

**JTTRI International Seminar on
"Railway and Area Development in Manila"
Ambassador Haneda's speech**

Secretary Arthur Tugade , Mr. Yasaburo Hikasa, Mr. Masafumi Shukuri, Dr. Shigeru Morichi, Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, Good morning. Magandang umaga po sa inyong lahat.

I'm glad to be part of today's seminar on "Railway and Area Development in Manila." Leading figures in this field from both countries' governments, industries and academia coming together despite their busy schedule speaks volumes to us. It is proof that it's high time for the Philippines to unlock its bigger potential and fully harness the benefits railway brings to national development.

Over the past 4 years, Japan has given high priority to the Philippine government's "Build, Build, Build" program. Nowhere is this more evident than in the railway sector. We are more than glad to share the knowledge and best practices we've cultivated through long years of experience for the completion of the Metro Manila Subway and North-South Commuter Railway. Notwithstanding the challenges we tackle along the way, we have been observing steady progress in these joint efforts as a result of adopting the "fast and sure" approach.

At the same time, we have made sure that our ongoing cooperation is not only limited to the advancement of hard infrastructure. Not to be left behind is the human resource development component, which is a prerequisite to the success of any endeavor. For this reason, one of Japan's leading railway operators, as well as top consultants, are supporting the newly founded Philippine Railway Institute to develop practical courses for crew and station staff training. This way, we can say that we are definitely on the right track to providing a better and safer commuting experience for Filipinos.

Here in Metro Manila, we all know how congestion poses a serious barrier to increased productivity. It is imperative to lay new tracks for railway projects that can work as an efficient and reliable public transportation system on a daily basis. The initiatives we start today will shape the future of cities and the generations to come. Thus, the right combination of planning, know-how, technology,

partnership and human capital must not be compromised.

This is why we are gathered here. By railway and area development, we mean nothing less but quality infrastructure that meet the international standards of economy, safety and reliability. Today's seminar is a good opportunity not just to substantiate these principles, but also establish collaboration between our governments, industries, and academe—an essential element for keeping the momentum of the Philippine railway sector going. Japan is all the more determined to make active contributions to this end, and I believe this seminar could spark both collaborative and transformative ideas in the way forward.

With that, I wish everyone a productive round of discussions on the latest research results this morning.

Thank you and Mabuhay po kayo!