

## **Good Stories Movement Planting Seeds of Goodness**

*We change the story of the world,  
When we change the storyline.*

### **Background**

Much of what happens in this world, probably 99.9%, is not bad. It is neutral, and much of it is good. So much good is being done by many people from all walks of life - ordinary citizens, and public servants alike.

But why do we hear only of the 0.1% that is bad? Why do we see and hear only bad news on TV, radio, newspapers and now, in social media? Is it because bad news sells? And is it also because people like to hear of bad news? Maybe, this is called the *negativity bias*.

All this bad news is causing us all to suffer stress and depression. What is even worse is that we are feeling helpless and hopeless.

So how can we change the story?

Simple: We will just turn around the narrative -- from negative to positive.

We can change the story of the world if we change the storyline.



Above the wild waves,  
The heavy rains and dark clouds of  
Today's crisis of Life on Earth  
Is the Golden Sun of Hope.

## New Pathway

“We will have peace on Earth when we have peace *with* the Earth.

From now on, we will search for good stories of people making peace with the Earth. From now on, we will shun the bad and the sad. From now on, we will shine the spotlight on the good, the right, and the bright.

Law and Science try to change the mind – a very difficult task. And even if you can change the mind, it can change tomorrow. But when you change the heart, it is forever.

How? Let us look at human hunger.

The greatest human hunger is not the hunger for food. It is the hunger of the human heart for approval and recognition. Stories of the good, the right, and the bright are the best teachers. Good stories can inspire and set the hearts of the world on fire.

### ***Dramatis Personae (Players in the Drama of this Journey)***

This is a movement of people who share the common belief that we can change the story of the world by changing the storyline. We share this vision and mission. We will join this happy journey to highlight the strong, instead of the wrong.

Everyone is invited. Please share with us and with the world, good stories of good people who are caring for the Land, Air, and Water (LAW) of Life.



***A New Pathway.***

***The greatest human hunger is not the hunger for food;  
it is the hunger of the heart ... for approval.***



We will enter into a covenant of cooperation with like-hearted individuals who will joyfully join this journey. Together, we will seek the good stories, and shine the spotlight on the good, the right, and the bright.

## Timeline

*“Anything that is worth doing cannot be done in one lifetime.” But in this lifetime, we can plant seeds of hope to grow in the garden of goodness.”*

This movement started in the central Philippine island of Cebu last March 2017. It was then called the *Pasalamat sa Katauhan* (People’s Gratitude) Movement. It was launched by a handful of thoughtful people, some of whom are world-renowned for their work in Environmental Law enforcement.

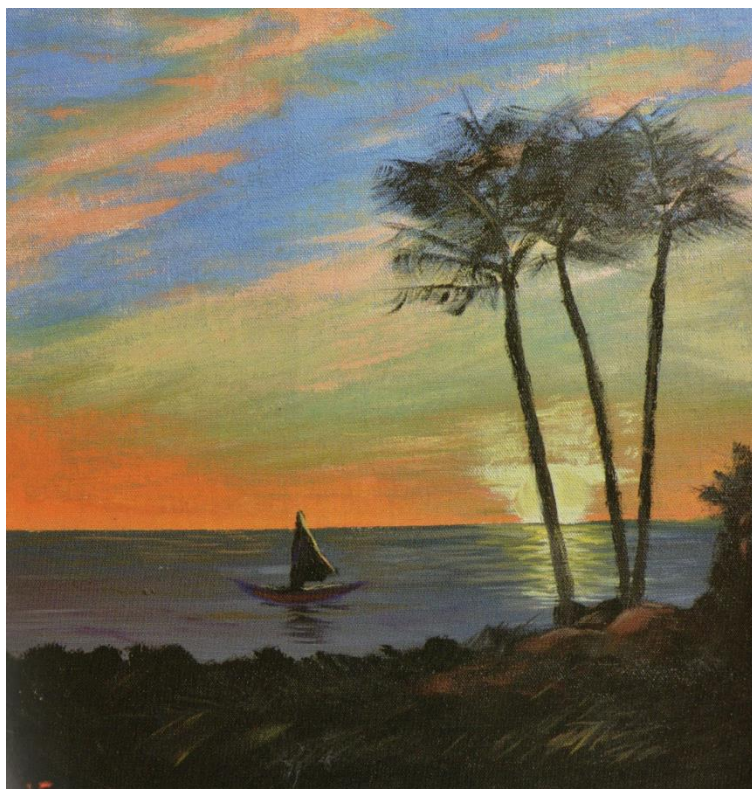
After all their wounds of war and bruises of battle, they finally realized that the best form of law enforcement is when the law does not need to be enforced.

