

**PRESIDENT FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.'s
SPEECH AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE POBLACION WATER
TREATMENT PLANT BY THE MAYNILAD WATER SERVICES, INC.**

Barangay Poblacion, Muntinlupa City
December 15, 2023

[00:00:03]

Thank you, Maritoni Yulo-Loyzaga, our DENR Secretary.

Please take your seats.

The Muntinlupa Lone District Representative, Congressman Jaime Fresnedi; Muntinlupa City Mayor Rozzano Rufino Biazon; MWSS Administrator Leonor Cleofas; and, of course, our most important partner in all of these endeavors from the private sector side, the Maynilad Water Services Inc. Chairman Manny Pangilinan; fellow workers in government; ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

I am very pleased to be here today, joining you in the inauguration of Maynilad's Poblacion Water Treatment Plant. This will provide clean and potable water to residents in Metro Manila and its surrounding areas.

I extend my greetings to our distinguished guests, private partners, local government officials and community leaders who have played a crucial role in making this project a reality. It is a testament to our shared commitment to water security and sustainability.

We stand on the brink of completing this crucial project --- a necessity heightened by the current challenge posed by the El Niño phenomenon. Your collective efforts ensure that we exceed the demands of our people in these trying times.

With the El Niño projected to last until the second quarter of 2024, we must prioritize the repair of water pipes to prevent leakages and the completion of ongoing water supply projects to ensure that we have adequate supply. And so, let us call upon the pertinent agencies to intensify their vigilance in overseeing

the construction of water supply facilities, particularly in regions grappling with water scarcity.

[00:02:22]

As we confront present and future challenges, this project is a testament to the positive outcomes that we might achieve when the public and private sectors unite for the greater good. I invite the private sector once more to further explore opportunities to collaborate with government in addressing our water supply challenges. Let us continue to work together so that we can provide our people with the best quality services that they truly deserve.

Although we refer to water, the supply of water as a service, and I am of the view that it is in fact a right of our people to be able to expect their government to put systems into place so that water is available to all households, to industry, to agriculture. These are the main uses of water that we have, and so that we still must continue to develop all our capabilities.

The focus has sharpened with the onset, with the forecasted onset of El Niño which at the very least will be with us over the first quarter of next year and, unfortunately, the latest forecast show that there is a distinct possibility that it will last until the second quarter of next year and therefore we must prepare and apply some of the lessons that we have learned during the pandemic, when it came to supply of agricultural products, of food, of the efficiencies of the supply chain. All of these will be affected if our water resources are inadequate.

And that is why we have now begun in government a very accelerated effort to prepare for that. For all intents and purposes, we have a good buffer until maybe the end of the first quarter.

Now, what we need to do is to prepare, further capacitate, so that should the El Niño extend to the second quarter of next year, we are still at the very least able to supply potable water, especially in the urban areas, we are able to supply our agriculture, we are able to supply our industry. And one of the elements that we sometimes do not think about, we think about those major uses of water, we also have to be thinking about our hospitals. Hospitals cannot operate without water and with the onset of a drought that will become more and more important as it goes on.

And so, these are the issues that are confronting us now. But with projects such as these, and the further following projects. I was looking at the brief. There is another one here in Mandaluyong *[sic]* [Muntinlupa]. And I think there is three more in Cavite and that will all --- that is all to the good and we have to get those facilities built and operating so that we can consider ourselves at least minimally ready for the arrival of the drought that will be coming next year.

Now, I do not mean to frighten anyone off, but it is a serious problem. But we are familiar with the capabilities of both private sector and public sector. Put us together and there's much that we can do and let us do that so that we have done our duty to the people and continue to provide, as I said, what I consider their right to availability of clean, fresh water.

Sa Bagong Pilipinas na sinisikap natin na itaguyod ngayon, hiling ko ang pakikilahok ng bawat isa upang mapatibay ang ating mga imprastraktura at mapabuti ang kalagayan ng ating mga mamamayan.

Maraming salamat sa inyong lahat. Maraming salamat sa inyong ginagawa, sa tulong ninyo para sa taong-bayan.

Mabuhay ang Bagong Pilipinas! Magandang umaga sa inyong lahat at Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! [applause]

[00:07:08]
