

**1<sup>st</sup> National Forum on Volunteerism as Strategy for Development**  
**Conference Rooms 14 and 15, Mitra Building**  
**House of Representatives, Quezon City**  
**27 January 2010**

**Keynote Speech**  
*by Congressman Manuel S. Agyao*

To all of you who took time to grace today's momentous occasion, our distinguish guest, the most outstanding volunteers for 2009 and to our special honoree the CNN hero of the year, Mr. Efren Penaflorida, to my colleagues, our hardworking a dedicated partner agency, the PNVSCA, other government representatives including our Local Government Units and the entire volunteer community and vigilant stakeholders, a pleasant morning to all of you.

In behalf of our Chairman Honorable Arrel Olaño and the members of the Committee on Rural Development, I wish to take this opportunity to praise my sincerest and profound gratitude to all of you for making this event which marks the realization of a truly meaningful hallmark of genuine service and commitment to development now possible. We take pride in the equally enthusiastic response from our partners as exhibited by your presence today and in your collaborative determination of crafting a roadmap or the Philippine development action plan for volunteerism in the next 3 to 6 years pursuant to Republic Act 9418, the historic first ever law known as the "Volunteer Act of 2007" we passed last congress at a noble strategy for rural development.

The very encouraging support we have been getting from the voluntary sector continuously and our collective passion and vision in congress and strengthen our collective resolve to continue to find ways to

make our legislative trust meaningful in positively on the live of Filipino poor and accelerate genuine law of development in our country. Indeed, much hope is keen on us members of 14<sup>th</sup> Congress in general and in particular in committee on rural development to champion legislative measures that are truly responsive to the needs of empoverized nation and constituent. It is imperative upon us all know to enable our poor and the marginalized most of them in the rural areas to have the opportunities and the access to development as we pave the way for life changing intervention such as what we collectively envision in today's forum.

In this urgent task and challenge of adapting volunteerism as viable development option, I am confident that with your support and cooperation and with solid belief of our partners and stakeholders behind our collective development agenda together we can transform the house of representatives into a more dynamic proactive volunteer sensitive legislative body, and our effort in the community and committee on rural development into relevant opportunities and undertakings anchored on volunteerism agenda.

In the 14<sup>th</sup> Congress and beyond, I would like to ride to the occasion to commend the entire volunteer community for matching our enthusiasm and believing in this important innovation which underscores the country's level of readiness and capacity for meaningful change. In particular, allow me to credit all of you for your dedication to our volunteering work which started to showcase the potential of this important development innovation in this volunteerism could very well be the engine to move the country forward and establish the scheme that will propel the emergence of the Philippines as the world's pioneer in volunteer-based development model.

Today's momentous presence of our various volunteer stakeholders and sectors in this forum the academe, national government agencies, local government units, foreign volunteer organizations, non-government organizations, corporate foundations and entities and individual volunteers is a fitting tribute as well to the outstanding volunteers we shall honor today who served as models and inspiration to the nation for their example heroism and selflessness.

To all of you great men and women, accept our deepest gratitude for making this nation proud of. Thank you and I wish everyone a fruitful collaboration.