That happens when the people behave according the meaning and the spirit of the Law.

Throughout the past three years, this modest initiative found kindred hearts in some parts of the world. Some of our spirit siblings hold positions of influence.

Focusing on the bad makes us feel helpless and hopeless. To focus on the good will inspire us for courage, hope, and happiness.

Changing the narrative from bad to good will not take one week, one month, or one year. But within one week, one month, and one year, we can begin to change the storyline.



Maybe it is true, anything that is worth doing cannot be done in one lifetime. But in this lifetime,

We can plant  
Seeds of hope and  
Grow a garden of goodness.

### **‘The World is a Stage’**

All around the world, there are countless stories of good people doing good things for the greater good of the Land, Air, and Waters (LAW) of Life. We will search for these good stories. We will identify the people behind them, and we will listen and learn from them. More important, we will highlight their stories to the whole wide world. Their stories will inspire and set the hearts of others on fire.



Inspiration is the most powerful form of leadership.

### **Process**

Step 1. We will search for good stories of people who are caring for and making peace with the Earth. Attached as Annex B is a sample nomination form. Please send pictures of the nominee in action or a product of his/her/their work.

Step 2. When submitted to the Secretariat of the Good Stories Movement, we will review the story. And then, we will try to send a letter of congratulations and commendation to the people behind this good story.

Examples of the letters from the Normandy Chair for Peace (NCP), International Council for Environmental Law (ICEL), Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development (IGSD) and others attached as Annex C.

Step 3. These letters will be sent to our global partners for them to share widely on social and mainstream media. When you tell of the bad stories, say it in a whisper. When you have a good story to tell, let it be heard by the whole wide world.



We hope to hold conferences in the six regions of the world (Europe, Asia, North America, Latin America, Africa, and Oceania). These conferences, physical and/or virtual, will showcase the good stories in the region. The highlight of the event will be a recognition and awarding ceremony to parade the good stories and recognize the people who are making it happen. If physical conferences are already allowed, this awarding event can be held during the usual dinner reception for delegates.

The initial list of the fields and categories of efforts to focus our search are the good stories in the fields of:

1. solid waste management
2. marine conservation
3. coastal governance
4. road sharing and non-motorized mobility.
5. edible landscaping and food gardens
6. eco-governance
7. environmental legislation
8. environment education
9. arts for the earth
10. environmental jurisprudence
11. youth leadership
12. women leadership
13. environmental diplomacy
14. marine enforcement
15. renewable energy
16. cultural heritage
17. lifetime efforts
18. beach restoration
19. rain gardens
20. environmental litigation
21. water use and recycling
22. others



From ridge to reef, so much good is happening all around the world.

A parallel guide is the UN Sustainable Development Goals. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

The nominees will receive a letter of recognition from very prestigious international organizations such as from the Guardians of Future Generations, The International Council for Environmental Law (ICEL, Madrid), the Normandy Chair for Peace (France), the Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development (IGSD, Washington DC), and occasionally, from the United Nations.

To give more prestige to the awards, some of them can be named after men and women who have made significant contributions in the field.

For example, in Environmental Jurisprudence, the awards can be named after the former Vice President of the International Court of Justice, Judge Christopher Weeramantry and former Philippine Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide.

For marine conservation, the award can be named after the phenomenal Sylvia Earle. For Environmental Litigation, it can be named after the living environmental litigation legend – the Earth Advocate MC Mehta of India. And so forth, with their permission of course.



