

PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY (1730H-OS)

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:
A QUESTION OF BALANCE

**Joint Address of H.E. President Fidel V. Ramos
Closing Ceremonies for the Conference on
Population, Environment & Peace, and the
Opening Ceremonies for the Conference
of National Councils for Sustainable
Development in Asia and the Pacific
PICC, Manila, Philippines
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INTRODUCTION

AS WE CLOSE TODAY THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION, ENVIRONMENT AND PEACE, WE ALSO OPEN THE CONFERENCE OF NATIONAL COUNCILS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC.

YOU COULD SAY THAT ONE HAPPY RESULT OF THIS IS THAT YOU HAVE TO LISTEN TO ME ONLY ONCE, AND I FOR MY PART HAVE TO GIVE ONE ADDRESS.

YET IT IS NOT SO MUCH BECAUSE OF THRIFT THAT THESE TWO CONFERENCES HAVE BEEN LINKED TOGETHER HERE. THE CONCERNS AND THEMES OF BOTH CONFERENCES ARE IN EVERY WAY RELATED.

THE CONFERENCE ON POPULATION, ENVIRONMENT AND PEACE FOCUSES OUR ATTENTION ON HUMAN AND ECOLOGICAL SECURITY. THE CONFERENCE OF NATIONAL COUNCILS OF ASIA-PACIFIC FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ADDRESSES THE STRATEGY OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WHICH FUSES TWO PARAMOUNT CONCERNS OF OUR TIME: THE NEED TO ACHIEVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE NEED TO CONSERVE THE ENVIRONMENT THAT IS THE LIFE BELT OF MANKIND.

ONE NATURALLY LEADS TO THE OTHER, AS IT WERE. THIS IS PUTTING TOGETHER, IN A SYNERGISTIC WAY, THE GLOBAL VIEW WITH REGIONAL CONCERNS WHICH WILL LEAD TO EFFECTIVE LOCAL ACTION.

RP CONTRIBUTION TO EARTH CHARTER

DURING THE PAST TWO DAYS, YOU HAVE AFFIRMED THE PRINCIPLE THAT GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL CARE, A WORLD-WIDE CULTURE FOR PEACE, AND HUMAN

DEVELOPMENT GOALS ARE INTIMATELY RELATED. YOU HAVE BEEN CHALLENGED TO CREATE INITIATIVES --NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY -- TO TRANSFORM VISIONS INTO REALITIES, AND CONCEPTS INTO DEEDS.

IT IS ALREADY A SIGN OF PROGRESS IN PROMOTING HUMAN AND ECOLOGICAL SECURITY THAT THE COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED HERE HAVE UNANIMOUSLY AGREED TO ACCEPT A HIGHER STANDARD OF HUMAN EFFORT AND ACHIEVEMENT FROM HERE ON.

BECAUSE OF YOUR VALUED DELIBERATIONS, WE CAN SAY THAT TOGETHER WE ARE LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS LEADING TO A NEW WORLD WHERE OUR SOCIETIES AND OUR PEOPLES CAN FEEL MORE SECURE ENVIRONMENTALLY AND SOCIALLY. AND WE CAN DARE TO HOPE THAT THERE IS RISING TODAY A VAST ARMY OF DEDICATED STEWARDS WHO CAN TRULY INSURE THE SURVIVAL OF HUMANKIND ON MOTHER EARTH.

FOR US IN THE PHILIPPINES, IT IS A PRIVILEGE THAT WE CAN MAKE OUR OWN CONTRIBUTION TO THE EARTH CHARTER, WHICH WILL BE ADOPTED BY THE FAMILY OF NATIONS IN 1997. THIS CONTRIBUTION EMBODIES OUR COMMITMENTS AND PLEDGES TO THIS NOBLE IDEAL.

WHILE AS A NATION WE WILL STRIVE TO DEVELOP OUR ECONOMY, STRENGTHEN OUR SOCIAL COHESION AND LIFT OUR PEOPLE FROM THE MIRE OF POVERTY, AS A NATION WE ALSO RECOGNIZE OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO HELP IN THE CARE OF OUR ENDANGERED PLANET. WE MUST -- AND WE WILL -- DO OUR PART.

DEVELOPMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENT

IT TOOK SOME TIME FOR OUR PEOPLES AND OUR GOVERNMENTS TO FULLY REALIZE WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO OUR PLANET. BUT SINCE THE EARTH SUMMIT IN RIO IN 1992, NONE OF US CAN BE UNAWARE ANYMORE OF THE PROBLEM. SOME CAN ONLY PRETEND NOT TO KNOW.

ESSENTIALLY, WE ALL SHOULD UNDERSTAND BETTER BY NOW "THE TWO-WAY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENT." IN OUR RESPECTIVE WAYS, WE HAVE ALL LEARNED TO OUR SORROW THAT DEVELOPMENT CAN AND HAS CAUSED SERIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE.

AND WE HAVE ALSO LEARNED THAT ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND RELATED PROBLEMS UNDERMINE THE GOALS OF DEVELOPMENT, PARTICULARLY FUTURE PRODUCTIVITY ON A SUSTAINABLE BASIS.

OUR COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE HAS SHOWN US THE FOLLY OF PROGRESS MADE TODAY THAT HAS AS ITS PRICE THE FORECLOSURE OF PROGRESS ANTICIPATED FOR TOMORROW.

IT WAS IN THE SEARCH FOR A WIN-WIN SOLUTION THAT "SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT" WAS RECOGNIZED AS THE ONLY RATIONAL AND ACCEPTABLE ANSWER.

THROUGH THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, OUR COUNTRIES HAVE COME TO RECOGNIZE THAT IT IS TRULY POSSIBLE TO DEVELOP AND YET CONSERVE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY IN OUR SOCIETIES.

AND IT IS A MEASURE OF HOW FAR WE HAVE ALREADY GONE -- IN THIS CRUCIAL PROGRAM AND IN OUR ASIA-PACIFIC REGION -- THAT TODAY WE ARE CONVENING THIS CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL COUNCILS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC.

ONE ENVIRONMENTAL EXPERT IN OUR COUNTRY CONFIDENTLY SAYS THAT WHAT IS TAKING PLACE TODAY IS A SILENT REVOLUTION THAT HAS COMPELLED MOST OF HUMANKIND TO RETHINK THEIR PRIORITIES, THEIR VIEW OF DEVELOPMENT, AND THEIR PERSPECTIVES FOR THE FUTURE. IT IS A REVOLUTION THAT HAS GONE THROUGH POLITICAL AND CULTURAL BARRIERS, UNITED FORMER ENEMIES, AND PENETRATED THE WALLS OF NATIONAL INTERESTS.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN RP

IT AMAZES ME NO END TO RECALL THAT THE REVOLUTION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IS NO MORE THAN A DECADE OLD TODAY. YET, ALREADY IT HAS INSPIRED COMMITMENT FROM MANY GOVERNMENTS AND PEOPLES AROUND THE GLOBE.

IT IS NOT DIFFICULT TO SEE WHY, FOR THE EVIDENCE OF MAN'S NEGLECT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURE, RESULTING FROM HIS RELENTLESS AND YET SHORT-SIGHTED DRIVE TO PRODUCE WEALTH AND EXPAND HIS TURF, HAS BECOME A POWERFUL FORCE THAT HAS TURNED CITIZENS' DISMAY INTO POLITICAL POWER. IN MANY COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY THE MORE ADVANCED, THIS POWER HAS TURNED INTO VOTES, AND VOTES INTO ENVIRONMENTALLY-CONCERNED POLITICIANS.

IN COUNTRIES LIKE THE PHILIPPINES, IT IS ONLY NOW THAT WE ARE BEGINNING TO FEEL THAT, INDEED, OUR PEOPLE HAVE STARTED FULFILLING THEIR SHARE OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY BY TURNING THEIR CONVICTIONS INTO POLITICAL SIGNALS. DURING THE MAY 1995 NATIONAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS, WE SAW NOT A FEW CANDIDATES GET ELECTED ON AN ENVIRONMENTAL PLATFORM.

IN FACT, WE ARE SEEING SUCH CHANGES HAPPEN GLOBALLY. WITH THE END OF THE COLD WAR, NATIONS HAVE REDIRECTED THEIR EFFORTS TOWARD CONFRONTING GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL REALITIES SUCH AS CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS POSSIBLE EFFECTS ON COASTAL COMMUNITIES AND NATIONAL BORDERS, FOOD SECURITY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURAL RESOURCE BASES, AND THE PROMOTION OF HEALTH FROM A CLEANER ENVIRONMENT. FACING THESE ISSUES NEEDS A NEW PERSPECTIVE, ESPECIALLY IN THE AREAS OF GLOBAL AND REGIONAL COOPERATION, NATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE, AND THE ALLOCATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES.

