

Draft Speech for JICA Chief Representative SAKAMOTO Takema
Seminar on Development and Operation of Large-Scale or Basin-Wide Flood
Control and IWRM Facilities
November 23, 2023

- Hon. Parliamentary Vice Minister of
Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, KOYARI Takashi,
- Project Director, DPWH, Ramon A. Arriola III,
- Minister for Economic Affairs, Embassy of Japan, NIHEI Daisuke,
- Our colleagues and friends from national government agencies,
Distinguished guests and speakers,

Magandang umaga po sa inyong lahat

Today, I'm honored to join you all for this important seminar on "Development and Operation of Large-Scale or Basin-Wide Flood Control and IWRM Facilities".

It's no question that climate change is a critical issue of our time.

And the impact is becoming increasingly severe.

The Philippines, like Japan, is a natural disaster-prone country.

Furthermore, in the Philippines, natural disasters were ranked the first as the risk most likely to pose the biggest threat in the World Risk Report.

In addition, the Philippines ranks the highest disaster risk country in the world.

Recognizing this, JICA has been actively engaged in climate resilience projects with the Philippine counterparts to deal with the serious challenges.

For example, JICA has signed a partnership memorandum with the Philippine Climate Change Commission very recently, so that we can

identify what we can contribute together to create a climate resilient society.

Seriously, in the past years, we have seen extreme weather events, such as floods, droughts and storms, threatening people's lives and property. Economic damages are also gigantic.

Therefore, JICA welcomes the concerted efforts of our Filipino counterparts hand in hand, such as the DPWH, National Irrigation Administration (NIA), DENR, CCC, DOST, PAGASA, OCD, and other disaster management related agencies in taking sensible steps to fight climate change.

It's fair to note some success stories JICA and the Philippines achieved working together to address this critical issue.

For example, JICA's cooperation in flood control management in Pasig-Marikina River Channel since 1970s has helped reduce the very large number of people severely affected when flooding comes.

From our study on Category 4 Typhoon "Ulysses" in November 2020, the numbers of estimated flood victims were down from 1 million to only 30 thousand people. Reduced by 97%!

What this shows us is that: investing in quality infrastructure in advance can contribute to save lives and lessen economic losses.

It will surely support the country in achieving sustainable development.

This concept of "prior investment" is extremely important that we cannot overemphasize, and also in line with the world's DRR initiative, the "Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030".

JICA is truly enthusiastic to keep working with wide-range stakeholders in this issue.

As a disaster-prone country, Japan has rich experiences, both good and bitter.

We are very pleased to share our expertise and know-how with all of you, as the closest and the most reliable partner.

Especially in the field of “Integrated Water Resource Management”, JICA is ready to discuss, consult and collaborate with you.

As part of our work in the DRRM sector, we are happy to include the Cagayan River Basin in the scope of our new technical cooperation project, which we are about to start with DPWH to scale up flood control management.

Speaking of Cagayan River, in addition to our new technical cooperation project mentioned above, another study by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) and Japan Water Agency (JWA) is also underway.

It is aiming for addressing the sedimentation issues in Magat Dam at the boundary between the provinces of Ifugao and Isabela.

I understand that the Philippine Government is now seeking to formulate a new JICA ODA Loan project for the rejuvenation of the Magat Dam.

JICA is also very keen to follow up on that study to explore the possibility to collaborate further.

So, we welcome this kind of initiative of MLIT, JWA and the Philippine Government, that may contribute to effective and modernized irrigation and hydropower generation as well as better flood control management.

Kasama nyo kami !!

I seriously expect to see more of you in our future collaborative activities, and see you more proactively play a more important role in the success of Japan-Philippines cooperation!

Last but not least,,,

Let me recall, earlier this month, Japan's Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio paid his very successful visit to this lovely country.

And in his Congress Speech in Manila, the Prime Minister stated that we will jointly create a new era of sustainable and prosperous development together with trust.

Mr. Prime Minister also mentioned several important key phrases, such as the "Heart-to-Heart Ties" and "Golden Friendship, Golden Opportunities."

I believe that today's fruitful discussion will contribute to promote the actual Heart-to-Heart Ties" and "Golden Friendship, Golden Opportunities."

Mabuhay!

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

Maraming salamat po sa inyon lahat!

Arigatou Gozaimashita.

Good morning to all of you.

End