



The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Manila  
121 Arzobispo Street, Intramuros  
P.O. Box 132  
Manila, Philippines

21 August 2006

**HON. NOLI DE CASTRO**

Vice-President, Republic of the Philippines  
Chairman, Housing and Urban Development  
Coordinating Council  
6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Floors, Atrium Building,  
Makati Ave., Makati City

Dear Vice President de Castro,

Greetings of peace in the Lord!

You will recall in my letter to you on 12 May 2006 that I raised several issues pertaining to the relocation of railroad evictees to the Southville Housing Project in Cabuyao, Laguna. I particularly drew your attention on the need to improve the living conditions in the resettlement area and to find alternate in-city relocation.

I am writing this time to draw your urgent attention on the existence of a six-hectare mixed waste dump next to the residential blocs, which only tends to exacerbate the poor living conditions in the relocation site.

Living in close proximity with a dump raises the risks of developing serious health problems, especially among the children, women and elderly. Dumps, as you know, are sources of harmful toxins that are capable of damaging human bodies, contaminating the food supply and polluting the surroundings, including the air, soil and surface and groundwater.

As gathered by the Ecological Waste Coalition and the Urban Poor Associates, relocatees are concerned about the ill effects of daily exposure to airborne contaminants as well as pollutants from leachate and surface runoff that are dispersed via floodwaters. Likewise, our ecology desk coordinator, visiting

relocatees who are partners of the Archdiocese of Manila's outreach program for waste pickers, observed the same dangerous and inhumane conditions.

Their concerns about the health threats of living next to a dump are not groundless. Studies in North America have shown that residing near dumps or landfills involved an increased incidence of birth defects, respiratory ailments and cancers of the bladder, breast, cervix, liver, stomach and prostate.

It appears to me that the current relocation program in Cabuyao, Laguna fails to take into consideration the health and environmental hazards that living next to a mixed waste dump might cause to the relocatees.

I therefore convey my solemn appeal to the government to reconsider further plans to relocate evictees to the Southville Housing Project, and to look more seriously for in-city relocation sites.

I further appeal for your action that will restore the relocatees' hope for a humane and secured future by:

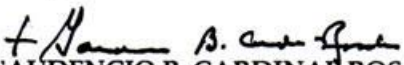
1. hastening the closure, clean up and rehabilitation of the said dumpsite;
2. ensuring immediate access to essential services such as electricity, safe drinking water, proper drainage and sanitation and ecological system for managing discards;
3. completing what is required to obtain quality education at both Southville Elementary School and Cabuyao National High School Annex in Southville; and,
4. providing sustainable jobs and livelihood opportunities within the site and nearby places.

I am one with the relocatees' in seeking for the immediate resolution of their grievances and needs.

I thank you for your prompt action that will surely make a difference in restoring the relocatees' human dignity and in promoting environmental health and justice for all.

Thank you very much and God bless you always!

Sincerely yours,

  
+ GAUDENCIO B. CARDINAL ROSALES  
Archbishop of Manila