

**PRESIDENT FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.'s
SPEECH DURING THE GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY OF THE
CATICLAN PASSENGER TERMINAL BUILDING**

Caticlan Airport, Nabas, Aklan

July 14, 2025

[00:00:00]

Thank you for your introduction, Energy [Transportation] Secretary Vince Dizon. Please sit down.

Energy Secretary Sharon Garin, who is with us today because after here, we are going to fly-by the rig in Malampaya that is now slowly drilling down into the seabed with a reasonable chance of success of finding further reserves.

The Aklan 2nd District... I'm sorry, the CEO of San Miguel Corporation and I have to say our very, very important partner, full partner with the government, in nation-building, the CEO of San Miguel Ramon Ang. [applause]

Aklan 2nd District Representative Florencio Miraflores and the honorable members of the House of Representatives; Aklan Governor Jose Enrique Miraflores; Malay Municipal Mayor Frolibar Bautista; Nabas Municipal Mayor James Solanoy; other mayors, nandito yata 'yung ating mga mayor na nandito at excited lahat para sa pagbukas at pagsimula nitong ating terminal building; the officials of the Civil Aviation Authority who is represented by the Officer-in-Charge, Atty. Danjun Lucas; Chairman and CEO of Megawide Construction Corporation, Mr. Edgar B. Saavedra.

Noong pinipilit na matatapos ito maraming nagsasabi nasa eroplano pa lang kami, si Sec. Vince sinasabi na niya, pinangako ng Megawide na matatapos ito ng 24 months. [applause]

Kaya noong binanggit ni Chairman RSA 'yung 24 months, ang bulong namin dito sa harap, sabi namin sa kanya, "no pressure, no pressure." We take it

back, pressure, pressure. I'm sorry, we really need for you to finish this 24 months or even less than now. [applause]

[00:02:24]

And what I was telling the CEO of Megawide, I was telling him, "You have no excuse because I've seen your other projects nagawa niyo na eh, even more complicated constructions than this." This is a relatively simple one.

The more complicated construction projects that Megawide has undertaken. They have finished it on budget and in time. So, that is what we are hoping for and are looking forward to.

My fellow workers in government; other distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen. Good morning.

Well, this is a very important day. As Chairman Ramon has clearly laid out, this is what we could refer to as a much-awaited project dahil ang dami-daming pinagdaanan, nasimulan, natigil, nalipat, maraming pagbabago – bago tayo umabot dito sa araw na ito.

Ngunit nandito na tayo. We are very happy and we are all very excited that we are slowly putting together the building blocks of our policy of opening up our areas, tourist areas, our business areas to international travelers without having to go through the Manila Airport.

And this is simply because – although Manila Airport is improving, once again, because of the concession agreement that we made with San Miguel – it is improving and we are going to increase the capacity in terms of passengers per hour, passengers' movements per hour, in terms of passengers and travelers per year.

However, it would be much easier for our tourists or for any travelers na doon na sila tumungo kagaya dito, nandito na lahat, direktso na sila dito sa Caticlan. And from here, they can go to Boracay, they can go around and see all of the tourist destination. Marami ritong tourist destination. We can see all of the tourist destinations around the province and in the neighboring areas.

And so, it is not something that is just belonging to one province, it is not – it is not just Aklan who is involved in this, it is the entire region that will be assisted by the construction of this terminal building.

The influx of people, of travelers, is going to be a big boost to the local economy and, I might add, the national economy. Tourism right now contributes close

to eight percent to our GDP. And that is something that we want to increase and that is why these projects that we have are also very important.

[00:05:15]

We are doing the same things for many regional airports. We have been talking about Iloilo. We have made agreements in Bohol, in Siargao, and there will be others more. Ngayon ay pinag-uusapan pa lang. So, I don't want to let the cat out of the bag because they are still in discussions.

But the idea is to open up the Philippines not necessarily only through Manila but on international flights coming from Europe, coming from Southeast Asia, coming directly to the tourist destinations.

And in this case, maganda — tama 'yung nabanggit kanina that it is better here because the ferry experience is very important and very much part of the experience of a... I remember coming here as a vacationer. And pagsakay mo sa bangka, ito na, bakasyon na ito. This is where the vacation starts. [applause]

And so, we are making that experience even better. Boracay now is a much nicer place to visit than it was a few years back and we are doing the same things as I said with the other tourist destinations, with the other business destinations.

Hindi lang tourist pero 'yung mga lugar na gusto nating i-develop na ngayon ay maliit ang airport, hindi mapuntahan, o mahirap puntahan ay 'pag nabuksan ang mga airport diyan, talagang makikita natin maraming magiging — maraming magbabago.

So, this is one step in a — in what you have to describe is — is going to be the beginning of one journey, of the journey. And that journey is to bring the Philippines once again to the forefront of the rest of the world. To bring the Philippines once again to the top of mind of the rest of the world that this is a place where people can invest, this is a place where people can come to have a vacation, this is a place where the businessman can come and do business to the benefit of their own interest and, of course, of the country.

And so, that is how important today is and I'm very, very happy to have come today and to witness the groundbreaking and to be part of this groundbreaking. And it is already — it is already in my schedule – 24 months, I am coming to cut the ribbon. [applause]

Kung puwede mong gawing 18, I won't complain. Oh kita mo, masarap kausap 'tong Megawide. Very ano eh, hindi sila umaatras sa challenge.

So, thank you all!

Once again, as mentioned, the problems that occurred here are the usual problems when it comes to infrastructure, right-of-way, land acquisition.

And that's why kailangan natin pasalamatan ang local governments dahil kung hindi sa local government, both on the provincial and the municipal side, kung hindi sa inyong tulong, hindi namin magagawa at hindi namin mabubuo 'yung daan kung saan kailangan ma-expropriate o kailangan magkaroon ng negotiation. At we always turn to local governments to help us.

And once again, that has been fruitful and it just goes to show exactly like the governor has said when the national government, the local government, and the private sector work together hand in hand – not opposite sides, but hand in hand – this is what we can achieve.

So, we look forward to many, many more of this. [applause]

Maraming, maraming salamat!

Congratulations sa inyong lahat.

Magandang umaga po sa inyong lahat. [applause]

[00:09:21]

BAGONG PILIPINAS