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### MESSAGE OF SOLIDARITY TO THE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL FOR PEOPLES' RIGHTS AND STRUGGLES (IFPRS)

By Prof. Jose Maria Sison

Chairperson

International League of Peoples' Struggle

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On behalf of the International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS), I wish to convey warmest greetings of solidarity to all the workers, peasants, women, youth, indigenous peoples, migrants, artists and cultural workers and all the people from other sectors and communities from all over the world who are now gathered in Manila for the first International Festival for Peoples' Rights and Struggles.

For their success in jointly organizing this festival, we congratulate the International Migrants Alliance (IMA), the International Women's Alliance (IWA), Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN), League of Filipino Students, Concerned Artists of the Philippines, Habi Arts, RESIST, IBON, Peace for Life, People's Action Network, People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS), the People's Movement on Climate Change (PMCC), Asian Peasant Coalition, the UP College of Mass Communications, the ILPS Commission 14 and many other entities.

We welcome this festival for serving as an occasion for social activists in Asia-Pacific, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, North America and Europe to exchange ideas and experiences, to learn from each other regarding the vital issues

that confront them, to network and build relations of solidarity and to celebrate the struggles and victories of the people.

We are grateful that this happy and enlightening occasion comes immediately before the Fourth International Assembly of the ILPS. The festival promotes the assembly, brings to it a significant number of delegates and enriches their journey and brightens their horizon. The conferences, colloquium, seminars, forums, workshops and speak out under the auspices of the festival will certainly be helpful to several commissions during the Fourth International Assembly.

We appreciate that the festival confronts the global depression and the handful of imperialist powers that have caused it, protracting and deepening it under the piratical banner of neoliberal globalization and continuously passing the burden of crisis to the working people and the middle class. Trillions of dollars of public money have been used to bail out the big banks and favored corporations and serve their profit-making interests and have not resulted in real economic recovery in terms of production and employment.

The public debt bubble is bursting and the monopoly bourgeoisie is adopting and carrying out austerity measures at the expense of the people. The incomes of the working people are being pressed down further and social services are being cut back. The prices of basic goods and services are soaring. While the big corporations and upper class pay less taxes, the tax burden falls heavier on the broad masses of the people.

The imperialist countries are accelerating superprofit-taking at the expense of the underdeveloped countries through the practice of international usury, investment and trade liberalization, privatization, deregulation, denationalization, the takeover of natural resources and the rapid extraction of raw materials at the grave costs to the people and the environment.

The imperialist powers are whipping up state terrorism and unleashing wars of aggression as in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya under the pretext of anti-terrorism or humanitarian intervention in order to suppress the people's resistance and attack countries that assert independence. But the people's resistance is irrepressible and continues to arise on the scale of entire countries and global regions.

Mass protests and strikes against austerity measures have spread across Europe, South Asia, Africa, Palestine, Thailand and the Philippines. In the Middle East and North Africa, the people's uprisings have been set off by protests against unemployment, food scarcity, corruption and despotic rule. The worsening crises of global capitalism and the local reactionary ruling systems are generating conditions that are favorable to the waging of armed revolution.

The crisis of the world capitalist system is inflicting terrible suffering on the people and is inciting them to rise up. As the imperialist powers and the puppet governments escalate the oppression and exploitation, we can expect the people to wage far greater resistance than ever before in both the underdeveloped and developed countries. We  
laud the festival for seeking to inspire the people to be resolute and militant in the struggle for national and social liberation against imperialism and all reaction.

We appreciate highly the RESIST Colloquium for seeking to analyze the crisis of the world capitalist system and the new world disorder and present the challenges and opportunities for the people's movement. A deeper understanding of the character and course of the crisis and the scope and intensity of the people's resistance can lead to further advances in the struggle for a new international political and economic order.

