



## MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT



In 2004, Ayala celebrated its 170th anniversary by renewing its commitment to national development. As the heart of the country's largest and most respected business house, Ayala Foundation was instrumental in buttressing Ayala's position as a leading advocate of corporate social responsibility. Our various divisions came together to celebrate this momentous occasion in Ayala's history and committed to the pursuit of our vision with refreshed vigor and firm resolve.

Ayala Foundation is perhaps at its most diversified, with initiatives in arts and culture, education, the environment, and social development. Our involvement in these varied causes allows for myriad opportunities to reach out to our countrymen and women.

Fostering national pride was the focal point of 2004 as Ayala dedicated the new Ayala Museum to the Filipino people. We believe that the ability to define our national identity is key in our pursuit of development and that a greater appreciation of our rich history and cultural heritage lies at the core of this quest. The new Ayala Museum, located at the heart of the country's financial

district, is in an excellent position to bring art, history, and culture within the public's reach. Furthermore, the Ayala Museum, is a state-of-the-art facility that measures up to international standards and is something all Filipinos can be proud of.

Another milestone for Ayala Foundation was its being conferred the status of "people power people's organization" by former president Corazon Aquino. We take great pride in this honor, and are humbled by the responsibility that comes with it. While we certainly see this as a challenge to continuously live up to the standards and ideals expected of such an organization, we are confident that our work throughout the past year has proven that we can do so.

Our programs for education, information technology, and youth development expanded considerably in 2004. Youth Tech, our effort at bridging the growing digital divide in the country, was able to provide more public high schools with computers and Internet access than we had originally targeted. With the support of the United States Agency for International Development, we have been able to take concrete steps

towards alleviating information poverty in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao.

Inspired by this success, we began to lay the groundwork for Gearing-up Internet Literacy and Access to Students, or GILAS, a multi-sectoral project that extends Youth Tech's reach to the entire nation's public high school system. Preparations for the Education and Livelihood Skills Alliance, an education and livelihood skills assistance program in Mindanao, are also under way. ELSA will be launched in 2005.

While we ceaselessly think of new ways to bring information technology and skills training to marginalized sectors, we ensure the sustained growth of our existing projects. The Ayala-Intel Computer Clubhouses continued to hone the skills of their increasing number of members, culminating in the participation of selected youths in the Teen Summit in Boston, Massachusetts. Our text2teach program extended its reach to more public elementary schools, providing them with access to downloadable multimedia educational materials. Barangay.Net, which introduced

information technology as a tool for governance, established additional one-stop information centers around Cebu.

Our programs for youth development also increased in 2004. AF USA launched its Filipino-American Youth Leaders Fellowship Program, allowing participants to reconnect with their Filipino roots and become U.S.-based advocates for the Philippines. The Ayala Young Leaders Congress held its sixth congress and is looking to replicate its operations in Mindanao.

Meanwhile, the Center of Excellence in Public Elementary Education moved a year closer to producing its first batch of graduates, forging partnerships with both public and private high schools, thus ensuring the students' continued education. Faculty development was also of paramount importance and various training methods were employed.

Finally, the Filipinas Heritage Library continued to enrich the lives of Filipinos through its numerous projects, including writing and photography workshops, poetry readings, and storytelling sessions. It also strengthened its services in the area

of publications and multimedia projects, reinforcing its role to support the information and communications requirements of Ayala group companies.

Looking back at what we accomplished in the last year brings a certain sense of satisfaction. Through the dedication and hard work of our staff and the support of our many partners, we were able to not only sustain our projects but also increase their breadth. We responded to the needs of our brothers and sisters in the best way that we could, and this is truly worth celebrating.

As 2004 came to a close with a torrent of massive natural disasters, the calls for action intensified. There is no room for complacency in a world so changed by incomprehensible tragedy. As we enter the new year with a feeling of sobriety, let us allow our success in the past year to inspire and energize us as we face the challenges of the future.

  
Victoria Garchitorea  
President