

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE CEBU CITIZENS-PRESS COUNCIL (CCPC) ON THE ISSUES RAISED ABOUT THE DOCUMENTARY "CORRUPTION OF MEDIA: THE CEBU SETTING"

WHEREAS

1. The film "Corruption of Media: The Cebu Setting," produced by the Cebu Citizens-Press Council (CCPC) and Cebu Press Freedom Week Inc., was screened three times during the celebration of Cebu Press Freedom Week: at a forum with mass communication students and at a meeting of the Cebu Federation of Beat Journalists (CFBJ) on Sept. 22, 2010; and at the 20th Quarterly Meeting of the CCPC on Sept. 23, 2010.
2. The leaders of the CFBJ viewed the documentary again at a meeting in Baseline Restaurant on Sept. 29, 2010, and the CFBJ came up with a resolution on the video.
3. On Oct. 6, 2010, Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia asked for a copy of the video, saying she received reports that the video had placed the Capitol in a bad light; and that the video would be viewed by members of the Provincial Legal Office, who would then recommend appropriate action Capitol would take.
4. The CCPC responded, saying it would give Capitol a copy of the film and the script to show that "there is no basis for their suspicion that the film libels the Provincial Government. It was a clinical discussion of corruption as a subject of interest to Cebu's practicing and future journalists."
5. CCPC provided the Capitol with the script and copies of the film.
6. During the CCPC's 21st Quarterly Meeting En Banc on Nov. 16, 2010 at MBF Cebu Press Center, CFBJ president Elias Baquero submitted to CCPC the CFBJ's resolution arrived at during their Sept. 29, 2010 meeting in Baseline Restaurant, urging the CCPC to refrain from further showing, distributing and reproducing the documentary on the ground that it was unfair and damaging to Cebu media and that CFBJ members should be the ones to police their own ranks.
7. The CCPC en banc reviewed the video and the script, after which the issues of alleged illegality and unfairness were discussed.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED as it is HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Cebu Citizens-Press Council declare that it found nothing libelous or unfair to individuals, media organizations or government offices mentioned in the film; it understands the discomfort CFBJ members felt given the sensitive nature of the topic; and opens the door for dialogue with the CFBJ to address their specific concerns, even as it affirms its support to the video project and stands proudly behind it.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that it adopt and issue the following statement:

After a review of the video documentary “Corruption of Media: the Cebu Setting,” the Cebu Citizens-Press Council affirms its full support for this work as an honest self-appraisal of the ethical challenges and efforts to address corruption in the media industry.

The CCPC project is a concrete step in the process of having journalists police their own ranks by confronting an old problem and presenting ways to uphold the values of professional journalism.

However, the 25-minute video documentary, which is not the final authority on the subject, has drawn sharp reactions from some media colleagues and government officials who feel they were unfairly portrayed when it was first shown during the annual celebration of Cebu Press Freedom Week in September 2010.

We received today the resolution of the Cebu Federation of Beat Journalists (CFBJ) requesting the CCPC to refrain from further showing the video, which beat reporters fear will cause damage to the reputation of news media workers.

The discomfort is understandable given the thorny nature of the topic.

Our review of the script, images and dialogue shows there was nothing libelous or unfair to individuals, media organizations or government offices mentioned. Care was taken to use testimonials and first-hand experiences of identified reporters, editors, broadcasters, publicists and public officials for a balanced discussion of corruption in the print and broadcast media in Cebu. Contrary to fears that one or another entity was singled out, the 25-minute video covered a broad scope of concerns.

A copy of the script is available on the CCPC's website cebucitizenspresscouncil.org for anyone to make his or her own assessment.

However, we wish to open the door for more dialogue with the federation of beat journalists to address their specific concerns and to invite them to a meeting at the soonest time possible. We extend the opportunity for dialog to other sectors of society to bring up their own concerns.

There are no villains to flay in this video documentary, just the journalists' collective conscience to disturb and hopefully lead to a deeper role of public service and concrete action.

The project was intended to be a springboard for discussion in newsrooms, classrooms and professional circles. If the video documentary can be improved to get across the message of reforms and professional values, we welcome suggestions.

We have utmost confidence in the maturity and commitment of the journalism community in Cebu to see this process through, even as the CCPC stands proudly behind this ground-breaking project.

RESOLUTION unanimously approved by the CCPC en banc in its meeting on Nov. 16, 2010 presided by vice chairman Sabino Daplat at the Marcelo B. Fernan Cebu Press Center, Sudlon, Cebu City.

Present: Atty. Jonathan Capanas, Fr. Ramon Echica, Jose Rafael Ferreros, Mayette Tabada, Leo Lastimosa, Atty. Ruphil Bañoc, Lucky Malicay, Eileen Mangubat and Michelle So