

**Statement of TUCP President Democrito T. Mendoza in the Socio-Economic Summit,
10 December 2001**

Madame President, colleagues in labor, sectoral leaders, ladies and gentlemen.

This socio-economic summit has good intentions. We commend the President, Senator Blas Ople, the cabinet secretaries, the sectoral representatives, and all those who contributed to this culminating summit. Workers and their families who are the first and the worst to be hit by difficulties expect much from this summit.

Madame President, leaders, your honors, the economy and the country must regain its footing. Labor looks up to your leadership, and those of our political leaders, to vigorously implement plans and programs from this summit to take us out of the series of crisis that has hit us badly.

We appeal to both business and government, to support longer lasting measures, not quick-fix solutions and short-sighted schemes that usually target workers for cost-cutting.

The decision of some regional wage boards not to grant wage increases is not acceptable. The government representatives in the wage board of Region Seven should think again. This kind of decisions not only push workers deeper into poverty but also raises social tension. This will not be good for the economy. Tension, uncertainty, are bad for the economy.

Our economic experts should think out of the box. In these times of global recession we can fall back on domestic productive activities. Reducing real buying power will cut demand for domestic goods and services and will only push our economy further down.

Jobs will be created and sustained by local actions, more than by exports. Investments will come to a large market. Impoverished workers are bad for investments. The country will be built by many actions in workplaces and communities. These local actions should be supported.

Madame President, labor should be represented in the Regional Development Councils (RDCs). We can contribute our one cents worth in discussions for development.

Labor also appeals to our political leaders: let us have a ceasefire on harmful politics.

Divisive politics distract us from implementing proper solutions to our problems.

For a few months, let us devote ourselves singly to the serious work of national development. The best preparation for 2004 is to serve the interest of the people and the nation. Concrete contributions to nation-building, not propaganda, not investigations and inquiries.

There are bigger things to address: poverty, insurgency, kidnappings, drugs, corruption, other crimes against our people and the nation.

Let us apply our collective minds to these issues and move forcefully.

Labor is tired from many years of privation. We are close to the end of our patience. Labor calls for self-less actions.

So, let us make this summit different from all the rest. Let us achieve many things after this summit.

Thank you and let's go to work!