

**Signing Ceremony for the Comprehensive and Sustainable Urban Development Master Plan for
Metropolitan Davao (CSUDMP) Record of Discussions**

10 November 2023 | 11:00 AM – 3:30 PM @ SMX Convention Center, Lanang, Davao City

**MESSAGE OF
JICA Chief Representative SAKAMOTO Takema**

Her Excellency Vice President of the Republic of the Philippines,
Sara Z. Duterte

Honorable Secretary of NEDA, Arsenio M. Balisacan

Honorable Mayor of the City Government of Davao, Sebastian Z. Duterte
and other Mayors,

Regional Director of NEDA Regional Office 11, Maria Lourdes D. Lim

His Excellency Ambassador of Japan to the Philippines, KOSHIKAWA
Kazuhiko

Honorable Consul-General of Japan in Davao, ISHIKAWA Yoshihisa

Distinguished Local Chief Executives, Regional Development Council
Members, Dignitaries from the Metropolitan Davao Provinces, Cities and
Municipalities, National Government Agency officials;

Guests, Colleagues and Friends:

Maayong Buntag sa inyong tanan!

A pleasant morning to all of you!

Ako po si Sakamoto, ang Chief Representative ng JICA Philippines.

It is my great honor and privilege to be with all of you today,

as we take a significant step in achieving robust and equitable development in the Metropolitan Davao Region.

This is also a great chance for me to return to Davao City.

This lovely city, “Crown Jewel of Mindanao”, is actually the very first city that I have visited outside of Metro Manila in 2022 at the start of my tenure as Chief Representative of JICA in this beautiful country last year.

Let me tell you that the selection of Davao for my first official trip destination is not a mere coincidence.

Rather, it is a strong and symbolic message of JICA’s seriousness to contribute to the equitable regional development of the entire Philippines, duly considering the huge potential of the “Land of Promise”, Mindanao.

As you know, JICA has three major pillars for our Philippine operations:

(1) To pursue overall economic growth through infrastructure and investment promotion;

- (2) To address human security issues, such as poverty, food security, education, health, disaster vulnerabilities and so on; and
- (3) To achieve peace and development in Mindanao.

Through these three pillars, we provide special support to Mindanao friends through our projects, such as:

- (1) Davao City Bypass (with the first-ever 2.3 kilometer mountain tunnel),
 - (2) Flood Control and Drainage Improvement in Davao,
 - (3) Comprehensive Wastewater Management Masterplan in Davao City, (which I signed the agreement document with Hon. Davao City Mayor Baste recently in September),
 - (4) Flood Risk Management in Cagayan De Oro,
 - (5) Central Mindanao High Standard Highway (from CDO to Malaybalay),
 - (6) Road Network Development in Conflict-Affected Areas in Mindanao,
 - (7) Capacity Development Project for Bangsamoro,
- to name a few.

Such a proactive and vigorous operation coverage in Mindanao is a clear testimony how seriously JICA takes Mindanao.

Consequently, I have also travelled to other areas in Mindanao many times, and meet with our counterparts and beneficiaries, to observe and promote the progress of our important projects.

In fact, my visit to Cotabato City in January of this year was the one with JICA President Dr. TANAKA Akihiko, and at that time, JICA President TANAKA was given the privilege to deliver the very first speech as a foreign dignitary at the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region Parliament.

The Parliament also issued Plenary Resolutions that recognized, appreciated and commended JICA for the proactive collaboration with the people.

In addition to visiting Cotabato in January, JICA President Tanaka and I were honored to have many opportunities to exchange views with top officials of your esteemed government, including no less than Her Excellency Vice President Sara Zimmerman Duterte.

There, of course, we touched upon various important projects and issues about the development of Mindanao as well.

Taking this opportunity, today, let me again express my utmost gratitude to Her Excellency VP Sara Duterte for spending her time out of your busy schedule to meet the JICA President and our team.

Daghang salamat, VP Sara!

Needless to say, our partnership with VP Sara and Davao City, together with NEDA, go way back.

From 2017 to 2018, JICA worked closely with the City Government, headed by then City Mayor Sara Duterte, and NEDA, for the implementation of a “Davao City Infrastructure Development Plan and Capacity Building Project”,

We worked hand-in-hand and successfully crafted the master plan of “Infrastructure Modernization for Davao City” or “IM4Davao”.

I am very pleased to note that, from the IM4Davao, many of the identified priority projects have progressed to various stages of planning and implementation.

In this regard, I highly appreciate the tireless efforts and dedication of NEDA Regional Office 11 and Davao City for sustaining the gains under our master plan by conducting a monitoring and evaluation exercise to assess the progress of the priority projects.

JICA very much appreciates such initiative, because it signifies the project ownership and accountability of the Philippine Government.

I cannot overemphasize the importance of project ownership, as this is one of the key factors of the success obviously.

In this case, because of NEDA and Davao City's strong ownership and good track record, the Government of Japan and JICA have agreed to further expand our cooperation with this new Master Plan project for Metropolitan Davao, in collaboration with expanded partners, such as the newly created

Metropolitan Davao Development Authority or MDDA and all of the Local Government Units in the Metropolitan Davao Region.

Earlier, I mentioned that today's event is a "significant step forward". However, this is just the beginning, and we must put all our hands together to make this planning exercise truly successful and relevant to all of you.

For the success of this project, JICA will send our experts from Japan, and it is essential that your good offices and the JICA experts will form and work as one team.

They will work together, share their experience and knowledge, and I am quite sure that we can see the brilliant future of Metropolitan Davao.

For the same, allow me to humbly request your full collaboration with JICA experts to envision what kind of Metropolitan Davao we are aiming for-- a Metropolitan Davao, that is ① livable, ② smart, ③ efficient, ④ peaceful, ⑤ economically-viable, ⑥ environmentally-sound, ⑦ resilient and ⑧ inclusive.

Again, let me emphasize that JICA has a clear and strong message and commitment to the development of Mindanao.

Moreover, let me also emphasize that it is our paramount honor and a source of pride that we have the unwavering recognition among our Filipino friends, as His Excellency the former President Rodrigo Roa Duterte kindly called us “a friend closer than a brother”.

Be noted, Japan, JICA is, and will be continuously the most trusted and reliable partner of all of you.

We support you.

We cheer for you.

We will be standing with you every step of the way, so that we can jointly achieve our common goals.

We can do it!!! Let's work together as one team!

Kasama niyo kami.

Sama-sama tayó!

Nothing is impossible!

In fact, today's event is extremely memorable, as this is the very 1st agreement signing event just after the successful visit of HE Japan's Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio last week.

Mr. Prime Minister stated at the Congress last week that we will jointly create a new era of sustainable and prosperous development together with trust.

Mr. Prime Minister also mentioned several important key phrases, such as the "Heart-to-Heart Ties" and "Golden Friendship, Golden Opportunities."

I believe that today's project will serve as a model of his dream.

Our project is truly a symbol of enormous opportunity and our heart-to-heart friendship! *Mabuhay!*

Last but not least, Happy belated birthdays to Honorable NEDA Secretary Arsenio Balisacan¹ and Honorable Davao City Mayor Sebastian Duterte²!

¹ Nov. 8th, 1957

² Nov. 3rd, 1987

Please accept my best gift to you, that is the launch of this Project!!

May all your dreams and wishes come true !

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

Daghang Salamat!

Good morning to all of you.