WE IN THE PHILIPPINES HAVE BEEN FORTUNATE PERHAPS IN ADOPTING THE PARADIGM OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AS OFFICIAL POLICY AS EARLY AS 1989. AND AFTER TAKING PART IN THE RIO SUMMIT AND ACCEDING TO AGENDA 21, WE IMMEDIATELY CREATED THE PHILIPPINE COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (PCSD) IN 1992.

AND WE ARE NOW FULLY ENGAGED IN OVERCOMING SECTORAL DIVISIVENESS AMONG US AND INTEGRATING NON-GOVERNMENTAL AND PEOPLE'S ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs AND POs) IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES OF THE RAMOS ADMINISTRATION.

THE PCSD IN MANY WAYS BREAKS NEW GROUND IN PROVIDING A MECHANISM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THAT TRANSCENDS THE LIMITATIONS OF TRADITIONAL BUREAUCRATIC INSTITUTIONS, BECAUSE GOVERNMENT AND NGOs SIT AS CO-EQUALS IN THE COUNCIL, WHICH REPRESENTS THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF DECISION-MAKING IN GOVERNMENT.

COOPERATION WITH OTHERS

AT THE SAME TIME, WE HAVE EXPLORED REGIONAL MECHANISMS FOR COOPERATION TOWARD SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION

AMONG THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN), FOR EXAMPLE, ALREADY HAS A HISTORY TO LOOK BACK TO. AS FAR BACK AS 1981, ASEAN ISSUED THE MANILA DECLARATION WHICH CALLED FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE ASEAN ENVIRONMENT AND THE SUSTAINABILITY OF ITS NATURAL RESOURCES TO ENSURE CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT AND ATTAIN THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR OUR PEOPLES.

THE MANILA DECLARATION WAS FOLLOWED BY THE BANGKOK DECLARATION OF 1984 WHICH ADOPTED AN ASEAN STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT THAT INCLUDED ENVIRONMENT DIMENSIONS IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING; BY THE JAKARTA DECLARATION OF 1987 THAT CALLED FOR ASEAN MEMBERS TO ADOPT THE PRINCIPLE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AS A GUIDE AND INTEGRATING FACTOR IN ASEAN'S COMMON EFFORTS; THE KUALA LUMPUR ACCORD OF 1990 THAT MOVED THE ASEAN TOWARD TAKING CONCRETE STEPS AT SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT; THE SINGAPORE DECLARATION WHICH CALLED FOR INTENSIFIED COOPERATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT; AND, MOST RECENTLY, THE BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN RESOLUTION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT CALLING FOR THE ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ASEAN STRATEGIC PLAN OF ACTION ON THE ENVIRONMENT, INCLUDING THE HARMONIZATION AND STANDARDIZATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STANDARDS THROUGHOUT THE REGION.

THESE AND THE CONCRETE STEPS TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT THESE DECLARATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS REFLECT THE VITALITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION IN THE ASEAN REGION. WE HAVE BROKEN GROUND IN WORKING TOGETHER FOR COMMON PURPOSES, WHILE YET ACCEPTING THAT WE HAVE VARIED NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO FULFILL.

SO WE FULLY UNDERSTAND THE IMPORT OF THIS CONFERENCE WHICH HOPES TO BRING OUT A COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF OUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS ASIAN AND PACIFIC NATIONS UNDER AGENDA 21.

PRACTICAL MOVES FOR ASIA-PACIFIC

AT THE LEADERS' SUMMIT OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION (APEC) IN SEATTLE IN NOVEMBER 1993, I CALLED FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT TO MAKE UP FOR THE ASSAULT AND ABUSE UPON NATURE IN THE PAST. I EXPRESSED THE HOPE THEN THAT WITHIN APEC, THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES SHOULD BE ASSISTED IN ORDER THAT THEY WOULD NOT DETERIORATE INTO NEOCOLONIAL STATUS WITH RESPECT TO THEIR DEVELOPED NEIGHBORS IN ASIA-PACIFIC.

