



**SPEECH OF
SECRETARY RALPH G. RECTO
As Representative of
PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.**

**41st Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
Social Security Association (ASSA) Meetings 25
November 2024**

Representative's Spiel:

A good day to all!

It is a great honor to represent President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. at the 41st ASEAN Social Security Association Meetings.

The President conveys his deepest gratitude and commendation to the organizers, delegates, and esteemed guests who have come together in the spirit of solidarity and inclusive progress.

He trusts that this occasion will build a platform for the exchange of knowledge, the convergence of expertise, and the strengthening of partnerships in the vital realm of social security.

In his stead, allow me the privilege of delivering his message to this assembly:

“A pleasant day to all!

Allow me to welcome you all to Manila.

At this 41st ASEAN Social Security Association Meeting, we honor a long-standing tradition of regional solidarity—one that binds our nations together in the shared pursuit of safeguarding the future of our people.

As we confront the challenges of an evolving world and seize the opportunities it presents, we reaffirm our commitment to a collective mission: to build social security systems that meet the demands of today and reinforce the aspirations of generations yet to come.

Our framework for progress rests on three (3) vital pillars: integration, innovation, and inclusion.

These principles must guide our decisions as we work to enhance social protection across Southeast Asia.

First, integration. In a region as dynamic and interconnected as ours, collaboration is not merely desirable—it is imperative.

By aligning our systems with international financial reporting standards, we strengthen transparency and accountability, fostering trust in the institutions that serve our people. This ensures that our workers—whether they

remain in their home countries or contribute their talents across borders—receive the security they deserve.

Second, innovation. Technology offers transformative possibilities: reaching those who were once beyond our grasp, streamlining cumbersome processes, and tailoring our services to the unique needs of our people.

Yet, with these advancements come risks, particularly in data security. It is our responsibility to develop robust cybersecurity measures that protect the sensitive information entrusted to us.

Innovation also extends to wise fiscal management. By aligning our investments with shared economic goals, we ensure the sustainability of our funds, securing the stability and well-being of all our societies.

Finally, inclusion. In our vision of a Bagong Pilipinas, no one must be left behind. Our efforts must encompass all sectors, especially the vulnerable—the informal workers, the gig economy participants, and the individuals whose labor often goes unnoticed but whose contributions are just as invaluable.

We must ensure that their rights to social protection transcend borders, providing continuity and security whether they seek opportunities abroad or plan for retirement.

The Philippines, like many of our ASEAN neighbors, is deeply committed to these priorities. We are digitalizing our services, fortifying cybersecurity, exploring sustainable investment strategies, and extending social protection coverage among all sectors.

Yet, we recognize that our journey is far from over. This gathering reminds us that our collective strength lies in our common aspirations and firm resolve.

We take another step forward through the signing of the ASSA Sustainability Pledge—a declaration that aligns our mission with the principles of sustainability, inclusivity, and environmental stewardship.

With the adoption of ASSA Board Circular Resolution No. 1/2024, we formalize this pledge and reaffirm our commitment to a future where sustainability and social security walk hand in hand.

Esteemed delegates, over the next few days, I wish you a fruitful and meaningful conference. May your discussions be bold, your ideas transformative, and your vision unwavering. Let this gathering serve as a fertile ground for collaboration and a testament to what we can achieve when we work together.

And as you deliberate on the future of social security, I invite you to experience the delectable and

mouthwatering Filipino cuisine and the warmth and hospitality of our people.

Take time to immerse yourselves in the rich history and vibrant culture of Manila—a city that reflects the progress and dynamism of our nation.

Together, let us build systems of social security that not only elevate our nations but also guide the ASEAN region towards lasting peace and prosperity.

Thank you so much. Mabuhay tayong lahat!”

Those were the words of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.

As Secretary of Finance, let me also reaffirm our steadfast commitment to building a social security system that is inclusive, forward-thinking, and responsive to the needs of all. We are determined to ensure that the benefits of economic growth are felt by every individual—that progress uplifts, empowers, and protects the people at their core.

Through your partnership, we are confident in our ability to shape a future where our nations and our people flourish together.

Fueled by our shared purpose, let us build a stronger, more inclusive, and more sustainable Southeast Asia for all.

