



ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ORGANIZATION
27TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
10 - 15 SEPTEMBER 2006 ▲ CEBU CITY, PHILIPPINES

Keynote Address

H. E. GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
(President of the Republic of the Philippines)

**THE ROLE OF AIPO IN BUILDING A CARING
AND SHARING COMMUNITY IN THE ASEAN REGION**

*SPEAKER JOSE DE VENECIA,
PRESIDENT OF THE ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ORGANIZATION,
DISTINGUISHED PARLIAMENTARIANS FROM THE ASEAN REGION,
MEMBERS OF THE AIPO,
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,*

LET ME BEGIN BY WELCOMING ALL OF YOU TO THE PHILIPPINES AND CONGRATULATING SPEAKER JOSE DE VENECIA AND THE PHILIPPINE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ORGANIZING THIS EVENT.

I AM ALSO TAKING THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK OUR FRIENDS IN ASEAN ONCE AGAIN FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN BRINGING A JUST AND LASTING PEACE TO MINDANAO.

AT A TIME WHEN THERE ARE LINGERING DOUBTS ABOUT THE ABILITY OF THE W-T-O TO MANAGE GLOBAL TRADE, AND THE UNITED NATIONS TO RESTORE PEACE AND ORDER AROUND THE WORLD – THE ROLE OF ASEAN BECOMES EVEN MORE CENTRAL TO PEACE AND ORDER, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL STABILITY, AND A GROWING ECONOMY IN EACH OF OUR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES.

FOR ONE YEAR, THE PHILIPPINES WILL LEAD ASEAN IN ACHIEVING ITS GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF COMMUNITY BUILDING. WE WILL HOST VARIOUS ASEAN MEETINGS INCLUDING THE 12TH ASEAN SUMMIT IN DECEMBER 2006.

THE PHILIPPINES HAS CHOSEN THE THEME “ONE CARING AND SHARING COMMUNITY” FOR THE 12TH ASEAN SUMMIT. THE THEME DEFINES THE IDEALS OF A REGIONAL COMMUNITY THAT THE PHILIPPINES HOPES TO BECOME THE NORM IN ASEAN. OUR VISION IS FOR ASEAN TO GROW AS A COMMUNITY THAT VALUES THE COMMON GOOD OF THE REGION, ONE THAT TRULY CARES FOR THE WELFARE OF ITS PEOPLE AND ITS ENVIRONMENT, AND ONE THAT SELFLESSLY SHARES ITS RESOURCES FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL.

UNDER THAT TIME, WE WILL PUSH FOR CLOSER COOPERATION IN ASEAN ENERGY, SECURITY, COUNTER-TERRORISM, THE WELFARE AND PROTECTION OF MIGRANT WORKERS, AND THE FORMATION OF AN ASEAN CHARTER.

AIPO'S IMPORTANCE TO THE ASEAN HAS NEVER BEEN AS VALUABLE AS IT IS TODAY. ASEAN MEMBER COUNTRIES WILL NEED ALL THE SUPPORT OF THEIR PARLIAMENTS IN RATIFYING REGIONAL AGREEMENTS AND IN LEGISLATING NATIONAL LAWS THAT WILL HELP REALIZE OUR GOAL OF BUILDING A CARING AND SHARING ASEAN COMMUNITY.

ON ENERGY AND SECURITY, AIPO MEMBERS CAN CONSIDER ADOPTING NATIONAL LEGISLATION THAT WOULD BE IN HARMONY WITH SIMILAR LAWS OF OTHER MEMBER COUNTRIES TO EASE THE EFFECTS ON OUR PEOPLE AND OUR ECONOMIES OF OIL PRICES THAT REMAIN OUT OF CONTROL.

I PROPOSE THAT AIPO AGREE ON COLLECTIVE DEVELOPMENT ON A LARGE SCALE OF ALTERNATIVE AND INDIGENOUS ENERGY SOURCES THAT ARE AVAILABLE IN THE REGION. OIL PRICES, FOR INSTANCE, HAVE NOW MADE IT PROFITABLE TO CONVERT CANE SUGAR TO ETHANOL. ANOTHER PROMISING ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCE IS DEISEL OIL FROM COCONUTS, WHICH BOTH INDONESIA AND THE PHILIPPINES PLANT IN LARGE QUANTITIES. THE PHILIPPINES, AND I AM SURE, THE OTHER NATIONS IN THE REGION, HAVE ALSO BEGUN TO INVEST IN WIND FARMS AND IN RURAL-SOLAR ENERGY PROJECTS. I ALSO PROPOSE COLLECTIVE EFFORTS TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM OF OIL RATIONING, ENERGY CONSERVATION, ACTIVATING A REGIONAL STOCKPILE, AND SO ON.

I AM IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL BLUEPRINT FOR OUR NATION THAT WILL GUIDE US FOR YEARS TO COME. I AM CALLING IT "GREEN PHILIPINES" AND IT WILL ENCOMPASS EVERY FACET OF OUR ENVIRONMENTAL NEEDS FROM CLEAN ENERGY TECHNOLOGY TO CLEAN AIR, REFORESTATION, EXPANSION OF NATIONAL PARKS AND PROTECTION OF OUR PRISTINE BEACHES AND REEFS.

ON COUNTER-TERRORISM, I URGE ALL ASEAN MEMBER COUNTRIES WHO HAVE NOT YET ACCEDED TO THE AGREEMENT ON INFORMATION EXCHANGE ON COUNTER-TERRORISM TO CONSIDER DOING SO, AND FOR THOSE WHO HAVE ADOPTED IT TO EXPEDITE RATIFICATION OF THE ACCORD.

I URGE AIPO MEMBER LEGISLATORS TO CALL UPON MEMBER COUNTRIES THAT HAVE YET TO RATIFY THE AGREEMENT ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE. THIS AGREEMENT ASSUMES A PARTICULAR URGENCY IN VIEW OF THE MANY DISASTERS THAT VISITED OUR REGION DURING THE LAST TWO YEARS.

FINALLY, I BELIEVE THAT ONE IMPORTANT AREA WHERE AIPO COULD CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TO ASEAN IS IN ITS PROCESS OF DRAFTING THE ASEAN CHARTER. THE ASEAN CHARTER WILL ENSHRINE THE PRINCIPLES AND VALUES TO BIND MEMBER COUNTRIES AND MAKE ASEAN A RULES-BASED REGIONAL ORGANIZATION WITH A JUDICIAL PERSONALITY.

I AM SURE THAT MANY OF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE FORMATION OF AN ASEAN PARLIAMENT TO STRENGTHEN OUR REGION'S EFFORTS TOWARDS DEEPENING ITS INTEGRATION AND COMMUNITY BUILDING EFFORTS.

IT IS MY HOPE AND PRAYER THAT YOUR DISCUSSION DURING THIS 27TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY WILL BE GUIDED BY OUR COMMON INTEREST TO HELP MAKE THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN REGION A PEACEFUL AND PROSPEROUS PLACE, AND TO TRANSFORM THIS DIVERSE REGION INTO A CARING AND SHARING COMMUNITY.