We are deeply pleased that the recently-founded International Women's Alliance

(IWA) is holding its First General Assembly as part of the festival. We are confident that this assembly with the theme of building a militant women's alliance in the 21st century, will further strengthen IWA as an anti-imperialist, anti-patriarchal, anti-racist and anti-sexist force and will contribute to advancing the women's movement as a vital part of the people's movement for national and social liberation.

We anticipate fervently the International Conference on Progressive Culture: People's Art Shaping the Society of the Future. This is an opportunity for artists and creative writers from different parts of the world to come together, share their work and reinvigorate the role of art in the struggle for fundamental social change. The entire festival shall be enlivened by the art exhibit, film showings, workshops and the Kafe Kultura as the space for music jamming, mural painting, sculpting and social media.

We welcome the 2nd International Assembly of the International Migrants' Alliance, with the theme "Strengthen and expand our movement, Migrants, resist intensified imperialist attacks, achieve victories in our struggle!" The assembly will sum up and evaluate the level of struggle in relation to the major issues confronting migrants.

We also welcome the forum on: The Global Movement of Migrants: Current Situation and Resistance Against Imperialist Attacks. We wish to know more about how the migrants are adversely affected by the crisis of global capitalism and how they are resisting the escalating attacks from the proponents of neoliberal globalization and the worst reactionaries, including the chauvinists, the racists, the religious bigots and fascists.

We look forward to the seminar on the US War on Terror and Counterinsurgency. We must examine the US national security doctrine, the various dimensions and forms of US intervention abroad, the latest version of its counterinsurgency doctrine and its implications and consequences on the rights of peoples. An excellent case

study can be the application of the US Counterinsurgency Guide in the Philippines through Oplan Bayanihan.

We also look forward to the International Panel Discussion and open forum on US Foreign Military Bases. We must ventilate the demands of the people for the dismantling of US military bases, forward stations and covert intelligence teams and for the repeal of military treaties and agreements that allow these. We wish to hear the reports of resistance against US military bases in Asia and Oceania, Middle East, Latin America and Europe.

We welcome the People's Speak Out for the Right to Land and Life, a forum organized by the People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty. It underscores the struggle for land and life amidst the food crisis and intensifying land grabbing by foreign agro-corporations and their local reactionary partners. It is appropriate that the forum will be followed by a people's march to the Department of Agrarian Reform.

We also welcome the V International Forum on Democracy and Cooperation which aims to amplify the voices from Asia in promoting active citizenship and realizing truly participatory democracy and at the same time seeks to build synergies and solidarity beyond geographical and regional borders as a way forward in finding alternatives.

We have high expectations from the Seminar on People's Resistance and Struggles for Liberation, which features the testimonies from leaders, activists and representatives of liberation movements from various countries, including Egypt, Tunisia, Sri Lanka, Greece, Palestine and the Philippines. We hope that in this regard there are no obstacles to the travel of outstanding leaders who are iconic of revolutionary struggle.

We anticipate to learn so much from the Workshop on the Permanent People's

Tribunal. This intends to present its experiences as an opinion tribunal and a collective research effort towards the implementation of the principles of the Universal Declaration of Rights of Peoples (Algiers Declaration), to examine cases from Latin America to the Philippines involving the impunity of so-called democracies and to show several initiatives that challenge such impunity through condonation by as well as circumvention of international law.

We look forward to the Solidarity Forum on Youth Struggles. It will gather young people from various countries to depict and analyze their situation in relation to the crisis of global capitalism, to share experiences and learn from each other in resisting imperialism and advancing their struggles, and to draw up a declaration to inspire the further spread and intensification of the struggles of the youth and the people for a fundamentally new and better world free from imperialism and all reaction.

We are confident that the International Festival of People's Rights and Struggles will obtain resounding success and will lead to further festivals in conjunction with the international assemblies of the International League of Peoples' Struggles. May all our efforts contribute to the advance and triumph of the people's struggles for greater freedom, democracy, social justice, all-round development and world peace. ###