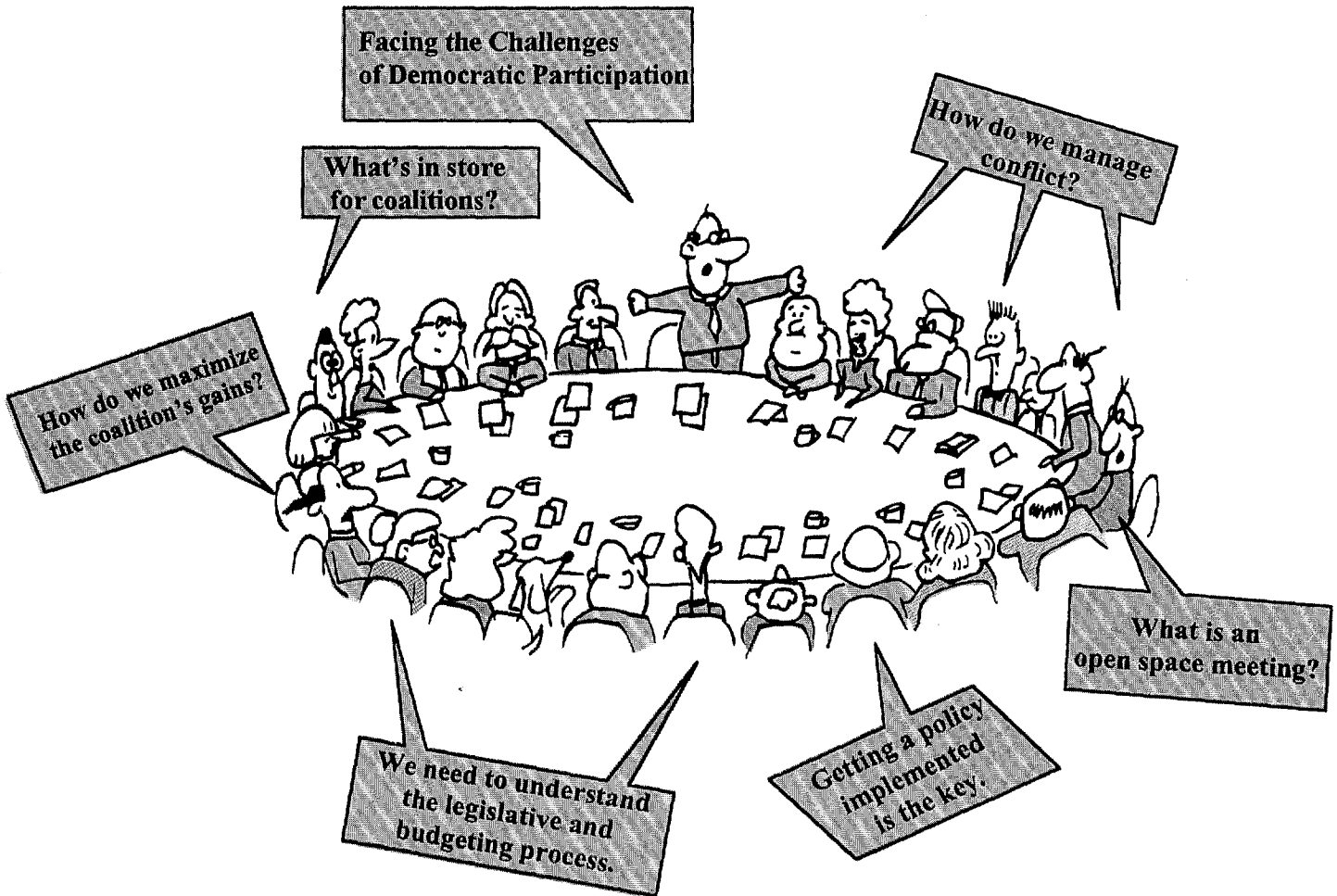




1996 Annual Partners' Conference  
on Facing the Challenges  
of Democratic Participation  
September 10 - 13, 1996

**PRESENTATIONS**  
Volume 2





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## Conference Program

### September 10, Tuesday

- 2:00 - 5:00 Registration of Participants  
*Philippine Center for Population and Development (PCPD) Secretariat*
- 6:00 - 6:30 Opening of Meeting  
**John A. Grayzel**  
*Chief, Office of Governance and Participation (OGP)/United States Agency for International Development (USAID)*
- Welcome Remarks  
**Kenneth G. Schofield**  
*Director/USAID*
- Introduction of Speaker  
**John A. Grayzel**  
*Chief, OGP/USAID*
- 6:30 - 7:30 Keynote Speaker  
**Governor Oscar Orbos**  
*Pangasinan*
- Open Forum
- 7:30 - 8:30 House Rules  
*PCPD*  
Dinner

### September 11, Wednesday

- 6:30 - 8:00 Breakfast
- 8:30 - 8:45 USAID and Coalition Building:  
A Report on the Year's Events  
**Lisa P. Magno**  
*Chief, PVO/Corporate Co-Fi Division, OGP/USAID*
- 8:45 - 9:45 Maximizing Coalition Gains  
**Louie Corral**  
*Executive Director, Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP)*
- 9:45 - 11:15 Small Group Discussion 1



Group 1: Linking with the Business Sector  
*Lead Discussant: **Vicky Garchitorena***  
*Executive Director, Ayala Foundation, Inc.*

Group 2: Networking with the Academe  
*Lead Discussant: **Ma. Serena Diokno***  
*Professor of History, Associate Dean,*  
*College of Social Sciences*  
*University of the Philippines*

Group 3: Interphasing with Media  
*Lead Discussant: **Melinda Quintos-de Jesus***  
*Executive Director, Center for Media Freedom*  
*and Responsibility*

Group 4: Public Relations at the Local Level  
*Lead Discussant: **Red Batario***  
*Acting Executive Director, Evelio B. Javier*  
*Foundation, Inc.*

Group 5: Global Alliances Between Coalitions  
*Lead Discussant: **Michael Calavan***  
*Chief, Decentralization and Local Development*  
*Division (DLDD)/OGP/USAID*

11:15	-	12:30	Plenary Session <i>Facilitator: <b>Monette Parado</b></i> <i>OGP/USAID</i>
12:30	-	1:30	Lunch
1:30	-	2:30	Panel Discussion Best Practices in Coalition Building <i>Moderator: <b>Gerry Porta</b></i> <i>PVO/ECD Specialist, OGP/USAID</i>
			<i>Discussants:</i> <b>Ruth Callanta</b> <i>Consultant</i> <b>Marlene Ramirez</b> <i>Executive Director, PhilDHRA</i>
2:30	-	4:00	Small Group Discussion 2 <i>Facilitator: <b>Gerry Porta</b></i> <i>OGP/USAID</i>



Group 1: Maximizing the Partnership with LGUs

*Lead Discussant: Cesar Liporada*

*Consultant, PhilDHRRA*

Group 2: Conflict Resolution

*Lead Discussant: Corazon Juliano-Soliman*

*Executive Director, Community Organization*

*Training and Research Advocacy Institute*

Group 3: Effective Participation Techniques

*Lead Discussant: Rosemarie Nieras*

*Participation Development Specialist*

*Associates in Rural Development, Inc.*

Group 4: Tools of Policy Influence

*Lead Discussant: Percival Chavez*

*Program Director, Urban Land Reform Task-Force*

*(ULRTF)*

4:00 - 5:30

Plenary Session

*Facilitator: Gerry Porta*

*OGP/USAID*

## September 12, Thursday

6:30 - 8:00

Breakfast

8:30 - 10:00

Panel Discussion

Effective Advocacy: Balancing the Interests of  
Grassroots Constituencies, Government and  
Other Stakeholders

*Moderator: Lisa Magno*

*OGP/USAID*

*Discussants:*

**Marlene Gatpatan**

*Project Director, Urban Land Reform Task Force (ULRTF)*

**Larry Manaog**

*Executive Director, National Coalition of*

*Fisherfolk for Aquatic Reform (NACFAR)*

**Dave de Vera**

*Executive Officer, Philippine Association for*

*Intercultural Development (PAFID)*



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10:00	-	10:30	Open Forum <i>Moderator: Lisa Magno</i> OGP/USAID
10:30	-	11:30	Panel Discussion Dealing with the Legislative Process <i>Moderator: Lisa Magno</i> OGP/USAID  Discussants: <b>Martha Espano</b> <i>International Labor Organization (ILO)</i> <b>Sheila Espine</b> <i>Center for Legislative Development</i>
11:30	-	1:00	Lunch
1:00	-	2:00	Understanding the Budget Preparation Process <b>Prof. Ben Diokno</b> <i>Professor, U.P. School of Economics</i>
2:00	-	3:00	Sectoral Workshops <i>Facilitator: Jose Dulce</i> <i>PVO/ECD Specialist, OGP/USAID</i>  Group 1: Fisherfolks <i>Moderator: Larry Manaog</i> NACFAR  Group 2: Urban Poor <i>Moderator: Marlene Gatpatan</i> ULRTF  Group 3: Indigenous Peoples <i>Moderator: Dave de Vera</i> PAFID  Group 4: Small Coconut Farmers and Farmworkers <i>Moderator: Jose Mari Faustino</i> <i>Assistant Executive Director</i> <i>Coconut Industry Reform (COIR) Movement</i>  Group 5: Microfinance Sector <b>Gil Lacson</b> <i>Deputy Executive Director</i> <i>Tulay Sa Pag-Unlad, Inc. (TDPI)</i>



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- 3:00 - 3:30 Break
- 3:30 - 5:00 The Social Reform Agenda: A Status Report  
**Secretary Ernesto Garilao**  
*Department of Agrarian Reform*
- The Social Reform Agenda from the Point of View of  
NGOs and POs  
**Teresita Quintos-Deles**  
*Executive Director*  
*Gaston Z. Ortigas Peace Institute*

### September 13, Friday

- 6:30 - 8:00 Breakfast
- 8:00 - 9:30 Panel Discussion  
Moving from Policy to Implementation  
*Moderator: John Grayzel*  
*OGP/USAID*
- Discussants:*  
**Mr. Oscar Santos**  
*Chairperson*  
*Cocomut Industry Reform (COIR) Movement*  
**Mayor Bayani Fernando**  
*Municipality of Marikina*
- 9:30 - 10:30 What is in Store for Coalitions?  
**Dr. Anna Marie Karaos**  
*Institute for Church and Social Issues*
- 10:30 - 12:00 Workshop on Establishing Synergies  
*Facilitator: Lisa Magno*  
*OGP/USAID*
- 12:00 - 1:30 Lunch
- 1:30 - 5:30 Open Space Meeting  
*Facilitator: Jose Dulce*  
*OGP/USAID*
- 5:30 - 7:30 The Role of Civil Society in the Electoral Process  
**Atty. Haydee B. Yorac**
- Closing Dinner/Socials





## Foreword

### JOHN A. GRAYZEL

*Chief, Office of Governance and Participation (OGP)  
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)*

The USAID Annual Partners' Conference, held on September 10-14, 1996 at the L'Fisher Hotel Bacolod City, was a continuation of a tradition that has become a major event awaited by USAID and its partners from private voluntary organizations, corporate foundations, government agencies and the private sectors. This year's theme, "Facing the Challenges of Democratic Participation", was chosen in consultation with a representative group of partners and was intended to be responsive to the most pressing interests and needs of the clients they seek to serve.

