



## Minutes of the 28<sup>th</sup> Weekly Forum Meeting

21 August 2007 • 12:00noon – 2:15 p.m. • President's Room, Manila Polo Club, Makati City

### A. Call To Order/Opening of the Session

- The Chairman called the meeting to order at 12:15pm. The event started with the singing of the Philippine National Anthem.

### Members:

1. ALCUAZ, Francisco A.
2. AMANTE, Victorio M.
3. ANGELES, Aurelio O.
4. MENELEO, Carlos J.
5. CEA, Philip M.
6. ILUSORIO, Ramon K.
7. ORDOÑEZ, Dr. Ernesto M.
8. PAVEY, Francis Roy
9. QUESADA, Hector A.
10. TAN, Ramon A.

### Guest Speaker and Company:

11. REGALARIO, Jaime R. – Chairperson, Kilusang Makabansang Ekonomiya
12. VASWANI, Hiro R. – Head, Education, Kilusang Makabansang Ekonomiya

### MAP ABCDF Guests:

13. ALVAREZ, Jun M. (Programme Manager, Clean and Green Foundation, Inc.)
14. DE PADUA, Christine (Asst. China Desk Officer, Department of Agriculture)
15. DIAZ, Renato V. (Chair & President, RVD Mgt. Services & Holding Co.,Inc.)
16. DIZON, Jul B. (CEO, JBC Jewellery Salon)
17. EVARISTO, Gilberto P. (President, GEMCO)
18. GO, Eugenia C. (Planning Officer IV, China Desk, Department of Agriculture)
19. JIMENEZ, Myrna (Executive Director, Clean and Green Foundation)
20. KAPUNAN, Lorna P. (Senior Partner, Kapunan Lotilla Flores Garcia & Castillo)
21. LIONG, Henry Lim Bon (Chair & CEO, Sterling Group of Companies)
22. PUNONGBAYAN, Benjamin R. (Chair, Punongbayan and Araullo)
23. RICAFORT, Benigno N. (Chair, Mgt. Center and Resource Group, Inc.)
24. ROXAS, Peter T. ( President, One Cagayan Resource Development, Inc.)
25. YAP, Eduardo H. (President, Clairmont Group)



**Secretariat:**

26. MONDIDO, Ronald A.
27. RINGOR, Jan Michael M.
28. YAP, Bernadette N.

**B. Approval of the Minutes**

- The minutes of the 26<sup>th</sup> foundation meeting of the year held on 7 August was approved. (There was no foundation meeting on 14 August 2007. Instead, the members were invited to its Special Partner Institution's monthly meeting featuring Mr. Romeo Bernardo on "The Philippines: Back In Business?")

**C. Introduction of Guests**

- a. Our two guests from the Clean and Green Foundation briefly enumerated their projects: Trees for Life (Indigenous Philippine trees), Piso Para Sa Pasig which was reformatted to the Clean River Zone and the Orchidarium at Luneta all for ecology and education. He identified the Philippine tree called Mankono which has nice flowers but its fruit is not edible. Lots of information about it could be obtained by surfing the internet. The Chairman said the private sector is doing a better job in protecting the trees and the ecology than government so it should continue doing so. Will schedule them as a resource in the weekly forum that is booked months ahead.
- b. The companion of our speaker, Mr. Vaswani is in the property business in the country and in New York. He is also Director for software on local projects such as the ADB.
- c. Atty. Kapunan is a MAP member and sits in various boards such as the Red Cross and Kilusang Makabansang Ekonomiya.
- d. For Mr. Evaristo, aside from his business, he is interested in seeking new models as the venture they embarked on in the Mindanao area of armed conflict did not succeed though it was well planned and funded.
- e. Mr. Punongbayan was welcomed as a BalikFoundation member. He said he found the breakfast meetings too early. He is really interested in Agriculture. Not many know he is a part time mango farmer.
- f. (The other guests who came in after were not formally introduced to the group.)

**D. Other Matters**

- a. The trial period for lunch meetings may go till mid-September after which it shall be evaluated and decided upon.
- b. The Chairman asked the members to ponder two times a week meeting since our forum calendar is full months ahead resulting in long wait by interested resources.
- c. Next week he will present in greater detail how the foundation can be a catalyst going into projects without costs. The benefits reaped include high take home education value of the weekly forum, technical development, problem solving, and meeting prospective associates, employees, and partners, fulfilling members' dream of making a difference, catering to the public and special partner institutions (like with the Philippines-Finland Association where we have a lot to learn from in terms of productivity), blending of





business and theory, realization of the vision to be an entrepreneurial class that is profitable and socially relevant.

