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*Noted*

MISYON NG PILIPINAS SA MGA  
NACKAKAISANG BANSA



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PHILIPPINE MISSION TO THE  
UNITED NATIONS

001059

21 November 2012



H.E. MR. BAN KI-MOON  
Secretary-General  
United Nations  
New York

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Dear Secretary-General,

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chairman of the Asia-Pacific Group for the month of November, 2012.

At the last plenary meeting of the Asia-Pacific Group, it was agreed that I should write to you on the subject of one of your illustrious predecessors, H.E. Mr U Thant. As you know, his two terms as Secretary-General are universally regarded as having made a great contribution to global governance and peace. We believe it is incumbent upon our Group to ensure that his legacy and service are duly remembered at the United Nations.

The Asia-Pacific Group's attention has been drawn to the state of the small, rocky outcrop situated in the East River directly opposite the United Nations Headquarters. The island is apparently officially known as Belmont Island, but has been popularly known since the early 1980's as U Thant Island. Reference to Google maps, for example, will confirm the latter.

We are advised that the island is owned by the State of New York and has been leased for the last thirty years by followers of the revered spiritual teacher Sri Chinmoy. We are advised that Sri Chinmoy was a friend of Secretary-General U Thant's, sharing with him a profound belief in interfaith dialogue and interfaith understanding.

It is inspiring to think that greater interfaith understanding could be stimulated on a daily basis simply by contemplating the view from the United Nations of an unassuming Buddhist stupa, a simple Peace Pagoda, or some other form of remembrance monument erected upon U Thant Island.

Today, U Thant Island presents a rather forlorn picture of rubble, surmounted by some dead plants and a disarray of metal structures. It is submitted for Your Excellency's consideration that the right thing for us to do is to make a

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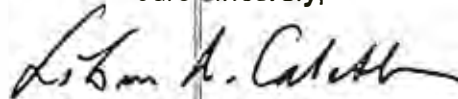
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concerted effort to improve upon this picture. We envisage a public-private project to erect a modest monument to interfaith dialogue, in honour of the late Secretary-General. ✓

The Asia-Pacific Group has appointed a small ambassadorial working group to progress this matter and to keep the Group apprised. As this month's Chair, I have convened this working group and am writing to you at their behest. We would be most grateful for your advice on steps that you would propose to take in order to regularise the name U Thant Island and to proceed with plans for a monument to interfaith dialogue. ✓

With assurances of highest consideration,

Yours sincerely,



**LIBRAN N. CABACTULAN**  
Permanent Representative