

MAYOR MCF'S CLOSING REMARKS
SHOE EVOLUTION
24 January 2003

This forum is indeed a welcome development coming as it does on the heels of our vigorous campaign to re-invigorate our shoe industry. It takes a great deal of re-engineering and creativity to regain the old glory and prominence of our century-old industry. We remain optimistic about the prospect of our shoe industry.

It boils down to competitiveness in the face of globalization. We know where we are lacking and we have taken steps to address the gaps. And what are these concrete steps? We have put in place a ***Marikina Shoe Design Center*** to provide our local shoe designers access to computers which they can utilize in making designs as well as opportunity to update themselves with the latest designs in other parts of the world. In an effort to keep our local shoe industry at par with the rest of the world, our City Council has passed a resolution requiring local shoe manufacturers to use the French sizing system. The system has been generally adopted by the local shoe manufacturers.

On a local scale, we had launched a series of Shoe caravans which helped promote our local shoe products. The strategy proved to be effective as evidenced by the considerable income generated by the participating local shoe manufacturers and the new marketing niches that they have established. This is complemented by our participation in International Trade Fairs and Exhibits.

Recently, we have stirred interest on a global scale with the production of the biggest pair of men's leather shoes in the world which has been officially recognized by the Guinness Book of World Records. This unique promotional strategy has put not only Marikina but the Philippines as a whole on the world map. To further promote our shoe industry, the big shoes will do a mall tour all over the Philippines for public viewing.

There are serious talks now going on among industry players that will promote unity and direction for the industry. Backward integration, standardization, quality and design are areas of concrete improvement.

Our efforts will continue and we will not slacken off until we realize our mission of regaining the old label for Marikina as the veritable ***Shoe Capital of the Philippines.***

Once again thank you for your efforts. I can only look forward to a continuing healthy and productive collaboration with all of you.

Good evening.