

Walden Bello's acceptance speech to Akbayan! Party

Message to Fourth National Congress of Akbayan

Friday 27 October 2006, by [BELLO Walden](#) (Date first published: 15 October 2006).

Dear Comrades:

I really wish I could be with you today, but previous commitments require my presence here at the University of California at Santa Barbara, a distinguished institution but one which is not up to par with my beloved UP.

After consultations with a number of networks I belong to, I have decided to run for an Akbayan party-list position at the party Congress. Most of those consulted were in support of my candidacy for public office, including Focus on the Global South, the organization with which I have been principally affiliated over the last 11 years. Focus decided to give me a leave of absence.

It might be a surprise to many why I have decided to run. I've always been really uncomfortable with electoral politics. I've really been more cut out for the politics of the street and for taking over embassies and consulates and breaking into the World Bank (the reasons the Singapore government gave for not allowing me entry to the country during the World Bank-IMF meeting last month). That kind of politics is intensely pleasurable, indeed even better than sex.

A few years ago, I would not have entertained the idea of a congressional candidacy owing to my international work. But things have changed on the international front. The WTO is on the verge of collapse, the IMF is practically defunct, the US is bogged down in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Israelis have been humbled by the remarkable fighters of the Hezbollah, and my godson Hugo Chavez is now the scourge of the Americans. On the domestic front, however, things have gone from bad to worse. I feel the challenge for me personally is now greater on this front than on the international. If there is one thing that could be said to have swung me to running, it is this vile strategy of assassination that has been adopted by the military, with the complicity of our political and economic elites.

The challenge is, however, broader, and it is that of contributing to making our politics a critical mass, a credible alternative to both the fundamentalist left and trapo politics, and not just in the long term but in the short and medium term. Making the Left not only a respected voice, not only a viable force, but hegemonic—that, in a nutshell, is what motivates me.

Etta Rosales, Mayong Aguja, and Risa Hontiveros have been trailblazers in this project in the Batasan, and they have set standards that I hope I can measure up to. If nominated by this Congress and if successful in the elections, I will need not only their assistance but the support of all of you in continuing this exciting enterprise of making our vision of a democratic, egalitarian, just, and caring government a reality.

I would like to end by making two promises since every politician worth his or her salt must make promises:

1. By the end of the first month in Congress, I will be able to give an entire speech in Pilipino.
2. We will go for broke. We will give no quarter nor will we seek one. We will make sure that they—the rotten representatives of the eternally benighted Philippine upper classes—will regret our presence in Congress.

In solidarity,

Walden