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Opening Remarks

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OPENING REMARKS

IT gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the second session of an echo seminar on development jointly sponsored by the Ateneo de Manila and the Loyola House of Studies, and hosted by the East Asian Pastoral Institute.

For some, perhaps, the term "echo seminar" may be as much of a novelty as for your present moderator; and so it might be well at the outset briefly to explain what these seminars are an echo of.

They are an echo of the Asian Ecumenical Conference for Development (AECD) which was held in Tokyo last July under the joint sponsorship of the East Asian Christian Conference (EACC) and SODEPAX, SODEPAX being the Committee on Society, Development and Peace jointly created by the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace.

Many if not most of the countries of South, East, and Southeast Asia sent delegates to AECD. We are happy and proud to have with us this afternoon, as principal speakers, three members of the Philippine delegation to AECD, namely, Dr. Emérito P. Nacpil, Dean and Professor of Theology of Union Theological Seminary, Father C. G. Arévalo, Director and Professor of Theology of the School of Theology and Ecclesiastical Studies of the Ateneo de Manila, and Dr. Ramón C. Reyes, Chairman of the Department of Philosophy of the same University.

The AECD decided to deal with its agenda by breaking up into workshops, one of which was the Theology Workshop. The participants in the Theology Workshop adopted as a basis for discussion the notion of development put forward in Pope Paul VI's *Populorum progressio*, namely, integral development, or the development of peoples in their dignity as persons, and the achievement of freedom, justice, and peace

in the human community. They then addressed themselves to the following questions.

First: Why, to what extent, and how is development, thus understood, a concern of Christians specifically as Christians, that is to say, by reason of their vocation and mission as Christians, and not simply because they happen to be also citizens of a commonwealth or members of the human race?

Second: What is the specifically Christian approach to the problems posed by development, such as the alleviation of poverty, the uses of affluence, the management of power, and the means by which the disadvantaged may secure the justice and freedom that is rightfully theirs?

Third: What are the practical measures that must be adopted to make the Christian concern with development, and the Christian approach to development, a reality, and not just a hope, in Asia, today?

The results of the Theology Workshop's deliberations on these questions were submitted to the plenary session of the AECD in the form of a report entitled "Theological Perspectives", of which I take it copies have been distributed to the participants in this echo seminar. You will note that there are seven sections to this report, namely:

- A. The Scope and Basis for Christian Concern for Development
- B. Poverty and Affluence
- C. Justice, Power, and Liberation
- D. Ways and Means
- E. Conclusion
- F. Epilogue
- G. Recommendations

Dr. Nacpil will comment principally on Section A, Father Arevalo on Sections B, C and D, and Dr. Reyes will add a humanistic dimension to the theological perspectives.

We are honored to have as panelists Mr. Cirilo A. Rigos, General Secretary of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, and Father Francis Senden, CICM, Director of the

Asian Social Institute. They will comment on the papers presented; and, after brief replies by Dr. Nacpil and Father Arévalo, there will be an open forum. It is hoped that in the comments of the panelists and in the open forum certain interesting points in Sections E, F, and G of the report will be taken up.

It is hoped, as well, that ideas will be put forward as to how the conclusions and recommendations of AECD regarding Asian development in general should apply to the Philippines in particular.

It is hoped, in short, that this echo seminar will not merely give an echo—a mere reduplication of an original sound, like a hall whose acoustics are not what they should be. What is expected of us, I suspect, is not so much an echo as variations upon a theme; the strings and woodwinds of the Philippines, as it were, restating, after their own fashion, the melody so masterfully stated by the French horns of Tokyo.

HORACIO DE LA COSTA, S.J.