

**2<sup>nd</sup> WATER RESOURCES SUMMIT**  
**MANAGING WATER RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABILITY**  
**AND EQUITY IN THE STA ROSA WATERSHED**  
DAP, Tagaytay City, March 11, 2009

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A PLEASANT GOOD MORNING TO EVERYONE, TO ALL LOVERS OF THE ENVIRONMENT. I AM VERY PLEASED TO BE WITH YOU TODAY.

**WATER AS A RESOURCE** : THE HOTTEST TOPIC OF THE DAY HAS CAUGHT THE ATTENTION, NOT ONLY FROM POLICY MAKERS BUT ORDINARY PEOPLE AS WELL WHO WILL BE DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY THE SHORTAGE OR LACK OF IT IN THE NEAR FUTURE. WARNINGS HAVE BEEN ISSUED NOT ONLY BY INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS BUT PROMINENT PERSONALITIES LIKE FORMER U.S. VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE AND HOLLYWOOD STARS LIKE LEONARDO DE CAPRIO, BOTH EXTENSIVELY USING MEDIA TO GET THE MESSAGE ACROSS.

CLOSER TO HOME, THE LAGUNA DE BAY, OUR COUNTRY'S LARGEST FRESH WATER LAKE IS IN GREAT DANGER. AND IT IS BECOMING THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST SEPTIC TANK. THE LAKE WATERSHED'S INHABITANTS, THE PEOPLE WHO ARE ATTRACTED TO THE LAKE WATERS AS A SYMBOL OF LIFE'S SUSTENANCE AND LIVELIHOOD , ARE THE ONES POLLUTING THE LAKE. AS A PEOPLE, WE TREAT BODIES OF WATER AS RECEPTACLES AND TRASH CANS. THE LAKES, RIVERS AND CREEKS ARE OUR BACKYARDS.

THE RAPID URBANIZATION AROUND THE LAKE HAS PRODUCED WELL CONNECTED LANDGRABBERS, ALLOCATING FOR THEMSELVES SHORELAND, WETLANDS AND RIVERBANKS. THE RESULT, ECOLOGICAL IMBALANCE, SILTATION, SOLID WASTE POLLUTION, AND POISONING OF RIVER TRIBUTARIES THAT FIND ITS WAY TO THE LAKE. AND YET HOW MANY OF US HERE KNOW THAT THE LAGUNA DE BAY WATERSHED CONTRIBUTE TO THE ATMOSPHERE, ABOUT FIVE MILLION TONS OF GREENHOUSE GASES (GHG) PER YEAR MEASURED IN TERMS OF ITS CARBON DIOXIDE EQUIVALENT FROM THE VARIOUS ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE BASIN. SUCH ACTIVITIES LIKE RAPID URBANIZATION, INDUSTRIAL ESTABLISHMENTS, SLASH AND BURN AND PIGGERIES COULD RESULT TO WATER POLLUTION, INDUSTRIAL EMISSIONS, LAND CONVERSION AND SOLID WASTE DUMPING WHICH ARE SOURCES OF GHGS.

THE TASK IS FORMIDABLE BUT THERE IS HOPE. MANY LGUSs HAVE SHOWN THE WAY, A NUMBER OF MATERIAL RECOVERY FACILITIES ARE NOW IN PLACE. AND A FEW MORE ARE IN THE PIPELINE, RESULTING IN THE REDUCTION OF GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS. IN ADDITION, THE COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE CENTER FOR HOG FARMS AND SLAUGHTERHOUSES BECAME OPERATIONAL IN 2008. INSTITUTIONAL REFORESTATION USING BAMBOO IS GAINING GROUND – FOR CARBON SEQUESTRATION. LGU LED LAKESHORE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS ARE BEING PURSUED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. FINALLY, THE CHALLENGE NOW IS TO RESURRECT THE BIOLOGICALLY DEAD RIVERS, MAINTAIN AND SUSTAIN THE INTEREST OF ALL STAKEHOLDERS FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF LAGUNA DE BAY.

MARAMING SALAMAT PO!