**AN OPEN LETTER TO RODRIGO R. DUTERTE**

**President, Republic of the Philippines**

**World Experience and New Scientific Findings:**

**Relevance for Containing COVID-19**

**20 April 2020**

Dear Mr. President,

Your quick and decisive action gave the nation some breathing space in the face of the unknown. Even as the cumulative cases per day are increasing, the **growth rate of new cases per day and the death rates are definitely declining.** **These indicate that the virus behind COVID-19 is not as virulent as feared.**

The lockdown definitely contributed to the reduction of risks. But we have not arrived at collective (“herd”) immunity. Thus a second wave of infections is possible.

We are all faced with a **cruel choice: Save lives or save the economy? Mr. President, we can have it both ways: save Filipino lives while at the same time save Philippine society and its economy from self-imploding**

The proposed 7 aspects **Precision Quarantine and Immunity (PQI)** can help us achieve this. It integrates the advantage of both selective quarantine and immunity, which latter, at this time, is the only way the virus can be ultimately stopped. The seven are:

1. Protect Risk Groups especially the elderly.
2. Self-Isolate oneself immediately for any symptom of illness.
3. Re-open schools carefully for children to hasten achievement of “herd” immunity.
4. Allow teenagers and the working population, in low risk institutions, to continue their normal lives, provided they follow current protocols for safety.
5. Re-open regions, provinces, cities, towns, barangays, and institutions on the basis of their low risk densities.
6. Instruct all age groups on how to strengthen their immune system.
7. Install a communication, monitoring and enforcement system, to ensure that this new approach works. This would include designed randomized viral and antibody testing, using the most accurate tests, used at the right time, to determine progress towards collective immunity.

Mr. President, we now have a better scientific understanding of how to contain the virus. The attached Open Letter and its Briefing Paper provide the necessary evidence.

We all truly hope that, whatever your innovative decision will be, it will save both lives and the stability of Philippine society including its precious economy.

Sincerely,

(Sgd.) Nicanor Perlas

Former Undersecretary-Designate, DENR (2016-17)

Recipient, Right Livelihood Award (Alternative Nobel Prize) (2003)