The annual conference is intended to belong to, and be an expression of the will of, all its participants. It seeks to focus on subjects that are of primary importance to them and not USAID per se. This year, it was structured to generate discussions which were particularly relevant to civil society organizations seeking to expand the participation of underrepresented groups in a dynamic democratic society. It was meant to provide an environment and venue to strengthen old alliances, create new partnerships and discover shared agenda.

This year, the disadvantaged and underrepresented groups included indigenous peoples, urban poor, marginalized fisherfolk, coconut farmers, informal sector and a tactical coalition of sustainable microfinance practitioners. The Conference agenda included discussions both on sectoral issues of direct relevance to them and on a wide range of common operational concerns and relevant pragmatic areas such as government legislative, budgeting, electoral processes, and the Social Reform Agenda. In addition, this year's conference experimented with a new "open forum" technique that allowed participants to create instant sessions focused on specific additional issues they particularly wished to address.

This volume records the proceedings of the three-day conference. It highlights the discussion in various open fora and small workshops. It also summarizes the various open fora and small workshops. It also summarizes the various speeches delivered by lead discussants and guests speakers.

The organizers of this conference - USAID and the PCPD - hope that this document of the proceedings will be of help to PVO partners and coalition groups as they pursue their advocacy work and realize broadened participation in policy formulation and implementation.



## Welcome Remarks

**KENNETH G. SCHOFIELD**  
*Director/USAID*

Thank you all, ladies and gentlemen, for coming to join us in Bacolod. I see that the El Fisher Hotel has given us a very warm welcome - actually, a very cold welcome. So, to help us warm up, I suggest that we give the Office of Governance and Participation a very loud round of applause for organizing this event.

Welcome to the conference. It's very nice to see so many familiar faces. I'm very pleased to welcome you today to the annual meeting of USAID partners. This year's meeting brings together more than one hundred representatives of both Philippine and US-based private volunteer organizations, corporate foundations, government agencies, and the private sector. This event has always been eagerly anticipated by us, and I hope, by you, our partners, both as an opportunity to refresh old ties, but also to forge new relationships. This year's theme - "Facing the Challenges of Democratic Participation" - is appropriate in many respects. The Philippines is now reaping the fruits of development laid through appropriate macro-economic policies and the liberalization of the economy, as well as people's participation and the return to democratic processes.

The country has been referred to as a minimalist tiger cub and the economic growth rate is approaching 7%. This reinforces our mutual belief that rapid development is compatible with democracy. However, major challenges in democratic participation still remain. Economic growth by itself cannot guarantee the requisite equity needed for sustainable social harmony and progress. There is always the temptation for the rich and powerful to seek special economic privileges and advantages. Sometimes, they seek to reduce competition, sometimes to create barriers to new interests, sometimes to artificially raise prices. A strong and progressive civil society can help ensure that government policy and the implementation of that policy benefit the many rather than the few.

USAID has signed seven grants that promote the formation of coalitions of disadvantaged groups, and hopefully, enable them to participate more widely in the formulation and implementation of government policies. In the next three days, these groups will share with us their experiences and lessons learned on discovering pragmatic solutions in the course of advocacy work, forming partnerships, and in networking. We will also talk about best practices in coalition building and how to maximize coalition gains. Towards the end of this three-day conference, we will see cases of how policies are actually transformed into implementable actions. In the next three days, we shall have



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exciting discussions on how you plan to respond to the various challenges of democratic participation and its relevance to the country's development. I encourage you to participate dynamically and creatively in the many fora that this conference will offer. People may speak with different voices at times but do speak out. On the other hand, I expect everyone to promise to listen earnestly.

Thank you again for coming. And we look forward to a very fruitful week.

USAID



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## USAID and Coalition Building: A Report on the Year's Events

LISA MAGNO

*Office of Governance and Participation*

USAID

I got married not too long ago to Jose Garzon. What he has been trying to do these past two years is to learn *Tagalog*. He asked me one serious question one day -- "Why are there two words in *Tagalog* for the english word "we", that is, *kami* and *tayo*. *Kami* excludes the addressee. In the same way there are two *Tagalog* words for the english word "us", which is *amin* and *atin*.

For many years now and even occasionally now, we tend to do our business more in the *kami* and the *atin* concept. Yesterday, John Grayzel mentioned that we are big on partnership these days, that we consider you our partners, that we are on equal footing. I would like to think that in the past year we have been true to our promise. For one, we have opened.

One, we have opened our Mission project reviews to include you, our partners, during the presentation and discussions with our own management- a first in the history of the Mission. Two, we have further revised our grant agreement provisions to be in better sync with the concepts of empowerment and accountability. Three, as many of you know, we have labored together over our performance indicators. And more recently, we have held brainstorming sessions to develop the agenda for this year's conference.

So, I hope that the way we have dealt with each other in the past year will continue this year and in the years to come. That rather than thinking of *kami* and *kayo*, we will continue to hold dear the concept of *tayo* as we conduct our business. And I hope that eventually we will not even have to make it a stated objective or initiative but rather an assumed and ingrained way of relating with each other.

And so it is only fitting that I (and my colleagues) stand here before you to report on past year's events, its challenges and accomplishments. In the Mission, we often begrudge the frequency and level of detail with which we sometimes have to report to Washington. We think it is only fair that you, our partners expect and receive a progress report from us.

I better get on with the rest of my piece. You might start to correctly suspect that we are in fact short on accomplishments, thus I am trying to use up my time until 8:45 with a lengthy introduction.

For fifteen years, USAID had assisted NGO and PO projects of various shapes and forms. The nature of the NGO/PO projects evolved from provision of basic services, capacity building, to intermediate institution grants, to collaborative efforts with government entities. Beginning with February 1995, the assistance has been focused on the increased participation of disadvantaged groups in the policy arena. It has been a full year at least since



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assistance was provided for coalitions of indigenous peoples, marginalized fisherfolk, and urban poor. What have you and I learned from these coalitions? What have we accomplished?

We have learned a simple truth which we do not hesitate to admit—this business of coalitions is difficult, extremely difficult. Not a few people have told us, some of whom are in this audience that they were surprised yet congratulatory that USAID has taken on support for something as complex as coalitions. We were warned about organizational prestige, personality differences, ideological splits, and diverse political affiliations. And we did come across them in the past year. But we moved on in what may have seemed a naive manner or as they say in Filipino showbusiness "deadma". We cheered loudly behind the NGOs, the POs which took the high road and saw their commonality of purpose, beyond organizational and individual differences.

Not too long ago, the coalition of marginalized fisherfolk could not be in the same room as the commercial fishing sector, without unsavory terms and curses occurring within the first five minutes. That is no longer the case. Now they are cursing each other within the first 15 minutes. Seriously, just as the coalitions find themselves in a room with what they used to call *kalaban* or opponent, they also now find themselves walking the halls of Congress and even attending sessions and seeking appointments with the many varieties of elected officials. In fact, the coalitions are now finding themselves invited to sessions and discussion meetings with the policy decision-makers.

In the process, the coalition gets opportunities to present itself as a thinking as well as a feeling group of brave souls. It can better situate itself in getting a legitimate seat at the discussion table, learn and practice how to decide on a position, present and articulate a position, tactically decide on the negotiable and the non-negotiable, agree or agree to disagree with the other group.

Many important lessons have been learned here. One, real deliberation happens through facts and figures, not just emotion and good intentions. Two, it is just as important to listen as to talk. Three, it is not always an either/or situation. There are various shades of healthy agreement between a "yes" and a "no". Sometimes, the term compromise undeservedly receives a negative reputation. What have we accomplished here? Real opportunities for more progressive policies, for policies that do not favor a few.

I do not need to mention that the Fisheries Code and the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act are being deliberated in both houses. Many of you spend your waking hours, pushing for their passage—at the same time keeping watch on any surprising last-minute insertions. These laws may pass and then again they may not. Or they may pass, but not in versions 100% acceptable to you. As a repeated joke goes—there are two things you should never see made: hot—dogs and laws.

But as you advocate for the passage of these laws, there are many other victories being scored. Let me mention just a few. As NACFAR went through its nationwide consultation process that has involved hundreds, thousands of small fisherfolk, innumerable issues also surfaced: from the dislocation of Manila Bay fisherfolk, reclamation of Cordova Bay in Cebu, to Impact of EAGA on Davao fisherfolk. On the other hand, a dialogue among indigenous peoples (IPs), and NGOs in Northern Luzon has led to a multi-sectoral alliance addressing mining rights over tribal lands. In a workshop on Policies affecting IPs, a bold group of indigenous leaders grilled top government officials from a line agency on the agency's position on ancestral domains management.



Were there any accomplishments here? We say yes. For victory cannot only be judged on the basis of policy outcomes. Equally important is the effect on civil society. Citizen or grassroots participation is a necessary ingredient. As our friends from UNAC repeatedly say, policy is only as good to the extent that it is based on ground realities.

Finally, let me refer to the Anti-Poverty Summit held last year. As your eyes glaze into the Land of Boredom with the mere mention of summit, let me tell you there is no cause for worry. I do not intend to discuss that Summit. I know many of you already suffer from summit fatigue. Rather, it is the participation of the urban poor coalition during this summit which I want to talk about. I did manage to catch the televised version of the summit on PTV 4 at about midnight. I guess it did not attract as many advertisers as Marimar, thus the late viewing time. But John Grayzel was at the Summit, was a first-hand witness and so later corroborated my observations.

The urban poor coalition is advocating, among others, for (1) the repeal of the Marcos decree which criminalizes squatting and (2) the proper implementation of the UDHA and CIFSAs. The urban poor coalition reached out to the other POs/NGOs attending the Summit, aggressively distributed stickers reading "Repeal PD 772". Towards the end of the Summit, members of all sorts of coalitions, not just the urban poor were wearing the stickers. I must have seen Marlene Gatpatan of ULRTF in every TV frame that night pressing stickers on people's chests.

The point I am trying to make is that: let us create and welcome allies from all sectors. ULRTF is one example of this. It is composed of urban poor POs, NGOs—policy orientated and otherwise, businessmen, and church leaders. As we often repeat, USAID assistance is not for PBSP, nor ACDI, nor Mondragon Foundation. Our assistance is for the IPs, the marginalized fisherfolk and the urban poor. As hard as it can often be, there ought not to be discriminatory boundaries on who our allies ought to be, how they can help, nor how they can constructively critique. On Friday afternoon, we have blocked off some structured time wherein each coalition can explore synergy with other coalitions.

