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**SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.**  
**AT THE AWARDING OF THE MEDALLION OF EXCELLENCE TO THE**  
**2024 METROBANK FOUNDATION OUTSTANDING FILIPINOS**

[Delivered at the President's Hall, Malacañan Palace in Manila | 28 October 2024]

Thank you, DepEd Secretary, Secretary Sonny Angara, for your introduction. *[Please be seated.]*

Pasig Lone District Representative, Representative Roman Romulo; the Chief of the Philippine National Police General Rommel Francisco Marbil; GT Capital Holdings, Inc. Chairman Francisco Sebastian and Vice Chairman Alfred Ty; Metrobank and Metrobank Foundation, Inc. Chairman Arthur Ty; Metrobank Foundation, Inc. President Aniceto Sobrepeña; awardees of the Metrobank Foundation Outstanding Filipinos and their families; fellow workers in government; our partners and friends from the private sector; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

For 39 years, the Metrobank Foundation has been shining a spotlight on Filipinos—the teachers, the soldiers, police officers—whose work strengthens the very foundation of our nation.

It is always a privilege to stand here and give credit to those who embody the finest qualities that we aspire for: patriotism, integrity, courage, and social responsibility.

Today, we honored ten (10) Outstanding Filipino awardees for going above and beyond in the work that they have done to transform lives and to elevate communities. You are the new faces of public service—dedicated, selfless, and committed to excellence—the living examples of what it truly means to be a Bagong Pilipino.

Let us give due recognition to the teachers who mold the minds of future generations.

We honor Ma. Ella Fabella, whose passion for inclusive education has safeguarded the culture of the Sama-Bajau community in Zamboanga; Franco Rino Apoyon, Zamboanga Sibugay's Cultivator of Green Education, has shown us that we can teach our youth while empowering them to care for the environment.

We recognize Dr. Maria Regina Hechanova-Alampay, Quezon City's Mental Health Champion, who dedicated her expertise to make mental health information and services more accessible in our country. Dr. Decibel Faustino-Eslava from the UPLB, who became a force in environmental stewardship, proving that we can balance development with ecological responsibility.

We have our soldiers. No media, no medal, no accolade could fully capture the sacrifice that they have made to secure our safety and our freedom. We salute Staff Sergeant Michael Rayanon, who led his team in implementing development projects in Palawan, significantly contributing to the declaration of the province as insurgency free.

There is Major Ron Villarosa Jr., who reshaped peacebuilding in Bangsamoro, proving that even in the most conflict-stricken areas, peace is possible.

Captain Salvador Sambalilo, digitally transformed the systems of the Philippine Navy for an enhanced service delivery.

Our police officers, too, have faced trials that many of us could not even imagine.

Police Staff Sergeant Llena Sol-Josefa Jovita has worked tirelessly as Cagayan de Oro's Community Care Advocate, specifically for the rights of women and of children; Police Major Mark Ronan Balmaceda has fought relentlessly for the liberty and integrity in Marawi City and the police organization; while Police Lieutenant Colonel Bryan Bernardino has been at the frontlines of countering extremism in Sultan Kudarat, preventing the recruitment of our youth into radical groups.

These honors are a testament to the remarkable heights each of you has reached. Whether you are educating our young, defending our borders, keeping our communities safe, you have gone beyond what is ordinary. And for that, you deserve nothing less than our highest admiration.

As you wear these medallions, carry them as a reminder of your determination to keep pushing forward. You have set a high standard, and I know you will continue to surpass it.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to the Metrobank Foundation and its partners for honoring Filipino exemplary public servants.

Be assured, that we stand with you in this mission to uplift those who make the Bagong Pilipinas possible.

To our awardees, continue to be the catalysts of change when you go back now to your communities. Challenge them to dream bigger, to aspire higher, and to take action with the same fervor that you have demonstrated, especially now typhoons and storms are made stronger because of climate change and the challenges become even harder to deal with.

We need more people like you—innovative, selfless, socially responsible; this is what I have always seen in Filipinos— we never get tired of helping others.

As we look into the future, let us dream of progress and be relentless in our pursuit of it. The journey ahead may be long and it may be winding. But with your unwavering commitment, we will forge a path where our nation rises and flourishes, standing tall and proud among the greats of the world.

Together, let us write the next chapter of our history—the Bagong Pilipinas filled with promise, with hope, and the undeniable spirit of the Filipino!

Congratulations to our 2024 Metrobank Foundation Outstanding Filipinos!

Maraming, maraming salamat sa inyong serbisyo. Mabuhay kayong lahat!

Mabuhay ang Bagong Pilipinas!

Magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat. *[applause]*

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