

**PRESIDENT FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.'s
SPEECH AT THE 74TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT**

SMX Convention Center, Pasay City
February 18, 2025

[00:00:00]

Thank you very much, Secretary Rex Gatchalian, for your introduction.

Please be seated.

Pasay City Mayor Imelda Calixto-Rubiano; the DSWD Undersecretary Em Aglipay-Villar; officials and employees of the Department of Social Welfare and Development; fellow workers in government; ladies and gentlemen. Good morning and happy anniversary. [applause]

When we were scheduling this anniversary celebration of the Department of Social Welfare and Development, I had to pause for a moment. Because after all 74 years is a significant amount of time. Eh kung tao iyan, may senior citizen's card na iyan. Nag-e-enjoy na ng discount sa grocery at saka sa mga priority lane. But when it comes to serving the public, the DSWD remains as spritely, as committed, and even a better organization than it was when you began.

Since your establishment, this institution has been a steady, reassuring presence for many, many, many Filipinos through countless generations. You have provided not just assistance – but behind that assistance, you have also provided hope—to families rising from hardships, to communities devastated by calamities, to individuals who need to feel that their government is there

by their side ready to assist.

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Your vision is simple and profound: to build a resilient, inclusive society where no one is left behind. Time and again, we have seen how that vision translates into action—whether in the swift distribution of aid after a typhoon, the consistent support for struggling families, or the enduring commitment to sectors often overlooked by society.

Our mission does not end here. It has really just begun. Lasting change is not built overnight—it takes consistent, and honest, and dedicated effort. Every single centavo spent, every program that is implemented, every decision that has been made must serve a very clear purpose: to create opportunities that endure, that uplift, and reach far beyond just today.

One of the strongest examples of this commitment is the 4Ps. This program reflects a fundamental belief: education and health are investments in the future. Through conditional cash grants, we help families stay on track with their children's education and their healthcare, laying a sturdier foundation for a better life.

Sa tulong ng 4Ps, mas napapangalagaan ang kalusugan ng mga bata at pati na ang kanilang mga magulang. Mas dumarami ang pumapasok sa paaralan, at mas nabibigyang-pansin ang pangangailangan ng mga kabataan na itinuturing nating pag-asa ng bayan.

Just last year, more than four million households received support through the 4Ps. Behind these numbers lies a deeper, more profound success: Since its inception, nearly 678,000 families have achieved self-sufficiency.

Ibig pong sabihin, kaya na nila na itaguyod ang kanilang sarili dahil may kumpiyansa at pag-asa sila para sa mas maliwanag na kinabukasan.

More than a million high school students have graduated, nearly 470,000 elementary school children have completed their primary education. And amongst those graduates, 40,000 individuals have passed their licensure examinations and 65 of them stood out—earning spots among the top examinees in their respective fields.

Yet, we know that progress requires more than just assistance. It demands that opportunities be built so that they may earn and they may grow. [With] the implementation of the Sustainable Livelihood Program or SLP, we empower our fellow Filipinos with the skills, with the resources, most importantly, the knowledge to improve their livelihoods—whether through

micro-enterprises or stable employment.

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Under SLP, we conduct free technical-vocational and life skills training for our vulnerable and marginalized sectors.

Hindi po ito nangangahulugang “Sustainable Lovelife Program,” ha? Baka kasi may magtanong, “Sir, meron bang training para sa mga pusong laging nalulugi?” Iyan iyong mga ano – iyong mga personalities without jowa. Nangunguna na diyan iyong inyong kalihim. [laughter] Masyadong masipag itong ating Secretary. Wala nang panahon para mag-romansa. [applause]

Lahat naman sa inyo kapagka tinatawagan – lahat kayo the Secretary, the Usec, kahit alas-tres ng umaga ay tumatawag ako sumasagot. Hindi na yata kayo natutulog. Matulog naman kayo paminsan-minsan para medyo huwag kayong magkakasakit kasi kailangan namin ng sigla ninyo. [applause]

Alam niyo po, kung ang SLP ay para sa lovelife, siguradong dagsa ang aplikante [laughter]—lalo na iyong mga nasa situationship. [laughter] Iyong invested ka na, pero wala pa ring label. [laughter] Pero negosyo po ang tinututukan natin—hindi po puso. Hindi po natin kaya iyon.

Sa pamamagitan nito, natututo ang ating mga kababayan kung paano magtaguyod ng negosyo, palaguin ang kita, at patatagin ang kanilang kinabukasan.

In 2024, nearly 271,000 households benefited from SLP. While we focus on the future, we also honor those who built the foundations of our present. Our senior citizens, who have dedicated decades of their lives to hard work to help our nation. They deserve comfort, dignity, and peace of mind in their twilight years. And through the Social Pension for Indigent Senior Citizens, we deliver financial aid to help cover their daily necessities and medical expenses.

Hindi na mangangamba ang ating mga seniors kung saan kukuha ng pambili ng gamot o panggastos sa pang-araw-araw.

In 2024, nearly 4.3 million senior citizens received social pensions. For these elders, the monthly stipend is a reassurance that their contributions to the nation are cherished and are appreciated, and redound to their benefit.

Even as we strengthen these core programs, we remain vigilant against modern challenges such as climate change. Natural disasters are growing more frequent, more severe, leaving communities at greater risk. So, to address this, we utilized the Quick Response Fund or QRF—a dedicated

resource for swift, effective disaster response.

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Nakalaan ang QRF para sa agarang pagbili ng pagkain, kagamitan, at iba pang pangunahing pangangailangan ng mga nasalanta sa kalamidad.