The second point with the ULRTF case is that the passage of the law does not necessarily end the coalition's work. Many of our laws are beautifully written. Their proper implementation can be a completely different story. We do have a minimum wage law in this country but it is not uncommon to hear of daily wage earners receiving much less than minimum. I have seen videos of police raids on the basis of an NGO's advocacy work, police raids in a plastics factory which literally have minor workers in cages. We all too often hear loud pronouncements of support for this and that progressive policy. Yet when it comes to actual allocation of resources, the actions do not match the words.

In our consultations for this Conference's agenda, you have expressed the need to understand the legislative oversight committee process, the budgetary process. You have acknowledged the critical importance of coalescing to ensure effective policy implementation. We have structured several sessions in this Conference to specifically address these needs.

Let me close by mentioning that this Fiscal Year, we have signed three new grants. These are for coalitions for the informal labor sector, primarily women and children home-based workers, for coconut farmers, and a



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tactical coalition advocating for sustainable microfinance among NGO and PO practitioners. A fourth grant is under design, a coalition focused on literacy and training in Mindanao.

I have great respect for Benjie Montemayor who probably can lecture on microfinance even in his sleep. Yet when we were first discussing the tactical coalition for sustainable microfinance, one of his initial questions to me was "what lessons can I learn from the first batch of coalitions?" Here is a smart man who is smart enough to know he can learn from others. I urge you, let us all do as Benjie during this Conference. Let us learn from each other.

Thank you.



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## Maximizing Coalition Gains

**LUIS CORRAL**

*Executive Director, Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP)*

Today, I will address the new political realities and how civil society through their sectoral organizations and coalitions need to respond to the challenge of influence-making. The success of our advocacies depends on a favorable government climate, and legislative action by coalitions is necessary and critical to preserving and strengthening that climate.

Our respective advocacy messages are new to many members of congress and their staff. The task of educating representatives, senators and their staff about the TUCP call, for instance, to criminalize labor-only-contracting, the importance of unions and key issues of concern related to jobs. Equity and justice in the face of the relentless pace of globalization is tougher and requires continuous tracking of legislative initiatives. Congress makes decisions based on a deluge of conflicting information about any given issue. Coalitions must continue to build credibility and, through perseverance, convince members of congress on the value of our respective causes.

Through savvy lobbying, meticulous planning and creative follow-through, TUCP entered into a coalition of NGOs and POs that won its battle to pass the party list law in 1995, succeeding in excluding the five major political parties from participating in the upcoming 1998 party list elections.

The coalition-known as the Koalisyon ng mga Mamamayan Para sa Repormang Elektoral-or simply the KUMARE-KUMPARE formed as a result of the desire to pass wholesale amendments to the omnibus election code. These included the computerization of counting, continuous registration, providing for absentee voting, and an anti-dynasty provision. Shortly after the filing of the omnibus amendments, it became apparent that the NGO initiative of changing the rules of the electoral game would be met with widespread opposition from incumbents and the political parties.

### **FRAMING A STRATEGY**

At the early stage, we had not even focused on a practical solution. We only knew that passing omnibus amendments would be impossible. It became apparent that the anti-dynasty provision would not fly in the house and that computerization was dead in the water in the senate. The difficulty of framing a solution seemed overwhelming. The clearest approach—to presenting piecemeal amendments through individual bills—would have split the coalition early on and was thus out of the question. Individual members of the coalition therefore were freed to push their pet electoral issues—for NAMFREL it was computerization, for Konsensiyang Pilipino it was anti-dynasty, for TUCP the party list system. The intricate nature of this approach was cemented by the common task collectively agreed on that the coalition convenors would share in the task of prequalifying, screening and ranking nominees to fill up three vacancies to the comelec.





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Ultimately the role that the coalition assigned to itself as a sort of collective judge as to who could be appointed to the Comelec legitimized its role. It also helped immeasurably that chairing the entire process were justice Celilia Muñoz-Palma (KUMARE) and justice Feria (KUMPARE). Eventually, president Ramos himself started referring applicants for the comelec to the KUMARE-KUMPARE. Current chair Pardo and Commissioner Desamito were both shortlisted nominees of the coalition.

## **WHERE TO START**

With our elaborate cost-free solution in hand, the next step was selling the electoral reform ideals in congress. The TUCP early on lined up support from senator Herrera and Rep. Lagman. We worked on the powerful committees on suffrage and electoral reform. These powerful committees have staff organizations which are not inaccessible. Congressional staff knew that they would have to make the call for their principals, so they wanted the information we had. Moreover, on issues as complex as electoral reform, and with such major consequences for governance, staff conversations can continue over several visits result in a dialogue that eventually gets them to come around to your position.

Exactly what do you do if the staff cold shoulder you? You have to keep hounding staff members and members sometimes at length. You ask them: Why won't you support us? What can we do to accommodate your concerns? You don't always have to tell them everything, but when asked, you just don't lie. If you do, you'll never get anything again and it's a long life.

## **DEAL WITH THE LEGISLATOR**

The next set of decisions was how to meet directly with members of the committee on electoral reform. The way you do this will be different every time. But it's always good to start with a district where you have members. Start with the staff. From the staff, find out who is interested and who isn't. But find an ally who is willing to help you approach other committee members. And, if you can find one from each party, so much the better. But begin with the staff. If you begin with the member, he is often going to ask the staff how they feel about the issues, and no staff likes to be blindsided.

If the member you have the closest connection with happens to be the chair, so much the better. But don't expect a definite answer from a committee chair. Also, you'd better be sure how the chair thinks if he/she is the first one on the committee that you visit. If the chair doesn't like your proposal, then you're dead in the water, but if you get a lot of committee support first, then the chair is likely to think differently.

Members like to meet with sectoral leaders coming from their districts. Often there are practical questions asked that only the sectoral leader can answer. What actually happens in those closed door sessions where political power brokers face off against our sectoral leaders? They never face each other cold. This requires that the coalition do its research in advance. You know what the members stand is and you are prepared to use some chips if necessary. And usually our sectoral leaders have already had some acquaintanceship with the member.



Even though such a meeting may last only a few minutes and cover only one or two issues, making a point with a member of congress reflects a good deal of work that has gone into developing your case. U.S. president Lyndon Johnson put it more colorfully, noting that most voters "never take the time to think about what really goes on in those one-to-one sessions. They see it as rape instead of seduction; they miss the elaborate preparation that goes on before the act is finally done."

## **MARKETING THE CONCEPT**

Framing the issue in a way that will get the member's attention is critically important. Selling an idea is like selling a product. It has to look good. And you have to make the customer feel good for having bought it. Advocacy introduces one unique factor: You've got to give your member enough information so that he or she can defend your position against people who are opposed to or who couldn't care less about your position.

## **STAY AVAILABLE**

While the other electoral reform issues fell by the wayside because of the direct threat made to changing rules of the game which the traditional politicians have mastered, the passage in the house of the party list law was almost anticlimactic. It provided for inclusion of all political parties, and in all probability, few members understood its complexities. What they did understand was that it hurt no one in congress and carried bipartisan endorsement.

Nevertheless in legislative advocacy, coalitions must fight to the last. Members of the *KUMARE-KUMPARE* were accessible during deliberations, floor debate, passage, and bicameral conference committee consideration. During any such debate coalition members sit in the galleries or stand in a convenient place off the floor. What is important is that they stay available. This is specially true in the bicameral conference committee, where almost anything can happen once a bill is being deliberated. Sometimes you have to react quickly.

During the first day of the bicameral consideration of the party list system bill, the strong obstructionist position taken by Rep. Lagman to the participation of the five major political parties resulted in language excluding LAKAS, LDP, NPC, PRP and LP from participating in party list elections in 1998 and 2001. On the second day Rep. Lagman was summoned to a Malacanang meeting, *KUMARE-KUMPARE* and TUCP representatives attending the Bicameral proceedings at Annabelle's restaurant heard members guaranteeing Lagman over the cellular phone that they would protect his language of the previous day. TUCP with the coalition picketed in the parking lot and monitored the Bicam Deliberations. After Lagman informed the members that he was only fifteen minutes travel time away, one member remarked: *parating na si Edcel, tapusin na natin ito*. Edcel arrived at Annabelle's failing to catch anyone from the bicameral committee. Only the TUCP/*KUMARE* picket was there to greet him with the information that the Bicam had already concluded and all political parties could now participate for the party list elections.

In response, Rep. Lagman and the coalition agreed to launch a quorum watch. While technically the reconciliation of the house and senate versions in the Bicam had ended any further insertions, the Bicameral conference committee report still had to go through the technicality of being reported and passed. Only problem was, this



was just prior to the 1995 elections, congressmen were out campaigning, and each time that the conference committee report was presented for approval, Rep. Lagman and four TUCP sectoral representatives raised the question of a quorum.

This effectively derailed enactment of the party list law, with the retirement of chairman Monsod from the COMELEC and the *KUMARE-KUMPARE* crying foul over the failure to pass a single electoral reform measure, the BICAMERAL conference committee on the party list system was reconvened and the exclusion of the five major political parties from the 1998 party list elections carried the day.

### **STAY ONE STEP AHEAD**

Throughout the long process of getting this law passed, the coalition developed letters to members, comics for the coalition partners, a grassroots educational campaign, letters to the editor, testimony, the text of the law itself, background materials for congressional documents. We supplied materials for floor statement, alerts to constituents, negotiations with members and staff liaison with the committee staff.

The group involved in the party list campaign still meet and maintain their ties with key congressional staff and members. Our organizations have given seminars to prepare our respective members for participation in the party list elections. We have developed manuals, and are now in the process of beginning regional orientation programs in the party list system. For our coalition, the lesson is clear. In maximizing our gains we must always stay one step ahead. If you write the provision, get it enacted, and help interpret it, you'll always be ahead of the curve.

From hindsight one could see that many right decisions were made, including abandoning the omnibus approach. At the start, the choices did not appear all that clear. Members of the coalition disagreed on what electoral concern to focus on and continued to disagree even as the campaign was under way.

But even this happy little tale has a cautionary note. There is one thing about the legislative process, and that is, it never works the same way twice. And we are already focusing on new crises related to maximizing the coalition's gains and that is keeping the coalition together.

Sometimes as in the case of the party list system (PLS) campaign of the upcoming PLS elections, it's impossible to keep all members of a coalition. There are techniques however for ensuring that a coalition does not fall apart heedlessly. They come down to one word preparation.

- Goal-setting - One of the most important aspects of managing a coalition is getting agreement at the start on your goals. This statement of goals should be formally approved by each coalition member.
- Concentrate on essentials- Anticipate at the start what is really most essential to everyone and what you think are the most likely elements to fall by the wayside. Attempt to eliminate any excess baggage you can from the agenda, so that you can count on a solid core of partners who will stick to the end.



