

**SONIA B. MALALUAN**

**MARINA Administrator**

**23<sup>rd</sup> Philippines-Netherlands Joint Committee on Maritime Affairs Meeting**

**Paranaque City on 01 July 2025**

Her Excellency Marielle Geraedts, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Philippines, Ms. Brigit Gijbbers, Head of the Dutch Delegation to the 23rd JCMA Meeting, distinguished members of the Dutch and Philippine Delegations, representatives of government agencies, esteemed guests, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

It is with great honor and sincere pleasure that I welcome all of you to the 23rd Joint Committee on Maritime Affairs (JCMA) Meeting between the Republic of the Philippines and the Kingdom of the Netherlands. We are privileged to host once again this vital platform for dialogue, collaboration, and partnership, where two maritime nations, bound by a shared vision and enduring friendship, convene to strengthen ties and forge new pathways forward.

Since the inaugural JCMA meeting in the year 2000, our two nations have consistently reaffirmed our commitment to enhancing Bilateral Cooperation in Maritime Affairs. Over the past 25 years, while faces have changed and global circumstances have evolved, the spirit of collaboration, mutual trust, and steadfast dedication to safety, sustainability, and excellence at sea has remained unwavering. Today's meeting is not merely a continuation of tradition, it is a timely opportunity to confront emerging challenges and harness new opportunities in the maritime domain. I commend both delegations for their steadfast commitment to collaboration as we address key agenda items: Climate Change Policy, the Comprehensive Review of the STCW Convention, the Digitalization of Seafarer Certification Processes, the Recognition of Seafarers' Medical Certificates, the implementation of the Magna Carta of Filipino Seafarers, and the European Union's Technical Assistance to the Philippines.

For the Philippines, a milestone development this year is the enactment of Republic Act No. 12021, also known as the Magna Carta of Filipino Seafarers with the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) now formally assuming jurisdiction over maritime education. We look forward to constructive dialogues on elevating the quality and relevance of maritime education and training. We place great value on the Netherlands' rich experience and exemplary practices in this field.

Aligned with the Magna Carta, we are also determined to reinforce the rights, welfare, and protection of our seafarers, not only within our National Borders, but across the global maritime industry. Our seafarers are the lifeblood of international trade, and it is our collective responsibility to ensure that they receive world class training, fair treatment, and ample opportunities for career advancement.

Additionally, we welcome the opportunity to share updates and engage in meaningful discussion on the ongoing European Union Technical Assistance in the Philippines. This partnership continues to play a pivotal role in fortifying our institutions and aligning our systems with international standards. Through technical assistance and knowledge exchange, we are confident

that our maritime sector will continue to thrive and adapt to the evolving demands of the global industry.

As we navigate today's discussion, may we be guided not only by policy frameworks and institutional mandates, but also by our shared vision, to cultivate a maritime sector that is resilient, inclusive, forward-looking, and deeply anchored in the principles of safety and human dignity.

Furthermore, as we embrace technological advancements and sustainable practices, we must work together to integrate innovation into maritime education and operations. The future of the industry lies in digitalization, green shipping, and enhanced safety protocols, and through our partnership, we can lead the way in shaping a more resilient, efficient, and environmentally responsible maritime sector.

Let this meeting serve as both a testament to our achievements and springboard for deeper collaboration. May our dialogue remain rooted in mutual respect, and may our joint efforts continue to uplift the lives of our seafarers and strengthen the maritime partnership between the Philippines and the Netherlands.

Once again, welcome to the 23rd JCMA Meeting.

Thank you, and mabuhay!