

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
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**SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR. AT THE CEREMONIAL
ENERGIZATION OF THE CEBU-NEGROS-PANAY 230-KV BACKBONE PROJECT**

[Delivered in Bacolod City, Negros Occidental | 08 April 2024]

Thank you very much, our Energy Secretary Popo Lotilla.

[Please take your seats.]

Bacolod Lone District Representative, Congressman Greg Gasataya; the City Mayor, our good friend, Mayor Albee Benitez; National Grid Corporation President Anthony Almeda, my former classmate; NGCP Vice Chairman “Big Boy,” Sy; NGCP Chief Technical Officer, Rico Vega; the officials, all of you officials, and employees of the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines; my fellow workers in government; ladies and gentlemen, good morning!

We are here today to mark a momentous occasion as we gather here in Bacolod to hold the Ceremonial Energization of the Cebu-Negros-Panay 230-kilovolt Backbone Project or the CNP.

This remarkable feat of collaboration and innovation embodies our steadfast commitment to empowering communities, enhancing connectivity, and ushering in a brighter and more sustainable future for generations to come.

We must to recognize the NGCP for the successful completion of the CNP.

The completion of this project is a milestone in our pursuit to enhance the resilience and reliability of our power infrastructure, especially in this area.

We have to align the different power systems that are available in Panay, in Negros. Negros has captive sola power that they cannot--- that you cannot transmit.

The northern part of Negros Island has close to 500 Megawatts that’s stranded. Hindi nagagamit. So this power, this transmission lines we’ll make that available to wherever else it is needed.

We were able to fly over a small section, pero maliit lang. A small section of the entire project which is from here to the substation where the submarine of the cable crosses over to Barotac [Nuevo].

And so that’s the area we saw. But there’s a greatly more hanggang Cebu. It crosses over all the way to Cebu and that will, as I said, bring together the power systems, independent power systems.

And It will help resolve the power supply challenges that have plagued Negros and Panay sub-grids, and which have caused very serious economic setbacks for the region.

So the CNP will also address the surging energy demands in the area and propel the socio-economic advancement of Regions VI and VII to new heights.

To highlight, the combined population of Western and Central Visayas is more or less 16 million.

The contribution of the two regions to our economy was a robust 2.24 trillion pesos in 2022.

As the population expands and the economy expands, their power supply must too.

So, because this is a truism, no region can be an economic powerhouse without reliable supply of power.

No region can attain a dynamic economy if it is hobbled by an inadequate power transmission systems.

We cannot rally our people to seize the bright future that awaits them when their homes, their schools, and their businesses are often dark.

Power outages are hindrance to progress. Our power system must be the spark to ignite development.

The imperative of ensuring energy security for national and regional economic growth cannot be overstated.

By enhancing connectivity and stability in the transmission network through CNP, we are not only addressing immediate power challenges in the Negros and Panay, but also laying the foundation for a more sustainable and robust energy for the entire country.

The timely completion of critical transmission projects in strategic locations is paramount to avoid power disruptions and ensure our continued development.

Let us remain steadfast in our drive to ensure the timely completion of the remaining major transmission projects to bolster the stability of our power grid.

And we are working, the government, specifically the Department of Energy and ERC as well is working very closely with NGCP so that road blocks or the bottlenecks used exist can---we can open up to make the process much easier, make the process much faster and bring these transmission lines in to play, on line, so that there will be an immediate effect on, not only on the health and comfort of our consumers, but certainly for the industries in the area.

And I trust that the NGCP will always fulfill its duty and obligation of safeguarding the resiliency and efficiency of our energy infrastructure. It forms the bedrock, this is how important NGCP is. NGCP and our transmission, our transmission network for the bedrock of our nation's progress and well-being.

I urge the NGCP to deliver on its expansion commitments in a timely manner. Rest assured that the government will be continuing, continuously assisting you in this shared endeavor.

And let us--- we always consider it that way. It is a shared endeavor. It is not a project solely of NGCP, it not solely a project of Department of Energy, it is always a joint project and we bring all our resources and all our relevant assets to the problem.

So as to be able to build the best system we can, as cheaply as we can in the--- as quickly as we can.

While the CNP is a major step forward, I implore all stakeholders in the Visayas to strategically identify suitable locations that will host new baseload generation plants, as well as renewable energy and energy storage systems. This will bolster energy sufficiency and sustainability in Negros and Panay Islands.

I encourage private generators to invest in the Negros and Panay sub-grids so that the region can meet its energy demands and ensure self-sufficiency in the long run.

We have taken a big step in, today, when we open this transmission network in making this more attractive to other private investors to come in, and to help up us with the problem and to bring their own capacity in improving the transmission lines even our generation.

The collaboration of government agencies, local government units, and private landowners will prove crucial in this endeavor, particularly in expediting permit issuance for energy projects and facilitating the acquisition of the right-of-way for transmission system lines and distribution systems.

So, let this project serve as a testament to the fruits that we can all harvest if we continue to work together to drive our nation's energy agenda forward and forge a more sustainable future for the Filipino people.

Let us ensure that the transformative impact of this infrastructure project reaches every corner of our society, especially the underserved and marginalized communities.

Let us welcome and claim the *Bagong Pilipinas* that we deserve—a nation where our people's ideas spark progress and where a better and brighter tomorrow awaits us all.

Thank you all. Congratulations and I wish you a pleasant day.

Maraming salamat po. [applause]

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