- Organization - Coalition coordinators play an important role, assigning congressional visits, keeping track of meeting results and helping develop priorities for future coalition actions.
- Differences among coalition members - In a coalition, one group may have a stronger stake than the other. It is likely that such group will also have a stronger knowledge of the subject and a greater research capacity. That group should be contacting coalition members to share relevant information. A coalition works best when there is complete information—sharing in coalitions of competitors, there is a lot of opportunity to be distrustful. Again this stresses the importance of preparation to ensure that coalition members understand their mutual obligations.

As our respective coalitions now retool for the coming legislative—and electoral battles—it has become clear that the main gain of a coalition is establishing its credibility. Concurrent with achieving credibility is getting exposure and maneuvering our way into a series of debates. Along the way there are several techniques we can use to overcome our disadvantage and leverage our influence.

- Get what you can for free. TUCP/KUMARE-KUMPARE acquired free air time from TV and radio stations. We take advantage of research that are collecting dust on the shelves of offices such as the congressional planning and budget office (CPBO), research that workers' tax money had originally paid for. We got mailing lists from congressional friends.
- Get the facts and simplify them - Coalitions need a set of arguments that could be expressed clearly and withstand attacks.
- Establish a volunteer speakers bureau - Develop a speakers bureau from among your organizers and volunteers from the community. Develop talking points to support their presentations.
- Seek confrontation - Debate and confrontation rather than one-sided efforts such as opinion-editorial articles should be our primary strategy. We debate in schools, policy bodies and before other NGOs and POs. Once the press becomes favorably impressed with the sophistication of our arguments the whole thing picks up.
- Surprise the opposition with talent - Let the opposition underestimate you. Plan this. Do not become formidable until it is tactically to your advantage. Initially invest in research, turn out issue briefs, develop lists of voters and organization, train speakers and refine your arguments. When the time comes, your coalition can mount a rather intensive campaign with surprisingly few resources.
- Push the underdog image - You will have David and Goliath that becomes worthy of coverage. The media is always interested in a contest. Allow the media to view your modest resources and your one or two telephone banks. Pit unknowns against well known public figures. But be flexible—we sometimes get calls asking if someone could show up for a debate that same morning.



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In conclusion, I have tried to set forth a broad agenda for how coalitions can become more effective advocates of people's causes.

We believe that coalitions can be more effective in congress. We can meet the challenges we face through working together in cooperation. Coalitions can frame legislative initiatives. Coalitions can track and monitor the status of legislation favorable or unfavorable to specific constituencies.

Coalitions can affirm the essence of representation as we hold our officials accountable, and with the party list, coalitions in 1998 can totally change the face of congress.

We believe that a legislative affairs program is a key element for advancing coalition interests. But to do that we will have to get our respective acts together. Civil society through our organizations continues to lead a process of renewal in order to bring about new possibilities for us as individuals, as families, as sectors, as communities. Our coalition work offers us a chance to break from a period where our leaders invite a season of cynicism. Our leaders invoke morality, but wink at greed. They criticize the public sector in the rush to privatize, but then rob it blind. They rail against taxes but then raise taxes on the minimum wage earner. Truly, the organizations with us today with their advocacies for the peasant, fisherfolk, the urban poor and the informal sector represent a different path, a better way: Harder but more hopeful. Longer but more compelling. Steeper but more worthy.



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## Linking with the Business Sector

**VICKY GARCHITORENA**  
*Executive Director, Ayala Foundation Inc.*

### 1. CURRENT AND POTENTIAL AREAS OF COLLABORATION

The Philippine business sector is today growing increasingly aware of the need for their greater involvement in social development. Perhaps this is also due to the improving economic climate which has allowed them to reap higher profits and to become more optimistic about the future and therefore more generous in their corporate philanthropy.

The League of Corporate Foundations, which started with 13 members in 1992, now has 30 members and hopes to have 50 by the end of the year. I myself have been approached by a number of owners of large corporations who have asked for help in establishing their corporate foundations. Even the Chinese taipans are setting up foundations, indicating a more serious interest in corporate philanthropy from a sector that in the past kept a very low profile in the community.

This is a major shift from the past, when most companies merely responded to requests for grants from church-based groups or from politicians for one-time dole-outs for anything from infrastructure projects to garbage cans for the barangay. Today, companies have seen the need to rationalize their corporate giving and to seek more effective solutions to the problems of poverty.

This development should be warmly welcomed by the NGO and PO sectors, who should not be alarmed by the possibility of being edged out of the development mainstream. The corporate foundations are fully aware that they cannot and should not work by themselves. Most are staffed by professionals who understand the need for partnerships, for cooperation, and for coordination. Most are looking for legitimate and competent NGOs and POs whom they can work with and who can sustain the projects that they start up.

Indeed, corporate foundations are keen on nurturing local, community based NGOs, and POs because they are the ones with their ear to the ground, with the intimate knowledge of the problems of the community, with a feel for the pulse of the formal and informal leaders in the area.

What then can corporate foundations provide?

1. *Funds and access to funds.*

Corporate foundations usually have an annual budget from their principals, either for specific programs or to respond to proposals. These are significant amounts. Just 16 foundations in the League submitted 1996 annual budgets totaling P640 million.



These may include funds from local and foreign donors. One of the advantages of the corporate foundations in seeking these counterpart funds is the stability they offer the funders, backed up as they are by their principals.

Corporate foundations, whether they are granting foundations or operating foundations, can therefore be sources of project funds for local NGOs and POs.

### 1.2. *Sustainability of programs.*

Corporate foundations can take a long term view of programs which other funders, especially foreign donors, may not be able to sustain due to their other interests in other countries or regions of the world. This may be especially relevant for programs in areas where the companies have a strong business presence or interest.

## 2. **HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THE PARTNERSHIP**

2.1. NGOs must take the trouble to understand the businessmen and to take the trouble to help the businessmen understand them. Each side must learn to remove their biases or hang-ups about the other. On one side, NGOs must accept that profits are not evil and not all businessmen are greedy bloodsuckers. They must accept the sincerity and real concern of corporations regarding the social problems of our country, which after all is their country as well. On the other hand, businessmen must realize that NGOs are not just bleeding hearts who may not know what they are doing or pinkos out to maintain the class struggle in order to justify their existence. They must accept the fact that there are now many legitimate NGOs which are professionally run by men and women who have taken this career path and who bring in management skills together with their social concern.

This is probably a role the corporate foundations can play, as they straddle both worlds and can therefore "translate" for both sides of the dialogue.

2.2. NGOs must learn to respond to the needs of business for concrete results, complete and timely reports, financial transparency and accountability and even perhaps some publicity for their corporation.

This can be a delicate issue. Some NGOs feel that corporate grants must be "pure", and that any publicity is a manipulation of the poor. I believe this issue must be debated and clarified. Even among us in the League of Corporate Foundations, it is an issue that we have debate among ourselves. We believe that it is an issue that we have debated among ourselves. We believe that it is acceptable for a corporation to generate some goodwill from the good work that it does. However, this must be done in a manner that will preserve the dignity of the people we serve.

The difference between public relations and social development is clear. For the first, the company and its image is the most important factor. For the latter, the interest of the community must be the core issue of the activity.



### 3. SUSTAINING PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN COALITIONS AND THE BUSINESS SECTOR

In the face of declining funds from foreign donors, the development community can turn to the business sector for its sustained operations. I believe that we have just scratched the surface of the potential funds that we can tap into in terms of corporate philanthropy. If we take one percent of the net income before tax of the top 1000 Philippine corporations, this would amount to a whopping P2.5 billion.

But even the smaller companies in the cities and towns of the country can be our partners in development for smaller community-based projects that they themselves can get involved in. It could be a matter of reaching out to the professional associations and socio-civic clubs such as the Rotary Clubs, the Zontas, the Chambers of Commerce and Industry in the provinces and cities where you operate. They can be convinced to fund or jointly implement with you certain activities that can have longer term effects on the areas of your concern, be that the environment, health, housing, or credit.

Many of them are truly interested in doing good, but most do not know how to do so beyond medical missions and Christmas gift-giving. While these are certainly worthwhile activities, we could help them design, implement, manage, and monitor more relevant programs for the poor in their vicinity. In so doing, we will at the same time be transforming their view and understanding of social development.

It is up to us in the development sector to understand the needs of the business community and seek those areas of cooperation and mutual benefits between the corporate sector and the NGO/PO community. Some suggestions:

- 3.1. Invite them into your Board of Trustees. Bring them to the slum areas and arrange meetings with the leaders of the cooperatives and urban poor groups in your communities. There is nothing like being personally involved in social development for a hard-nosed businessman to realize the kind of problems that we face in our day-to-day operations. I have seen quite a number of business executives become advocates for development after some exposure to poverty and its problems.
- 3.2. Look for areas that are a "natural" for the company. For example
  - a food manufacturing company may be more interested in a feeding program for streetchildren or abandoned elderly or in training food nutritionists
  - a publishing company may be more interested in educational programs
  - a drug company may be interested in an AIDS campaign or the training of paramedics
  - a bank will be more interested in a credit program for cooperatives or micro-enterprises
- 3.3. Look for corporate events which can be enhanced by philanthropic venture, such as anniversaries or new product launches. The establishment of a scholarship program or the construction of a training center would be a great centerpiece of an anniversary celebration.
- 3.4. For those who have already helped you, be sensitive to their need for some publicity. Perhaps you can prepare success stories or annual reports on the impact of their donations on the communities





you have assisted. They can use this in their own annual report or stockholders' meetings and can ensure a continuing partnership with your NGO/PO.

3.5. Be willing to work with them on corporate programs such as disaster training, volunteer programs, outreach activities.

#### **4. SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS IN THE AYALA GROUP**

I am sure that many of you have your own success stories in dealing with one company or the other and I ask you to share them with us as well. For my part, let me tell you of some projects we undertake in the Ayala Group which highlight the possible synergies between business and development:

4.1. Settlements development for relocated squatters through our Integrated Community Development Program has been a critical success for Ayala Land, Inc. It has transformed potentially violent situations into a win-win program where the lives of the squatters actually improve after their relocation.

4.2. Purefoods Corporation has been funding a credit program for micro-enterprises for the past five years that is open not only to the families of their low-income employee but also to members of the community surrounding their plant in Marikina.

4.3. Bank of the Philippine Islands has a loan fund for cooperatives through which they have already disbursed P34 million and assisted 1,500 micro-enterprises.

4.4. Ayala Corporation has focused on support for the arts through the Ayala Museum and the Filipinas Heritage Library, which are major cultural institutions aimed at enhancing appreciation for our history and our culture.

4.5. An Ayala Volunteer Corps has been formed drawing volunteers from among all 18 or so companies with the intention of inculcating the same sense of social commitment in the officers and employees of the group.

In all our activities, the network of Ayala companies is our network as well. We tap them when we seek to place those whom we have trained; we seek the help of their professional staff in training college students from the public schools in surfing the Internet; we tap their resources in responding to disasters and major national activities that need the support of the private sector.

