

16 April 2010

His Excellency Most Rev. FERNANDO R. CAPALLA, D.D. Archbishop of Davao

Your Excellency,

I regret that I was unable to attend the "Listen Mindanao: We Care for You" Presidential Forum scheduled today, April 16. I am in Bacolod City, Negros Occidental for a campaign sortie, and I would have attended the forum if we had been able to get a plane that would transport me to Davao City.

My staff checked all the flights available from Bacolod to Cebu and then to Davao. We also tried to charter a private plane. Regrettably, though, there were no matching flights, nor available private planes.

As you may be aware, I had been present in all forums and debates organized by different sectors because I want to convey my message and my platform to the people. I have always given priority to these events because I believe that our people have the right to know the stand of the candidates in various issues surrounding our country.

Peace and progress in Mindanao has long been a part of my agenda for change. It is a priority in my platform of government. Whenever I go to Mindanao I see the possibilities that are boundless and we can develop it to become a center of aquaculture and tourism. But to me, the first thing that we must instill in every Filipino is to respect, understand and accept our fellow Filipinos, regardless of religion, faith and culture. I would have gladly discussed these points and many other things to our beloved Mindanaoans.

Again, I sincerely apologize for any inconvenience brought about by my absence in the said forum. I hope for your kind understanding.

Sincerely,

RICHARD J. GORDON

Senator, Republic of the Philippines