

**Presidential Communications Operations Office**

**Presidential News Desk**

**SPEECH OF**

**PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE**

**DURING THE GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY OF THE TWO CHINA AID AND BRIDGES  
PROJECT: BINONDO-INTRAMUROS BRIDGE AND ESTRELLA-PANTALEON BRIDGE**

[Delivered at Maestranza Parking, Intramuros, Manila | 17 July 2018]

Thank you. Kindly sit down.

His Excellency Ambassador Zhao Jianhua of the People's Republic of China; Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea; Secretary Mark Villar and the other members of the Cabinet; China Communications Construction Co. Vice President Chen Fenjian; officials and employees of China Communications Construction Co. and China Road Bridge Constructors; fellow workers in government; ladies and gentlemen

I thank the Department of Public Works and Highways for inviting me to lead the groundbreaking ceremony of the Binondo-Intramuros and the Estrella-Pantaleon Bridges.

These bridges, one of which will replace the existing bridge connecting Estrella Street in Makati to Barangka Drive in Mandaluyong, both represent our desire to use connectivity and mobility as catalysts for inclusive economic growth and sustainable development.

These bridges will not only improve the capacity and the efficiency of Metro Manila's transportation corridor by providing additional bridges and routes across Pasig River, but will also enhance the resilience of our road network against natural disasters.

The life of these bridges will be extended because they will become more resilient, thereby reducing bridge maintenance costs. Moreover, it will also increase the transportation capacity of Pasig River and contribute to local tourism due to the improved view of the riverine area.

Allow me to express my appreciation to China for their generosity in funding the construction of these two bridges. As a friend, China has once again proved that they intend to join us in achieving lasting progress by addressing traffic congestion in Metro Manila.

Indeed, the construction of these bridges will not just connect these very strategic areas, but will also contribute to our quest to spur vibrant economic activities through an efficient and reliable road transportation network.

I am therefore directing the DPWH and the other agencies concerned to ensure that the construction of these bridges will be finished within thirty months or earlier. Maybe --- at the end of the year? Ah impossible.

As an important part of the Build, Build, Build Program, I expect you to fast track the implementation and execution of these bridges, as well as all other infrastructure projects already in the pipeline.

Through our combined efforts, we will be able to expedite our infrastructure programs [that] will improve connectivity and mobility around the country. Together, let us join hands in uplifting the lives of our people [through] channels that will give [them] the decent and comfortable lives that our people rightfully [deserve].

Before saying thank you, I would like to just to say a few words. Allow me to veer away from the prepared speech.

Personally I've been to China. I have talked to the leadership of the government and I have --- I have had the honor of meeting President Xi and talked about a lot about friendships and cooperation.

I just like to tell everybody that in all of these discussions, China never asked for any not even a one square of real estate in this country.

Each geopolitics position is something which is critical to China and the stand which we disagreed as we filed the arbitration case.

But in the meantime that we are talking about a concerted effort of both countries to develop is going on.

We have promised to deal with the problem from the President himself, President Xi of the People's Republic of China, that we will discuss this at some other time, as China has to deal with individually bilateral relations and issues.

And so allow China --- we will allow them the sufficient period to sort out things and I'm sure that in the end, China will be fair and the equity will be distributed.

I cannot talk about --- well, elaborate these things now. They are in the blueprint. But in the days to come, we would realize that China after all is really a good neighbor.

Daghang salamat.

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