

Remarks of RAUL M BACALZO, CEO VI
The Director for Investigation & Detective Management
ICOW Opening Ceremony of Forum-Workshop for PNP Human Rights Desk Officers
July 8, 2010, Thursday, 8:00 a.m. Soriano Room, 2nd Floor, SIDD, PNP TS Building
Camp Crame, Quezon City

(APPROPRIATE GREETINGS)

I AM GLAD TO JOIN YOU TODAY FOR THE **OPENING CEREMONY OF THE FORUM-WORKSHOP FOR PNP HUMAN RIGHTS DESK OFFICERS**. YOUR GROUP IS THE FIRST BATCH AND THERE WILL BE SIMILAR WORKSHOPS FOR YOUR COUNTERPARTS IN LUZON, VISAYAS, AND MINDANAO. THE NATIONWIDE SCOPE OF THE FORUM-WORKSHOP DENOTES THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS DESKS OFFICERS IN THE OVERALL MISSION AND FUNCTIONS OF THE PNP.

THIS MORNING, ALLOW ME TO SHARE SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS ACTIVITY AND THE CHALLENGES FACED BY HUMAN RIGHTS DESKS OFFICERS.

FIRST, WHY DO WE NEED A FORUM-WORKSHOP?

A FORUM IS A VENUE FOR DISCUSSING ISSUES AND CONCERNS, AND HOPEFULLY, FOR FINDING SOLUTIONS TO THOSE ISSUES AND CONCERNS. FOR THAT REASON, I ENCOURAGE ALL OF YOU TO BE OPEN AND TRANSPARENT ABOUT YOUR SITUATION IN THE FIELD AS HUMAN RIGHTS DESK OFFICERS.

THE IMPORTANT TASK OF LOOKING FOR DOABLE SOLUTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES BEGINS WITH AN HONEST APPRAISAL OF STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, AS WELL AS OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS TO YOUR MISSION AS HUMAN RIGHTS DESK OFFICERS.

WITHOUT EXCEPTION, ALL OF YOU FACE CERTAIN CHALLENGES THAT AFFECT YOUR DAILY WORK. SOME WILL SAY YOU HAVE INADEQUATE LOGISTICAL SUPPORT; OTHERS WILL CLAIM THAT YOUR POSITION IS NOT GIVEN THE IMPORTANCE IT DESERVES. FOR EXAMPLE, HUMAN RIGHTS DESK OFFICERS DO NOT HAVE A T.O. POSITION, WHICH MAKES YOU FEEL LIKE AN “ORPHAN” IN A BIG ORGANIZATION SUCH AS THE PNP.

PERHAPS, WE CAN ADMIT THAT YOUR POSITION AS HUMAN RIGHTS DESK OFFICER IS NOT AS POPULAR OR DESIRABLE AS COMPARED TO BEING THE CHIEF FOR REGIONAL INTELLIGENCE OR INVESTIGATION. MOREOVER, MANY OF YOU WERE ONLY DESIGNATED TO THESE POSITIONS. SOME OF YOU MIGHT EVEN BE SKEPTICAL ABOUT “HUMAN RIGHTS” TO THE POINT THAT YOU SEE IT AS A “THREAT” TO THE PNP.

THESE ISSUES ARE IMPORTANT AND WE REALIZE THAT IGNORING THEM WOULD ONLY CREATE BIGGER PROBLEMS IN THE FUTURE. THAT IS WHY, BY ALL MEANS, LET US USE THIS FORUM TO FACE THESE ISSUES HEAD-ON.

WE AT NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS ACKNOWLEDGE THE NEED TO CONFRONT THESE CHALLENGES. WE CANNOT TURN A BLIND EYE OR HAVE A DEAF EAR TO THE NEEDS AND REQUIREMENTS OF OUR FRONTLINE SERVICE PROVIDERS --- WHICH INCLUDES YOU AND YOUR COLLEAGUES IN THE POLICE STATIONS. SURELY, OUR NHQ NEEDS TO BE MORE "IN TOUCH" WITH THE REALITIES ON THE GROUND.

AS WE PREPARE TO START THE FORUM-WORKSHOP, WE MUST REMEMBER TO KEEP AN OPEN MIND AND MAINTAIN A SHARED COMMITMENT TO MAKE THINGS WORK. **LET US USE THIS ACTIVITY AS A MEANS TO LOOK FOR SOLUTIONS. WE ARE HERE NOT TO FIX THE BLAME, BUT TO FIX THE PROBLEM.**

BY DISCUSSING THESE WORK-RELATED ISSUES AND CONCERNS, WE ARE TAKING FORWARD STEPS TO IMPROVE OUR SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC. AT THE SAME TIME, WE ARE REMOVING OBSTACLES THAT HINDERS US FROM ATTAINING CAREER ADVANCEMENT AND GENUINE FULFILLMENT IN OUR PROFESSION.

IN THE MONTHS TO COME, PEOPLE WILL EXPECT MORE FROM THE PNP AND FROM OUR HUMAN RIGHTS DESKS. IF YOU HAVE BEEN READING OR WATCHING THE NEWS LATELY, IT IS CLEAR THAT HUMAN RIGHTS WILL BECOME ONE OF THE PRIORITIES OF THE PNP AND THE AQUINO ADMINISTRATION.

AT THE SAME TIME, WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT PEOPLE WILL ONLY BELIEVE IN OUR TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM IF THEY SEE A REAL TRANSFORMATION IN HOW WE DEAL WITH THE ORDINARY CITIZEN IN THE STREET OR INSIDE A POLICE STATION.

LET ME BORROW AND PARAPHRASE THE WORDS OF THE NEW PRESIDENT AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF IN HIS INAUGURAL SPEECH ---- *“ANG MAMAMAYAN....SILA ANG BOSS, HINDI TAYO.”*

WHILE THE PROBLEMS FACED BY THE PNP HAVE NO OVERNIGHT OR QUICK-FIX SOLUTIONS, THE TIME IS RIPE FOR US TO GRAPPLE WITH THESE CHALLENGES. WITH DETERMINATION, WE MUST UNTANGLE THESE CONSTRAINTS WHICH LIMIT THE EFFECTIVENESS AND RESPONSIVENESS OF HUMAN RIGHTS DESKS.

FINALLY, LET ME COMMEND ALL OF YOU FOR YOUR HARD WORK AND DEDICATION. DESPITE CERTAIN LIMITATIONS, ALL OF YOU REMAIN FOCUSED AND FAITHFUL TO THE TASKS ENTRUSTED TO YOU. TODAY IS JUST AN INITIAL STEP IN A CONTINUING JOURNEY TO MAKE THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE A MORE SERVICE-ORIENTED AND RIGHTS-BASED LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY.

TOGETHER, LET US CONTINUE TO SERVE AND PROTECT THE PEOPLE AND THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS.

THANK YOU AND GOOD DAY!
