

**SNCP'S Welcome Remarks
20th CARP Anniversary Celebration
'Recognition Ceremony for CARP Advocates and Supporters'
Hotel Rembrandt, Quezon City**

Honorable Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives, Distinguished Representatives of the Catholic Church, distinguished friends and colleagues from the civil society and the government sector, distinguished representatives from the academe and the landowners' and farmers' groups, and last but not the least, our distinguished advocates and awardees who will be honored today, thank you all for being here today!

Today is another 'another day' in our country's history as we gather here to start celebrating the 20th Year Anniversary of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program or CARP. And we at the Department of Agrarian Reform can not think of any other way to kick-off this year's celebration than to give due recognition and honor to individuals and advocates who in one way or another have contributed immensely to the achievement of the 'milestones' that the program has achieved the past 20 years.

And I firmly believe that all stakeholders of the program should be proud for the significant 'milestones' it has achieved so far. And prouder will be the individuals who will be given their respective awards and recognitions for their outstanding achievements, thus, becoming as endless inspirations for us who will continue to believe that we can achieve more and more importantly, serving as manifestations of the program's success.

But while we are going to witness a video presentation of CARP's saga highlighting the various success stories and events during the past twenty years of its meaningful implementation, it is of high importance to note of the huge tasks and challenges that lies ahead of us, of which, the relevant passage of pending bills in both House of Congress that would ensure the continued implementation of the program beyond June 2008 becomes an 'utmost priority'.

In this context, I want to believe and become highly optimistic that all of us here will once again be united to ensure the passage of these pending bills. Let us not allow the detractors of CARP a bit of a chance to defeat the noble purposes of the program. Your sustained advocacies and legacies have proven them wrong these past twenty years and together, we shall defeat them and protect the gains of the program and provide a better future for our farmers!

Thank you and mabuhay po kayong lahat!