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Estrada: We must continue moving forward

THE Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation should continue moving forward its avowed goal of building a peaceful and prosperous Asia-Pacific community, Philippines President Joseph Estrada said.

"We must ensure our common achievements of the past decade are extended, not sustained, much less pushed back."

Expressing satisfaction with progress in the Early Voluntary Sectoral Liberalisation in Apec, Estrada said the Philippines would actively participate in winning progress in World Trade Organisation negotiations.

Expressing gratitude to the host nation and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Estrada said his first presence at the meeting was with simple goals.

"We are pleased that Apec leaders devoted most of the discussions to the financial and economic crisis, causes, effects and their possible solutions."

Estrada said the Philippines would participate in efforts to strengthen the international financial system and to rationalise short-term capital flows.

During a question and answer session the President shocked those present when he responded in the negative to a question if he felt there was a lack of camaraderie among Apec members.

The journalist repeated the question.

Coming to the President's rescue, Foreign Secretary Domingo Siazon asked the journalist "was that lack or luck?"

Told it was lack, the President replied: "No, there was no lack of camaraderie."

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