

**PRESIDENT FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.'s
SPEECH AT THE CEREMONIAL ENERGIZATION OF THE MINDANAO-
VISAYAS INTERCONNECTION PROJECT**

Kalayaan Hall, Malacañan Palace
January 26, 2024

[00:00:00]

Good afternoon.

House Speaker Martin Romualdez; the Executive Secretary, Secretary Lucas Bersamin.

Oh, please take your seats.

Our Energy Secretary Popo Lotilla; Mr. Anthony Almeda, the President and CEO of the NGCP; my fellow workers in government; our very important partners in the private sector; other distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen.

A year ago, we launched here in the Palace the commercial operation of the Wholesale Electronic *[sic]* [Electricity] Spot Market in the Mindanao grid. I then highlighted the importance of completing the Mindanao-Visayas Interconnection Project by the end of March last year, as assured by the NGCP.

After a much-extended wait, I am pleased to finally see the energization of the 450-megawatt MVIP. It is the first time in the history of our nation that the three major power grids, those of: Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao—are now physically connected.

A 184-circuit-kilometer High-Voltage Direct Current submarine cable with a transfer capacity of 450 megawatts now connects the Mindanao and Visayas grids via Dapitan, Zamboanga del Norte and Santander in Cebu. This infrastructure allows power generated in Mindanao to supply our homes and establishments in Visayas and now all the way to Luzon and vice versa.

Indeed, this interconnection will unlock enormous socio-economic development potential for both Visayas and Mindanao. The realization of our “One Nation,

One Grid” aspiration is definitely a crucial turning point for this country in ensuring reliable power at all times.

I do not wish to discredit the momentous win that we are celebrating today, but I find the need to address a critical incident which has recently frustrated every one of us.

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Earlier this month, the Panay Island started the new year with a total black out for three days, parts of Negros Occidental were under rotational power. The power interruption caused 3.8 billion pesos in economic losses in the Province of Iloilo alone, notwithstanding the inconvenience that it brought to the people of Western Visayas.

This incident emphasized that vital role of these interconnection projects. We cannot afford to have another round of this costly interruption, not only in Panay Island but anywhere in the country. So, let’s move forward with the lessons that we have gained from this blackout; ensure that this massive inconvenience and loss for our people should not occur again.

We acknowledge the NGCP’s immense responsibility and role in maintaining the stability of our grid, including the need to ensure the completion of critical interconnection projects and to undertake other necessary activities to support a safe, reliable grid operation.

So, we look forward to the assurances in the promised completion of the 230 kilo Volt Cebu-Negros-Panay backbone project by March of this year, as well as the commitment that you have made to complete the Hermosa-San Jose 500 kilo Volt transmission lines next month. We do realize these are daunting tasks, but I call on you to faithfully fulfill these obligations which are so necessary for the progress of our country.

Let me reiterate the need for greater responsibility, transparency and accountability among key players in our power sector with the NGCP as the singular operator of our country’s united power grid.

I assure that similar support and cooperation will always be extended by government to ensure the timely completion of all these significant transmission projects—particularly those that will relieve congestion, as well as those needed to deliver additional capacities that can be provided by renewable energy.

I have directed the ERC to complete the reset of NGCP’s rate without further delay. I have also directed the Department of Energy and the ERC to look into the proposal of allowing third parties to construct transmission projects at the pace required by the country’s power needs as we grow out of the pandemic economy.

Ladies and gentlemen, each of us here has a shared responsibility to ensure the reliability and the adequacy of energy supply at all times.

I strongly believe that a brighter future awaits us, so therefore, I enjoin your cooperation and commitment as we achieve our goal for our country's total electrification in the soonest possible time.

Once again, congratulations and thank you to all who have contributed to the successful energization of this Mindanao-Visayas Interconnection Project.

Thank you very much and good afternoon. [applause]

[00:05:40]
