

**PRESIDENT FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.'s
SPEECH AT THE IMPOUNDING PROCESS CEREMONY
OF THE UPPER WAWA DAM**

Montalban, Rizal
July 10, 2024

[00:00:00]

Thank you very much to our DENR Secretary, Secretary Maritoni Yulo-Loyzaga.

Please take your seats.

The other members of the Cabinet who are here to watch and to commemorate this important event that we have today; the MWSS Administrator Leonor Cleofas; Prime Infrastructure Capital Incorporated President and CEO, Mr. Guillaume Lucci; other distinguished guests; ladies gentlemen. A pleasant day to everyone.

In the past years, Metro Manila and its surrounding areas have constantly grappled with water shortage problems. The Angat Dam, where the metropolis is sourcing a significant bulk of its water, can no longer meet the needs of around almost 20 million people living in the area. After all, it is more than 50 years --- built in the '60s and completed during the time of my father --- when the population of Metro Manila was just three million.

Suffice it to say, we need a new source of water to ensure the water security of Metro Manila and surrounding areas now and in the decades to come. And that is why we are all very happy to be here today to lead the impounding process ceremony of the Upper Wawa Dam.

This significant milestone marks the completion of the construction of the dam component of Phase 2 of the Wawa Bulk Water Supply Project. The Upper Wawa Dam will be the biggest water source to be built in the country in over 50 years, next to the Angat Dam. It is commendable that it was completed with remarkable speed despite the Covid-19 pandemic which slowed down the progress of projects and industries during the time that this was being built.

[00:02:07]

Having been accomplished a year ahead of schedule, this monumental development has set a new standard for infrastructure projects of similar magnitude in terms of scale and impact. We are very fortunate to have found a private sector partner that would join us in spearheading this endeavor.

I recognize the Prime Infrastructure Capital, its joint venture, WawaJVCo, and the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System for your continuing commitment to building critical infrastructure systems that will address the needs of our people and of our country. Not only are these projects truly representative of what the government is working on to achieve infrastructure resilience, but this initiative also brings the most effective practices on environmental preservation.

Indeed, the fruit of your meaningful collaboration --- the Upper Wawa Dam -- is a groundbreaking achievement not only in providing a basic need for millions of Filipinos, but also in easing concerns on climate change-related challenges, such as we have just gone through with the El Niño.

In fact, Phase 1 of the Project or the Tayabasan Weir, has improved the water supply situation in Rizal by providing a substantial water source, benefiting both the residents and businesses.

The water supply from the Wawa Bulk Water Supply Project is set to increase from 80 million today to 438 million liters per day once Phase 2 of the Project or the Upper Wawa Dam starts its operations --- the end of 2025, which could increase to 710 million liters per day in the following years. These 438 to 710 million liters per day translate to supporting the water supply needs of about 2.2 to three and a half million Filipinos in the MWSS service area.

This dam will also foster climate resilience amongst our people by protecting our communities downstream from flooding and by mitigating the detrimental effects of drought. It also complements other groundbreaking projects we are currently undertaking across the country, which aim to provide reliable and potable water supply, especially in the countryside and in the far-flung areas.

Without a doubt, the progress that we have made here at the Upper Wawa Dam is a significant stride towards our goal of social and economic transformation. I now ask the Prime Infra and its joint venture WawaJVCo to continue collaborating with the DENR. Prioritize watershed protection in the Upper Wawa Dam as well as the reforestation and biodiversity preservation in the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape.

[00:05:32]

Please continue implementing these innovative designs and practices in your initiatives so that you can uphold the delicate balance of our ecosystem and continue to reinforce our nation's resilience against ecological adversities.

I also call on our stakeholders, particularly those operating other dams nationwide, to maximize the use of your facilities by integrating other uses for the captured water, such as for the generation of renewable energy. Let us work together in this endeavor to create a more sustainable and energy-efficient future for our nation.

Water is a finite resource while the demand for it is ever increasing. We need to use water wisely, as many times and for as many purposes as possible. We need to build more multi-purpose dams to ensure water supply not only for drinking but also for irrigation, power generation, flood control, aquaculture and hopefully other technologies that we may engage in the future.

I likewise call upon every Filipino to amplify our efforts to conserve the country's water resources. Let us remember that the stewardship of these resources is not just a task but a shared responsibility of us all.

Rest assured that this administration remains firm in its resolve to pursue a more transformative endeavor that will champion the optimal health and growth of Filipinos across the country. We will continue to address water security challenges to ensure that every Filipino has access to sufficient and clean water.

At the end of the day, water remains at the core, not only for human survival but also for national development. Water is life. Water is life for human beings. Water is life for our economy. Water is life.

Let us not only consider this as a milestone in our nation's development but also as a symbol of our collective determination to lead better lives and shape a more promising Bagong Pilipinas for the Filipinos.

Thank you and congratulations to everyone for bringing us to this extremely important day that we commemorate with great pride and gratitude.

Maraming salamat at magandang umaga po sa inyong lahat. [applause]
[00:08:17]



BAGONG PILIPINAS