

Speech of Ambassador Kazuya Endo
JTTRI-AIRO Logistics Symposium

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Mr. Masafumi Shukuri,
Chairman, Japan Transport and Tourism Research Institute

Mr. Yoshimichi Terada,
Vice-Minister, International Affairs, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure,
Transport and Tourism

Mr. Elmer Francisco U. Sarmient
Under Secretary for Maritime, Department of Transportation

Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Congratulations on hosting the Logistics Symposium. We would like to express our gratitude to Chairman Shukuri and everyone at the Japan Transport and Tourism Research Institute, as well as Secretary Bautista and everyone at the Department of Transportation of the Philippines for their efforts in hosting this Symposium. We are also very grateful for the opportunity to hear the insights of all you logistics experts on the topic of logistics in the Philippines.

Buoyed by the friendship and shared values between the people of our two countries, Japan and the Philippines have built a strong relationship in recent years, which has been described as a "golden age". The friendship and cooperation between the two countries has expanded into a wide range

of areas, including the economy, security, people-to-people exchanges and culture, giving the impression of a new era in Japan-Philippines relations.

In this context, we believe that the theme of this symposium, "Improving Logistics", is directly related to the further economic development between the two countries and is a very important undertaking.

As you know, the Philippines is an island nation and we believe that maritime transport plays a very important role in the country's logistics. The demand for maritime transport in the Philippines is increasing as the economy grows, but we are aware that there are also many challenges. Logistics costs were already high due to the country's geography as an island nation, but the impact of COVID-19 has added to this, resulting in a sudden increase in transport costs and a further deterioration of the logistics environment. In addition, the ports, which are key to maritime logistics, are congested, leading to traffic jams and delays in logistics.

In this context, President Marcos has set policies to improve port facilities and modernise ports to make the Philippines a logistics hub, and is also taking steps to improve logistics, such as measures to ease logistics supply constraints.

Thanks to these efforts, logistics in the Philippines is showing signs of improvement, but port infrastructure development takes time and short-term measures must also be considered.

I hope that today's keynote speech, research reports, panel discussions and other discussions will provide an opportunity for all parties to review the issues between our two countries and, with the help of your knowledge, advance efforts to resolve these issues.

The Embassy of Japan will continue to work with the Department of Transportation and the Japan Transport and Tourism Research Institute to improve logistics in the Philippines.

Next year will mark the 70th anniversary of the normalisation of diplomatic relations between Japan and the Philippines. In November last year, at the Foreign Ministers' Meeting, we confirmed that we would further deepen cooperation in various fields in the run-up to the 70th anniversary of the normalisation of diplomatic relations between Japan and the Philippines. Since the beginning of this year, high-level communication has been active, such as the Japan-US-Philippines online summit and the Foreign Minister's visit to the Philippines.

In addition, concrete cooperation through Official Development Assistance (ODA) and Official Security Assistance (OSA) continues to make progress. Now, Japan-Philippines relations are poised to move from the "golden age" to new heights.

I hope that Japan-Philippines cooperation in various fields, including logistics, will become even stronger.

Finally, I would like to conclude my remarks by wishing all of you here today good health and happiness, and further development between Japan and the Philippines through improvements in logistics.

Maraming salamat po.