

Speech for Chief Representative SAKAMOTO Takema
Signing of M/M for “SDGS BUSINESS VERIFICATION SURVEY WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR FOR
JAPANESE STYLE LONG-TERM-CARE SYSTEM IN THE PHILIPPINES” (June 07, 2023 | 1:00PM)

All distinguished guests and participants,
Magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat!
こんにちは。

It is truly my honor and privilege to be here today, to sign the Minutes of Meeting for the “SDGs Business Verification Survey with the Private Sector for Japanese Style Long-Term-Care System in the Philippines” .

For over five decades, the Philippines and Japan have been exceptionally important “Strategic Partners” , which developed into the historic highest level nowadays. It is even called as “friends closer than brothers” . Consequently, JICA is extremely enthusiastic to expand our various active cooperation in this lovely country. We would like to contribute to a more prosperous future for Filipino friends, and to more robust bonds between two nations, as well.

While aiming for national development of our partner countries, JICA also aims to provide local impact. And

now, JICA brings the best of Japan to targeted cities, like Pasig City, also known as the “Green City” . One of JICA’ s projects in this esteemed city is the “Pasig Marikina River Channel Improvement Project,” which was inspected even by JICA President Dr. TANAKA Akihiko earlier this year. The river channel improvement project achieved significant impacts on DRRM with huge reduction of affected people and damaged assets from natural disasters and is consequently deemed as one of the most successful projects of our collaboration.

Besides such an infrastructure support, JICA also provides Pasig City with scholarship opportunities in Japan. In addition, JICA is currently dispatching a Japanese volunteer in “Rizal Experimental Station and Pilot School of Cottage Industries” here in Pasig City. Actually, the JICA volunteer is present here today. I would like to introduce Ms. MIYAGAWA Yoshimi. She has been working as a cooking teacher in Pasig City since July last year, to help her students develop cooking skills and find decent jobs by sharing her knowledge of Japanese food cooking techniques and nutrition balance.

As such, JICA is very much eager to promote people-to-people exchange, so as to boost capacity development and “heart-to-heart” relationships, too.

And now, I would like to touch upon today’s main theme, PPP promotion and introduction of Japan’s knowhow. As you know, JICA has been extending powerful Official Development Assistance to the Philippines on a Government-to-Government basis. JICA is providing our ODA supports through wide-ranging support instruments, such as provision of ①soft loans, ②grant assistance and ③technical cooperation.

Apart from these conventional ODA support programs, recently, JICA has been putting higher priority on Public-Private Partnership promotion. This PPP promotion program aims for win-win impacts both for beneficiary countries, such as the Philippines, and Japanese companies’ business deployment.

This program can contribute to solve wide range of development challenges, and also to boost further socio-economic growth of our partner countries, like the Philippines. It is expected to work up business appetite

of Japanese companies in promising overseas markets, like the Philippines.

Using this JICA' s cooperation scheme, this time, INFIC Inc., decided to collaborate with the City Government of Pasig, to introduce and transfer the Japanese-style Comprehensive Care System.

This unique and high-quality care system from INFIC aims at helping the elderlies become more independent, rather than simply caring for them. Thereby, INFIC will encourage the elderlies' participation in society and reduce the burden of society.

Eventually, it is expected that elderlies can live on their own as much as possible, with their dignity and their own choices -- a combination of ① "commuting" to the facility, ② "staying" at the facility for short period and ③ "visiting" at elderlies' homes. In this sense, the significance of INFIC' s project cannot be emphasized more.

Furthermore, I recall the City Government of Pasig is fortunate enough to have been selected as the cooperation partner of INFIC, because you can enjoy the impacts derived from INFIC's collaboration firstly. Congratulations in advance!

According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), the number of Filipino elderlies has doubled to 9.2 million in 2020 from only 4.6 million in 2000. With longer life expectancy, the demand for elderly care service is naturally increasing.

Also, it should be noted that President Marcos himself urged the ASEAN community, at the ASEAN Summit in Indonesia last month, that "it is time now to start to discuss the issues about an aging population, consistent with the Asian tradition of valuing our elders." We fully agree with President Marcos. Our goals and workplans should include elderly people's ①safe, ②dignified, and ③productive lives.

As such, this INFIC's collaboration comes at the right time, and is envisioned to be in line with the direction and priorities of the current administration.

Now, allow me to also highlight one more JICA's cooperation to boost human resource development in social welfare and nursing care for the elderly, through JICA's training course. Recently, 12 young Filipino professionals in the health sector were sent to Japan to develop their technical knowledge and skills. Having that invaluable occasion, they could learn about the latest techniques and practices in Japan. And they are expected to share their knowledge with their colleagues in the Philippines, so that they can level up the quality of elderly care services throughout the Philippines, too.

As such, JICA has committed to our wide range of collaboration through various cooperation schemes, and especially in the field of elderly care, we are very pleased to welcome the presence and involvement of INFIC here in Pasig City. Appreciating INFIC's tremendous efforts and dedication in preparing this project, I count on your strong leadership, President MASUDA Masatoshi.

On the other hand, I expect the strong commitment and unwavering partnership spirit of the City Government of Pasig, led by Honorable Mayor Vico Sotto.

This project cannot be possible without everyone's great contributions! Throughout the implementation stage of this project, I am quite sure that you two, INFIC and City Government of Pasig, will become the exemplary model of the partnership in the Philippines!

Furthermore, in the future, it is our hope that the good work we will start in this esteemed city will serve as a model of advanced elderly care services and will be widely spread to the whole country.

Let's demonstrate our solidarity and strong partnership,
*Magbayanihan tayo*¹!!

Maraming salamat po sa inyong lahat.

Mabuhay, and good afternoon to all of you!

ありがとうございました.

¹ Translation: "Let us help each other"