We are now at the stage of looking for ways to integrate social development into their business operations. This is already in place for Ayala Land, where the foundation is invited as early as possible when there is a land development project that includes issues such as squatters, environmental concerns, and community needs.



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We are now looking also at helping them design products and services that will respond to the needs of the poorer sectors. We are helping them operationalize the socialized housing law and extending it to services other than those mandated by law. We are encouraging our insurance and pre-need companies to design products for lower-income families who need these services even more than the rich who are their natural market.

There are many more examples and we seek even greater integration of social development into the activities of the Ayala Group. We are confident that such partnerships are in the best interest of all concerned-the community, the corporation, and the country as a whole.



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## Networking with the Academe

**MA. SERENA DIOKNO**  
*Associate Dean, College of Social Sciences*  
*University of the Philippines*

1. Fundamental tension:  
Advocacy "vs." scholarship
2. Levels of involvement:
  - Individual faculty
  - Institution (bureaucratic constraints, advocacy issue + institutional support)
3. Types of involvement:
  - Research
  - Training - special courses on specific areas such as data gathering, documentation, analysis
  - Education - diploma/other formal courses with NGO target in mind (e.g., economics, demography, social work)
4. Factors which encourage networking:
  - Transformation in nature of academic disciplines as evidenced by:
    - Multidisciplinary projects (breakdown of disciplinary barriers) acceptance that solutions to problems are not the monopoly of any one field (e.g., megadike problem, Bolinao cement plant)
    - More and more fieldwork by social scientists; breaking away from the image of academe as an ivory tower
    - Development of new techniques and challenges to Western paradigms; for example, oral history seeks to transform community/people from "objects" of study into "subjects" —"give back to the people who made and experienced history, through their own words, a central place."
  - Legitimization of NGO areas of concern (OCWs, gender) as academic subjects of study
    - Reflected in curriculum new courses (on gender, peace studies, environmental studies)
    - Also in research-action research and policy - orientated research
  - Breakdown of barriers between academe and larger society which has had democratizing effects on the academe; perhaps because, in part, activists of before now hold mid and top level positions in the academe and are in a position to shape institutional policy and direction.



5. Negative factors

- Work constraints; coalition partnership done alongside teaching, research and sometimes, administrative functions.
- Not enough faculty to network with; such faculty have a certain profile (openness of mind, willingness to learn from others)
- Academic outputs not circulated enough - not written for lay audience, written mostly in English, not disseminated

6. Gains on both sides from partnership between NGOs and academe

- Broader knowledge, understanding of society in various ways
- Broader range of solutions to a variety of problems

7. Questions for discussion

- Do academic studies have any impact at all on NGOs?
- What strategies for collaboration can be adopted based on needs/interest assessment at both sides and a shared vision



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## Interphasing with the Media

MELINDA QUINTOS DE JESUS

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### INTRODUCTION

The role of the mass media in society should be understood by society as a whole. This paper will focus only on the news media, which differ in both character and effect from the other forms of mass communication such as film, television and radio programs which are produced for the purposes of entertainment and general public education.

In a democratic system such as the Philippines, the role of the news media needs to be defined by those who practice journalism; as well as by the public, the users of journalism in government and in the private sector. The issues of the press touch on the very character of society, the people's needs, their aspirations and their way of life.

The perspective of this paper draws from a professional experience in various aspects of mass media, in various periods of Philippine development in the last three decades. I began as a free-lance writer of television documentaries and public affairs programs shortly before Martial Law was declared in the early seventies. I produced material for corporate communications and government information programs during the Martial Law period. In the late seventies, I edited a television magazine and then a variety magazine. In the early eighties, I got involved in advocacy journalism, as a columnist in the **Bulletin Today**, a paper which began testing the levels of tolerance of the Marcos government. After the assassination of Benigno Aquino Jr. in 1983, I joined the "alternative press" as columnist and editor of **Veritas News Weekly**.

To my mind, it is in the period of liberation after February 1986 that the need for national consensus about the role of the media, specifically, the press in print or broadcast, has gained urgency.

With the recovery of press freedom and the proliferation of newspapers, of television channels and radio stations, Filipinos obviously have a valuable resource that should expand the means and opportunities for public information and mass education. But in the context of freedom, and the operation of free enterprise and free market, the national community has shied away from the kind of discussion which would clarify the purposes of the press and determine the character and style of the service. One reason it has not been done is because such discussions are generally held in suspicion by journalists who perceive in such activities the hidden attempt to control press freedom.

After all, the press is there, for good or bad; and an examination after the fact seems superfluous, especially from the point of view of those who are going to be examined.

However, one gathers from the number of fora which I have been asked to address on the subject that people want some clarification. There are those who are not happy with the press, who wonder about the limits of



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freedom, who question the effects of the negative and adversarial content that so much of the news carries. It is as though the national community had not thought out the implications of press freedom, of the provision of the Constitution which prohibits any law from abridging the same, and the protection it provides to a free exchange of ideas, good or bad, right or wrong.

Interphasing among the sectors--interaction and coordination with the media involves the mutual understanding of how each sector or institution works.

Let us now try to understand the character of the media particularly the press--in print or broadcast.

### **THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE PRESS AND DEVELOPMENT**

The context of this discussion lies in the fundamental commitment to press freedom, to the autonomy of the press as an essential feature of the democratic system. It is indispensable to the conduct of a free society. The earliest observations of American democracy by Alexis De Tocqueville saw newspapers as instruments by which people could understand "the state of their public weal." Those early forms of newspapers enabled individuals to participate in a public life. With this form of shared communication, it was possible for strangers to unite with one another whenever they were moved by some common purpose. The course of national development in democracy goes hand in hand with how well or poorly newspapers serve the purposes of communication.

In Robert Putnam's study of development in modern Italy, research identified certain shared features which characterized the most progressive regions. Certain qualities of civil society were strongly evident, civic engagement, political equality, solidarity, and the strong presence of associations which brought together the community for a variety of shared activities. Interestingly enough there was also a high incidence of newspaper readership in the areas which showed economic productivity.

That newspapers make for a more progressive community seems obvious enough as to sound almost like a motherhood statement. But these days, communities and associations have become a major business enterprise, commercial ventures which have to deal with profit and loss issues and with competition in the market. In this new environment, journalism often seems to lose its sense of original purpose and its place in the national scheme of development.

### **THE EVOLUTION OF THE PRESS AND NEWSPAPERS**

Perhaps, it will help to consider how newspapers came about and the various normative concepts which have evolved to analyze the nature of journalistic activity.

The democratic tradition in the US inspired journalistic activity in the Philippine, although the first newspapers in the Philippines were the propagandist papers written by Filipinos in a campaign for reforms in Spanish colonial rule.



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James Carey in an article first published in the *Journal of International Affairs* goes back to the gathering places of the colonial era in the US, the pubs and taverns where people gathered to converse with one another. The first publishers then recorded these conversations, including the gossip, the reactions and responses to ideas raised; published these and circulated them. These newspapers were essentially "reflected speech—the ongoing flow of conversation" of people about the concerns of the day. This first "public" was made up of merchants, traders, activist citizens who may have been strangers to one another but who found each other company for the purpose of exchanging views. The places where they met—taverns and pubs—made it possible for a community to pursue a continuing conversation about the problems of the day. Their recorded speech provided a reference point for decision-making in government.

At present, the public has become larger and more amorphous. But the press continues to conduct its activity in the name of the public's right to know.

Another conceptual frame for journalism is the narrative whose function feeds a hunger and interest for stories. What's going on in the community? Newspaper carried news stories about the events of the day, and it is not surprising that these earliest forms also made capital of crime, of sex and violence. Eventually, an editorial format framed the stories in an order of their significance and importance. The multi-sectioned national newspaper today descended from penny press and the "extra" editions—but both were attempts to keep the public informed about the events and ideas of the time.

Radio, television, all day cable news channels have all expanded the reach of the press beyond anyone's expectation. Now, journalists are at the center of a communication flow which spans rural and urban communities, in touch with a national as well as a global audience. Technology has accelerated the pace of news delivery. Real-time reporting has sometimes reversed the flow of information—with government and public officials awaiting reports from the media who are out in the field so they in turn can reflect on the implications of the most current developments for policy decision and action. This was demonstrated during CNN's coverage of the Gulf war, and in the reporting of major disasters, in the coverage of world events, such as international summits and conferences, where diplomatic information sometimes passes through the media.

It seems natural then to raise questions about the value of journalism and the role that it should play in the course of national development. In the US, a growing public discontent with newspapers and with television news has moved journalist media critics to review disturbing aspects of its practice.

Howard Kurtz has likened the "news" to a "media circus" with its emphasis for entertainment, thus the phrase "info-tainment," its fascination with personalities, even those with dubious claims to fame. Some of the news trivialize the purpose of the public forum. For example, on the day that Nelson Mandela was released from prison in Soweto, Kurtz observed, the headlines of major American newspapers were tracking the divorce of Donald and Ivana Trump.

The celebrity status of the big stars of the news set up new standards of success which have nothing to do with the tasks of reporting. The kind of celebrity which sets journalists as a special class also raises questions about the ability of the news community to keep its hand on the pulse of ordinary people.



In another aspect, the orientation toward conflict upholds the images and symbols of a society at war with itself.

These and other issues about the press are also demonstrated in the practice of journalism in the Philippines. We can try and find out how such characteristics affect the course of Philippine democratic development.

If the value of newspapers lies in their being instruments of public information, of dialogue about and engagement in public affairs, then the press community, together with concerned sectors of the population, should be ready to examine if these purposes are being served.

### **THE "CHARACTER" OF "NEWS"**

#### *Models of Newsmaking*

Various academics provide us with normative concepts for news. The book **Media and Public Policy**, edited by Robert J. Spitzer, provides us with a wide reference for the study of the subject. Although journalists may not themselves be conscious of these norms, the examination of case studies validates the common adherence to these models.

The most accepted is the mirror model in which "news" is merely a reflection of the reality out there. The media simply "tell it like it is." While there are standards or criteria which determine what gets into the news, this concept projects the journalist as a neutral and disinterested observer.

Related to this model are those which see the media as "conduits" of information or as channels of news materials (Graber, 1989). The media simply provide the means of disseminating the news. Other terms, such as "neutral transmitter" (Linsky, 1986) also reflect the same understanding of the character of the media.

Reporters do not as a rule make up the "news" although there have been cases when reporting has been as inventive as fiction in producing plot or detail. They rely on "leads" provided by others. By and large, and in principle, the media do not invent the news. In this sense, the media cannot be asked to make things happen by themselves; meaning, crime will not go away, just because the media decide to stop reporting its incidence. This view props up the claimed objectivity by which journalists claim to work, the objectivity which allows them to search for the facts and the truth without fear or favor, the objectivity which cannot be bogged down by teleological concerns. In short, journalistic objectivity makes it disconcerting to have to worry about the consequences of the news.

