

WELCOME MESSAGE

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Undeniably, science has made a striking contribution to the improvement of human welfare especially in the past century during which dramatic advances have occurred in all disciplines, spectacular changes have led to development, which have transformed the status of many countries to more advanced stages with consequent reduction in inequities and the acceleration of human well-being.

The Academy was created in 1976 and is mandated to advise the nation and the people on national issues related to science and technology, to recognize outstanding achievements in science and technology, and engage in projects and programs to promote a science culture and environment and scientific productivity. The Academy is composed of members of the scientific community of the country called Academicians. Currently 10 of our Academicians are also National Scientists, our precious national treasures. At present, there are 51 Academicians in six divisions: Agricultural, Biological, Mathematical, Chemical and Physical, Engineering Sciences and Technology, Health; and Social Sciences.

Annually, in keeping with its mission and vision, NAST identifies mega-issues of great concern to society. Thus, last year, among the issues discussed extensively and dealt with were population, rice productivity and sufficiency, biosafety, bioprospecting, microbial genetics, mathematics and science education, the status of medical schools, hospital waste management, and enhancement of the role of the scientific community and bearers of the science culture. The Academy was also involved in the crafting of the water policy, urbanization and land conversion and industrialization, applications and ethics relative to the human genome, the health of older persons, agricultural biotechnology, biodiversity, a technology roadmap for the semi-conductor and electronics industry, and recently coconut oil for better health.

The Annual Scientific Meeting of the NAST is held on the second Wednesday and Thursday of July, come rain or shine, come typhoon or floods. This year, the Academy, ever faithful to its vision to attain a progressive Philippines anchored on science is holding its 27th Annual Scientific Meeting focused on the theme “Philippine Agriculture 2020: A Strategy for, Food Security, Global Competitiveness, and Sustainability”. I congratulate the organizers of this meeting, our Agricultural Sciences Division led by Acd. Teodulo M. Topacio Jr., the co-chairman, Acd. Emil Q. Javier and a huge number of committees that worked hard to make this meeting a successful as it promises to be.

Then of course, there is the writing group of PA 2020 that has worked so hard and burned the midnight oil in order to produce a remarkable document and extensive visionary plan entitled similar to our theme with the addition of goals of poverty alleviation, justice and peace in its title. This will serve as the main resource material for the next two days and even beyond especially for our panelists and distinguished speakers whom I would like to thank even now. But by no means is the work of this group finished. The sacrifice, the labors will still have to continue for there still much work to be done.

The goal is to present PA 2020 to the President and the Cabinet by end of this year together with its inputs from you during the next two days from democratic consultations and afterwards for the refinements and revisions.

We thank all those who are helping us in the production of this remarkable documentation for their dedication and patriotism. It is our passionate hope of course that the annual scientific meeting keynoted by the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Arthur C. Yap. He will be properly introduced later by our very own Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Sec. Estrella F. Alabastro. And we hope that this meeting will lead to a relevant and feasible roadmap for agriculture and in uplifting the lives of the people through science and technology. We hope the discussion will bring about a positive impact not only on the many stakeholders but especially on our policymakers and leaders with just a decade to go until the deadline for the Millennium Development Goals, that’s 2015. It is imperative that the political will and resources be fully harnessed to ensure the attainment of the key targets of the Millennium Development Goals.

On behalf of the Academy, therefore, let me extend my appreciation to our partners and co-workers. I like to mention a few of them—Sen. Ramon

Magsaysay, chair of the Committee on Science and Technology of the Senate, the DOST, especially the two councils, the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources and Development and the Philippine Council for Aquatic and Marine Research and Development, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and all sectors, agencies, and institutions concerned, for all the support given to the NAST to ensure the success of this year's Annual Scientific Meeting. Definitely, we should all work together to bring the benefits of science to our people and to our country. My warmest welcome once again. Thank you very much for being here with us.

