

## ADDRESS

*By*

HON. CARLOS P. GARCIA

Vice-President of the Philippines

Speaking on behalf of His Excellency President Ramon Magsaysay and as Chairman of the Coordination Board of the Statistical Training Centre

My countrymen and friends:

It is indeed a pleasure and a satisfaction on my part to take part in the inauguration of the Statistical Training Centre. Statistics are a vital need to the nation, hence the opening of this Training Center answers an imperative need of the times.

Statistics sounds dull and prosaic, but it has truly dramatic importance for you and me, especially at the present crucial time of our history. It is the scientific name for facts—facts that can be counted and converted into precise knowledge on the basis of which we can master-plan our government program of action, and execute such plan—for the benefit of all of our people.

Without facts in statistical form, our government, both in Congress and in the Administration, will make decisions in vital matters in the dark—on the basis of guesswork. We can ill afford to do this. We must have accurate, precise and prompt information on the welfare of our people, on the capacities and utilization of our manpower, on our natural resources, our production, the condition of our economy, and the rate of progress we are making.

Let me cite the case of rice in the Philippines. We are a rice-producing and rice-eating nation. If we produce too little, we must buy in the world market. If we can produce more than we require, we can sell, to the benefit of our trade position with other countries. How can we decide what to do? We cannot wait to find out whether people have too much or too little rice, for decisions to buy must be made ahead of the harvest. Therefore, we must have the facts, and our information must be reliable and correct. How is this possible? To

our dismay, we have found that information not collected with needed accuracy, not collected methodically and in the best possible way, leads us to wrong and costly decisions. Since the supposed facts on which we relied in previous years were wrong, we bought rice which we did not need, sold it at a loss, and as a result the Philippine people lost many millions of pesos.

How can we avoid these mistakes with its tragic consequences? Only by good, reliable statistical methods of reporting, analysis and estimating. So we have improved the equipment of the Department of Agriculture by setting up a new Division of Agricultural Economics which will undertake to develop good information on crops harvested, and good estimates of probable yields in periods immediately ahead. But how will they know how to do these things? First, they must be good people, with good technical capacity, and good training. Second, they must know the experience of this country and of other countries in getting reliable information. The same kind of organization and planning will be required in other departments of this Government.

To help us in developing technically qualified people, and to help avail ourselves of the best experience existing elsewhere to come to our aid in solving our statistical problems, we have entered into a cooperative agreement with the United Nations to set up a training center, under the University of the Philippines, here in Manila. I feel it is one of the outstanding achievements of the year that this Center has begun operations, with the assistance of high calibre experts supplied and to be supplied by the United Nations from various other countries, now, and in the future, to work with our own technical people in laying the foundations for good statistical services in the Philippines. This will take time and effort along many lines, but we must get on with the task. It is especially fortunate that the international organizations affiliated with the United Nations will be working with us, for they can assist in seeing that we compile statistics comparable to those of other countries.

We must have information relating to all fields involving the welfare of our people. This means that statistical

services throughout the government must be well-planned and well-organized. This will not be easy to accomplish. Every key department and agency has something to offer, all of which must be coordinated from a nation-wide viewpoint. It is especially appropriate that technical guidance and training should be furnished in this field through our great educational institution, the University of the Philippines, cooperating with the international agencies. Through this channel we shall be assured of objective work and assistance, maintaining always a long-range point of view.

It is our aim that the Statistical Training Center, whose in-service-training and developmental activities we are formally launching today, will be engaged for a long time to come in the provision of basic training and in direct advisory work with government agencies which produce and use statistics. It should be a focal point of technical assistance from all sources in this field. This is a government enterprise, and must produce results with lasting value for the benefit of our people. We must aid its growth and help it find its way, even as we benefit from its activities.

I am especially glad that the attention of the Center has already been attracted to the technical problems of assessing our manpower resources, their disposition and capacities, and the amount of employment and unemployment among our people. Exact knowledge on these matters assumes great importance as we seek for effective means of protecting the security and the welfare of our country and its free neighbors. It is necessary that we develop methods of obtaining the vital information on our manpower currently and in a form in which comparisons can be made with other countries.

I take pleasure, therefore, in announcing the opening of the full program of the Statistical Training Center at this time, and urge upon all Departments of the Government the fullest cooperation in the assignment of working time of employees for work with the Center, in connection with the statistical problems with which they must grapple.

I am especially glad, also, to acknowledge the cooperation of sister nations in helping us, through the international or-

ADDRESS — BY HON. CARLOS P. GARCIA

ganizations of which we are members, toward the great objective of peace, development and progress which we share with all peoples. As many of you are already aware, the Philippines is not only a recipient of expert advice under the Technical Assistance Programme of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, but also the provider of expert assistance to other countries under the same programme; a number of Filipinos are also working at the Headquarters of the United Nations and some of its affiliated agencies.

I believe this new Statistical Center can have a brilliant future, for the Philippines, especially through participation in its work by our friends from other countries. This is the first specific move to follow out the objectives of "National Statistics Week" which was proclaimed last January by President Magsaysay. In closing, I wish the Center success in its work and as a means for progress toward a reliable and accurate basis in our job of forging a better world.