But there are concepts which now admit that news media have a role to play in the policy making process. A communications theory projects the media with a role in agenda setting. (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987) (Kingdon, 1984) The media act as a "funnel regulating (emphasis mine) the flow of communication between policymakers and others in the political system. "(Schattsneider, 1975).





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In a more active mode, the media wield different kinds of effects. They educate the public. They facilitate the exchange of ideas among policy actors in and out of government. The media also organize the issue and project scenarios to prime the ground for public acceptance of certain policy options. (Hawthorne. 1994).

In practice, the media do not operate within just one conceptual framework. While reporting may be simply reactive to the things going on out there, the resulting publicity and resonance of journalism exerts influence over the policy agenda.

### ***Criteria for News***

Whatever the conceptual framework, the process of news selection takes place, a process involving standards of newsworthiness set by tradition and in cognizance of the nature of human interest and curiosity. "News" is what people want to know about. And these criteria have long determined what flows through the channels and what we eventually find in the mirror reflection of ourselves.

The most commonly cited criteria for "news" include: timeliness, which means that the news must be circulated as soon as possible after the event; wide interest; contain information which had not yet been publicized before; the out-of-the-ordinary or out-of-the-norm, and the element of conflict. Florangel Braid and Raymond Tuason writing for the **Philippine Journalism Review** also note that these criteria are oriented to viewing news as events, as isolated occurrences rather than developments in a process. Others have said that the only real preference governing news selection is the bias for bad news, rationalized as fulfilling the out-of-norm requirement. Since the norm is seen as "what is good," what goes wrong is the aberration. Finally, conflict is another element that one finds in good measure in the news pages, especially the front pages. Recalling the narrative impulse in journalism, conflict is essential. It makes a story interesting, without conflict, the story is not newsworthy.

The bias for conflict turns most policy news into a competition among proponents, and every policy controversy into an assessment of gainers vs. losers. Politicians and bureaucrats are depicted as playing a game trying to put one over the other side, or over the people.

The above criteria answer the query: why is so much of the "news" the same. These explain why many front pages are dedicated to political contests, to calamities and disasters, to graft and corruption, to crime. The dismal list is broken occasionally by the celebrities and their happenings in life.

The favored "bad news" budget often excludes anything that turns out well. Projects and experiments which actually work and receive widespread public support are not interesting to editors. Neither are dispute settlements, and the compromises which made agreement possible, even if this results in benefits to the public interest. The signing of accords are buried somewhere inside; but the walk-out in the talks or the collapse in negotiations make front page news.

Over time, the outlook for relief and resolution for all kinds of problems dims. Such a negative view of things would turn off public engagement and civic participation, as people turn inward with their feelings of helplessness and powerlessness. In the US, analysts say that such growing cynicism has led to a decline in electoral



participation, to a growing distrust of politicians and the establishment, and a disenchantment with the media in general.

### ***The Press as Watchdog***

The democratic framework which allows the citizenry to question and check government and leadership has positioned the press in the role as watchdog of the exercise of power. In the name of public interest, the press takes an adversarial position towards government and public officials in general—viewing those in government as the enemy who must be watched with distrust.

- Since the watchdog is assigned to expose wrong-doing and the abuse of power, there is a preponderance of news about scandal in government, about incompetence, about the mistakes of public officials.

In such a scheme, the good that is done by those in power is not reported in terms of the benefits received. They are usually interpreted only as political triumphs of a public official, say the president, over their opponents in the other side, say Congress. Or it can be presented as the successful resistance of Congress against rubber-stamp legislation.

In such a scheme, there is no news in many bureaucracies, unless some scandal has been found; no news in the provinces unless some calamity has occurred, such as a terrorist bombing, lahar or epidemic. The bias for bad news and the role of the watchdog combine to make journalism blind to many aspects of development, silent about a range of political activities apart from elections, oblivious to various conditions which can grow into a crisis.

Such blind spots in coverage provides an incomplete and incoherent picture of how things really are. And it does not make for a balanced and fair rendering of what is going on from day to day. It also dis-oriens policy-making.

### **WHAT INTERPHASING INVOLVES FOR OTHER SECTORS**

Interphasing is based on communication and communication systems. This cannot be accomplished without each group or sector building up its own information system which will allow them to share the knowledge that they have with others.

This involves the following tasks:

1. Identifying and organizing the information or knowledge you hold;
2. Establishing a framework of understanding the issues of your concern and involvement;
3. Establishing a policy for information sharing as a constant activity;
4. Setting up your own structures for access;
5. Identifying strategies for dissemination of knowledge and information sharing;
6. Assign responsibilities within your organization for interphasing with the media.



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## **CONCLUSION**

**The underlying principle for all these activities is the recognition that knowledge and information have become a means for empowerment, for increasing productivity and development, for enhancing personal individual growth and learning.**

**A genuinely democratic society must become a learning society. The media share the responsibility for that learning process. But they can only do so much. Every sector, public or private, should be involved in the continuing education of citizens, beyond the formal learning institutions and the schools.**

**Otherwise, the capacity to learn will wane and citizens will not be able to do their part in decision-making and policy-formation. A society as a whole will not be able to meet the increasing challenge posed by change. Society will stagnate, unable to reinvent itself and its institutions as required by new growth and new development.**



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## Global Alliances Between Coalitions

MICHAEL CALAVAN

*Decentralization and Local Development Division*

USAID

### PURPOSE

Sharing Information on Good Practice

- Gender and Development Responsibility Institution. - Thailand
- Environmental news service - Bd.
- ADAB taking over the GE Facility - Bd.
- Green labelling in Thailand -

Gaining Joint Influence in International Fora

- UN System Regional Alliances
- NGO participation in the Beijing, Cairo, and Jointian Conferences
- NGO "participation" in the upcoming and future APEC activities

Gaining National Effectiveness Through an "Outside in" Strategy

- Getting groups in other countries to legislate against unfair labor practices in your country.
- Thai student groups

### STRATEGY

- "Inside" or "outside" - "contentious" or "conciliatory" "loyal opposition" as "participatory"
- Broad based (rights of the working poor or maternal/child health or international ban on female circumcision or a campaign against inappropriate advertising of baby formula)
- Policy pronouncement and 'followthrough'

### TECHNIQUES/TACTICS

- Permanent organizations/alliances
- Regional and sub-regional sharing
- Media programs
- Personel ties and networking
- Piggybacking on international events
- Newsletters, magazines, journals, CD-ROM data bases
- The Internet!??



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## Best Practices in Coalition Building

**MS. RUTH CALLANTA**

*Consultant, Ayala Foundation*

My presentation will follow this outline. I will give a short introduction on what democratic participation and what coalition building is all about, and how we intend to discuss the topic this afternoon. Then I would like to discuss with you Coalitions as Effective Structures for Poverty Alleviation. Flowing from there-some trends and some perspectives on what good coalitions will be like in the future, and fourth, some challenges. Just for the purpose of understanding the jargon that we're going to use I'd like to start with coalitions. I'm borrowing from the USAID definition of what coalitions are as written by Lisa Magno. As written in the paper, coalitions are/is a collaboration of diverse groups with great, distinct identities, persuasions and motivations to achieve a common defined practical objective, where the terms collaboration, diverse groups, and separate identities have been defined.

### **Democratic Participation**

Effective equity and social equation thru democratic participation require basically two essential components. The legal framework which provides for the system and structure and the people who need to be enabled and empowered to take advantage of the opportunities made possible by openings in the system. Thus, we say that if the systems are open, and people are empowered to participate or take the opportunity in the system then equity and social cohesion take place. Getting to the legal bottom line, the 1987 Constitution took a decided shift towards expanding democratic participation by institutionalizing people's initiative in governance. In recognition of the Filipino people's historic pact of mounting a peaceful and bloodless revolution, the framers of the 1987 Constitution made the proviso for a peoples'initiative where at least 10 % of the national or 25% of the local population acting collectively may compel the government to face and finally resolve raging issues among others. Echoing the essence and spirit of expanding democratic participation, Republic Act 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991 instituted political structural reforms aimed at facilitating a more responsive, directly accountable government bureaucracy in the context of expanded devolution of powers, from the national to local government units. The other prerequisite to enhance participation is that people should be empowered to help create the conditions that will shape their own history collectively and individually. But since power and privileges are hardly ever renounced voluntarily, the concept of a truly participative society will necessitate the struggle for power such that conditions for people to become effectively involved in shaping their own history collectively and individually are created. Thus, poverty is not only a socio-economic problem, it is also a political and cultural issue. Poverty prevents the poor from effectively participating in governance. Poverty hinders the poor from developing capability to participate in many community and social activities because of lack of confidence because they're poor. Poverty deprives the poor of access to power structures thru which they may improve their plight. In effect, poverty marginalizes 37% of the total Philippine population, virtually depriving them of social equity and contributing to social disintegration, a societal weakening which can undermine the sustainable economic progress the country hopes for.



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## **Coalition Building as Effective Structures for Poverty Alleviation**

Poverty alleviation efforts by the non-government sector has taken on the following means : NGOs have advocated for policy and electoral reforms; NGOs have delivered basic social services such as health, education, housing, water, and others; NGOs have provided access to productive assets such as man, capital, technology, skills; some progressive NGOs actually tried entering into government service to effect such changes and NGOs participated in governance. The problem of poverty is, however, too big that the NGO sector realizes that individual efforts at poverty alleviation is not enough to make a difference and create lasting changes. Thus, the need to coalesce. Coalitions have proven to be more effective in securing the objective they have set out to do. Allow me to refresh your memory on the following. On advocacy, the National Movement for Free Elections composed of several NGOs covering the entire Philippines was instrumental in having a credible result. From the mid-1985 Presidential Elections, their untiring effort against massive election fraud provided among others a rallying point and thread of continuation that anchored the historic massive social movement which mobilized previously unconcerned sectors of Philippine society into bringing about the ouster of then President Marcos. "Kilusan Price Roll Back", a more recent example of the efficacy people's groups working thru coalitions caused the roll back of gasoline prices in the first quarter of 1996. The timing of the movement was good, many other things were happening in the country and the government could ill-afford such massive movements. The President responded immediately and oil prices were then rolled back. This coalition was short term and meant to call the authority's attention for a roll back of oil prices. After its purpose was served, it died a natural death having nothing to fuel the union. Another example is the "Kill the VAT" movement. NGOs, the business sector and prominent community figures launched a concerted effort which compelled the government to rethink and reformulate the new tax measure. Several concessions were given to major service industries. The Cebu Uniting for Sustainable Development and concerned organizations in the province of Cebu came together in common protest against the continuing oversight of government for the people's water resource. They are now drafting an integrated watershed and coastal-aqua development plan for government to implement. On the delivery of basic social services, the Philippine Business for Social Progress is a model of successful coalitions against poverty where business corporations, pulled their resources together for anti-poverty activities. Today owing to its professional way of handling the funds and its programs, PBSP has more than multiplied the resources initially provided by the business sector for its anti-poverty activities. The Alliance of Philippine Partners in Enterprise Development, which is an alliance of micro financing institutions, in the pursuit of expanding its absorptive capacity and NGOs involved in enterprise came together and packaged wide-reaching anti-poverty programs which commanded donor attention because of the expected impact on the poverty situation in their areas of operation. The Foundation for Philippine Environment with funds from the Debt for Nature Swap is also an example of such coalition activities. The Integrated Recruitment, Training and Placement for Employment in a symbiotic relationship with needy communities, the private sector and an NGO coalition performs coordinating functions to train and match trained field workers into appropriate jobs. They not only supplied businesses with much needed, properly trained personnel but helped improve employment conditions in poor communities. I am sure that there are a hundred and thousand more examples of NGOs coalescing with other sectors of the Philippines in terms of poverty alleviation activities.

