

Suggested Talking Points
Energy and Environment Chief Rolf Anderson
20th Anniversary of the Foundation for the Philippine Environment
3/F Podium Garden
Regalia Tower Hotel Suites
January 16, 2012, 6:30 pm

- **Greetings.** *Magandang gabi sa inyong lahat.* (Good evening to everyone.) It is my great pleasure to join the 20th anniversary celebration of the Foundation for the Philippine Environment.
- **Congratulations to FPE.** Congratulations on reaching this very significant milestone. USAID itself recently celebrated its 50th year of partnership with the Philippines last November. And FPE is a living testament to those strong and productive ties particularly in the areas of biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.
- **USAID values and continues to nurture its relationship with FPE.** USAID supports the Philippines' desire to improve its natural resource base and ecosystem services, which underpin inclusive and broad-based economic growth. We also recognize that achieving this goal will require the strategic and collaborative support of partners from government agencies, nongovernmental organizations like FPE, local governments, the private sector, and especially those communities who are most dependent on and vulnerable to the continued degradation of natural resources.
- **We are proud of our longstanding partnership – a partnership that in fact, enabled the establishment of FPE.** Twenty years ago, intensive discussions among government and civil society organizations of the Philippines and the United States resulted in a debt-for-nature-swap arrangement, and one of the outcomes of this arrangement was the establishment of an endowment fund through a US\$ 21.8 million (about 570 million pesos) grant from USAID. I am

pleased to note that since then, FPE has provided grants to more than a thousand organizations, and all while has been expanding its endowment base—a faithful steward of the funds that were entrusted to it.

- **FPE’s achievements.** Since its creation, FPE has accomplished many outstanding and notable achievements. These include building sustainable communities, restoring habitats, linking population, health and the environment, and meeting the challenge of climate change. I am pleased to note that FPE’s work in biodiversity conservation remains a high priority.
- **USAID shares FPE’s other concerns related to the environment.** Looking into the future, USAID has identified climate change, forests and sustainable landscapes, fisheries, clean energy, water, and governance as among its priority issues and concerns. We have recently embarked on a reform initiative called USAID Forward, under which we will work more with local organizations to achieve our development goals.
- **And the partnership between FPE and USAID is ongoing.** FPE continues to be a valued partner of USAID in helping achieve our mutual goal of conserving and improving the state of natural resources and biodiversity in the Philippines. We recently awarded a grant to FPE to support reforestation and conservation work.
- **Message of appreciation.** USAID sincerely appreciates receiving this Plaque of Recognition tonight. This is a warm reminder that the support from the American people is making a great difference in supporting the Philippine environment and sustainable development.
- **Closing.** Thank you very much. And congratulations again to FPE on your 20th birthday. I look forward to more productive years ahead.