

**Welcome Remarks for Dinner Reception for Mrs Anke Fuchs, the Chairperson of FES  
“Shaping a Fair Globalization for Social Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> century”  
by Mirko Herberg, Resident Representative of FES Philippine Office  
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Magandang gabi po. Guten Abend.

Not every evening do I have the pleasure to welcome so many illustrious and distinguished guests at a function of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

Not long ago, Undersecretary Edsel Custodio was in the midst of a highly contentious topic among a highly diverging crowd when he led a discussion with the WTO Secretariat and civil society on “Decision-making processes in trade negotiations”. Having a wealth of experience in handling such affairs, I promise Undersecretary Custodio that this evening will be more harmonious. Welcome, Undersecretary Custodio.

It is with equal pleasure to welcome one of the most prolific and hard-working legislators of the Philippine Senate, Senator Edgardo J. Angara. FES has had the pleasure of working with him in efforts to promote the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and discussing ways to push forward political reform. These issues never come to be resolved, don’t they? We, on the other hand, have the resolve to continue debating and dialoguing with you on these matters. Thank you for being with us, Senator Angara.

I am equally proud and privileged to welcome

- Undersecretary Ernesto Carolina of the DND
- Assistant Secretary Rey Carandang for European Affairs of the DFA,
- Assistant Secretary for Special Concerns and External Affairs, Teresa Soriano of DOLE, who is a long-time partner of the foundation when she headed the Institute for Labor Studies of the labor department.

A political foundation would be remiss if no politicians would be around in an evening like this. I therefore welcome

- Congressman Magi Gunigundo, Chair of the Committee on Labor
- Congresswoman Risa Hontiveros-Baraquel from the House of Representatives. We appreciate your presence even more, given the current travails taking place in the House.

In acknowledging tonight’s guests, I run the risk of neglecting our friends from the international community and, importantly, our partners and friends who regularly participate in what we do best – not without reason, I have heard, do people think of FES as ForEverSeminar.

My Ego does not feel hurt if I admit that you are not here to see me. Rather, you are probably curious to find out what kind of person is the lady who presides over this foundation that, so I would like to believe, most of you value and cherish. Some colleagues and predecessors of mine mentioned to me “Wow, how come you have managed to bring her over to the Philippines?” Well, I guess that she is not here BECAUSE of me – unless she wants to check out how these youngsters are doing representing FES so far from home.

She has come to the Philippines for the first time in her life rather because she would like to get a better understanding of this part of the world, of this unique, fascinating and full-of-contradiction group of islands called the Philippines, and to find out for herself how the foundation contributes to peace,

democracy and social justice in the country. Ladies and Gentlemen, it is an immense pleasure to introduce to you and welcome Mrs Anke Fuchs, Chairperson of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, accompanied by her husband, Mr. Andreas Fuchs, former Counsellor of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen. I also welcome Dr. Beate Bartoldus, the Head of the FES Asia-Pacific Department, who is not a first-time visitor but always a welcome visitor.

While the Philippines may not be in the spotlight of the German media (and if it is, it may not be for the right reasons), it is still recognized that the Philippines is and remains democratic in a region where democracy does not enjoy a smooth sailing. We take note of the commitment to promote and protect human rights despite serious challenges encountered. We witness the many facets in the struggle to deepen democracy, to uplift people out of poverty and to bring about social justice. We value the indispensable role the Philippines plays in regional integration and in shaping the face of globalization. The Global Pinoy is also present in Germany.

In all these, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Philippine Office has been and is committed to continue to be a reliable partner – for both government and civil society. Our engagements reflect the basic values that we hold and of which we are very fond.

We are unrelenting in supporting initiatives for a more enlightened system of labor relations, the fair balancing of interests between employers and employees through allowing for more genuine representation of the interests of the Philippine (or Filipino?) working people.

We continue to offer space in which actors from various sides of the spectrum engage in debates about economic development and the future of the political system that may open more opportunities for the representation of the marginalized. We offer space to young people to raise their voice when they see their future imperiled by the here-and-now-centered decisions of the current adult generation that wields power.

We still see the value in contributing to the capacity of local governments and local elected officials to involve stakeholders in decision-making at the local level for more responsive and accountable local governance.

We venture in new areas of cooperation. We aim to build bridges (mention presence of DND/ NDCP?) for dialogue and better understanding of issues affecting the provision of security and the guaranteeing of human security. I have been deeply impressed by the way in which people who have been militantly opposed to another during the period of Martial Law sit at the same table, share their perspective and appreciate each other's presence and openness. This is the dialogue function of the foundation at its best, and I am strongly looking forward to continue such dialogue between civil society and the NDCP (or security sector?).

Our political foundation, as the other German political foundations, holds a non-negotiable commitment to the democratic process, to an open exchange of opinions, to the peaceful solution of conflicts.

I will stop here. My task is only to give Welcome Remarks, not to deliver a programmatic speech. That is for our speakers of the evening to do, which will put me in the comfortable position to listen to political leaders. Therefore, let me open this evening with our guest, or better, our guests of honor, but not without expressing my deep appreciation of your presence tonight and our continued partnership in our quest for peace, democracy and social justice.

Herzlichen Dank. Maraming Salamat po.