

Opening Speech

Benjamin Cayetano

Governor of the State of Hawaii, U.S.A.

As Governor of the State of Hawaii, it is my pleasure to welcome the eminent governors and the many other distinguished participants from other Asia-Pacific countries to this Northeast Asia Economic Forum at the East-West Center.

Hawaii as you know is America's Pacific State, located at the center of this mighty ocean which laps our shores. We have a common bond, which in peace-time can bring us together to deliberate on major issues that concern us and work cooperatively for solutions that will benefit humankind. And in this institution where we are meeting, the East-West Center for Cultural and Technical Interchange, we have an ideal venue where scholars and policymakers can bring forth their findings and inquiries, listen to all viewpoints and reach consensus on desirable policies and actions.

I am fully cognizant of the strategic importance of the Asia-Pacific and have directed much of our effort to enhancing our economic relations in this dynamic region. In this initiative, I have relied heavily on Dr. Seiji Naya, director for my Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, who is a well-known Asian specialist. He has been a long time proponent of strengthening U.S.-Asian business relations and with his leadership, Hawaii could play a role as America's "Gateway to Asia."

Discussions at international forums such as this are focusing more and more on trade issues for developing countries throughout the world. Those who have looked outward, who have expanded their foreign trade and welcomed direct foreign investment, have always done the best. Important trade issues are now being dealt with by the World Trade Organization (WTO) as successor to GATT. I have given serious thought to this issue and feel that Hawaii would be an ideal venue for these trade negotiations and have asked that we be considered as host for the next round. Thereafter, the negotiations could be considered as host for the next round. Thereafter, the negotiations could be conducted under the rubric of the Hawaii Round, just like the recently concluded Uruguay Round. Perhaps you may wish to consider this possibility in your discussions.

The East-West Center has pioneered in scholarly exchange and policy dialog. It has convened important meetings involving the United Nations Development Program, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the Development Research Center of the State Council, People's Republic of

China, and many other important official, international, and academic institutions. Today like other U.S. government supported institutions, it faces serious budgetary cutbacks.

Because the East-West Center can contribute even more to Hawaii and the entire Asia-Pacific region, it is my hope that we can find the means to restore its fiscal integrity so that it can continue its important work. In this effort, we would welcome the advice and support of our distinguished conferees. The countries and regions of the Northeast Pacific have much to offer in terms of economic resources, investment potential and international relations.

I know you will enjoy yourselves with our wonderful climate and in your interaction with our talented scholars here at the East-West Center and our friendly people throughout our islands.

Hawaii has much to learn from this strategic section of the Asia-Pacific. I wish you success in your deliberations.

Mahalo and Aloha.