service on the seas.

Filipino seafarers account for 70% of the foreign crew members serving aboard Japan's merchant fleet.

The fact that Japanese ships can navigate the world's oceans safely and reliably is a testament to the skills, diligence, and integrity of Filipino seafarers.

To Japan's maritime industry, Filipino seafarers are not merely indispensable — they are irreplaceable partners.

And this year is especially meaningful, as the bond between our nations continues to grow even stronger.

As you may all know, 2026 marks the 70th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and the Philippines — a truly historic milestone.

Over these 70 years, our two countries have built profound ties in every area, including economic, security, cultural, and people-to-people exchanges.

And just recently, I had the honor of accompanying President Marcos on his State Visit to Japan.

During his visit, President Marcos engaged with many Japanese leaders, including our Emperor and Empress and our Prime Minister.

The welcome ceremony held at the Imperial Palace was very moving.

It was not merely a ceremonial diplomatic event — it was a demonstration to the world of the depth of the bond between Japan and the Philippines, and of our shared resolve for the future.

As graduates in this special anniversary year, each one of you are about to make important steps forward.

I firmly believe that by working side by side with Japanese colleagues in ports across Japan and sailing together on the world's oceans, each one of you will become a bridge between Japan and the Philippines, strengthening the bond and partnership between our two nations for years to come.

However, not every day at sea will bring fair winds.

There will be days of thick fog and stormy nights.

But you have already acquired, here at this academy, the knowledge, skills, and strength of spirit to weather those storms.

Please do not fear the open sea — sail toward the horizon that lies beyond it.

I am confident that you, who are setting sail in this landmark year of the 70th anniversary of Japan-Philippines friendship, will help build a brighter future for both our nations and for the world.

Once again, congratulations on this remarkable achievement.

May you sail with confidence, lead with humility, and always take pride in the vital role you play in keeping the world moving.

Fair winds and following seas to all of you.

*Mabuhay ang mga bagong marino!*

*Mabuhay ang Pilipinas!*

*Mabuhay ang pagkakaibigan ng Japan at Pilipinas!*