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**WELCOME ADDRESS**

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**Ambisyon Natin 2040 Youth Summit**

*Eastwood Central Plaza, Libis, Quezon City*

*09 July 2016, 12:00 – 8:00 PM*

A pleasant evening to all, and welcome to the Ambisyon Natin 2040 Youth Summit. Kanina tinawag kaming VIPs. And it’s only because we are part of the Filipino people who are very important for this initiative. And so we in NEDA are happy to have you all join us today. Let me first acknowledge the officials and staff of NEDA led by Deputy Director-General Rosemarie Edillon. It’s a Saturday and we’re at work, no overtime pay, but it’s fun work this time. It doesn't happen often. Let me also acknowledge Mr Kit Cruz, commissioner of the National Youth Commission.

Some of you might have already heard of Ambisyon Natin 2040 from your Facebook feeds, from the LED screens along EDSA, or from the few student briefings we’ve conducted this year. If you haven’t, or if you still don’t know what it is, please visit 2040.neda.gov.ph. In essence, as Chino said, Ambisyon Natin 2040 represents the collective aspirations of Filipinos. It is our long-term vision for ourselves – the kind of life we want, the country that we want to see in the future, in the year 2040.

In the video earlier where we interviewed people about the future, you would notice that we Filipinos are family-centered. We aspire for a life that includes our parents, our siblings, our children. It is one striking finding of a nationwide survey commissioned by NEDA.

Just to give an idea, did you know that about 80% of Filipinos want a simple and comfortable life – simple at maginhawang buhay? Less than 4% want to be rich, and the rest want an affluent life or buhay ng may kaya. In the survey, we asked people to define what they mean by simple and comfortable. For many of us, it means having our own house, having a job or a business that will enable us to afford the things we need, having enough savings for unexpected expenses and for retirement, and being able to travel comfortably. Are these something you would want yourselves? And did you know that 88 percent of Filipinos prefer to stay and work in the country?

To us in NEDA, knowing the people’s aspirations motivates us to work on policies and plans that will help us achieve the life we want. But we know we cannot do this alone. This is why we are here. This event is special because we want young Filipinos to own and fight for this vision. In the next two decades, you will be the next leaders, and as the future movers and shakers of this country, you need to be more involved.

We are here because we want you to know that we Filipinos have a lot in common in terms of what we want to see in the future. Despite disagreements on some issues, despite the challenges we face as individuals and as a nation, we fervently hope that all of us will remain positive, knowing that there are things that can actually unite us. Let us think long-term and be inspired by the kind of future we want. Ambition connotes action. And so this long- term vision should not become merely a dream. Let us act to make our vision, our ambitions a reality.

And on that note, in behalf of NEDA, welcome to all of you, and here’s to a good life for all Filipino families. Yan ang AmBisyon natin 2040. Maraming salamat.

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