



Building on the momentum of the first part of our Philippines report, this second report continues to spotlight the Philippines' vision for inclusive growth and innovation.

This edition features insights from the Japanese Embassy in Manila, the Japan External Trade Organization, the Philippines-Japan Economic Cooperation Committee and the Japanese International Cooperation Agency. It also highlights the Philippine Veterans Investment Development Corp. Industrial Authority, the AppleOne Group and the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.



Read part one of the report:  
<https://bit.ly/PH25-pt1>

Read the full report at:  
[sms-bridges.com/PH25](https://sms-bridges.com/PH25)  
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# Philippines: A vision of progress for Expo 2025 and beyond

## Japan-Philippines relations making remarkable advances

As Japan and the Philippines approach their 70th anniversary of friendship in 2026, Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines Kazuya Endo shared his thoughts on the continuing evolution of their strategic bilateral relationship.

"In recent years, Japan-Philippines relations have made remarkable progress in various areas such as security, economy and people-to-people exchanges," he said. "Our ties have grown from strength to strength, strategically embracing realities toward mutual prosperity."

On defense cooperation, the Philippines became one of the recipients of Japan's Official Security Assistance and is the only country to be granted OSA funding for two consecutive years.

"Through this scheme, Japan has steadily supported the Philippines with military and defense equipment transfers to the Philippine Navy and Philippine Air Force," Endo noted. Referring to maritime cooperative activity, he also



Kazuya Endo, Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines

highlighted Japan's promotion of multilateral cooperation in the Indo-Pacific "with other like-minded countries such as the United States, Australia and Canada."

Recent high-level visits, including that of Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, have paved the way for bolstering operational collaboration. "The visit marked significant progress on the Reciprocal Access Agreement and the start of ne-

gotiations on an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement," Endo said.

On the economic front, Japan supports the Philippines through major infrastructure projects, such as the Metro Manila Subway Project, the North-South Commuter Railway and the Davao City Bypass Construction Project, along with initiatives on energy and digital infrastructure. "Japan is committed to leveraging its strengths and experience to support elevating the Philippines to an upper-middle-income status," he added.

Endo views the Osaka Expo as a key opportunity to deepen bilateral ties. "The expo creates a space for deepening international business linkages and partnerships."

With the 70th anniversary of friendship approaching, both countries look ahead to closer cooperation built on enduring friendship and shared regional goals. ■

Read the full interview here:  
[sms-bridges.com/PH25-Amb](https://sms-bridges.com/PH25-Amb)

## Your partner in business, your partner in progress

The Philippine Veterans Investment Development Corp. is powering regional progress through its 3,000-hectare industrial estate in Misamis Oriental, Mindanao.

Established in 1974 under Presidential Decree No. 538, Phividec was created to disperse industry to the countryside, foster socioeconomic development and support the employment of veterans and retirees of the Armed Forces of the Philippines through nation-building initiatives.

Today, the estate hosts a wide range of industries — from power, petroleum and logistics to steel processing, activated carbon production, food manufacturing and light industries. Japanese companies have played a vital role since its inception, beginning with the Philippine Sinter Corp. (a subsidiary of JFE Steel), and continuing



Joseph Donato J. Bernedo, Administrator of Phividec

with Nippon Sanso Ingasco Philippines Inc. and Jacobi Carbons Philippines Inc., the world's largest producer of coconut shell-based activated carbon and a subsidiary of Osaka Gas Chemicals Co.

Administrator Joseph Donato J. Bernedo is leading Phividec's next phase of development. While pursuing the long-term vision of an integrated steel mill — 300 hectares have been reserved — Bernedo is actively working to diversify the estate's industrial base by targeting electronics, semiconductors, electric vehicle components, tourism and commercial ventures.

Strategically located along a protected deep-sea harbor, Phividec connects the cities of Surigao, Davao, Zamboanga and Bukidnon province through the Mindanao Container Terminal. With a 13-meter berth depth in an area unlikely to experience typhoons and an ongoing expansion to 600 meters, the port is positioned to become the southern gateway of Philippine trade.