What have we learned from all of these experiences? First, for coalitions, to be successful in meeting their objective must have very well and very clear goals, objectives and targets. Second, that it must have a very broad base plan of action. Third, the task sharing and delineation of responsibilities must be very specific. Transparent processes, decision-making processes, transparent sources of funds, transparent alliances and networks must at all times be present.



There should be commitment of resources over the long term. And lastly, we learn from these experiences that we need leaders who have vision, skill, and charisma to sustain the coalition's activities. Regarding those coalitions involved in advocacy activities, policy reform and participation in governance, the Ateneo's Center for Social Policy and Public Affairs in a recent publication has this to say: first, that individual members of the coalition must have from the very beginning a firm resolve to participate in coalition activities. Second, the individual members of that coalition or the coalition itself must have internal organizational stability such that pursuit of all of these advocacy activities could be sustained. That there should be effective decision-making processes together with consultations, and efficient decision-making processes, without sacrificing consultations among the formation members. Alliances and networks add up and build up on organizational strength, hence, successful coalitions involved in advocacy must have alliances and networks in addition to the coalition itself. The CSP-PA study also highlights the need for coalitions to realize that government is not a monolithic structure. That within the government bureaucracy are specific pockets and individuals who may be receptive or who may be sharing the same vision and causes as the coalition. Hence, it is important that coalition members identify these individuals and pockets within the government bureaucracy who could further the objectives of the coalition. More importantly, coalition members must appreciate and must understand government procedures. And lastly, that the sensibility and sensitivity of the local government officials must be understood and must be respected by the coalition members.

For coalitions involved in the provision of basic social services are the following: One, that your target groups must be focused and very much targeted. Poverty alleviation activities could not be a shot gun approach but must be pivoted to specific sectors and to specific poverty groups. Two, poverty alleviation being transformational in nature requires sustained effort and sustained commitment of resources. It is not a one time, one year involvement but it is sustained in terms of efforts and resources. Three, poverty alleviation activities or programs must be integrated and wholistic in its approaches or the participating organizations must be outcomes of any anti-poverty activities. This poverty organization would be participatory in nature and will be used as instruments for action and change. And lastly, that the coalition must have an effective and efficient monitoring system for transformational processes. Given what coalitions are, what they do as far as advocacies and as far as the delivery of basic services are concerned, and their roles in terms of enhancing democratic participation, let me now bring this discussion into the future.

What does the future hold for coalitions? There are some trends that will continue. First, in the Philippines, there will be continued economic growth. Despite this, however, there will be the increasing gap between the rich and the poor. There is also the increasing influence, dominance of business in dictating the pace and direction of development in the country and concomitantly, diminishing role and authority of government, increasing politization and empowerment of people's groups and communities, and increasing competition for natural resources. These are some of the trends that will continue in the future.

What are some of the implications of such changes? One, the continuing marginalization of people's groups, those who cannot or who would not be able to avail of the opportunities being provided by the benefits of economic growth. There will always be pockets of people groups who will not be able to participate and thus, continue to be marginalized and disenfranchised. Given the need for more efficient government services, government bureaucracy, the continuing trends towards privatization of social services will continue. Where businesses will continue to dictate the pace and direction of development, government services and government bureaucracy will continue to privatize a lot of its functions and a lot of its corporations into the private sector. Thus, the decreasing size of government



bureaucracy. And lastly, because of the continuing globalization, modernization and pace of commercialism, there will be an increase in materialism and quest for short term gains.

What would therefore be the challenges for coalitions in the future as we move into all of these trends. Coalitions of the future will continue to be advocates for the poor, for the marginalized and for the oppressed. Coalitions of the future will continue to be fiscalizers for business excesses and for government abuses. Coalitions of the future will continue to be more of social auditors, asking to the implication of what we do now in the future. And lastly, coalitions of the future will be forced to move into social services delivery with emphasis on total quality management. We will also see that coalitions of poor communities will happen in the future with reference to responding to the trend in the environment.

Given where we are today and given the trends in our socio-political economic situation, given the role that we have to play, I would like to end by saying that you need, more than ever, leaders who will continue to be visionary, leaders who will continue to be rooted on what is right rather than what is convenient and what is practical, leaders who will be consistent in their action regardless of personal inconveniences and personal problems. Therefore, the challenge is in continuing personal and institutional transformation not only with ourselves but in the institutions that we lead. Institutions that will not fear so much for their own viability and capability but will give primary importance in terms of what is right, what is just, and what is humane. The NGO movement, we pray, will still continue to lead in this quest for visionary leaders and transformed institutions who will carry on a just and democratic society for all. Thank you.





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## Best Practices in Coalition Building

**MARLENE D. RAMIREZ**

*Executive Director, Philippine Partnership for the  
Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PhilDHRRRA)*

Ten years ago, PhilDHRRRA was a member of only one coalition — an Asian coalition of NGOs. Now, it is a part of twelve (12) national coalitions, three (3) funding consortia and five (5) Asia/Pacific networks. We have also catalyzed the formation of a major national farmers federation, and, through our local governance program, four (4) provincial NGO/PO coalitions. Obviously, we believe in the importance of coalition building.

As a network in itself of sixty four (64) NGOs of varying history and expertise, and with varying ideological and political traditions, we at PhilDHRRRA fully know that networking and coalition building are crucial to the success of our development work.

Since all of us here have had years of coalition work, I have no doubt that we are all familiar with the value-added of coalitions or networks. Within the PO-NGO community, coalitions/networks facilitate the exchange of experience, information, knowledge and skills. They allow us to maximize our always insufficient resources and enable us to become more effective in what we do.

Externally, with our relations to government, donor agencies and other institutions, coalitions enable us to develop our agenda and to more effectively influence these institutions along our democratization and development agenda.

In addition to these, I would like to point out that engaging in coalition work is often very enriching for the individuals and the organizations involved. Coalitions force us to sharpen our analysis and our positions as we prepare to discuss and dialogue with the other groups in the coalition. At the same time, they also teach us to be more open and humble as we see the strengths and the commitment of our fellows. Coalitions teach us to respect each other as partners and fellow travelers in the democratization and development journey.

It is also through coalitions that we are forced to go back to the basic value of trust. Of course, to be trusting is not to be mistaken with being naive. We are fully aware that each one of us in the coalition is after certain organizational and political gains. This is however counter-balanced by the awareness, and trust, that we all sincerely believe in the importance of the coalition, and the principles and objectives which caused its formation.

Given the importance of coalitions, what then should we remember in maintaining and strengthening these coalitions? Here, I will draw insights from our own experience as a network of NGOs as well as our experience with various coalitions and networks such as the Philippine Development Assistance Program (PDAP), the first funding mechanism managed by a coalition of Philippine and Canadian NGOs, the Philippine-Canadian Human Resource Development Program (PCHRD), the Caucus of Development NGOs (CODE-NGO), and the Congress for a People's Agrarian Reform (CPAR).



### **1. Regular Dialogues**

First, we always put priority on dialogues between the member-organizations. This happens through meetings, assemblies, joint seminars, and other activities. This should take place at all levels: from local to regional to national, and also from the policy-making board to the executive or secretariat level. This often proves financially costly. But the lack of dialogue between members could be more costly over-all. Thus, we invest on this. At PhilDHRRRA, the member-NGOs now see the relevance of these assemblies and other activities. And they now cover part of the cost of these activities.

### **2. Substantive Participation**

The member organizations must be given substantial and meaningful participation in the decision-making and operation of the coalition or network. Oftentimes, this has been operationalized through the rule of consensus in decision-making.

However, this is often not enough, especially for coalitions composed of varying political tendencies. This is so since consensus decision-making is usually limited only to direction-setting, major plans and policies.

The member organizations must also have meaningful participation in matters such as staff hiring, program development and program implementation.

In 1990, the PhilDHRRRA Assembly created thematic committees on gender, human resource development (HRD), PO Empowerment, economic empowerment and others. Through these committees, member-organizations, based on their expertise and interest, can participate in the process of program development of the network. They serve as advisory bodies to the Board and they support the organization's operation in various ways.

The thematic committees serve as an affective and concrete venue where members can share and participate, and also get updated and informed. Thus, the member-NGOs are able to identify with the network and feel relevant to its cause. This also results in more responsive programs and projects.

### **3. Equitable Gains/Benefit**

While coalitions or networks are established based on unifying principles and objectives (whether sectoral — e.g. agrarian reform, aquatic reform, recovery of the coconut levy funds, etc. — or geographical — provincial, regional, etc.), we are conscious that each individual organization also has its own agenda to think of.

The coalition has to work for both the coalition objectives and the objectives of its member-organizations — so long as these objectives are compatible with, or at least not inimical to, the welfare of the coalition. I am here referring to such organizational objectives as media projection, resource generation, membership expansion and the like.

Our experience with PDAP's success as a funding facility managed by NGOs has been partly attributed to the clarity of the agenda of the member networks vis-à-vis PDAP's agenda. For instance, PhilDHRRRA has a mandate to mobilize resources to support the socio-economic activities of its member NGOs. While PhilDHRRRA cannot access funds for



itself from PDAP, its participation in the fund consortium has given its member NGOs the opportunity to build their track records in implementing various rural development projects. It also allowed PhilDHRRRA to develop its monitoring and evaluation systems. PDAP through its rigorous project assessment process served as a very good training ground for the technical staff of the member networks in project development and proposal writing.

Of course, we share with the whole of PDAP the challenge and prospect of being able to develop an alternative to traditional official development assistance (ODA) channeling and management. But the point is that PhilDHRRRA has its own agenda and this is recognized and respected by the network.

When we say that the coalition also has to work for the objectives of its member-organizations, we are saying that coalition work cannot be a "dog-eat-dog" affair. The coalition leaders and members have to look out for each other and take care that no organization is being left out in the enjoyment of the gains and benefits. This may even mean bending over backward to accommodate each other. For example, in terms of staffing of a coalition, at least a semblance of equitable representation of the various organizations and political tendencies must be targeted even when this means patiently waiting for qualified applicants who are acceptable to certain member-organizations.

