

**PRESIDENT FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.'s
SPEECH AT THE 2023 PRESIDENTIAL MINERAL INDUSTRY
ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD**

Ceremonial Hall, Malacañan Palace
October 16, 2024

[00:00:02]

Thank you to our Executive Secretary, Secretary Lucas Bersamin, for his kind introduction.

Please be seated.

Well, the lead agency when it comes to all the issues that surround our mining industry, our Secretary of the Environment and Natural Resources, DENR, Secretary Marie Toni Yulo-Loyzaga; Presidential Communications Office Acting Secretary Cesar Chavez; the officials of the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines led by Chairman Mike Toledo; the officials of the Philippine Mine Safety and Environment Association led by President Louie Sarmiento; the 2023 Presidential Mineral Industry Environmental Awardees. Congratulations to you all and thank you for your conscientious work in making sure that the mining industry is sustainable. Fellow workers in government; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen. Good morning.

As I stand before you at this 2023 Presidential Mineral Industry Environmental Award Ceremonial Awarding, I am struck by a powerful truth: True progress, anchored on responsibility, paves the way for a more sustainable future.

The Philippines, as one of the most mineral-rich countries in the world, has a unique opportunity to leverage its natural resources for national development.

But this can only be done if we ensure that the wealth that we generate is shared equitably, that our ecosystems are safeguarded and that local communities are empowered.

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Today, we honor the companies that have demonstrated that mining in the country is more than just extracting resources; it is about giving back as well — giving back to the environment, giving back to the community, and giving to the future generations who will inherit this planet. Established in 1997, by Executive Order No. 399, the PMIEA promotes private sector participation in enhancing our government's environmental management efforts.

Each year, this award highlights the exemplary efforts of mining groups and companies that have achieved safe, environmentally sound, and socially responsible operations. This ceremony is a celebration of your commitment and your responsibility. It is a tribute to those who see mining as a profound opportunity to uplift communities and ensure environmental sustainability for generations to come.

Last year, our selection committee carefully assessed the accomplishments of 35 companies. And after rigorous evaluation, 13 mining and mineral processing companies shone brightly as recipients of the 2023 PMIEA. These awardees have shown commendable support for our vision for the mining sector. You continue to invest in environmental technologies and adopt best practices that go even beyond compliance—from pioneering reforestation efforts to utilizing more sustainable extraction techniques.

And, of course, your meaningful contributions to the host and neighboring communities through education, healthcare, and livelihood programs are truly inspiring. These initiatives demonstrate how we can unite the industry with the goals of social and environmental progress.

We must not grow complacent, however. As the world transitions to clean energy, the demand for critical minerals is surging. And in the emerging landscape, our country's abundant resources place us in a prime position to lead the way.

But to truly harness this potential, we must invest in the infrastructure and the technology required to process these minerals domestically. And at the same time, it is imperative that we adopt mining practices that prioritize the environment, to ensure that our extraction processes are clean, efficient and restore the land that has been mined. We must also foster innovation by driving research into new methods of mineral processing. Methods that reduce waste and energy consumption.

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As we look ahead, I urge all our dedicated agencies and esteemed members of Congress to support the Rationalization of the Mining Fiscal Regime. This crucial bill, which I highlighted in my 2023 SONA, is fundamental to creating a fair and equitable mining environment for everyone involved.

It is equally vital for the DENR to strengthen regulatory capabilities for all mining operations to ensure compliance with safety and environmental standards. Initiatives such as the Administrative Order Number 2022-04, which mandates biodiversity management in mining operations, along with the establishment of the National Environment and Natural Resources Geospatial Database, reflect our commitment to responsible practices.

The signing of the Philippine Ecosystem and Natural Capital Accounting System or PENCAS Act in May 2024 further emphasizes our dedication to sustainable resource management. This landmark legislation ensures that a robust system is in place to quantify and to integrate the value of our country's natural *[sic]* assets into national economic planning and decision-making.

This will enable us to better balance economic gains with environmental protection and guarantee that the true cost of resource extraction is accounted for. In doing so, we aim to foster a deeper commitment to sustainability within industries, particularly in mining and to create a landscape where responsible companies, such as yours, are recognized for leadership and for your innovation.

Furthermore, we continue to refine and enhance our mining policies to reflect these priorities. We plan to boost local value addition through mineral processing, strengthen environmental safeguards and ensure that communities are genuine beneficiaries of the wealth generated from mining operations.

We want to see more investments in processing plants, creating more jobs and contributing more directly to local economies. This framework complements the PENCAS Law by ensuring that resource development and economic activities are aligned with our broader sustainability goals.

Further, we are working to align Social Development and Management Program more closely with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. This aims to enhance the SDMP's effectiveness so that it can drive meaningful and positive change within the mining communities.

To our awardees today, you have set a high bar, embodying what it means to create value that extends beyond profit and demonstrating to the public that it is not enough to just meet regulations; we must strive to go beyond them.

I encourage you to be ambassadors of responsible mining. Share your experiences and best practices not only with your peers but with the next generation of miners, engineers and environmentalists.

With the continued partnership amongst government, industry, and local communities, there is no doubt that the Bagong Pilipinas will emerge as a global leader in responsible mining.

Again, congratulations to all the 2023 PMIEA Awardees! Maraming salamat sa inyong pagsisikap na ipagpatuloy ang ating pagbantay sa ating kalikasan. And thank you for all the efforts.

Congratulations.

Maraming salamat at mabuhay ang Bagong Pilipinas. [applause]

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BAGONG PILIPINAS