

- 1) HE Ambassador of Japan to the Philippines, KOSHIKAWA Kazuhiko
  - 2) Honorable Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Agrarian Reform, Bangsamoro Transition Authority, Mohammad Shuaib Yacob
  - 3) President of the Ateneo de Manila University, Roberto Yap and Dr. Jennifer Oreta and Dr. Marie Guillen from the Ateneo de Manila University
  - 4) Director of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity, Farrah Grace Naparan
  - 5) Professor of the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Dr. SHINODA Hideaki
  - 6) Senior Director, Governance and Peacebuilding Department of JICA, MUROTANI Ryutaro
  - 7) Division 5, Southeast Asian Department of JICA, OCHIAI Naoyuki.
- Collegues from ADMU, Embassy of Japan and JICA
  - Participants from various government agencies and universities

*Magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat.  
Assalaam Alaikum*

It's my great pleasure to join you all today, for the 4th JICA Chair lecture, which is held once again in this lovely university.

When I was requested to speak here today, I did not have any hesitation. I am also from the academe myself, as an ex-visiting professor at the Tsukuba University in Japan. And I always welcome knowledge exchange on Japan's modernization history and its role in the Bangsamoro peace process.

Today is a truly important opportunity for us to reflect and learn from each other's peace building experiences and thoughts. As shared by our panelists, JICA has been supporting the Bangsamoro peace process for more than three decades. We can proudly claim that we were among the first international partners of the Philippines to launch a comprehensive development assistance package for Bangsamoro peace process. This has been famously called "the Japan-Bangsamoro Initiative for Reconstruction and Development" (J-BIRD).

It has been a quite fulfilling journey for JICA to finally see that the Bangsamoro Region is achieving its quest towards lasting inclusive and sustainable development with peaceful society.

The Bangsamoro Organic Law indeed has paved the way for the Bangsamoro people to determine their own priorities.

JICA has been, of course, supporting this.

As a testament of our long-standing partnership with Bangsamoro, the Bangsamoro Transition Authority Parliament has, in fact, given the honor for JICA President Tanaka to speak at their Parliament as the first foreign national in January 2023.

JICA was also granted a resolution to appreciate and commend JICA's cooperation in the Bangsamoro peace process.

This is also an exceptional privilege and honor for us.

During this occasion, JICA stressed that we will continue to support Bangsamoro's transition to a real autonomous and functional government so that people in the region can undoubtedly feel the dividend of peace through the painstaking efforts of the government in securing socioeconomic stability and prosperity.

We continue to honor those commitments.

*Kasama niyo kami.*

As a long-standing and close friend of the Bangsamoro people, JICA is walking with you.

This is because JICA believes that the sustainable stability and prosperity of the Bangsamoro is not only crucial to this limited region, but also to the entire Philippines, the entire Asia and the world.

At this point, let's look at our nations' common experiences, learn from each other, and solve challenges together.

Personally, today I have learned several important secrets of our successful path, such as;

- a) Seeking solutions through cooperation and collaboration, not through force and threat,
- b) Building and strengthening mutual trust
- c) Illustrating clear vision for the brighter future and actual feeling with low-hanging-fruits and peace dividends

Like my personal learning case, I wish that all of you enjoyed a productive and dynamic exchange of ideas, and shared value of peace, from today's lecture and discussion.

This has been a momentous event, especially since we are celebrating the National Peace Consciousness Month in the Philippines, which aims to make everyone an active peacemaker

I believe your, no, our joint efforts and dedication to the stable and prosperous Bangsamoro deserve the Nobel Peace Prize.

Let's keep it up!

We can do it.

Nothing is impossible.

We can turn the word "impossible" into "I'm possible".

At my closing, I sincerely hope that today's JICA Chair special session contributes to the stability and prosperity of the Bangsamoro and the entire Philippines, and also presents an exemplary future to the whole world.

*Shukran Jazeelan!*

*Maraming salamat po! Mabuhay!!*

Good afternoon to all of you.