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**SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.
AT THE AWARDING OF THE 2023 METROBANK FOUNDATION OUTSTANDING FILIPINOS**
[Delivered at the Heroes Hall in Malacañan Palace, Manila | 28 September 2023]

Thank you very much.

The Metrobank and Metrobank Foundation Inc. Chairman Arthur Ty; the GT Capital Holdings Vice Chairman Alfred Ty; and the Metrobank Foundation Inc. President Aniceto Sobrepeña; of course, the most important people here today, our awardees of the 2023 Metrobank Foundation Outstanding Filipinos and their families who have joined us here this morning, welcome to the Palace. *[applause]*

Magandang umaga po sa inyong lahat. A pleasant day to you all!

I am as always for these ceremonies elated to be with you today as we give due recognition to the exemplary achievements of this year's Metrobank Foundation Outstanding Filipinos.

Well, our honorees are clearly the noteworthy Filipinos who have passionately pushed the limits of what and how public service should be.

All of you ten (10) awardees, who are here with us today, have greatly contributed to the development of their respective institutions and advocacies.

You have taken the extra mile, climbed that steeper mountain – and this is literal. Iyong climb the steeper mountain, talagang ginawa nila 'yan. Iyong panel na namimili, kung saan-saan napapadpad, kung saan mga lupalop pinupuntahan 'yung mga teacher, 'yung mga sundalo, 'yung mga pulis, talagang kung saan-saan nila pinuntahan. Kaya't hindi figuratively speaking "steeper mountains". Talagang bundok ang inakyat nila, tumawid ng ilog and have gone beyond what is expected of them.

So, on behalf of the Filipino nation, especially of those who have been graced by their services, I extend my most heartfelt congratulations once again to the Metrobank Foundation Outstanding Filipino awardees.

Your exemplary work as academicians, soldiers, and police officers are oftentimes the most demanding – not oftentimes, I take that back – are always the most demanding, exhausting, and wearisome professions that we have to undertake.

Nevertheless, yours are also among the most important and hopefully the most rewarding and fulfilling vocations that there are.

And I used the word “vocations” carefully because what you have done is gone above and beyond. And this is beyond the, shall we say, the job description that was given you. And you have gone far beyond that. And it is because you have taken on this profession, not as a job, not as a duty, but as a vocation.

If you were not paid, if you were not supported by anyone, you would still do this. And that is why you have become outstanding. And that is why these awarding ceremonies are very important that we recognize the men and women who have added to the value of our daily life in various ways.

But beyond that, we not only honor you but through you, we honor Filipinos. And we remind our countrymen, this is what a Filipino is. We are not a damaged culture. I hate that. We are a great people and you are the example of that greatness. And we need to remind our people because sometimes ang mga Pinoy kung minsan, ang tingin nila sa sarili pa nila, kinahahangaan tayo sa abroad pero dito sa Pilipinas, parang ano... Dahil magagaling lahat. Magaling talaga ang Pinoy.

At pinapaalala ninyo sa inyong pagsisikap, sa inyong pagsasakripisyo at sa pagtanggap ninyo nitong award na ito ay pinapaalala ninyo sa mga Pilipino na mahusay ang Pilipino, mabait ang Pilipino, magaling ang Pilipino, masipag ang Pilipino. Iyan ang mga katangian na kung minsan natin nakakalimutan at sinasabi, “ah magagaling sa ibang bansa.”

Tingnan niyo na lang pagka napunta ang Pinoy sa ibang bansa, lalong-lalo na noong pandemic, talagang tayo na ang bida sa buong mundo dahil sa galing ng trabaho ng Pilipinas.

So, the excellence that you have demonstrated in your pursuits is, truly, worth emulating.

Your accomplishments bring us also closer to *Bagong Pilipinas* that we are determined to build — a nation that has a globally competitive education system, a safe and empowered citizenry, and a society that offers equal opportunities for all.

As you accept this prestigious award, embrace it and consider it as a proud badge of honor. You deserve it.

You are all here for a reason and that is because of your commendable service to your people and your country.

What you have unleashed is a transformative force that creates ripples of positive transformation in the communities that you serve and beyond.

So thank you... I thank now also Metrobank Foundation and its partner-stakeholders for initiating these career-service awards... Well, medyo hindi na initiating kasi as you told me it's 45 years ongoing. I first became aware – I was always aware of these awards but I first became aware of the awardees in the Senate dahil dinadala ninyo sila sa Senado. And I always thought that this was such a wise thing to do to once – you know take a step back from our regular days and to remember what Filipinos can achieve, not abroad, not necessarily abroad but here in the Philippines.

And sometimes, it is important to once again recognize that these people are not up on a pedestal. They do not live in big offices. They do not live in big houses. They are people, our neighbors. They are people that we work with. They are people that are our relatives and we must again recognize that and Metrobank has played a very important part in keeping that spirit alive. Magaling ang Pinoy. At magaling, kaya natin, kaya ng mga Pinoy. Kahit anong hamon ang iharap sa atin dito sa Pilipinas, kaya natin pagandahin 'yan, kaya natin ayusin 'yan.

That's why through recognitions like this, our civil servants become more motivated to go above and beyond in selflessly extending a helping hand to fellow kababayans.

It is in these kinds of active participation—both from the public and private sectors—that our efforts are strengthened towards building our nation.

I urge everyone to continue doing your respective share in realizing our goal of a more productive, peaceful, and progressive Philippines.

Once again, congratulations to our 2023 Metrobank Foundation Outstanding Filipinos. You are truly outstanding.

Nawa'y magsilbi kayong inspirasyon sa ating mga kababayan nang maisakatuparan natin ang ating hangarin ng isang matatag na Bagong Pilipinas.

Maraming salamat at mabuhay tayong lahat! Magandang umaga po. [applause]

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