



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
MARITIME INDUSTRY AUTHORITY

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

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Administrator, Maritime Industry Authority

Graduation Ceremony of MAAP

Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP)

Mariveles, Bataan

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To the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP)
President Vice Admiral Eduardo Ma R. Santos AFP (Ret),
Dr. Conrado F Oca, esteemed faculty members of MAAP,
the distinguished guests, proud parents, and most importantly,
to the exceptional maritime graduates, ladies and gentlemen,
good morning to all.

It's a great honor and privilege to stand before you today, to be part of such a significant moment in your lives — the Graduation of the Class of 2024 here at the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP). This is not just a ceremony; it's a celebration of years of hard work, growth, and the beginning of a new journey for all of you.

To the graduates, MAAP Class 2024, my warmest congratulations! Today marks the fulfillment of a dream that many of you have been working towards for a long time. I know it hasn't been easy, and I want to acknowledge the sacrifices



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each of you has made. The late nights, the grueling assessments, and the challenges you faced during your training — every step of the way has brought you to this moment.

As the Administrator of the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), it's truly inspiring to witness firsthand the caliber of graduates that the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP) produces year after year. You are not just a group of young professionals who have completed a program — you are the future of the Philippine maritime industry.

You have all heard it before — the Philippines is a maritime nation. It's a point of pride for all of us that Filipino seafarers represent about a fourth of the world's merchant fleet. In fact, when you look at the ships that are transporting goods across oceans today, chances are, many of them are crewed by Filipino sailors, engineers, and officers. In fact, right now, there are more than 500,000 Filipino seafarers on ships all over the world, keeping global trade flowing smoothly. The reality is that without Filipino seafarers, the world's shipping industry would probably come to a halt. From the oil tankers delivering energy, to the container ships carrying the products we use every day, our seafarers are essential. And today, you — the graduates of MAAP — are stepping into those very roles, continuing the legacy of Filipino excellence on the seven seas.



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One example of this excellence is a female seafarer— a MAAP graduate from the class of 2003. I was told that she graduated from MAAP in 2003 and later became the first and only Filipino woman to earn a master mariner and dynamic positioning (DP) license in Asia. She began her seafaring journey just like you, working hard in the classrooms and on the training ships here at MAAP. Today, she is not only leading her crew but is a strong advocate for the safety and well-being of Filipino seafarers. Her journey is just one example of what you can achieve.

This brings me to the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific — a beacon of maritime education. MAAP has consistently been at the forefront of producing leaders in the maritime industry, and the training you have received here is truly world-class. I have had the privilege of seeing first-hand the many simulators and training equipment that MAAP has invested in. They are an impressive collection. No wonder MAAP graduates are in the most enviable positions to benefit the most from these investments.

You have been given the tools to succeed, but more importantly, you have been instilled with values that go beyond academics. You have learned the importance of discipline, leadership, and teamwork — qualities that are essential not just for life at sea but for life in any high-stakes industry. You have undergone rigorous



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training on your cadetships, participated in exercises that simulated real-life maritime emergencies, and been mentored by officers and mentors who have seen it all.

And it is not just about technical knowledge, it is importantly about character and caring for others. For instance, I remember visiting one of the ships manned by Filipino officers where I spoke with a chief engineer. He told me how, as a MAAP graduate, he knew that the well-being of his crew mattered just as much as the engine room itself. His focus on safety, his understanding of crew dynamics, and his strong leadership kept his team motivated and safe during long voyages. This type of leadership is the hallmark of a MAAP graduate — someone who not only excels in their profession but also cares for the people around them.

As you move forward into your careers, you will find that the maritime industry is rapidly changing. We are now in an era where technology, sustainability, and safety are taking center stage. Smart ships, green shipping, and new safety protocols are part of the industry's evolution. This is where you come in — you are the ones who will steer the industry into the future.

In the Philippines, MARINA is continuously working on improving the welfare and training of our seafarers. We are committed to ensuring that STCW standards (Standards of Training,



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Certification, and Watchkeeping) are not only met but exceeded. We are also pushing for advancements in safety training and environmental practices. We know that the work you do out there on the seas will directly impact how the Philippines continues to be a leader in global maritime affairs.

Specific areas we are focusing on is maritime safety and environment protection, particularly the impact of climate change. As part of our efforts, we have been working to improve the quality-of-life aboard vessels and ensure that Filipino seafarers are properly compensated, have proper rest, and work in safe conditions. We're making efforts to ensure Maritime Just Transition for our seafarers, that is your safety and wellbeing are prioritize as the world shifts to zero or near zero GHG fuels. I know that as MAAP graduates, you are already well-prepared to uphold the highest standards in these areas.

While the challenges ahead may be numerous, please, do not stop learning, and continue to cope with additional trainings and experiences that will definitely contribute to your professional and personal growth. Just like other industries, the maritime industry is in constant evolution through technological advancements, environmental considerations and other factors that may affect the global dynamics. With that being said, I would like to encourage the Batch of 2024 to embrace changes, and



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capitalize the advantages of emerging technologies such as digitalization, automation and artificial intelligence (AI) by utilizing it to improve daily operations and to elevate the overall safety, energy efficiency and sustainability in the Philippine and global maritime industry.

So, I urge you, the graduates of MAAP class of 2024, to carry the legacy of Filipino maritime excellence with pride. As you embark on your careers, continue to learn, adapt, and evolve. Continue to seek new knowledge, never stop improving yourself, and always stay true to the values that MAAP has instilled in all of you.

I also want to remind you that the maritime industry can be demanding, but it is also rewarding. The sea can be unforgiving, but with discipline, teamwork, and a commitment to safety, you will navigate its challenges just as those before you have done.

Dear Graduates, your government led by MARINA is doing our best to maintain a healthy and competitive environment that you will be a part of... It is up to you to step up and take the challenge of being the new batch of men and women of maritime who will lead the industry to unprecedented transformation characterized by automation, digitalization and green solutions. MARINA is committed in ensuring the seafarers well-being and continued employment, not only sustaining our position as the leading



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provider of highly competent seafarers, but even getting a bigger share of the world ship officers and become truly leaders in global maritime industry.

Essentially, you have all the tools to be successful — now, it's time to use them. Whether you are joining a vessel, a maritime company, or continuing your education, your journey is just beginning. As William Shakespear wrote in the Merry Wives of Windsor, the character pistol is heard to say, “why then the world's mine oyster...” the ocean is your oyster — full of endless opportunities, and you are ready to sail it.

As you sail the seas, don't forget to acknowledge the support and guidance of your families, friends and mentors who helped you build this foundation. Give them the well-deserved appreciation for believing in you from day 1 to this Day, and eventually to the next chapter of your lives as the Sailing Ambassadors of the country.

In closing, allow me to thank MAAP, for this privilege to join this auspicious moment and for continuously producing exceptional maritime professionals, and thank you, families and friends, for your unending support to these graduates.



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To the class of 2024, CONGRATULATIONS again. You have worked hard for this day, and I have no doubt that you will continue to make the whole PHILIPPINES proud.

Good day and again, CONGRATULATIONS to the Class of 2024, together with their parents and mentors.

Thank you.

Golden Voyage Towards Green and Digital Maritime Future