- d. Mr. Ordonez announced that the President, Mr Amante has been accepted as a member of the Department of Agriculture Trade advisory group.

## F. Main Agenda

The President introduced the guest speaker Mr. Jaime R. Regalario, the Chairperson of the Kilusang Makabansang Ekonomiya. He is an Economics graduate of the University of Santo Tomas. If his various speaking engagements would be read, we would run out of time. His speech in 8 pages entitled “The RP-China Farm Agreement, Another Act of National Betrayal” is in the website [www.map-abcdef.com.ph](http://www.map-abcdef.com.ph). This minutes of the meeting will only contain substantial points that are not a repetition of them.

1. He has tackled the subject matter with the basic sectors (peasants, workers), the academe and religious but this is a first time with a business organization.
2. The agreements have not been reported to Congress.
3. As a principle, foreign investors normally go where local investors go.
4. Mr. Diaz hails from Nueva Ecija and had been in Congress and as a Special Assistant for Central Luzon. He asks is any Filipino willing to invest in our marginal lands? How could we compete when our lands are only 1-2 hectares in size and given ideal size of 100-450 hectares? The Chairman asked where are the 2 million hectares public land that will be leased to China and how such will affect the land reform program.
5. Mr. Vaswani stressed that development comes from labor tilling the land. Only about 4-5% is pure Filipino labor in our some USD9B imported inputs.
6. Mr. Ordonez suggested that each limits his inputs to max 5 minutes.
7. Mr. Punongbayan asked if the agreement has been signed. Complex issues are involved such as national security and international relations. When we leased Sabah before, we never got it back. Costs and benefits have to be weighed. Benefits would be transfer of technology and employment of labor but the costs are depriving Filipinos opportunity for productivity and exploitation of its resources for 50 years when our very fellow Filipinos are fighting for land. The Dole and Del Monte models have not improved the workers lot who have remained poor.
8. The speaker said Taiwan has successfully distributed land and improved the income of its people.
9. Atty. Kapunan agreed that we should develop more engineers than produce lawyers. She referred to the abrogation of the US bases agreement with Subic only consisting of 60,000 hectares of land while these agreements in the tune of 2 million hectares will be 1/3 of our land. While many Filipinos are hungry, why should we be the vegetable garden for the Chinese populace? She sees nothing right about it.
10. Mr. Diaz says the agreement after all covers land that is not immediately usable, so why not?





11. Mr. Ordoñez acknowledged that the immediate reaction to the agreement was anger but upon hearing from the Department of Agriculture Planning Office, the China desk, he saw possibility for turning the seemingly bad to good.
12. Ms. Go said the government (including the Department of Agriculture) will only be the facilitator to help identify the lands. It will provide information such as soil suitability per area. It will link the beneficiaries and farmers with the investors. The problem is government has limited budget or budget has remained unreleased.
13. Mr. Carlos remarked that if the intention is to pilot test then why not use a 100,000 hectare size land instead of 2 million hectares?
14. Atty. Kapunan concluded that the Department of Agriculture is not doing its job of getting the budget, working within it and getting the private sector interested.
15. Mr. Regalario cited the Philippine companies partnering with the Chinese counterparts as not listed in the Securities Exchange Commission or existing without proper records such as the GIS.
16. Atty. Kapunan candidly inquired who then made money in this?
17. The Chairman said in the last 5 years, a Chinese company known as China Pack has been growing bananas locally to the same detriment of the local growers.
18. Mr. Lim narrated the country's experience about the food security issue in particular about rice during the Marcos era. Price of rice in the international market is expected to go up by 15% next year.
19. As there are two opposing views, each group will prepare its summary in about 2 sheets. Mr. Diaz volunteered to do the pro.
20. Mr. Ordonez reiterated that with Mr. Amante in the advisory group, some influence can be exerted.

## G. Adjournment

- As it was past the allocated time, the meeting adjourned at 2:15pm. The customary exchange of business cards was done.