## Annex A

### COVENANT OF COOPERATION

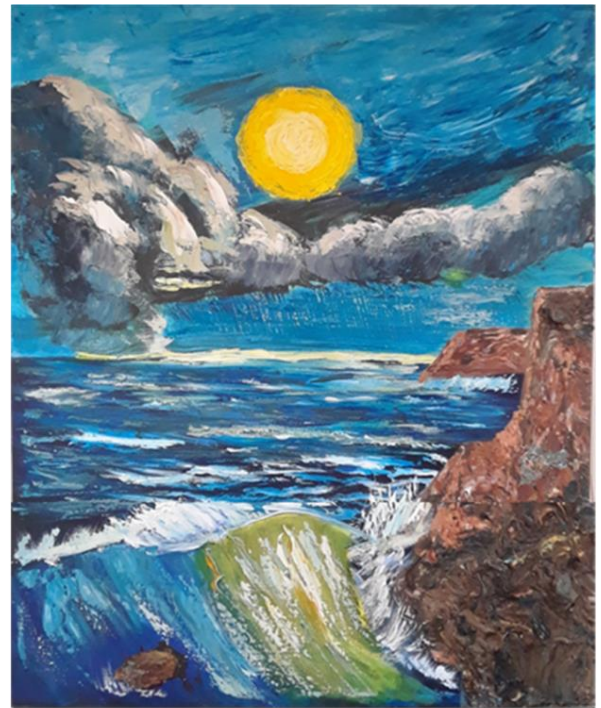
*We change the story of the world  
When we change the storyline.*

Almost everything that happens in the world is not bad. It is neutral, and much of it is even good.

But why do we hear only of the bad and the sad? Because bad news sells? This has made all of us stressed, depressed, hopeless, and helpless. No, we are not helpless!

We can change the story of the world if we change the storyline -- from bad to good, from the negative to the positive.

Together, we will cooperate to search for good stories. Together, we will shine the spotlight on the good, the right, and the bright. Together, we will gift them with kind words of appreciation and recognition.



Above the wild waves, raging rains, and clashing clouds  
Of today's crisis of Life on Earth  
is the ...  
*Golden Sun of Hope*

***“The seeds of goodness  
Live in the soil of  
Appreciation for goodness.”***

Together, and today when it is most needed,  
We will spread happy energy.  
A good story will inspire,  
And set hearts on fire.

“Kind words do not just praise the goodness of others. Kind words have the power to change the story of the world.”

This Covenant opens for signature on the 18<sup>th</sup> of August 2020, a memorable moment in the story of the world.

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I Join the Journey

Please send your name, and if possible, copy of your signed Covenant, by email to [goodstoriesmovement101@gmail.com](mailto:goodstoriesmovement101@gmail.com).

-----X

Seeds of goodness – Dalai Lama; Kind words – Dogen

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## LETTERS SENT TO GOOD STORIES - Annex C

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**The Hon. ITHAMAR ESPINOSA**

Mayor

**The Hon. J. LADETH CONTENTO**

Councilor, Youth Leader

**MR. LOUIE REBAMONTE**

Coastal Enforcement Officer

Sta. Fe, Bantayan Island, Cebu

The Philippines

16 May 2020

### **Re: Your Quick Action to Remove Illegal Seashore Structure and Food Gardens**

Dear Messrs. Espinosa, Contento and Rebamonte:

Greetings from the Normandy Chair for Peace! We write to congratulate and commend you for your quick and effective action to a citizen's report. This was regarding concrete structures constructed on the easement zone of the seashore. (Water Code, Sec. 51, the NIPAS Law, and Presidential Proclamations 1234 and 1251).

Within less than 24 hours from receipt of the citizen's report, you took action. This is a rare act of great efficiency among government people.



The local government of Sta. Fe, Cebu quickly responded to the citizen's complaint. And within 24 hours from receipt of the report, they removed the illegal structures on the seashore.



What you did sends a very important message that we must keep our beaches clear and unobstructed. This is an important need to have a place for human connection to the Sea. What you did ensures that the beautiful seashores of Sta. Fe will be free from obstructions for the free passage of the people.

Not allowing the construction of human settlements on beaches close to the sea is clear common sense. This is a pure precaution against the fast-rising sea and the increasingly-violent storm surges. (UN Sustainable Development Goal No. 13)

We also commend you for the food gardens initiative you have launched in the town of Sta Fe. This sets an excellent example that will guide your people and the rest of the province to address the chronic problem of hunger. (UN Sustainable Development Goal No. 1)



Food gardens started in the grounds of the Municipal Hall of Sta. Fe, Cebu

You are indeed a shining exemplar of dedicated public servants worthy of emulation.

