

KAF E-Newsletter

(Konrad Adenauer Foundation – Philippines)

May 2004

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Message from the Country Representative

Greetings!

Welcome to the maiden issue of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation's electronic newsletter. This is part of our continuing efforts to reach out to our friends and partners about our activities. We believe that this newsletter is useful for anybody who is interested in the major issues of the foundation and its work in the Philippines.

Klaus Preschle

Country Representative

CONTENTS

- **Iraqi Minister Speaks at Globalization Lecture Series**
- **The Future of the Coconut Industry: Highlighting Coconut Levy as Electoral Issue/ Stakeholders Consultation Workshop**
- **RP's Best Community Papers Cited by PPI**

Announcement: The Konrad Adenauer Foundation Philippine office will be on its summer break from May 20 until June 20. The office is still in operation, however there will be no seminars and conferences held during this period. If you have queries, you may contact us at info@kaf-mnl.com or at telephone number 8943427.

Iraqi Minister Speaks at Globalization Lecture Series

Minister for Municipalities and Public Works Nesreen M. Sideek Barwari of the Iraqi Governing Council invited the Philippine government and business community to continue investing and aiding in Iraq's reconstruction efforts. The minister spoke at the 32nd Globalization Lecture Series hosted by the Asian Institute of Management and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation last May 3rd. She also reassured the forum participants regarding the security situation by describing them as isolated incidents that do not obscure the progress that the reconstruction efforts have been making to normalize life in Iraq. However, she also said that despite the progress that is seen at present, the international community must understand that the process will take time due to the state that former dictator Saddam Hussein left the country in. Even without the effects of the war that led to the strongman's fall, Iraq was already in bad shape.

Despite all this however, the minister said that prospects for development are good due to the abundance of resources that the country has, especially with regard to oil. Daily, Iraq is trying to increase oil production or output levels comparable to those before the regime underwent sanctions. She stresses that the rebuilding of Iraq and its political stability is a vital regional and

global concern that the international community must continue prioritizing. She regrets that international media obscures progress made by reconstruction efforts and highlights isolated security incidents.

The minister paid a visit to the Philippines to strengthen the two countries' relationship. The Philippines, as a member of the coalition of the willing in the United States' war on terror has sent a humanitarian contingent to assist in peacekeeping and reconstruction efforts in Iraq. Also, there is a strong presence of Filipino nationals in the region as contractual workers for Middle Eastern companies. In the light of the first death of a Filipino national in Iraq since the toppling of Saddam Hussein, the minister reassured the Philippine government that other untoward incidents of this nature would be avoided.

Mr. Klaus Preschle, the Philippine Country Representative of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation affirmed the commitment of the German government to continue providing Iraq assistance with their reconstruction efforts. He remarked that efforts in rebuilding Iraq can be likened to post-World War II Germany, where Germany's rebuilding took time and extensive assistance provided by the United States provided through the Marshall Plan. The minister also expressed her gratitude to the European Union and Germany's assistance in the rebuilding of Iraq. The German government had just completed a \$3 M project that re-equipped the national water quality control laboratory and provided leak detection equipment.

For further details, please click on the following links:

Speech of Her Excellency Nesreen M. Sideek-Barwari

http://www.kas.de/db_files/dokumente/7_dokument_dok_pdf_4669_2.pdf

Mr. Klaus Preschle's Speech

http://www.kas.de/proj/home/pub/69/2/year-2004/dokument_id-4658/index.html

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's Comments on Safety of Filipinos in Iraq

<http://www.op.gov.ph/pms/currentissues.asp?action=view&id=2290>

Official Website of the Philippine Task Force for the Reconstruction of Iraq

<http://www.engagephilippines.com/mission.cfm>

RP's Best Community Papers Cited by PPI

Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario G. Davide, Jr. was guest of honor and speaker of the 8th Annual Community Press Awards.

Eight community newspapers were cited by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAF) and the Philippine Press Institute (PPI) for their outstanding work in community journalism.

Named as winners in the national search for the 8th Annual Community Press Awards in the weekly category are: **Mabuhay** (San Fernando City) for best edited paper, **Sunday Punch** (Dagupan City) for the Gerry Gil Foundation best editorial page and best in business and economic reporting, **Bandillo ng Palawan** (Puerto Princesa City) for best in environmental reporting, and **Southern Leyte Times** (Maasin City) for best in photojournalism.

In the daily category, the winners are **Cebu Daily News** (Cebu City) for best edited paper and best in photojournalism, **Sun.Star Davao** (Davao City) for the Gerry Gil Foundation best editorial page, **Negros Daily Bulletin** (Bacolod City) for best in environmental reporting, and **The Visayan Daily Star** (Bacolod City) for best in business and economic reporting. Werner vom Busch, regional representative of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and Amado P. Macasaet, chairman of the PPI presented special trophies and P15,000 cash prize to the winners in various categories for both weekly and daily publications.

