

PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK
Ref: Dir. Robertzon F. Ramirez

SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.
AT THE GRAND OPENING OF THE MAERSK OPTIMUS DISTRIBUTION CENTER
[Delivered at the Maersk Optimus Distribution Center in Calamba City in Laguna
| 30 October 2024]

Thank you very much to our Trade and Industry Secretary, Secretary Cris Roque. *[Please be seated.]*

The Global Head of Maersk Contract Logistics (MCL) Dominic Gates; the Province of Laguna Governor Ramil Hernandez who has been working very hard over the past couple of days to try and do what we can for all of those victims of Kristine. Unfortunately, mukhang may padating na naman kaya't paghandaan natin nang mabuti.

Calamba City Mayor Roseller Rizal; the head of the Philippines Maersk Contract Logistics Siow Phing Timothy Tan; the Regional Head of Business Development Asia Pacific Maersk Contract Logistics Jocelyn Ramos; the officers and personnel of Maersk Contract Logistics; my fellow workers in government; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen, good morning. *[applause]*

For many in our country, the idea of logistics seems like an abstract concept. When we order goods online, we often overlook this intricate system that moves goods across our islands, from farms to markets, warehouses to homes. Yet, quietly keeps the rhythm of our daily lives—ensuring food on our tables, medicine for the sick, and packages at our doorsteps.

Without logistics, the seamless flow of our lives and conveniences we have grown accustomed to would simply break. But, beyond keeping the flow of commerce seamless, logistics also fuel our economy and create jobs for our people.

We hear at this point, especially after the pandemic, a lot of talk about supply chains and robust supply chains. And these arise from the lessons that we have learned during the pandemic where supply chains were broken, and many of them no longer came back.

And therefore, the lessons learned from the pandemic are that those supply chains have to be robust, and when such a tragedy such as the pandemic hits us, that we still have the capability to move people and goods around. Facilities such as this are the nodes of that supply chain. Everything that we receive in our homes, all the deliveries that we receive in our businesses have to go through a facility like this so that they organize, as you can see, the goods that need to be moved on to their final destination. That is why today's inauguration is so important.

The journey of the Philippine logistics sector has been marked by our ability to overcome challenges and to seize new opportunities.

Following its growth in 2018 and 2019, the transportation and storage industry has withstood unprecedented disruptions – as I spoke about the pandemic.

But despite this, the sector has rebounded, and in the second quarter of this year, the transport and storage sector posted a growth of 14.8 percent. It ranked second only to construction [sector] as the fastest growing industry in the Philippines.

This growth is sustained by more than three-and-a-half -- 3.68 million Filipinos who are employed in this sector in the first half of 2024.

The transport and storage sector is also projected to achieve a market size of over 1.16 trillion pesos by 2027. This reflects the rapid and stable pace of its development.

Globally, the Philippines' logistics sector has shown marked improvement in competitiveness. In the World Bank's 2023 Logistics Performance Index, we climbed to the 43rd spot out of 139 economies, a great improvement from our previous place at 60th in 2018. Our gains in customs efficiency, infrastructure quality, [and] on-time deliveries made this rank improvement possible.

With the grand opening of the Maersk Optimus Distribution Center, our logistics system will be a step closer to become a powerful force—bridging our islands, breathing life into our industries, our businesses, bringing together our people on a path towards sustained development.

The Maersk Optimus Distribution Center attests to the shared vision of Maersk Philippines and Solid Group Incorporated—a vision for a more inclusive and sustainable growth.

As one of the largest logistics centers in the country, the Maersk Optimus Distribution Center is poised to bolster import and export activities in Southern Luzon, especially in Bicol and CALABARZON.

This strategic location in Calamba aligns with our efforts to decongest Manila and to unlock the economic potential in the countryside.

With this project, it is our citizens who stand to benefit the most. For many Filipinos, it opens many new doors.

In the coming years, the Maersk Optimus Distribution Center is expected to create employment for one thousand people in its surrounding communities and indirect employment for another a thousand individuals—from vendors and service providers to truckers and beyond.

And I think, Secretary Cris Roque will agree with me, those are very conservative numbers. Because generally speaking, when a large plant such as this is put up in a community, the downstream employment that comes -- both full employment and partial employment -- is usually three times the direct employment in the facility. So, it is a great boon to the local community.

And this company will be doing it in a sustainable manner, as we have heard. In line with its social responsibility, this center has embraced environmentally sustainable practices.

From utilizing solar power to reduce its grid consumption by 30 percent to deploying electric vehicles for the last-mile services, it is committed to earning a Gold Certification under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design.

Environmental stewardship is a cornerstone of this administration's agenda, and it is heartening to see the private sector partners echoing this commitment. It is more critical as we face natural calamities such as the typhoons and storms that have intensified because of climate change.

Your values as a company align with this Administration's priorities to transition to cleaner and more renewable sources of energy. It is imperative for both the public and private sectors to adopt effective, responsive, and ecologically sound practices.

As such, it is our fervent hope that your investment will continue to grow. And we hope like other like-minded businesses they will take stock of the country's logistics sector as we continue to pursue measures to reduce costs and make industry more competitive.

To Maersk Philippines and Solid Group Incorporated, thank you for spearheading this initiative. I urge you to build more agile and flexible end-to-end supply chains, fortifying the groundwork of a more competitive industry for all.

Let this day reaffirm our commitment to constructing a Bagong Pilipinas, where we work hand-in-hand to ensure that prosperity flows into every corner of our archipelago.

Thank you!

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

Mabuhay ang Bagong Pilipinas! At magandang umaga po sa inyong lahat. *[applause]*

--- END ---