We trust that this letter finds you in good health and spirits. And on behalf of your grateful friends – people of shared passions -- from around the world, *Merci Beaucoup. Daghang Salamat!*

Very truly yours,

**Durwood Zaelke**  
President  
Institute for Governance &  
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Washington DC and Paris

**Emilie Gaillard**  
Director  
Normandy Chair for Peace  
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May 25, 2020

**His Excellency IMRAN KHAN**  
Prime Minister  
Republic of Pakistan

Re: Congratulations for Engaging  
Covid-Idled Workers to Plant Trees

Dear Prime Minister Khan:

Greetings from the Normandy Chair for Peace. We will have peace on Earth when we have peace *with* the Earth.

We write to congratulate and commend your good self and your administration for the wonderful initiative to engage your people, unemployed by the covid crisis, to plant trees and restore your forests. What you are doing is an excellent example of crisis being turned around into an opportunity to achieve a greater good. Your initiative is especially important in the face of the climate emergency that will hit the face of the world and humankind after this covid crisis.



Covid-idled workers in Pakistan preparing to plant native trees in the denuded mountains.

Your effort shows one way the world can address multiple and major challenges – unemployment, deforested mountains, depleting groundwater sources, loss of terrestrial biodiversity, malnutrition and the continued global heating – all in one sweep.



The example you are showing is also a major part of the new economy, one that seeks to conserve, protect and restore the Land, Air, and Waters (LAW) of Life. Also called the CPR Economy, it is the new economic model which does not ravage the Sources and LAW of Life. Instead, livelihoods and industry will be focused on nurturing Nature. We also take note of the effort to engage women and children who would otherwise be doing nothing worthwhile, thereby losing their dignity.

You are addressing many of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as , among others, zero hunger (No.1), Gender Equality (No. 5), Decent Work and (Sustainable) Economic Growth (No. 8), Life on Land (No. 15).

The choice native tree species, among them *moringa*, is also most commendable. As we know, *moringa* is easy to plant, very quick to grow, and is a most nutritious and a medicinal vegetable.

The comparative picture is clear and indisputable evidence of the success of the Billion Trees Tsunami Program. In 2013, it was bare and barren. In a mere four years, the land has become green and lush. Your ambitious but realistic program to expand it to Ten Billion Trees will make your country a model for the rest of the world. While the world's forests burn in Australia, Indonesia, United States, in Brazil's Amazon, your good government is planting trees and restoring the lungs of the Earth.

The timing of the Ten Billion Trees program and the hiring of Covid-idled workers is truly an example of recovering from this crisis with dignity. We humbly echo the statement of Mr. Rab Nawaz of WWF-Pakistan when he said that your government's move is "a very good idea to create green jobs and get people employed".

Prime Minister Imran Khan, Sir, your work is a shining example that the world must know. It will inspire and their hearts on fire.



On behalf of a grateful people around the world -- of the present and future generations who will appreciate your work even more -- Thank You, *Merci Beaucoup* and آپ کا شکریہ.

Sincerely yours,



Nicholas A. Robinson  
Executive Governor  
International Council for  
Environmental Law  
Madrid and New York



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USA

Mansoor Ali Shah  
Justice, Supreme Court of Pakistan

Parvez Hassan, Pakistan

Andrew Raine, UN-EP, Nairobi

Source of Pictures:

Men pushing cart of saplings: Reuters Article in Al Jazeera: 29 April 2020

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/04/pakistan-virus-idled-workers-hired-plant-trees-200429070109237.html>

Comparative land cover (2013 and 2017).

[https://www.google.com/search?q=pictures+of+people+in+pakistan+planting+trees+in+the+10+billion+trees+program&rlz=1C1CHBF\\_enPH876PH876&sxsrf=ALeKk02\\_nr6qq32KwLGeh-UG5j8HMZ2DUA:1588570123464&tbm=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&fir=kSpQp2111816DM%253A%252CGdQc-EcYDMtP\\_M%252C\\_&vet=1&usq=Al4\\_-kSrpJnUU7VXYchmVM2CTIbFTQ1CA&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiZqKPvJnpAhXEJaYKHfscC60Q9QEwAnoECAoQHA#imgrc=kSpQp2111816DM:](https://www.google.com/search?q=pictures+of+people+in+pakistan+planting+trees+in+the+10+billion+trees+program&rlz=1C1CHBF_enPH876PH876&sxsrf=ALeKk02_nr6qq32KwLGeh-UG5j8HMZ2DUA:1588570123464&tbm=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&fir=kSpQp2111816DM%253A%252CGdQc-EcYDMtP_M%252C_&vet=1&usq=Al4_-kSrpJnUU7VXYchmVM2CTIbFTQ1CA&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiZqKPvJnpAhXEJaYKHfscC60Q9QEwAnoECAoQHA#imgrc=kSpQp2111816DM:)

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**The Hon. DANILO LIM, Chair**  
**The Hon. Jojo Garcia, General Manager**  
**The Hon. Roberto Almadin, AGM for Operations**  
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May 25, 2020

**Re: Congratulations and Commendation**

**Dear Messrs. Lim, Garcia and Almadin:**

Greetings from the Normandy Chair for Peace! We will have peace on Earth when we have peace with the Earth.