The search was conducted by the Philippine Association of Communication Educators Foundation (PACE) with assistance from Miriam College, Ateneo de Manila University and

University of the Philippines-Los Baños College of Development Communication which composed the screening committee.

This year's national jurors were Antonio Katigbak (Philippine Star), chairperson, Chi-Chi Robles (Ateneo de Manila University), Grace Favila (Department of Environment and Natural Resources), Evelyn del Rosario (Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.) and Alice Villadolid (Philippine Communication Centrum Inc.).

For further details, please click on the following links:

KAF Regional Media Programme in Southeast Asia

<http://www.kas-asia.org/Regional%20Programs.htm>

Konrad Adenauer Center for Journalism

<http://cfj.ateneo.edu/>

The Future of the Coconut Industry: Highlighting Coconut Levy as Electoral Issue/ Stakeholders Consultation Workshop

"National Security does not only mean terrorism, rebellion and insurgency. It goes beyond that. The Government's approach is to look into the causes of rebellion and terrorism, which is most of the time, POVERTY. The coconut farmers are one of the poorest sectors in the country and have long been victims of injustices. Poverty and injustices breed rebellions". These were the words of National Security Adviser Bert Gonzales during the Coconut Farmers Conference on April 4-5, 2004, held at the Northwinds Hotel in Cebu City.

The two-day conference, which was organized by the Pambansang Koalisyon ng mga Samahang Magsasakang Manggagawa sa Niyugan (PKSMMN) and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAF) was aimed at identifying a strategy to channel the coconut levy dividends to its rightful owners and to determine its productive uses. The conference organizers also hoped to strengthen support for Federalism as a possible structural reform that will support the effective delivery of basic services, the promotion of social justice and development of rural areas and to provide support for the concerns and platforms of the coconut farmers. Over 100 leaders from the coconut-farming sector across the country participated in this event.

Efren Villaseñor, National President of the PKSMMN highlighted that the Supreme Court's decision on Case 003-A, which declared all assets of the United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPD) as property of the Philippine Government, makes the struggle of the coconut farmers more complex. In this decision, it is implied that Congress has the sole authority to appropriate the funds in the National Treasury from the UCPD. Given the diverse political leanings and interests of congressmen, it is difficult to convince them to enact laws favoring the coconut-farming sector. Other issues he mentioned were: missing 4% of SMC shares, 1.2 billion dividends from SMC which has been kept secretly by CIIF, inadequate consultation and marginal participation of farmers for the uses of the dividends.

Philippine Coconut Authority's (PCA) Administrator, Hon. Danilo Coronacion responded that the Supreme Court's decision was just a temporary relief. The bigger issue on who would handle and manage the funds remains unsolved. Thus the PCA with the assistance of National Anti-Poverty Commission has proposed an Executive Order (EO) reviving the PKSMMN initiatives in 2001. The said EO is hoped to safeguard the proceeds of the levy and its usage in favor of the coconut farmers. Among the proposed immediate strategic programs utilizing the coconut levy are: research and development on farm productivity and product diversification, socio-economic services and credit assistance to farmers, farmer's social equity, micro financing and off-farm livelihood projects.

Roel Rosales who represented the Department of Agriculture (DA) supported the PCA's declaration. He stressed that DA and PCA have already formulated a "Coconut Farmers Safety Nets Program". Part of the dividends from the coconut levy shall be utilized for this program. This

will include but not limited to the following: farm diversification, intercropping, cattle fattening direct copra marketing, and micro lending and micro enterprises.

Dr. Jose Abueva of the Citizens Movement for a Federal Philippines (CMFP) and Hon. Camilo Sabio, Presidential Adviser on Constitutional Reforms presented the dissatisfaction of the Filipino people with the current political set up, the proposed structural reforms for the country, the modes of going about the reforms as well as its advantages and disadvantages. They are both convinced that Federalism and Parliamentary type of government is the best option available for the country, as it will enhance autonomy, promote the equitable distribution of wealth and the delivery of basic services, and will resolve secessions and rebellions. They are both convinced that a Federal and Parliamentary government is a critical step towards resolving the issue of coconut levy and in promoting the long-lasting development of the coconut farming industry.

For further details, please click on the following links:

Coconut farmers urge immediate signing of Executive Order unfreezing coconut levy fund

http://www.cyberdyaryo.com/features/f2001_1004_03.htm

Coco farmers see hard work ahead

http://www.cyberdyaryo.com/features/f2002_0225_02.htm