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To 9th ICQM / 14th APQO International Conference &
To all our friends improving the quality of life in the region:

August 23, 2008

I am sorry I cannot be with you at this most important event. You are now taking part in one of the largest gathering of quality professionals anywhere in the world. I would have loved to be part of this historic event. Historic events have become part of our culture here at Juran Institute. Most of these events revolved around Dr. Juran, our mentor and founder, as he traveled the world to teach about quality. He told me he never made it to this region but would have liked to. It was new territory for him to teach about quality. Instead, he has left that up to my colleagues and me. As you gather here and learn from each other about the quality management principles and techniques, do not forget those that preceded you. The pioneers that traveled the world in uncomfortable planes took days not hours to reach their destination – all in the name of quality. You are here today because you are the true pioneers in your region.

With Dr. Juran's passing earlier this year at the age of 103, our institute has set out on a new mission. That mission is to improve the quality of life for all citizens of the world. From his first trip to America as an immigrant child, to attending college as a son of a poor, impoverished family, Dr. Juran provided us with the hope of a better society. Poor quality to Dr. Juran meant that society would have to pay the price. Sometimes poor quality resulted in catastrophes, as in the space shuttle disaster in the 1980's. Every time we eat food from the market, drive our cars, fly on planes or even walk down the street we hope quality is present. If not citizens are sickened by the food, hurt in car accidents or trip on a poorly built walkways. Society suffers when the quality of products, services and information is below levels that can provide for a safe society.

Dr. Juran spoke about life behind the quality dikes. He referred to the Dutch land dikes holding back the waters of the North Sea. The dikes, if they fail, would devastate society in the Netherlands by flooding the land and killing the people. The chance that the dikes fail is small. However, when they do fail it is catastrophic. Many companies build products that lack the high quality needed to meet the needs of customers. In this case, they are living behind quality dikes. The risks associated with poor quality are high. A failure may occur and cause harm if it does.

While you are gathered here, think about creating a new purpose, a new mission to eliminate the dikes for all humankind. Work to push the methods of quality into your product development, customer service, operations and even financial processes to make sure we never have societal failures, which harm lives. If you do, you will then learn what Dr. Juran stood for. A life of improving quality of products and services will enable us to live in a society that is safe, clean and worth living in.

Quality is not about product defects. It is about creating value for society by providing products and services that work. Good luck and in the words of Juran long live the quality revolution.

Sincerely,
Joseph A. DeFeo
President Juran Institute