

Message of Mr. Paul G. Schafer

Resident Representative, Hanns Seidel Foundation

Opening Ceremony: Forum-Workshop for Human Rights Desk Officers (Luzon)

15 July 2010, Eurotel

Bulacan St. corner North EDSA, Quezon City

Police Director General Jesus Verzosa

Police Director Raul Bacalzo

Police Chief Superintendent Franklin Bucayu

Police Superintendent Gerardo Dia

Distinguished PNP Human Rights Desk Officers

Distinguished Members of the Training Team

Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Following the successful conduct of the 1st batch of the Forum-workshop for Human Rights Desk Officers (HRDOs) last 08-09 July 2010 which was attended by 47 HRDOs coming from the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO), National Operational Support Units (NOSUs) and relevant offices from the National Headquarters, we are pleased to be a part of the conduct of the 2nd batch coming from Luzon covering Regions 1 to 5 and the Cordillera Autonomous Region (CAR).

We are honored today with the presence of Director General Jesus Verzosa on this important activity, which signifies the PNP leadership's continuing support and commitment to our joint project on human rights promotion for the last two-a-half years. It is noteworthy that the PNP's ongoing Integrated Transformation Program (ITP) gives premium on this overarching national concern, given the recent pronouncements of His Excellency President Benigno Aquino III to respect human rights in the performance of your law enforcement duties and in the conduct of internal security operations.

The Hanns Seidel Foundation is pleased with its successful cooperation with the PNP through its Human Rights Affairs Office (HRAO). For this year, we are working closely together to implement three priority thrusts under this project, notably the strengthening of human rights desks nationwide. Also, we are in the process of finalizing the Human rights Desk Operations Manual, which will undergo validation by your group as part of the outputs during your 2-day forum-workshop. This is to ensure that the Manual will take cognizance of your actual situation on the ground for a smoother implementation of the more than 1,600 human rights desks all over the country, not to mention the important initiatives of your top level officers to lay down the necessary policies and resources to help you perform your responsibilities efficiently and effectively.

I understand that based on the results of the first forum-workshop, additional points were raised and discussed for consideration by the PNP leadership, for example, setting minimum qualification requirements for human rights desk personnel giving priority to those with adequate training on human rights and relevant work experience, longer or more permanent tenure with the office for purposes of continuity, provision of budget and office facilities and equipment, among others.

With respect to the area of human rights training and education, we express support to the suggestion of Police Director Bacalzo to cover all 1,636 human rights desks nationwide to enhance their knowledge and skills as human rights desk officers. We are discussing with HRAO on how to tap the PNP trainers on human rights that we have jointly trained over the last two years for this purpose, where a good number of them are also HRDOs.

We would like to assure the PNP of our continuing assistance towards institutionalizing the promotion and protection of human rights within the PNP. We are happy to share that our cooperation with the PNP is well recognized here and in Germany especially with the respective offices in charge of international cooperation. For this reason, the Hanns Seidel Foundation is working on implementing similar training activities in other ASEAN countries specifically Thailand and Indonesia starting in 2011, and is looking at partnering with the PNP for this ASEAN-level project.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the officers and staff of HRAO especially Chief Superintendent Bucayu and Superintendent Dia for your dedication and professional work, which have made possible the success of our cooperation.

Thank you for your kind attention and good morning.