



Nicole REVEL  
UMR 7206  
Département Hommes, Natures, Sociétés  
Muséum national d'histoire naturelle  
57 Rue Cuvier  
Paris 75005

Courriel : revel@vjf.cnrs.fr

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MOST HONORABLE JOSE CHAVES ALVAREZ, GOVERNOR OF PALAWAN  
HONORABLE DENNIS SOCRATES, VICE-GOVERNOR OF PALAWAN

DEAR GOVERNOR AND VICE GOVERNOR OF PALAWAN,

I ADDRESS THIS LETTER TO YOU AS A FRENCH SCHOLAR WHO HAS WORKED ON THE TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND KNOW HOW OF THE PALA'WAN SINCE 1970.

SINCE SEVERAL YEARS, I HAVE OBSERVED WITH GREAT CONCERN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PALM OIL PLANTATIONS IN THE SOUTH OF THE BEAUTIFUL AND EXTREMELY RICH PROVINCE UNDER YOUR CUSTODY TODAY.

WE REMEMBER THAT IN THE PAST, YOU HAVE BEEN SUPPORTING THE VISION FOR A 'STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF PALAWAN' AND SUPPORTED THE CREATION OF A VERY SPECIAL OFFICE DIRECTLY CONNECTED TO THE PRESIDENCY IN MANILA.

TODAY, THIS WIDE EXPANSION FROM 6.000HA. TO 20.000 HA. OF OIL MONCULTURE ON THE LAND OF FARMERS AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IS A POLICY IN TOTAL CONTRADICTION WITH YOUR FORMER COMMITMENT FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE 'LAST FRONTIER' IN YOUR COUNTRY, WHICH HAS ALSO BEEN DECLARED A 'RESERVE OF THE BIOSPHERE' BY UNESCO IN 1993 .

AS A MATTER OF FACT WE ALL KNOW QUITE WELL BECAUSE OF EXAMPLES IN VARIOUS AREAS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA, THAT THIS POLICY WILL ENDANGER BIODIVERSITY, WATER RESOURCES, TOPSOIL QUALITY AND THE LIVELIHOOD OF THE PEOPLE. CONSEQUENTLY, THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY OF THE SOUTHERN PART OF PALAWAN PROVINCE, FARMERS AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES 'FOOD SECURITY IN THIS AREA WILL BE SEVERELY AFFECTED.

ON 29 SEPTEMBER, HON. DENNIS SOCRATES HAS MET A DELEGATION OF FARMERS AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES REPRESENTED BY THE RECENTLY COALITION AGAINST LAND GRABBING (CALG), ACCOMPANIED BY BISHOP PEDRO ARRIGO. CALG'S MEMBERS HAVE DELIVERED A PETITION SIGNED BY ALMOST 4,300 PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY.

THEY ARE ASKING TO PASS A MORATORIUM ON THE EXPANSION OF OIL PALM PLANTATIONS AND THIS IS NOT ONLY A LEGITIMATE REQUEST, BUT A WISE VISION FOR THE GENERATIONS TO COME.

ALLOW ME TO REMIND THAT THE PRESENT, IMMEDIATE AND FURTHER FUTURE, IS AND WILL BE CONFRONTED TO A POPULATION INCREASE EXTREMELY HIGH IN THE COUNTRY AND CLIMATE CHANGES THAT WILL INTENSIFY INNER MIGRATIONS. THESE PARAMETERS ARE TO BE TAKEN AS AN INEXORABLE REALITY.

WE TRUST THAT THE COMMITMENT OF PHILIPPINE'S GOVERNMENT TO RESOLVE FOOD SECURITY, TO IMPROVE FARMERS' ECONOMY AND TO SAFEGUARD INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' ANCESTRAL DOMAINS, RESPECTING THE LAW AT THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS, IS A PRIORITY, AND THEREFORE, IS NOT COMPATIBLE WITH THE ONGOING ATTEMPT OF CONVERTING PRECIOUS LAND INTO OIL PALM PLANTATIONS.

BEFORE THE DAMAGE TO THE LAND AND ITS PEOPLE TURNS IRREVERSIBLE, WE ATTEMPT BY THE PRESENT LETTER, TO CONVINCE YOU OF THE NECESSITY TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO THE RECENT PETITION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND FARMERS OF YOUR PROVINCE.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Nicole Revel". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nicole" and the last name "Revel" clearly distinguishable.

Nicole REVEL  
Directeur de recherche émérite au CNRS  
(Centre National de la recherche Scientifique), Paris.  
Doctor Honoris Causa (Humanities), Ateneo de Manila University.

