

Remarks of Ambassador ENDO Kazuya during his farewell reception
26 August 2026

Magandang gabi po sa inyong lahat. Good evening. Konbanwa.

Thank you for enjoying Akiko's performance, and I would like to thank you all for being here this evening, despite this inclement weather.

I'd like to think that even the heavens are crying over Akiko's and my departure.

I encourage everyone here to keep singing "Raining in Manila" and hum a tune once we leave.

It is fitting to see our Residence filled with the very people who have made it feel a remarkable second home all these years.

I wish this really were our home.

But for the past two and a half years, I have been privileged to be this house's caretaker, using this venue to know you and this country more deeply.

I feel deep gratitude and a sense of pride for all we have accomplished together in that span.

Allow me to share three reflections that capture what this journey has meant to me.

First, the power of culture to bring people together.

Throughout my tenure, I was privileged to attend many events the Embassy organized or supported that brought us closer.

2026 was especially meaningful, as we celebrate the 70th anniversary of Japan–Philippines Friendship.

From jazz events and fashion shows to symphonies and academic dialogues, these occasions remind us that our people are at the heart of it all.

The simplest handshakes becoming partnerships.

Gatherings turning into lifelong friendships.

Seeing them was the most rewarding part of my service.

Second, the growth of our ties into a truly strategic partnership.

Recently, our relationship officially advanced to CSP, Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

And with it came a widening web of collaboration: across security, economy, infrastructure, disaster resilience, education and so on.

I was honored to witness and support many high-level exchanges that both embodied and propelled this momentum, including the highlight of my tour: President Marcos's state visit to Japan in May.

Each visit had its own significance, but taken together they tell a clear story: our two nations are working more confidently, more creatively, and above all more closely than ever before.

That continuity gives me strong confidence in the future of our relations.

Third, the diversity of this country and the warmth of the people of the Philippines.

Each visit to Provinces offered a distinctly different, yet familiar face of the country, and everywhere, familiar warmth from local leaders, students, businesspeople and volunteers.

I saw first-hand the creativity of its youth, the richness of its traditions, and the resilience of its communities.

It was these encounters that imparted the true essence of *bayanihan*.

From state halls to barangay gyms, from boardrooms to classrooms, I was welcomed without fail by the warmth and generosity of Filipinos.

Even my first encounter with balut was met with encouragement, to which I learned to say: "sisiw lang yan."

My time here has been as much of a learning experience as it was a working one.

You all have truly made Akiko and me feel at home.

Allow me now to extend my appreciation to everyone on this journey:
to our tireless national and local partners in the Philippine government;
to our leaders in business and finance;
to our scholars and educators;
to cultural institutions and sports groups;
to my friends in the diplomatic and consular corps;
to the NGOs and groups whose service inspires us all;
to the friends in the media;
to the Japanese community, whose dedication continues to be a cornerstone of our relations;
and to all our pure genuine friends, drinking buddies, golf partners and singers.

I am also deeply grateful to our entire Embassy team for working hard and managing the unexpected.

Any success we have achieved belongs to them.

Finally, on a personal note, I thank Akiko for being a charming and unwavering pillar of support.

She has been a true partner: steadfast, generous, and encouraging at every turn.

As I depart, I do so with confidence in the future of Japan–Philippines relations.

Our friendship rests on strong foundations and is animated by countless human connections.

The challenges of our time are real, but so are the opportunities.

Together, with mutual respect and shared purpose, I believe we will meet those challenges and seize those opportunities for the benefit of both

Filipinos and Japanese.

My affection for this country and my commitment to our partnership will always remain.

I will always be a friend and advocate of the Philippines, wherever I may be.

Back in Tokyo, I will start my work as the Senior Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs on September 1.

I might even be moving to some other overseas posting again in the future. Nevertheless, I will not say “good-bye” but “see you later” as Tokyo and Manila are still so close.

Paalam at maraming salamat po.

Hangang sa muli, Pilipinas!

Ang pagkakaibigan natin ay tunay na walang hanggan.

Arigatō gozaimashita.