Last year, nearly 7.4 million disaster-affected Filipino families received essential assistance through the QRF. Over 540,000 families were also provided early recovery services, ensuring support beyond just immediate relief. These numbers embody our commitment to stand with our people—swiftly, compassionately, and resolutely—through every stage of their recovery.

As we commemorate the past, we must also prepare for the future. That future demands modernization, efficiency, accessibility. That's why today, we launch our new initiatives:

First, the HELPS, the platform that streamlines the application processes for licenses and permits—makes it faster for stakeholders to access DSWD services.

Pangalawa, second, the Minors Traveling Abroad System. As part of HELPS, this system modernizes travel clearance processing for Filipino minors. Pinadadali at inaayos nito ang proseso para sa mga magulang at tagapag-alaga, habang tinitiyak ang kaligtasan at kapakanan ng mga batang Pilipinong bumabiyaha sa iba't ibang bansa.

And lastly, the Pamilya sa Bagong Pilipinas Program. This initiative aims to strengthen family development and welfare in every stage of life—recognizing that nurturing households are the cornerstones of a thriving nation.

Sa programang ito, susuriin natin ang kalagayan ng bawat pamilya upang matukoy ang kanilang tunay na pangangailangan. Kasabay nito, ipapatupad natin ang mga angkop na kalinga upang matiyak ang tulong ng gobyerno na wasto, sapat, at tumutugon sa kanilang mga sitwasyon.

These endeavors reflect a government that listens and that responds—a government that evolves to meet the needs of its people.

At this juncture, let me recognize the steadfast efforts of the DSWD. Your courage, particularly during the recent spate of calamities, has been nothing short of extraordinary.

Tka nga, you are the first to respond but the last to sleep. While others sought

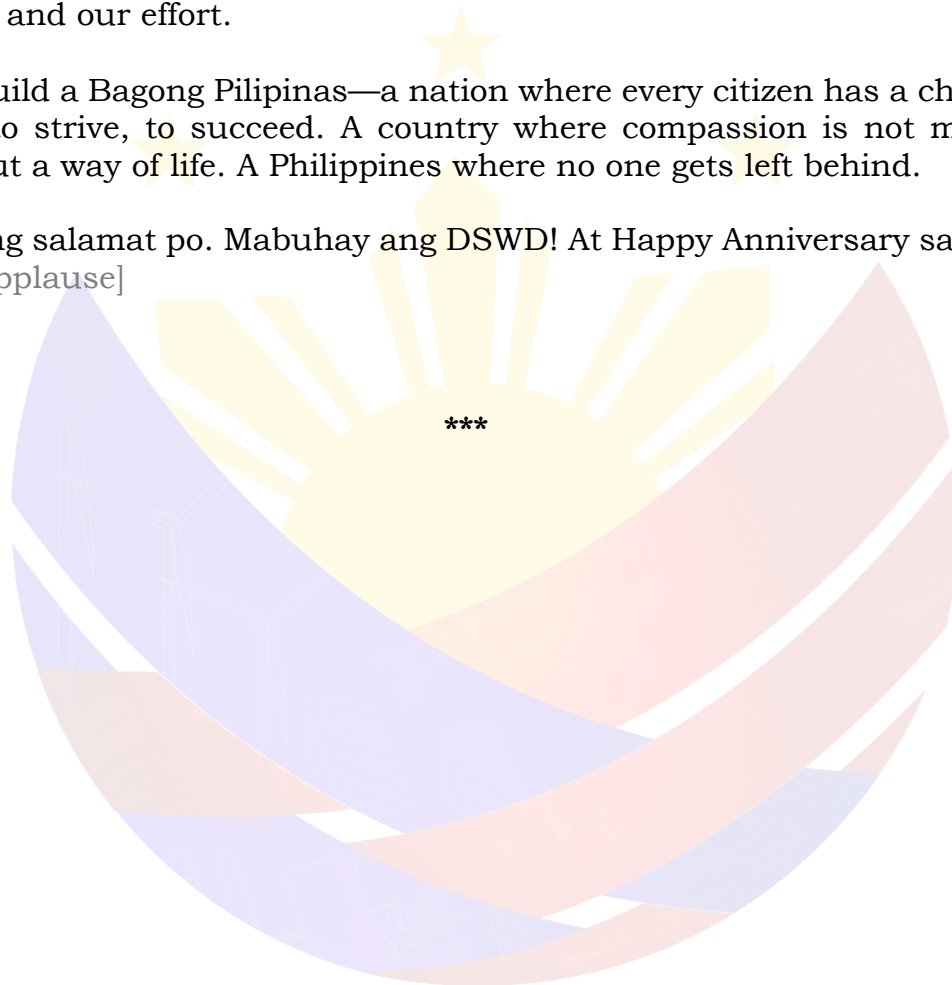
shelter from the storm, you walked into the chaos to deliver relief. You have saved lives, brought hope, and demonstrated the true power of compassion. For that, the country is grateful. [applause] For that, your President is grateful. [applause]

To my fellow Filipinos: The success of these programs does not rest on the shoulders of the DSWD alone. It requires our collective determination, support, and our effort.

Let us build a Bagong Pilipinas—a nation where every citizen has a chance to dream, to strive, to succeed. A country where compassion is not merely a value, but a way of life. A Philippines where no one gets left behind.

Maraming salamat po. Mabuhay ang DSWD! At Happy Anniversary sa inyong lahat. [applause]

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BAGONG PILIPINAS