

WELCOME ADDRESS

Senator Shahani, our honored guest, Dr. Gloria, honorable Secretary of Science and Technology, national scientists of the Philippines, fellow academicians, esteemed co-workers in science, ladies and gentlemen:

First, allow me to congratulate our new Academicians on their election to the National Academy of Science and Technology.

The focus of our annual meeting this year is the Filipino. Two years ago, we had an extensive presentation and discussion on how to manage our environment. We analyzed how badly our environment has degenerated -- our forests, mountains, lakes, rivers, cities and seas. There were many suggestions on what to do.

Last year our topic was how to mitigate natural disasters. The Mt. Pinatubo calamity and, before that, the Ormoc catastrophe, focused our attention on the need to mobilize our brains and efforts toward coping with and alleviating if not preventing the sufferings from such disasters. Again, a good number of suggestions were put forward.

The task force assembled to study and organize these recommendations for better implementation made a striking fundamental observation: not one of these suggestions can be implemented unless the people are willing. The solutions suggested are all, as we say, in the books. They have been known for a long time; they have been repeated over and over. But they have not been carried out.

Take the diseases that are water-borne, food-borne and insect-borne; they continue to rampage through our population. There is no reason why we continue to suffer from them when personal hygiene and sanitation of our surroundings and environment could practically eradicate them. In China, Mao succeeded in almost eradicating pests and insects purely by the individual efforts of each person in a community. Why cannot we do the same? Why is it that we are content to just talk and talk, argue, maybe even quarrel most of the time and afterwards do nothing?

Today, we will try to study this person, the Filipino, and see how best to handle him. After we have analyzed his strong points and his weak points, his habits and what makes him tick, perhaps we may discover how best to manage him.

I wish us all a fruitful and successful conference.



CONRADO S. DAYRIT
President