I CALLED ATTENTION TO A MEANS BY WHICH THE DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES COULD JOINTLY ADDRESS ECOLOGICAL CONCERNS BY TURNING A MODERN-DAY PROBLEM INTO AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MEANINGFUL ACTION. THE PROBLEM I REFERRED TO IS THE HEAVY DEBT BURDEN OF MANY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES; THE APPROACH I PROPOSED IS THE DEBT-FOR-NATURE SWAP AND OTHER DEBT SWAPS TO FINANCE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT UNDERTAKINGS, SUCH AS DEBT-FOR-EDUCATION AND DEBT-FOR-CHILDREN.

MY COUNTRY WELCOMES SUCH ARRANGEMENTS THAT WE HAVE ALREADY HAD WITH THE UNITED STATES, TOTALING U\$11.5 MILLION IN FAVOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS OF THE WORLD WILDLIFE FOUNDATION IN THE PHILIPPINES, AND WITH FRANCE, TOTALING 20 MILLION FRENCH FRANCS (OR U\$4.1 MILLION), IN FAVOR OF RESETTLEMENT PROJECTS FOR VICTIMS OF THE MOUNT PINATUBO DISASTER. WE ARE CURRENTLY NEGOTIATING WITH THE SWISS GOVERNMENT FOR ABOUT U\$30 MILLION WORTH OF DEBT SWAPS IN FAVOR OF OUR SOCIAL REFORM AGENDA.

THESE ARE STILL LIMITED AMOUNTS, TO BE SURE, SHOWING US THAT THERE REMAINS GREAT SCOPE FOR MORE OF THESE ARRANGEMENTS TO BE TAPPED, POSSIBLY WITH THE LARGE MULTILATERAL DONORS AS WELL. THE FINANCE MINISTERS OF APEC HAVE, IN FACT, BEEN MEETING REGULARLY TO CRAFT CREATIVE PACKAGES TO BALANCE FINANCIAL BURDENS VIS-A-VIS PEOPLES' SURVIVABILITY.

I THEREFORE CALL ON THE CREDITOR COUNTRIES AND INSTITUTIONS, REPRESENTED BY THE G-7 NATIONS NOW MEETING, COINCIDENTALLY, IN HALIFAX, CANADA, TO BREAK NEW GROUND IN ADDRESSING THESE TWO MODERN-DAY PROBLEMS OF GLOBAL CONCERN -- POOR-COUNTRY INDEBTEDNESS AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION -- THROUGH MORE OF THESE SWAPS. IN SO DOING, WE WILL ACTUALLY BE SWAPPING PROBLEMS FOR SOLUTIONS, AND MOVE ALL OF US CLOSER TO TRUE HUMAN AND ECOLOGICAL SECURITY!

CLOSING: THE NEED FOR BALANCE

ON BEHALF OF OUR PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT, I EXTEND HERE TODAY OUR UNQUALIFIED SUPPORT TO THESE TWO CRUCIAL CONFERENCES IN MANILA. AND WE JOIN YOU IN THE PRAYER THAT THEY WILL SERVE AS CRUCIBLES FOR STRATEGIC PLANS AND RESPONSIVE ACTION IN OUR QUEST FOR A BETTER WORLD.

IN CLOSING, LET ME EMPHASIZE THAT WHEN WE SPEAK OF HUMAN AND ECOLOGICAL SECURITY, AND WHEN WE CALL FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT WHILE STRIVING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, WHAT WE ARE REALLY SAYING IS THAT THERE IS A NEED FOR A SUSTAINABLE BALANCE -- BETWEEN MAN AND NATURE, BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

THIS IS A THEME THAT RUNS THROUGH ALL OUR RESPECTIVE CULTURES AND TRADITIONS -- IN THE EAST AS WELL AS IN THE WEST, IN THE NORTH AS IN THE SOUTH. THROW NATURE OUT OF BALANCE, OLD FOLKS TELL US, AND MAN REAPS A HARVEST OF TROUBLE IN LIFE.

THE WISDOM OF THE ANCIENTS ABIDES. WE JUST HAVE TO CONSTANTLY RELEARN IT IN OUR MARCH TO PROGRESS IN OUR TIME.

MABUHAY (LONG LIFE) EARTH 2000!!!, 3000!!!, 4000!!! AD INFINITUM!!!

THANK YOU. SALAMAT PO!