

## WATER CONSERVATION AS MY PERSONAL ADVOCACY

Water is a finite and valuable resource, essential to sustain life, development and the environment. It cannot be replenished as fast as it is consumed. Therefore, there is an urgent need to protect the resource by promoting its efficient use and preventing its waste.

Everyone in this world is a water user. The only difference is the purpose for which it is used and the way a person uses water. Unless earnest efforts are exerted, we hardly realize that such use is often prone to waste rather than conservation.

Having worked on an environmental project in cooperation with the National Water Resources Board, I picked up the following facts which underscore the critical situation of water resources in the country and why everyone needs to do his share to preserve this precious resource:

- 9 major cities are foreseen to encounter significant water constraint. Metro-Manila is considered a critically stressed area;
- 18 river systems are below water quality standards;
- 50 rivers out of the 421 rivers in the country are considered biologically dead;
- Just over a third or 36% of the country's river systems are classified as sources of public water supply. This is significant because a river is a surface water source which is easier to replenish and care for than groundwater – the source of supply for all deep wells that use a pumping mechanism to bring the water above ground;
- Up to 58% of groundwater sampled is contaminated with coliform and needs treatment;
- Many areas experience a shortage of water supply especially during the dry season (summer);
- Urban poor and economically challenged sectors of society actually pay more on a daily basis for their water supply than users in affluent areas;
- An average person can go without food for over a month, but would be dead in a week without water.

Its funny but a lot of people don't realize that they would rather spend more for a case of beer than one cubic meter\* of water.

As populations continue to grow, there will be greater competing uses for water.

Environmentalists warn that wars may be waged in the future to fight over this precious and vital resource. This scares me so I'm doing what I can to make sure that this never happens.