

Opening Remarks

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The period of welcoming you is not through. As a matter of fact, I'm adding a welcome to you to this Conference which is co-sponsored by the NSDB — which has provided substantial support for this Conference — and the NEDA, in particular, the regional office the distinguished representative of which is Director Lindy Morell. When I was in Manila, I thought I would be meeting a beautiful lady by the name of Lindy Morell. To my surprise, Lindy Morell is not a *Linda mujer* but a handsome gentleman.

The other sponsors of this Conference are the UP Alumni Association with its president, Dr. Julio Dolorico, the U.P. College at Tacloban represented by Dr. Cuna who welcomed us to this lovely campus of the College; and, of course, the Philippine Political Science Association itself.

I would like also, initially, to put on record our appreciation for the presence of the guest speaker, Rear Admiral Ogbinar, the Mayor of this very hospitable City of Tacloban, Mayor Cinco, and also the warm welcome greetings from Dr. Cuna, in behalf of Dean Catane.

When Admiral Ogbinar was delivering his remarks, Mayor Cinco and I were engaged in a running commentary. And I was reacting to Admiral Ogbinar's statement that the problem is to eradicate poverty in Region VIII. Unfortunately, this is easier said than done. But Mayor Cinco added a remark that the saddest thing about poverty is that it is a result of social arrangement. And from there, my wild imagination went back to Jean Jacques Rousseau and his essay entitled "On the Arrogance of Inequality" tracing all these inequities that we have with us to a very simple thing, namely, human greed. In other words, when the first man staked his claim and said: "This land is mine," that was the beginning of the problem of inequality.

I will not try to steal the thunder from the Conference Chairman who will address the issues and concerns in regional development except to say that, perhaps, all the efforts in this Conference are

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directed to this simple point — the undoing of the consequences of what that fellow said ("This land is mine."). This is a herculean task. But we have to find out how to undo the consequences of human greed.

Greed is a universal phenomenon which is not confined to the Americans in their imperialism, or to the communist countries with their own brand of acquisitiveness. It is also characteristic of Filipinos when we turn our backs to the nation and behave as individuals.

Now, the agenda for development is really something analogous to the effort of pushing a cart, a pullcart, up a hill if you do not have wheels. Can you imagine how difficult it is to push a cart up a hill if we do not have wheels? I call these wheels the wheels of development. And the analogy is the wheel. But we cannot have part of a wheel. It must be the entire wheel, namely, you must have the outer wheel, you must have the hub, you must have the connecting spokes representing the spokes of services that make the process of development possible. When you have the whole thing in place, then you can imagine that the task of pushing that cart up the hill will be so much easier.

Insofar as this conference is concerned, I would like to imagine this as an enlarged session of the RDC, the Regional Development Council. Here we have a panel of experts who will come up to discuss the various aspects of regional development. There will be expert discussants. An open forum will ensue for a broader discussion on the issues presented. Knowing your interest and knowledge, I am certain that the discussions will be enlightening.

For the rest of my opening remarks, I'd like to inform you about the place of this conference in the network of activities of the Philippine Political Science Association. The PPSA, as one of its major activities, has been holding a series of public lectures in cooperation with other organizations. We have had very distinguished scholars addressing the general membership of the PPSA in these lectures.

A second activity takes on an international character. In fact, we have been conducting negotiations through Dr. Loretta Makasiar Sicat towards affiliation with the International Political Science Association based in Montreal, Canada and in Paris, France. The talks have progressed and have reached the point where we are about to meet with counterparts in Southeast Asia for the formation of a regional political science association. In this connection, we

have been building up members of this Association throughout the country so that we will have a base of strength when we face our counterparts in the Asian region and in the world. Thus, the rest of the activities of the PPSA have taken the form of a series of regional conferences which will culminate in a national conference.

We started with a regional conference in Cotabato on March 7 and 8 on the theme "Political Integration and Nation Building." The conference was tremendous. The leaders of that region, led by Commissioner Datumanong, participated. The discussions were passionate but frank. I think we generated very rich proceedings from that conference.

Then we went to Iloilo City for the Regional Conference on "Development Politics." The proceedings are also very bulky, and I believe, very fruitful.

This regional conference in Tacloban with the theme of "Agenda Regional Development," I hope, will be equally productive. Already the signs of a successful conference are there with our initial impressions on the high-powered conference organization.

Next week, the last of the regional conferences will be held in Baguio City. You are welcome, if you happen to be travelling up north, to attend this regional conference. The emphasis will be "Regional Priorities as an Object of National Development."

For the national conference, we are reserving the first report and discussion of the regional conferences.

Starting next week, we will start the sessions of six seminar-workshops simultaneously. You are welcome to join any one of them. We will be holding them between July 22 and September 19 at the premises of the Asian Institute of Tourism which has the fullest conference facilities and the most modern lounge in the Diliman area today. One group is on agrarian reform and rural development. Another one is on constitutional problems, focusing in particular, on the evolving mechanism for broad citizen participation. A third group is on political theory, focusing on the quest for social justice. This will be led by Prof. Francisco Nemenzo, Jr. A fourth seminar-workshop is on problems of development administration. Dean Raul de Guzman will be chairing that session. The fifth is on Philippine Foreign Policy, addressing in particular the problems of foreign economic policies. Former U.P. President and former Secretary of Foreign Affairs Salvador P. Lopez will be chairing that session and joining him will be individuals like Undersecretary Valdepeñas, retired ambassador Juan M. Arreglado, maybe former president of

the Philippine Chamber of Industry, Augusto Cesar Espiritu, a few knowledgeable professors in the UP, colleagues throughout the greater Manila area, and members of the Association who are knowledgeable or interested or both.

Now at the end of the seminar sessions, there will be an executive summary which will be reported at the opening plenary of the national conference alongside the report of the regional conferences. I hope many of you will be there. The general membership of the PPSA attending the national conference will then break up into groups for small group discussions. The idea is to depart from the traditional way of conducting the activities of the PPSA, where, once a year, in a national conference, speakers are lined up, many of whom cannot submit their papers ahead of time. In the conference itself, some of them read their papers or notes. A few members dominate the proceedings and the rest are merely passive listeners. As the conference progresses, you will notice that fewer and fewer people are in attendance and some of those who attend are sleeping in the back rows.

Thus, this time we will break up the conference into smaller discussion groups where you may sit with a panel depending on your professional interest. Then everybody comes together in a final plenary session to firm up findings and recommendations. At the end of it, we will put the proceedings together between two hard covers and make representations with the President of the Philippines as the leading policy-maker in the country and say, "Mr. President, here are the findings and recommendations of our professional group." In that manner, I hope this Association will at long last have an impact on national policies.

With these words of explanation, I now declare the regional conference on regional development formally open.