

Speech for Chief Representative SAKAMOTO Takema
Signing of M/M for “SDGs Business Verification Survey with the Private Sector for Value
Chain of Black Garlic” (April 28, 2023 | 10:00 AM)

All distinguished guests and participants,

Magandang umaga po sainyong lahat!

おはようございます。

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 Value Chain of Black Garlic” .

For several decades, the Philippines and Japan have been exceptionally important “strategic partners” , which developed into a historic highest level, that is even called as “friends closer than brothers” .

The two nations’ long-standing partnership has been strengthened even further, due to the recent successful state visit of President BBM to Japan.

We understand that President BBM is planning his re-visit to Japan to attend the Japan-ASEAN special summit in the

coming December. Moreover, we also expect the 1st official visit of Japan's PM Kishida sometime in this year. So, we can say that this year 2023 is very momentous for our closer partnership.

Consequently, JICA is extremely enthusiastic to expand our vigorous activities in this lovely country. We are really keen to contribute to the more prosperous future of Filipino friends, and to more robust bonds between two nations as well.

JICA is strongly committed to make greater impact of all our various active cooperation in this beautiful country.

As you know, JICA has been extending powerful Official Development Assistance to the Philippines through wide-ranging instruments, such as provision of soft loans, grant assistance and technical cooperation.

In addition to these conventional ODA support programs, recently, JICA has been putting higher priority on Public-Private Partnership promotion.

In this context, JICA has been proactively conducting our “SDGs Business Supporting Survey” program. It is a unique scheme of JICA, actually Ambassador KOSHIKAWA himself initiated and promoted when he worked for JICA.

This PPP promotion program aims for win-win impacts both for beneficiary countries, such as the Philippines, and Japanese companies’ business deployment.

This PPP promotion program can contribute to solve a wide range of development challenges, and also to boost further socio-economic growth of our partner countries, like the Philippines. Furthermore, it works up business appetite of Japanese companies in promising overseas markets, like the Philippines.

Using this JICA’ s cooperation instrument, this time, Takara company, from Aomori prefecture in Japan, decided to introduce and transfer its advanced and unique technology on ①garlic cultivation and ②black garlic processing in Ilocos Norte, through the close collaboration with Mariano Marcos State University, MMSU.

This project envisions to enhance the partnership between Ilocos Norte and Aomori, which are commonly acknowledged as the “Garlic Capitals” of both countries, respectively.

We also envisage that the project will play a critical role in boosting both the agro-industry development and PPP. Subsequently, the project can contribute to ①job creation, ②income generation, ③healthy life, and ④ demand/supply gap mitigation, among others.

Thus, we can say that it is a real significant project in every aspect, aligning with the priorities of the current BBM administration and JICA.

Anyway, through the unwavering dedication of our distinguished partners here, Takara company and MMSU, we are finally able to get together here today, to formally launch this project. We fully acknowledge your efforts and dedication during the feasibility study and other preparations for the verification survey.

Now, we again count on your strong commitment and productive collaboration during the implementation of

this project. This project cannot be possible without your great collaboration!

And let me add one more appreciation. We are very fortunate to have the maximum support and strong encouragement from His Excellency Ambassador Koshikawa and his excellent Embassy team for this project. Including your warm consideration for the prestigious arrangement for today' s signing ceremony at your gorgeous residence, I cannot thank Ambassador more.

As such, thanks to all of you, we are confident that the initial benefits, from our earlier cooperation for the feasibility study, will be sustained, and eventually, realize the invaluable black garlic value chain in Ilocos Norte.

And in the future, it is our hope that the good work we will start in this esteemed province will serve as a model of the advanced garlic industry and will be widely spread to the whole country.

You can do it. We can do it, with the spirit of “Bayanihan” , “collaboration and unity” .

Let' s demonstrate our solidarity and strong partnership
as a lead model!!

Maraming salamat po sa inyong lahat.

Mabuhay, and good morning to all of you!

ありがとうございました.