We write to congratulate and commend you for your initiative to put up safe non-motorized lanes on the main highway of Metro Manila – the Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA). We thank you for your support of the May 24, 2020 EDSA Evolution launch by Filipino non-motorized advocates (NMAs). It is a most significant moment not only in the history of the Philippines.

**EDSA Evolution**

The term ‘EDSA Evolution’ is quite clever. Some 34 years ago, EDSA was the site of the first peaceful people power revolution in the world. Since then, and before



Bicycle lanes miraculously appeared on EDSA last May 24, 2020. A product of the cooperation between citizen-cyclists and concerned government offices. The Sandwich Theory of social change in action.





this lockdown, EDSA became a symbol of the motorized madness and terrible traffic that pervades the world over.

The move by Filipino Non-Motorized advocates (NMAs), with the support of the MMDA, to begin putting up the road separators during this lockdown period is most remarkable. Because of this ongoing crisis, the need for non-motorized (and clean) transportation became possible, clear, and compelling. It is good that you see the opportunity in this crisis today -- a rare chance to move the world to a new normal. This new normal must not return to the abnormal heavy traffic congestion of the past. This vision of a new normal will change the world from today's car-crazy and fuel-foolish transport system. It will usher the people to a new and brave world that is gentler, cleaner, kinder, and more wonderful.

Your suggestion for elevated bike lanes is well-taken for the safety of the non-motorized commuters. As an interim measure, you may wish to consider that a small concrete separator 2" wide x 6" high along the margin of the bike lanes is quickly doable. We were advised that the NMAs are willing to support the initial construction of these separators. This is while you wait for the release of slow government funds for the bigger construction work. This offer by the citizens is a truly commendable example of the great Filipino spirit of *Bayanihan* – cooperative heroism.

## Societal Changes

It is said that societal change happens in three ways: 1. Top-down, 2. Bottom-up, and 3. Top meets the bottom.

Top-down is fast. But due to changes of people in power, it does not last. Bottom-up lasts, but it is not fast. Ordinary citizens, without the support of their government, can do too little and too slow.



The change that is fast and will last is when the top meets (and works) with the bottom. What the MMDA, the Department of Transportation (DoTr), the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Senator Pia Cayetano and the citizen-NMAs is doing is an excellent example of the sandwich theory of social change. It is one change that will be fast and will last ... way beyond your times in office.

Once again, the Filipino people leads the world for something so enlightened and path-breaking. This time, the Filipinos are showing the world how roads can be transformed by a simple principle: *“Those who have less in wheels must have more in roads”.*(i)

This initiative by your good offices, while seemingly small and local, will have ripples of impact far beyond your borders. Your Government is showing how to care for the “rights of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of Nature.” (Phil. 1987 Constitution, Art. II, Sec. 16).

The EDSA Evolution implements on-the-ground multiple UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Among them are: to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being (#3); reduce inequality (#10); make cities and human settlements safe, resilient, inclusive and sustainable (#11); climate action (#13); promote peaceful and inclusive societies (#16); and the strengthening of partnerships to make these goals happen (#17).

The story of your collective work -- and its good impacts on health, air quality, well-being, inequality, traffic congestion, societal stress -- will be heard around the world. An excellent story of people *making peace with the Earth*. Most of all, the change you are starting will be of great benefit to the present generation and generations yet unborn.

Again, congratulations for the work of the MMDA, DOTr, DPWH, Senator Pia Cayetano, and the Concerned Citizens of the Philippines. You are all shining exemplars worthy of global emulation.

On behalf of grateful Filipinos and of your friends around the world, *Merci Beaucoup. Maraming Salamat!*

Very truly yours,



**Durwood Zaelke**

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& Sustainable Development  
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