

**Record of Discussions Signing - Project for Capacity Development of Public Utility Vehicles  
in Metro Manila and its Adjoining Areas**

DOTr Boardroom, Primex Tower, EDSA

11:00 A.M.-12:00 P.M., 17 July 2024

**Message from JICA Philippines Office Chief Representative SAKAMOTO Takema**

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- Honorable DOTr<sup>1</sup> Secretary, Jaime J. Bautista.
  - DOTr Undersecretary, Timothy John Batan,
  - DOTr Undersecretary, Jesus Ferdinand Ortega
  - Dear Colleagues,
  - Distinguished Guests, and Participants,

*Magandang umaga po, Honorable Secretary,  
at sa lahat nang dumalo sa pagtitipong ito<sup>2</sup>.*

Today we marks an important milestone to develop “Comfortable, Accessible, Safe, Sustainable and Affordable transportation to every Filipino”.

Yes, this is the shared goal between JICA and the DOTr.

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<sup>1</sup> DOTr : Department of Transportation

<sup>2</sup> Good morning, Honorable Secretary, and those who attended today’s event

It is my great honor and pleasure to speak before you today, especially before the Honorable Secretary, representing JICA, for the signing of the Record of Discussions on the “Project for Capacity Development of Public Utility Vehicles in Metro Manila and its Adjoining Areas.”

It is said that “A developed country is not a place where the poor have cars. It's where the rich use public transportation.”<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, however, I have to be frank, the streets in and around Metro Manila are chaotic and overflowing with cars and motorcycles. NCR<sup>4</sup> traffic was ranked the worst globally according to the Traffic Index TomTom in 2023.

The desperate road congestion situation here has been ridiculed as “Carmageddon<sup>5</sup>”.

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<sup>3</sup>by Gustavo Petro, the President of Colombia

<sup>4</sup> NCR : National Capital Region

<sup>5</sup> A compound word of "car" and "armageddon (the final war)", which implies the desperately heavy traffic congestion on roads.

Actually, according to JICA's famous survey in 2017, because of the dire traffic congestion, transport cost in Metro Manila alone was estimated at PHP 3.5 billion per day as of 2017, and this was projected to increase to PHP 5.4 billion per day by 2035, if nothing was done.

Traffic congestion not only affect the quality of life of Filipinos, but also it results in gigantic transport costs, previously estimated at about PHP 3-5 billion per day.

It negatively affects business investment inflow as well.

Under such a circumstance, last April, in the first ever town hall meeting, no less than President Marcos, Jr. identified road traffic congestion as an urgent problem, and said that the only true solution is mass public transit systems.

In Japan, the use of modernized and sophisticated public transportation, whether trains or buses, is very widespread and normal among all levels of society.

This results in modal shift, road decongestion, a greener environment, more comfortable commuting, and ultimately, higher quality of life.

This is what we equally envision for the Philippines.

There is a common recognition for the pressing need to prompt modal shift from private to public transportation.

This is just what the President Marcos advocates.

In this regard, this Project aims to support in making public transportation more convenient through the improvement of its service quality.

①Collaboration in effective route planning, ②development of intermodal transport hubs, and ③improvement of convenient fixed-route PUVs such as buses, jeepneys, UV Express, among others, will be provided through the Project.

For clarity, achievements gained through this Project are expected to be applied and disseminated to all over the Philippines.

If I may supplement, this Project does not stand alone, but is a part of JICA's strategic and comprehensive plan to transform public transportation in the Philippines.

JICA's cooperation in the transport sector is not only for hard infrastructure, such as:

- MMSP (Metro Manila Subway Project),
- NSCR (North South Commuter Railway Project),
- LRT1 and 2 (Capacity Enhancement of LRT Lines 1 and 2),
- MRT3 (Rehabilitation and Maintenance of MRT3),

but our support also includes soft-component development, such as:

- Technical assistance to the Philippine Railway Institute
- Formulation of 30-Year Railway Master Plan for GCR
- Capacity Enhancement of Transit Oriented Development, which promotes effective coordination between main railway line and feeder transportation linking station area development with urban development.

In a nutshell, this Project and our other supporting projects highly complement each other.

Railways alone cannot solve the pressing issue easily.

It needs to be complemented with PUVs' operation, so that public transport is modernized and sophisticated, providing comfortable and reliable paths from people's origins to their destinations.

For this purpose, JICA has committed to collaborate with all of you to "Transforming Philippine transportation infrastructure network to global standards".

I firmly believe, and have no doubt that, with the able leadership of DOTr Secretary Bautista, Undersecretary Batan and Ortega together with the excellent teams of LTFRB<sup>6</sup> and the OTC<sup>7</sup>, the Project will be able to achieve its objectives, and be successfully completed in 3 years.

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<sup>6</sup> LTFRB : Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board

<sup>7</sup> OTC : Office for Transportation Cooperatives

Admitting the Philippines' best and most reliable friend, JICA reiterates our full cooperation to realize 'Japan-quality' public transportation systems in the Philippines.

We are transforming public transportation in the Philippines!

Let's create the history!

*Kaya natin ito<sup>8</sup>!*

*Kasama niyo kami<sup>9</sup>!*

*Para sa Bagong Pilipinas!!*

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

*Maraming salamat po, at mabuhay kayong lahat.*

Good morning to all of you.

[End]

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<sup>8</sup> We can do it!

<sup>9</sup> always with you!