

DELIVERING THE PROMISES OF CARP

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(A Message Delivered during the Recognition Day held as part of CARP's 20th Anniversary Celebration at Pearl Hall, SEAMEO Innotech in Diliman, Quezon City on June 16, 2008)

A pleasant day to all of you.

It is my great honor and extreme privilege to be with you today as we gather here to give due recognition to certain individuals and organizations who have proven themselves to be 'worthy stakeholders' of the agrarian reform program

Celebrating 20 years of CARP

This is the 20th year that we have been doing this. Twenty years of implementing the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program or CARP. And we couldn't have done it without the trust and support of our program partners, beneficiaries, oversight agencies and CARP implementing agencies. It is but fitting that in today's event, we will:

- **Recognize CARP Implementing Agencies:**
 - Outstanding PARCComs (3)
 - Private Sector Representatives (5)
 - CARP Implementing Agencies (8)
 - Oversight Agencies (8)
- **Award Program Beneficiaries**
 - Outstanding ARBs (3)
 - Outstanding ARB Organizations (3)
 - Outstanding ARCs (3)
 - Outstanding Irrigator's Associations (3)

- **Distribute ARB ID Cards**
- **Recognize our PDMASP Scholars (23 graduates with honors) and**
- **Witness the MOA signing between DAR-CARD Inc. on Micro-Finance Capacity Development Program for Partner Organizations**
- **Sign the Guidelines governing the list of lands under Agri-business Venture Arrangement in Agrarian Reform areas and the determination of lease rental thereof.**

Hopeful for CARP extension

Today's ceremonies, which is being held as part of this year's anniversary celebrations for CARP, is made more significant and relevant because of the "supreme challenge" that we are facing in the light of our efforts to extend CARP beyond 2008.

While Congress was unable to pass the consolidated bill sustaining CARP implementation when it adjourned last week, we remain hopeful that our lawmakers would pass the measure when it convenes its regular session on July 21.

As you may know, a joint resolution was introduced maintaining the effectivity of the Land Acquisition and Distribution component of RA 6657, as amended, otherwise known as the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law of 1988, until December 31, 2008 and for other purposes. Further, it also resolved that during the period July to December 2008, both the Senate and the House of Representatives through their respective Agrarian Reform Committees, will come up with a definitive bill on extending the LAD component of RA 6657 with perfecting major reforms which Congress shall adopt on or before 31 December 2008.

DAR's operation is ensured until December this year since Congress has allocated funds to finance our agency's operation for the period. We remain confident that when the session begins in July, our lawmakers will have six months to deliberate thoroughly on the bill, including the necessary reforms needed to make the law more effective.

I am therefore optimistic that our Honorable Representatives and Senators would see through the significance of CARP and ~~extend~~ enact the 5-year extension of the program. Because 'your success stories' will always serve as great manifestations of the program's success, and these will serve as lasting inspirations to the present and future generations of our agrarian reform beneficiaries. Undoubtedly, together with the awardees of the previous years, you have become the "real heroes of CARP."

We have been together in this journey. Against tremendous odds, we have delivered the promises and have given justice to the cause of the agrarian reform program. We have walked a thousand miles and I would not mind walking another thousand miles with you to continue on CARP's "saga". Together, we will not fail and we shall continue on delivering the 'promises' of CARP not for another five years but for as long as there are farmer beneficiaries living in our countryside.

Congratulations and mabuhay po kayong lahat!

Mabuhay and CARP!