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86/43

Speech by the Right
Honourable Joe Clark,
Secretary of State for
External Affairs,
at Bacolod, Negros
Occidental, Philippines
on June 30, 1986

OTTAWA

July 2nd, 1986.

Your Excellency, Governor Lacson,
Your Grace, Bishop Fortich
Friends:

One of the challenges for any Foreign Minister is to escape the capitals and see the people and the countryside. I am very happy to visit your province and to meet the people of Negros. It is evident there are critical problems here: overdependence on the sugar industry, severe malnutrition, and the on-going struggle with insurgency. But there are also many rays of hope - your new Governor's dynamism and commitment to development, the moral and spiritual leadership of your church, and perhaps, above all, a growing recognition in Negros of the need to change economic and social relationships, as the first step toward ending poverty and hunger, and creating a stable, lasting prosperity for all of your people.

I express my sincere thanks to Governor Lacson's office and the Chito Foundation for making this visit possible today. They have gone to considerable lengths to help us understand both the problems of Negros and some of the possible solutions.

The Canadian Government, through the Mission Administered Fund (MAF) of our Embassy in Manila, has been able to support both the PLOW Program and the PAGKAON Program of the Chito and Assisi Development Foundations. In fact, our MAF Program and CIDA's International Humanitarian Assistance Program have focussed considerable attention on Negros over the past two years, supporting a variety of projects such as UNICEF's Quick Action Program for the Children of Negros, the expansion of Father Gratian Murray's Bacolod Boys Home and, through the CONCERN Foundation, the provision of equipment - to help save lives of children at the regional hospital.

Canada will continue our cooperation with the people of Negros. We will establish, in collaboration with the Government of the Philippines and the Governments of Negros Occidental and Negros Del Norte, a Negros Rehabilitation and Development Fund to support projects which help the socio-economic development of the rural poor, particularly sugar workers and their families. It will give priority to projects involving agricultural diversification, agro-forestry, resettlement, micro-industry and community development, and will encourage joint activities between local governments and non-governmental organizations. Depending on the final project proposal, CIDA will provide the Negros Rehabilitation and Development Fund with a contribution of 10 million Canadian dollars over the next three years. The needs of Negros are compelling and immediate, so I want guidelines established immediately for project selection, decision-making structures and administrative mechanisms. We want the fund to be fully operational within the next few months.

In the meantime, we will continue to provide support for Negros through our Mission Administered Fund (MAF), and through the Philippine Development Assistance Program, which will support linkages between Canadian and Philippine non-governmental organizations. Under our MAF Program, we have recently decided to assist four new projects in Negros. The first two are related projects and represent the continuing cooperation between the Chito and Assisi Development Foundations which worked so well with the PLOW and PAGKAON programs. Chito Foundation will establish a new farm-based training facility, while Assisi Development Foundation will sponsor an agricultural Training Program for sugar workers, making use of the Chito facility. We will contribute approximately 1.1 million Pesos for these two projects. At the same time, we will provide 104,000 Pesos for a project involving education, training and seed capital for low income women living in the Bacolod area. This project will be implemented by the Negros Women for Tomorrow Foundation. And, finally, we will make a contribution of 26,000 Pesos to the Bacolod Cultural Society, for additional equipment needed by the regional hospital. At this time, I would be honoured to present cheques for these four projects to the Presidents of the four foundations concerned: Mr. Ed Locsin of Chito Foundation, Mr. Howard Dee of Assisi Development Foundation, Ms. Cecille del Castillo of the Negros Women for Tomorrow Foundation, and Ms. Angie Eschaus of the Bacolod Cultural Society.

Governor Lacson, Bishop Fortich, Friends, our visit to Negros will long remain in our memories. Thank you for everything you have done for us. Thank you for everything you are doing for your people.