

**PRESIDENT FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.'s
SPEECH AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE JALAU RIVER
MULTIPURPOSE PROJECT – STAGE II**

Calinog, Iloilo
July 16, 2024

[00:00:07]

Thank you, Secretary Kiko Laurel—please, let's take our seats—for your kind introduction.

His Excellency Lee Sang-hwa, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the Republic of the Philippines; the National Irrigation Authority *[sic]* Administrator, Administrator Eddie Guillen; the Iloilo Third District Representative Lorenz Defensor; [applause] Iloilo First District Representative Janette Garin; [applause] Iloilo Second District Representative Michael Gorriceta; [applause] and the Iloilo Fourth District Representative Ferj Biron; [applause] the Iloilo Fifth District Representative Raul Tupas; [applause] and the Lone District of Iloilo City Representative, Representative Julianne Baronda; [applause] USWAG ILONGGO Party List Representative James Ang; [applause] and the main beneficiary of this rather grand project: the province of Iloilo, ama ng lalawigan, ng probinsya ng Iloilo Governor Art Defensor Jr.; [applause] Calinog Municipal Mayor Francisco Calvo; [applause] and, of course, my colleague in the Senate and former Senate President, Senator Frank Drilon; [applause] our full partners and valuable partners in all that we do to transform and develop our country are those from the private sector; representatives of the indigenous peoples and farmers; my fellow workers in government; ladies and gentlemen.

Maayo gid na adlaw sa aton tanan! [applause]

I welcome you all with great excitement as we inaugurate the dams of the Jalaur River Multipurpose Project, JRMP II. It is indeed another exciting day for us since this will be, by far, the largest water reservoir project of the

National Irrigation Administration outside of Luzon.

[00:02:50]

Costing almost 20 billion pesos, the JRMP II has three key components: the irrigation development, the environmental and watershed management and institutional development. With the inauguration today and the further completion of the construction of three dams and line canals spanning more than 80 kilometers, we anticipate that more than 30,000 hectares of service area and around 25,000 farmers will benefit from this uninterrupted supply of irrigation water.

This should boost further the development in the agricultural sector as well as the local economy of the entire region. In fact, it is estimated to help increase annual rice production in Region 6 by 160,000 metric tons, which is almost 20 percent of the region's annual rice requirement.

On top of its use for irrigation, a portion of the water from the High Dam's reservoir, or around 86 million liters per day, will be utilized to supply the commercial and industrial bulk water requirements of Iloilo City and its neighboring municipalities.

We also look forward to the 6.6 megawatts of hydroelectric power that it will generate to supplement the power supply on Panay Island. Additionally, it is also proposed to develop inland fishery, floating solar energy systems and eco-cultural tourism, in the near future.

With all these, the JRMP II truly deserves its label: Katuwang sa Kauswagan or Partner in Progress.

Let this project serve as a benchmark and an inspiration for all endeavors of this scale and of this magnitude. It's only the beginning of what we have in store for the development of our water resources.

In the past, we only built irrigation dams for the single purpose of watering our agricultural production areas. Then, we made flood control projects to stop flooding and invested billions more for bulk water.

In Bagong Pilipinas, we are strategically harnessing our finite resources, especially water. We are also wisely investing our limited funds in projects that would bring optimal development for the most number of beneficiaries in the most efficient manner.

Our water development projects would not just bring irrigation or potable water to our people, but will also help address flooding, produce food, generate

electricity and develop tourism activities. The JRMP II will definitely bring many benefits to the people of Iloilo in the coming years.

[00:05:50]

For this, my utmost gratitude goes to the Government of South Korea, which has generously partnered with us in this and many other very grand projects that we are undertaking in the Philippines. [applause] Yes, absolutely.

Indeed, this venture is not only a symbol of our strong friendship and our long-standing ties, but also our reminder of a shared desire for growth and for development.

I also recognize the men and women of NIA, and especially to the skilled brains and hands that labored relentlessly to turn our plans into reality. [applause]

The Senate President reminded me that he has been working at this for 13 years and I think it is entirely too long that the Phase I that was completed in my father's time, that the Phase II should be completed in my time. We should not have waited that long. So, let's... [applause] I think we need to accelerate the process a little bit.

While the work to build this project is almost done, our service to the people never ends. I urge everyone who will be tasked with the operations and further developments of this project to maintain our sense of purpose, our integrity, and dedication with you always.

From the groundbreaking to the completion and down to the daily management, we must always uphold excellence and wisdom with compassion. And so, let us continue, with a steadfast commitment to the well-being of our stakeholders and even the state of our future in mind.

Hindi ko rin maaaring kalimutan ang mga magsasaka na araw-araw ay nagsisikap upang magbigay ng pagkain sa buong sambayanan: Hindi kami titigil sa pagpapatupad ng mga proyekto at programa na tutugon sa inyong mga pangangailangan at mapagaan sa inyong buhay. Mananatiling kasangga ninyo ako at ang buong administrasyong ito sa pagtupad ng inyong mga pangarap.

Ladies and gentlemen, as we do the honors of opening the gates, of unveiling the marker of the Jalaur High Dam, let us remember that with persistence, with unity and hard work, we can do the difficult, the impossible might take just a little longer.

Should these few simple but meaningful words guide our actions every day,

we will soon achieve what we once dreamed of: that of a Bagong Pilipinas that overflows with bounty, with opportunity and prosperity for all our people, because our people deserve no less.

Thank you and my heartfelt congratulations to everyone for this great project that will be of great assistance to many, many people. [applause]

Maraming salamat po at magandang umaga po sa inyong lahat. [applause]

[00:08:55]



BAGONG PILIPINAS