

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, esteemed guests, and dear Rotarian friends.

Tourism is one of the most important drivers of our economy, and our beaches are the jewels in our crown. They attract thousands of visitors from all over the world, who come to enjoy the sun, swim in the crystal-clear waters, and love the natural beauty of our coastline.

According to a recent consumer survey, done by Expedia, one of the most important online travel agencies, 90% of travelers look for sustainable options when traveling.

In particular, they are looking for:

- To reduce their negative environmental impact,
- To support local economies, cultures, and communities,
- To contribute to nature and wildlife protection and
- To reduce their carbon footprint.

Tourists who express high interest in sustainability and nature-based travel come predominantly from the United States, Europe, and Australia. All these countries are very important markets for Cam Ranh.

Many local families depend on the income that derives from tourism, and it is time to send a message to the world that we, all together, as the entire community, are taking on the challenge to make sure we protect our precious environment that was given to us by nature.

Every single one of us has a role to play in this fight. We must all take responsibility for our actions and do our part to keep our beaches clean. We must stop throwing trash on the beach and start disposing of it properly. We must educate our children and

our visitors about the importance of keeping our beaches clean and protecting our environment.

If we do not act now, we risk losing everything that we have worked so hard to build. Our economy will suffer, our businesses will suffer, and our community will suffer.

Maintaining high and stable levels of economic growth is one of the key objectives of sustainable development. Abandoning economic growth is not an option. But sustainable development is more than just economic growth. The quality of growth matters as much as the quantity.

So we all must work together to keep our beaches clean and protect our environment. Let us show the world that we are a community that cares about our environment, our people, and our future.

Let us be the change that we want to see in the world.

Today, 13 Cam Ranh resorts, 17 Rotarian families, some of whom even came all the way from Cambodia, 50 volunteers from Cam Ranh and Nha Trang, and additional staff from the other resorts, brought together around 300 extra environmental enthusiasts to clean the beach.

To all of them, we send our deepest gratitude and thanks.

Please allow me to give a special thank you to Rotary Club Saigon International, our main sponsor for this project and the gala dinner.

Together with End Plastic Soup, a Rotary initiative founded by several Dutch Rotary Clubs and the Intercountry Committee between Germany and Vietnam, we have initiated this meaningful project.

We thank the Khanh Hoa Tourism Department and local government officials for endorsing and supporting us.

You can imagine that convincing 13 resorts to participate and to donate, coordinating transportation, organizing all the accommodations, and the general logistical work that involves basically all Cam Ranh resorts is a huge task. All of this was supported and managed by two very committed and dedicated young men, Andy Phan from Moevenpick, Cam Ranh, and Loc from Alma. Without their support, all this would not have been possible, so thank you, Andy and Loc, for your wonderful work. WELL DONE!

I am sure that this weekend is the beginning of something that we can be proud of when we look back one day. I have this dream that Cam Ranh can become a trend setter and an example for many more regions in Vietnam to follow our project, and it is our intention and commitment to move from collecting plastic to reducing and recycling to create a long lasting and sustainable project that will have a positive impact on the entire community in terms of the creation of more jobs and education as well.

Let me finish with one of my favorite Rotarain quotes:

"The only true gift is a portion of yourself." "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." "This is a changing world: we must be prepared to change with it. The story of Rotary will have to be written again and again."

Thank you all for your attention, Enjoy the dinner and see you later in the American Bar.