Other major initiatives include a bulk water project, an 18-building

housing complex and a 20-megawatt solar facility. Phividec also hosts two schools producing 2,000 graduates annually and a Technical Education and Skills Development Authority center that is being upgraded to a 200 million peso (¥51.2 million) facility offering courses in automation and robotics. The authority is also working toward ISO certification to align with global standards.

"We offer a unique combination of infrastructure, incentives and location," Bernedo said. "This is the right time to invest in Phividec." ■

<https://piamo.gov.ph/>



## AppleOne Group: Championing world-class development in the central Philippines

In the Philippines' fast-growing Visayas and Mindanao regions, AppleOne Group has emerged as one of the country's most distinctive developers, combining global-caliber projects with deep, local commitment.

Led by President and CEO Ray Go Manigsaca, AppleOne's portfolio has grown across the residential, commercial, hospitality and health care sectors, and more recently, renewable energy. From its headquarters in Cebu province, the company is steadily expanding across the Visayas and Mindanao regions, adding to its growing national footprint.



Ray Go Manigsaca, President and CEO of AppleOne

"AppleOne started with a clear purpose: to build developments that make a lasting difference in Cebu, one of the Philippines' fastest-growing regions outside of Metro Manila," Manigsaca said.

"What I'm most proud of are the values that have always guided our growth: We build not just to expand our footprint, but to uplift communities and contribute to the long-term progress of the region we call home."

Awards in 2018. This was followed by the groundbreaking of the JW Marriott Panglao Island Resort & Residences, further anchoring the developer's luxury portfolio.

In the meantime, the Mahi Center, a dynamic mixed-use development in Lapu-Lapu City, reinforces Cebu's status as an economic and innovation hub.

"These projects," he mentioned, "reflect our belief that world-class development should be rooted in local authenticity, operational excellence and long-term impact."

Beyond real estate, AppleOne is also developing critical infrastructure for inclusive growth. Its health care arm, anchored

by VisayasMed City Center in Cebu, reflects the group's commitment to accessible, quality care in the region. In the meantime, through its new subsidiary, Astronergy, AppleOne is supporting the country's renewable energy agenda with solar power projects that align with national sustainability goals and the growing infrastructure needs of the Visayas and Mindanao regions.

But what truly sets AppleOne apart is its deliberate approach to place-making and partnerships.

"We don't just follow trends, but anticipate needs, listen to local insight and respond with developments that are both globally competitive and locally grounded," Manigsaca explained, noting that each project is purpose-built not just for prestige, but for long-term value and positive impact.

company to align with international expectations and position itself as a credible partner for discerning investors.

Looking forward, AppleOne aims to build more integrated communities through shared progress that combines wellness, tourism and sustainable living without compromising its identity as a regional change-maker. A core part of this growth strategy will involve deepening its network of trusted partnerships.

"Our goal is to build developments that outlast trends, to build projects that elevate the region, serve people better, and stand as symbols of what can be achieved through purpose-driven growth," he affirmed. "And this purpose doesn't stop with real estate. It extends to health, clean energy and the infrastructure that powers sustainable communities."



Mahi Center, Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu province



The Residences at Sheraton Cebu Mactan Resort

This intentionality extends to AppleOne's cross-border relationships. Its collaborations with Japanese partners, for instance, have helped raise the bar internally.

"We've learned so much from our Japanese counterparts, particularly around precision, long-term thinking and thoughtful design," he said. "Those values now shape how we approach our developments, from engineering to after-sales service." These partnerships have enabled the

As the Philippines continues to rise as a destination for lifestyle tourism and cross-border investment, AppleOne invites like-minded global partners, especially from Japan, to join in creating the next generation of future-forward developments in Southeast Asia. ■

Read the full interview:  
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