



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
MARITIME INDUSTRY AUTHORITY

OPENING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTION OF THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER

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DAY OF THE FILIPINO SEAFARER 2025 (My Harassment-Free Ship)

Oath Taking of Harbor Pilots and Merchant Marine Officers

25 June 2025, Rizal Park Hotel

A Pleasant Afternoon to All of Us.

To the esteemed Secretary of the Department of Transportation, the Honorable Vivencio B. Dizon (**if present**); to our Assistant Secretary for Maritime, the Honorable Atty. Villamor Ventura S. Plan (**if present**); to the STCW Office Executive Director, Honorable Samuel L. Batalla; Deputy Executive Director Capt. Vicente C. Navarro; MDS OIC-Director Jose Louie Banua; the distinguished Chairman of the Board of Marine Deck Officers, Capt. Danilo G. Arevalo; the esteemed Chairman of the Board of Marine Engineer Officers, C/E Reynaldo S. Rabino; to our other dedicated officials at MARINA; to the diligent members of our event committees; my fellow workers in government; and most importantly, to our dear seafarers and their beloved families and friends who join us today.

We are gathered once again for a truly momentous occasion: the Oath Taking Ceremony for our new Harbor Pilots and Merchant Marine Officers. This ceremony is the culmination of years of hard work, sacrifice, and unwavering dedication. Today, you will take an oath that transcends mere words. It is a solemn vow to embody the highest principles of your profession—a pledge of integrity, competence, and an unshakeable commitment to duty.

As you embark on this new chapter, you inherit a legacy of excellence that has made Filipino seafarers renowned across the globe. You are not just navigators of ships; you are now stewards of a proud tradition.

Last year, we emphasized the foundational principle of "Safety First!" This principle remains, and will always be, the bedrock and steadfast foundation of all maritime operations. However, this year, the International Maritime Organization challenges us to deepen our understanding of what safety truly means with the theme for the Day of the Seafarer: "My Harassment-Free Ship."

This theme calls on us to recognize that safety is not limited to the physical integrity of the vessel or the technical proficiency of its crew. True safety is holistic. It encompasses the mental, emotional, and psychological well-being of every single person on board. A ship cannot be truly safe if its crew is operating under the shadow

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of harassment, bullying, or discrimination. A culture of fear erodes communication, compromises teamwork, and ultimately, jeopardizes the safety of life at sea.

As our newly minted officers and pilots, you are on the front lines of championing this crucial advocacy. Your authority comes with the profound responsibility to cultivate an environment of respect, dignity, and psychological safety. This is not a passive role; it requires active leadership. It means fostering open communication where every crew member, regardless of rank, feels safe to speak up. It means intervening when you witness injustice and setting a zero-tolerance policy for any form of harassment.

This responsibility aligns perfectly with our cherished Filipino values. The spirit of “pakikipagkapwa-tao”—of seeing humanity in others and treating them with dignity—must be the guiding compass in your leadership. To the management level officers among you, the duty to mold your junior officers now includes impressing upon them the critical importance of creating a just and respectful workplace. By doing so, you will not only ensure a safer voyage but also inspire a new generation of seafarers who lead with both skill and compassion.

We at MARINA could not be prouder to witness this milestone in your careers. You have triumphed over immense challenges to be here today, and for that, you have our utmost respect and admiration. I salute each and every one of you.

To the families and loved ones present: thank you. Your unwavering support, your patience through long months of separation, and your constant prayers are the silent anchors that keep our seafarers steady through the roughest seas. Your role in their well-being is immeasurable, and we honor your sacrifices today as well. We humbly ask that You continue to be their source of strength and their steadfast support.

Now, as we continue this meaningful celebration of the Day of the Filipino Seafarer and the Oath Taking Ceremony for our newly licensed Harbor Pilots and Merchant Marine Officers, it is my distinct honor to introduce our keynote speaker.

He is no stranger to challenges, having held key leadership positions in both the public and private sectors. Throughout his career, he has consistently championed development anchored on good governance, strategic innovation, and people-centered programs. As the Secretary of the Department of Transportation, he has been instrumental in accelerating infrastructure projects, improving transport systems, and strengthening inter-agency cooperation to better serve the Filipino people.

Under his leadership, the Department of Transportation has remained firm in its support for the maritime industry, recognizing the indispensable role of our seafarers, our harbor pilots, and marine professionals in keeping trade flowing, connecting our islands, and projecting the strength of the Filipino workforce across the globe.

Although unable to join us in person today, he has taken the time to prepare a special message for all of you, our newly licensed Harbor Pilots and Merchant Marine Officers, who will now serve as guardians of our nation's maritime gateway and ambassadors of Filipino maritime excellence.

To deliver his message on his behalf, we are honored to welcome the Assistant Secretary for Maritime of the Department of Transportation, Villamor Ventura S. Plan.

Ladies and gentlemen, the keynote message of Secretary Vivencio B. Dizon, to be delivered by Asec. Plan.

Let us all listen attentively to his message.

Again, congratulations to our new officers and pilots! May you have fair winds, following seas, and harassment-free ships. Thank you, and Mabuhay!