

SUGGESTED REMARKS
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USAID Mission Director
Induction of New Officers of Rotary Club of Barasoain
Malolos, Bulacan
August 1, 2007

- Rotary Club President Mike Mikesell;
- Governor Jonjon Mendoza;
- other officers and directors of Rotary Club of Barasoain;
- friends, ladies and gentlemen.

It is an honor for me to come to Malolos City and participate in this year's Induction Ceremony of the Barasoain Rotary Club. I was told that Malolos City is where the first Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines was crafted in 1898. Indeed, Filipinos are a champion of democracy and a close friend and important ally of the United States of America in this part of the world. I am proud to be here.

I understand that during World War II, when Rotary Clubs in the Philippines were forced to cease operations, the last meeting of the Rotary Club of Manila was held on the island of Corregidor on May 6, 1942 to induct General Douglas MacArthur as an honorary member. So, the Rotary Clubs of the Philippines

and the United States have a deep and longstanding relationship, which we at the American Embassy very much want to continue.

The Rotary Club International and USAID have many things in common. One big similarity is that we both work for A BETTER FUTURE FOR ALL. The Rotary supports this goal by organizing clubs of professionals and businessmen all over the world to invest their time and energies into improving their communities. USAID, a U.S. federal government agency, works with local governments and partner organizations to provide development assistance in more than 100 countries around the world in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and the Near East, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe and Eurasia.

Here in the Philippines, USAID's flagship education project is partnering with the Rotary Club of Makati and the U.S.-based Brother's Brother Foundation to distribute hundreds of thousands of books each year to school children in conflict-affected areas of Mindanao. Overall, the Books Across the Sea Program aims to distribute 1.8 million books and learning materials over the three-year life of the project.

The motto of Rotary International and Rotary Clubs around the world is service. Service is very much a value that our two peoples share. Every day, Americans from all walks of life volunteer their time to help others in need, whether it is in schools, hospitals, churches, or recreation centers. Our own U.S. Embassy Club has many charitable activities ranging from supporting orphanages to offering university scholarships to the children of Filipino Embassy employees.

I am sure that you are very proud to be part of an exemplary international service organization that dates back more than one hundred years. The international Rotary movement is famous for helping to eradicate polio. Rotary Clubs in the Philippines are implementing many programs as diverse as the people you serve, including: support for education and literacy; providing free heart surgeries, artificial limbs and wheelchairs when needed; and, building shelters for indigents.

Here in Malolos, I understand that there are four Rotary Clubs that are helping to treat tuberculosis, offering scholarships, carrying out medical and dental missions, and honoring exemplary citizens. Rotary Clubs in Malolos are also engaged in nutrition, environmental projects, arts promotion and cultural exchanges.

When I browsed the lists of projects that the Barasoain Rotary Club supports, I saw the best virtues of the *bayanihan* spirit that the Philippines is famous for. The Barasoain Rotary Club does justice to your motto: Service above Self.

For example, you display special concern for the mental health of the population. Your President, Dr. Mike, is a psychologist who counsels Tagalog-speaking community members. I salute your contributions to the local community Dr. Mike and I want to thank you again for inviting me to be here tonight.

The Barasoain Rotary Club has tremendous passion for the young as evident by your involvement in *Tanglaw Pag-asa* (Light of Hope) program which advocates for the right of juveniles-in-conflict-with-the-law to be educated. By doing so, you give them dignity, and you give them new hope. You also have creative ways of teaching girls and young women how to protect themselves (*from sexual predators?*) – using puppets and student volunteers as teaching aids. And finally, your Rotary Club is able to inspire others, including young students, to volunteer for your cause. In doing so, you transcend budget limitations to help as many of your neighbors as possible.

The American people, through USAID, want to share in your commitment to service. We are partners to the 3.2 million Bulakeños in the effort to strengthen health service and local governance. Under the now completed Governance and Local Development (GOLD) Project, the former Governor, Josie dela Cruz, spearheaded a number of local governance initiatives that serve as a solid foundation for Bulacan's public administration system. Under our previous LGU health systems strengthening project, USAID provided technical assistance to install a referral system that involved the private sector and a community-based monitoring system to help identify the poor and those with unmet needs for health services.

Today, under the new health governance project, USAID is working with local health service partners on important issues such as micronutrients and food supplementation, tuberculosis management and control, maternal and child health, family planning, HIV/AIDS, and avian influenza. Through its partnership with USAID, the Provincial Health Office of Bulacan recently trained two batches of health service providers on Service Delivery Implementation Review. The next step will be to identify and address

bottlenecks in the delivery of basic health services. All of these activities aim to achieve better health outcomes and increased resource allocations for health. USAID is proud to work with the people of Bulacan on these programs that represent the American people's commitment to prevent suffering, save lives, and create a brighter future for families in the developing world.

In the Philippines, as in many developing countries, HIV/AIDS, avian influenza and other health issues are having a dramatic impact on social cohesiveness and economic strength. They are hindrances to the development goals that you seek. But when these hindrances are addressed directly by service-oriented groups like the Barasoain Rotary Club, the tasks at hand can be accomplished.

Since its inception, USAID has worked in cooperation with international partners around the world to improve peoples' lives. These partnerships have contributed much to our shared successes. Today, USAID is more committed than ever to a development approach that recognizes the importance of local partnerships, private-sector giving and grassroots support. All of these critical elements are on display here tonight and in the work that you carry out year round in the name of the Barasoain Rotary Club.

Thank you for this opportunity to participate in your Induction Ceremony and strengthen our fellowship. I believe that tonight's event marks one more chapter in a lasting and productive partnership.