

Record of Discussions Signing - ***Project for Capacity Enhancement on Traffic Management with Improvement of Intelligent Transportation Systems in Metropolitan Manila***

MMDA Head Office, Julia Vargas Avenue, Pasig City

10:00 A.M.-11:00 A.M., 21 February 2025

Message from JICA Philippines Office Chief Representative SAKAMOTO Takema

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- MMDA Chairperson, Romando S. Artes
 - Embassy of Japan 2nd Secretary KINOSHITA Akito
 - Dear Colleagues, including esteemed representatives from National Government Departments and Agencies and LGUs
 - Distinguished Guests and All Participants,

Magandang umaga po sa inyong lahat.

Today marks an important milestone in our shared commitment, JICA, MMDA and its 17 LGUs, to enhancing modernized traffic management and promoting safer, faster and more convenient movement of people and goods in Metropolitan Manila.

It is my pleasure to commemorate the launch of the long-awaited technical cooperation project¹.

It should be noted that, just this February, HE President Marcos convened a cabinet-level meeting to discuss updates on the Comprehensive Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) for Metro Manila.

Also, last April, the President led his first-ever public town hall meeting especially on Metro Manila's traffic woes.

As such, modernized and advanced traffic management in Metro Manila is obviously one of the most pressing and serious development challenges in this promising country.

¹ the Project for Capacity Enhancement on Traffic Management with Improvement of Intelligent Transportation Systems in Metropolitan Manila

If I may talk about “the Comprehensive Traffic Management Plan,” or CTMP, JICA takes pride as the CTMP was the very achievement of our previous technical cooperation project between JICA and MMDA from 2019 to 2022.

In this context, I clearly remember that I was here in November 2022, with MMDA Chairperson Artes and 17 LGUs representatives, such as Mayors.

At the time, we officially approved the CTMP, and reaffirmed our joint commitment to creating better, livable, and attractive circumstances².

Currently, I acknowledge that MMDA is struggling to meet that commitment by implementing CTMP.

² [MMDA, LGUs and partner agencies set out Five-Year Action Plan to mitigate traffic congestion in Metro Manila under JICA's Technical Cooperation | Where We Work - JICA](#)

As we know, CTMP aims to ① strengthen traffic regulation and enforcement; ② develop a comprehensive traffic management database; and ③ promote road safety and smooth transportation.

I believe that the above-mentioned direction is correct to move forward tirelessly, in addition to the efforts for transforming the mass modal shift through the development of railway systems among others.

However, an international Traffic Index Ranking³ 2023 showed a very shocking result that Manila ranked as the world's worst metro area, out of 387 cities across 55 countries.

Although, in the 2024 ranking of the same index, Manila has moved up 15 ranks⁴ from the worst

³ [Traffic Index ranking | TomTom Traffic Index](#)

⁴ This might be mainly because the index survey included more cities, up to 500 from only 387 in 2023

position, of course, improving traffic management is not something that can be achieved overnight.

Moreover, with the recent increase in new vehicle sales and the growing use of motorcycles, driven by the growth of economy and the increase in population or commuters, traffic congestion remains a significant challenge in Metro Manila.

In addition, we cannot forget the enormous transport cost we are forced to pay every day.

Kindly be reminded, we should revisit JICA's previous famous survey.

It says that, because of the horrible traffic congestion, transport cost⁵ in Metro Manila alone was then estimated at PHP 3.5 billion per day

⁵ Includes vehicle operating cost and time cost

according to the survey conducted in 2017, and this was updated at the final report published in 2019, to increase to PHP 5.4 billion per day by 2035, if left unaddressed.

The impacts of traffic congestion extend beyond lost productivity; they negatively affect quality of life, hinder investment, and exacerbate environment.

That is why even HE President Marcos is putting an extremely high priority on this pressing issue, that is proper traffic management in Metro Manila.

In this regard, we still have more experiences and secrets to share with our beloved Filipino friends.

In Japan, Intelligent Transportation Systems, or ITS, have been playing a crucial role in managing congestion and improving urban mobility.

Actually, fully utilizing advantages of the digital age, ITS can optimize passenger flow and enhance the overall efficiency of transportation networks.

In short, our joint effort results in ①modal shift, ②road decongestion, ③more comfortable commuting, ④a greener environment, and ultimately, ⑤better quality of life and ⑥increased investment inflows with job opportunities.

Modernized ITS is what we love to share with the Philippines through the new technical cooperation project we are launching today.

Pursuing the overall goals mentioned now, JICA is pleased and enthusiastic to support MMDA to

develop its capacity of traffic management by introducing “Japan Quality” ITS measures.

Technically, in our new project, we join hands to work for:

1. the enhancement of planning capacity for ITS development,
2. the improvement of ITS implementation, such as procurement of ITS equipment,
3. the establishment of a useful traffic data management system, among others.

Surely, this critical project cannot function alone.

The harmony of infrastructure development and implementation capacity enhancement can give the success to solve the traffic congestion problem.

Only one or the other cannot bring about a shining future.

This is the core of JICA's strategic and comprehensive approach.

In this context, we are in an advantageous position!

As you are aware, currently JICA is strategically implementing various related projects in Metro Manila:

from new big-ticket projects such as the North-South Commuter railway and the country's first underground subway,
to expansion of existing railways such as LRT-1 and 2,

and refurbishment of vital infrastructure along EDSA⁶ such as MRT-3 and Guadalupe bridge.

We are now on the road to success!

Moreover, it is worthy to note that ITS projects do not necessarily require large capital investments, but the expected positive impacts are great.

The low-hanging fruit is before us now and waiting to be harvested!

With the dedicated leadership of Chairperson Artes, together with the excellent teams of MMDA and the 17 Metro Manila LGUs, I am fully convinced that our new project in the coming three years will be able to achieve our shared goals as expected.

⁶ Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, one of the main thoroughfares in Metro Manila connecting residential areas to the Central Business Districts

JICA, as the Philippines' largest and most reliable bilateral partner, commits our full collaboration.

We unwaveringly support capacity enhancement on traffic management, to transform road transportation, through the introduction of "Japan Quality" intelligent transportation systems in this beautiful country.

Let's create a brilliant history together!

Kaya natin ito !

Kasama niyo kami !

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]