

**Remarks of Ambassador ENDO Kazuya at the Japan
Foundation, Manila's 30th Anniversary Reception**

20 June 2026, The Theatre at Solaire

Magandang gabi po sa inyong lahat.

Tonight's celebration puts the spotlight on two grand milestones. We not only celebrate the 70th Anniversary of Philippines-Japan Friendship, but also the 30th Anniversary of The Japan Foundation, Manila.

Since the normalization of our diplomatic relations in 1956, the Philippines and Japan have deepened and expanded our cooperation in almost every sector in the last seven decades, as the largest ODA donor, as one of the largest trade and investment partners, now as a closest security partner and a favorite travel destination.

To further deepen our people-to-people ties, since its launch in 1996, The Japan Foundation, Manila has tirelessly worked to promote Japanese culture and language for three decades.

They have created a vibrant space for Filipinos from across generations to connect, to share moments together, and to enjoy the rich traditions of Japan.

We sense the radiant passion for Japanese culture, especially among young people.

From the crowds that flock to cinemas during the Japanese Film Festival, to the hundreds that showcase their language skills at the Nihongo Fiesta, and the diverse exhibitions that make their way across the Philippines – the Foundation not only bridged this growing interest but has become a vital bridge between our two nations.

My dear wife, Akiko, and I have always found great joy in attending the Foundation's cultural exhibits, such as Yakishime – Earth Metamorphosis and TOKYO Before/After, each offering a unique opportunity to discover something Japanese.

Recently, we also had the pleasure of visiting *Omocha: Japanese Toys Today*.

It is truly heartening to see so many young people engage with the wonders and nuances of Japanese culture.

It is also through the Foundation's programs that what was once a simple and quiet curiosity has blossomed into a deeper pursuit of knowledge.

A growing number of young Filipinos have been inspired to embrace an interest and passion in learning Japanese language.

Many Filipino scholars have started their academic journey centered on Japan.

The universities and think tanks have actively engaged in academic and intellectual exchanges, all through the Foundation's programs.

To celebrate our two grand milestones, we are proud to present a new generation of talent in this exciting event.

Our performers tonight are rising dancers from our two countries, headed by global dance icon, Ms. Rie Hata, and top P-pop group, SB-19.

Joined by such eager young talent today, I hope we'll see what our countries' friendship can inspire; and what passion can make possible.

I believe the Stella Dance Jam is the perfect window into a deeper understanding between Japan and the Philippines.

Through the universal language of dance, I believe our countries'

youth can share lasting friendships and a unified vision.

I once again thank the Japan Foundation, Manila for setting the stage for this incredible evening.

I end by giving thanks to our tireless organizers and dancers, as well as all our dear guests for making this evening more meaningful.

Maraming salamat po sa inyong lahat! *Arigatou gozaimasu!*