This may run counter to a common way of looking at coalitions/networks as a competitive arena where the better and stronger organizations gain the most. This perspective has its value as it emphasizes the need for the member-organizations to be alert and always prepared (*laging handa*) when engaging in coalition work. It emphasizes the challenge for each individual organization.

However, this perspective also has its limitation. There is the danger that the coalition/network will eventually be reduced to just the strongest organizations who are able to survive such harsh competition. That is, if the coalition does not disintegrate from the tension and recrimination caused by the falling-out of the "weaker" organizations.

In short, we, coalition leaders and members, must both be very competitive and very helpful. A tough combination, but a necessary one in coalition work.

#### **4. Strong Membership Base**

It has been said often enough: "the chain is only as strong as its weakest link"; "the coalition is only as good as its members".

This means that the coalition must work to strengthen its members. A national coalition/ network must also endeavor to strengthen its regional and local foothold. National strength is brought about by local and regional dynamism.

This also means that the coalition must do its work in such a manner that it contributes to the capability-building of the member-organizations, and the local and regional organizations. The coalition must not strengthen itself at the expense of its members. Thus, whenever and wherever possible, it must work through the existing structures and mechanisms of its members.



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The coalition/network must learn to tap the work and the capability of its members. It should avoid from duplicating what its members are already doing. This is very clear in CODE-NGO. The role of CODE-NGO is distinct from those of its member-networks. The member-networks are given the challenge and responsibility to concretize the strategies they themselves identify, based on their expertise and current involvement.

For instance, PhilDHERRA takes on the lead role in the provincialization thrust of CODE-NGO. We operationalize this thrust through our existing governance programs and a joint program with CODE-NGO. Generally, CODE-NGO takes care of the mainstreaming of our learnings from on the ground experiences toward higher levels of policy debate and resolution.

### **5. Sufficient Resources**

On a more pragmatic matter, the availability of sufficient resources is absolutely necessary in building and strengthening coalitions. A clear basis of unity, program of action, and active and dedicated members are of course the building blocks of any coalition. But our experience with both national and provincial coalitions shows that member organizations pitching in from their own limited resources can only go so far. Almost all coalitions that have been able to gain ground have had substantial support from external sources and many otherwise worthy coalitions have disbanded or faltered because of the lack of resources.

A case in point is the Kilusang Kasarinlan sa Pagkain (KSP), a national multi-sectoral food security coalition which was at the forefront of the campaign last year during the height of the rice crisis. The major stumbling block to the plans of the KSP to pursue its campaign for ensuring food sovereignty, sustainable agriculture and food security has been the lack of resources.

We are fully aware that we cannot forever rely on external funding but it seems that such support is at this time necessary for coalitions to fully take-off.

There are other important considerations in coalition building which have already been discussed elsewhere. These include (a) the importance of the human touch or the inter-personal relations between the coalition leaders, (b) the role of coalition builders (leaders and staff) who are a crucial factor in the dynamics and the direction of coalitions, and (c) the importance of maintaining a sense of humor and a creative mind.

Going back over what I have said, there might be a misimpression that coalition building is as easy and enjoyable as it is crucial for empowerment and development. This is not what I wish to say. In fact, I think we are discussing here the best practices of coalition building because we all know that these best practices are very difficult to undertake.

I am sure that, given the tradition of struggle of our PO-NGO community, we look upon this difficult and challenging path as just that — a challenge for all of us. It is a challenge that we all have to take up. The economic and political elite in our country and all over the world are continuously strengthening their unity on the agenda of neo-liberalism as exemplified by the GATT/WTO and the liberalization/de-regulation programs.

We must also strengthen our unity in advocating for our alternative. We must continue to journey on the difficult path of coalition building toward justice, democracy and development.



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## Maximizing the Partnership with LGUs

CESAR D. LIPORADA

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held at the Manila Galleria Suites, Ortigas, Pasig, December 8, 1995*

### Highlights of NGO/PO Participation in Local Governance

#### INTRODUCTION

At the onset, this paper does not claim to present the collective efforts of the NGO/PO community. The efforts of the "civil society" adherents are far more numerous and definitely encompassing. This only presents the highlights and trends based on the experiences of:

(a) the **Caucus of Development NGO Networks** (CODE-NGO), particularly through its member networks actively involved in local governance, namely, the *Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas* (PhilDHRRA), the Association of Foundations (AF), and the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP); and

(b) the NGO-PO counterpart of the Philippine Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) which is actively engaged in pushing for policy reforms related to sustainable development. PCSD is chaired by the Green Forum, with secretariat support provided by the Philippine Institute for Alternative Future (PIAF). Actively involved in PCSD are Convergence, WAND, the National Peace Conference and CODE-NGO members.

Both CODE-NGO and PCSD initiated a process for localization of their ranks. For CODE-NGO, its regionalization plan involves the eventual phasing in of provincial networks as its members in lieu of the existing 13 national network-members. Towards this end, it supported the strengthening of provincial networks of NGO/POs and targeted that its general assembly be composed of the provincial coalitions by 1997. For the PCSD, a parallel nationwide consultation to the Philippine Agenda 21 was undertaken. A highlight of the consultations include the strengthening of existing local formations to support sustainable development and the feedback-feed forward mechanism to integrate all NGO/PO initiatives at any level (i.e. local, regional, national)

The Local Government Code is perceived in the context of a whole set of laws, policies and programs of government which promotes people empowerment and sustainable development.

Included among the laws and policies are:

1. The Cooperative Code of the Philippines (RA6938)
2. The Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (6657)
3. Magna Carta for Small Farmers (RA 7606)
4. Magna Carta for Countryside Development (Kalakalan 20 or RA 6810).



Included among the national programs of government are:

1. The Social Reform Agenda (SRA)
2. Human and Ecological Security (HES)
3. Philippine Agenda 21 and the localization of the Philippine Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD)
4. Various Councils such as the Philippine Council for Countryside Development, the Philippine Council to Fight Poverty and the Philippine Council for the Urban Poor.

The participation of NGOs/POs in local governance may be said to involve (a) the enhancement and promotion of the aforementioned initiatives of the state, including the promotion of participation as mandated in the LGC; (b) the advocacy for laws which are not yet there, such as the Fisheries Code, the Land Use Code, the Ancestral Domain Law and the Forestry Law, and (c) the advocacy for laws and programs which may result in adverse effects on the basic sectors, such as the GATT/WTO and the Philippine thrust for the promotion of growth centers in conjunction with NICHood.

#### **Contributions of NGOs/POs to Local Governance**

The following undertakings were initiated by the NGOs/POs. They were started within the first three years of the implementation of the Local Government Code of 1991 or R.A. 7130. They reflect the importance of advocacy work coupled with sufficient understanding of the LGC and skills in strategic planning and management. They likewise reflect the myriad forms with which NGOs/POs partake in the management of public interest.

##### ***A. Advocacy work through provincial networks and individual NGO/PO initiatives:***

At least 42 NGO/PO provincial networks out of the 77 provinces sustained their development agenda through advocacy work in the various local special bodies and other special bodies created by LGUs.

Examples of successful initiatives are:

- The Fisherfolks Federation of Bohol, with the assistance of PROCESS Foundation, was able to prepare a fisherfolk medium term plan and successfully advocated for the creation of a multi-sectoral body and an ordinance on Coastal Resource Management.
- The Coalition for Social Development Organizations in South Cotabato (CSDO-SC) is an influential member of the Technical Working Group for the Protected Area Management of Mt. Matutum Integrated Conservation Area Development Program (MICADEV) and of the Area Development Program for South Cotabato, Sarangani and General Santos (SOCSARGEN). It provides consultancy services to municipal governments specially regarding integrated area management and sustainable development.
- In Negros Oriental, the Negros NGO/PO Network (NEGONET) was able to forge an alliance with the provincial chapter of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines (LMP) known as the Negros Alliance for Sustainable Development (NASUD).



### ***B. Provision of Consultancy Services for LGUs***

NGOs provided their expertise and time to provide technical services to LGUs at the provincial, municipal and barangay levels:

- In Albay, the Rural Systems Development Foundation was consultant to and conducted an Organizational Development (OD) intervention for the provincial government.
- In Romblon and Guimaras, the Evelio B. Javier Foundation assisted the LGUs come out with integrated area plans and enhanced the relationship between the LGUs and the local NGO/PO coalitions.
- In tandem with the DILG, the Camarines Sur Development Network of NGOs/POs (CADENET) conducted a series of LGU planning sessions and Lakbay Aral (for coastal municipalities) sessions leading to the enhancement of skills and strong partnership between LGUs and POs.
- The Iloilo Caucus of Development NGOs (Iloilo CODE) is undertaking an integrated area development program for the municipality of Battad in close coordination with the LGU.
- In Antique, the ANIAD Foundation, in collaboration with the Antique Federation of NGOs/POs (AFON), is implementing a province-wide integrated area development program.
- The Cullion Foundation Inc., a subsidiary of the Anscor Foundation assisted the Cullion officials in setting up their systems and procedures and in coming out with their Local Development Plan framework. Cullion is a new municipality in Palawan.
- The PRODEM program, a consortium of the Association of Foundations, the Evelio B. Javier Foundation, Ayala Foundation and the Center for Community Transformation is implemented in Cebu, Misamis Oriental and Laguna. The program includes strengthening the capacities of three municipalities per province along business, NGO/PO municipal formations, and local public administration.
- The Governance and Local Democracy (GOLD) program jointly undertaken by PhilDHRRA, PBSP, Evelio B. Javier Foundation and CODE-NGO supports the strengthening of the Leagues of provinces, cities and municipalities and capability enhancement in 10 provinces and cities.
- In Baguio, because of pressure from a broad based coalition of the citizenry, the city government stopped the awarding of the contract for the development of Camp John Hay to a multinational corporation. The city instead recommended the development of an acceptable blueprint for the area to be awarded later.

### ***C. Collaborative Efforts with LGUs***

Out of the 40 Galing Pook awardees during the 1994-95 season, 90% or 36 have very strong people participation component; with at least 5 being initiated by NGOs.



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- LGUs which adopted a strong stand for people participation have been the more progressive ones: Naga City, Puerto Princesa, Negros Oriental, South Cotabato.
  - LGUs which exercise their creativity beyond the provisions of the LGC, but within the purview of the corporate powers of LGUs have likewise been more successful: Bohol, Palawan, Bulacan

This highlights the adage put forward by Robert Putnam that the "*determinant of success... of democratic governments lies in civic matters*" or social capital.

#### ***D. Critique of Government Programs***

The SRA, HES and Agenda 21 programs of government, while interconnected are not coherent and integrated at the national level. This results in confusion at the local levels.

Further, the operating mechanisms for the implementation of the social reform programs are not yet in place at the LGU levels. Despite enabling orders to do so, local governments still stick to their respective programs and budgets based on their own priorities and plans.

The programs do not have legitimacy in terms of congressional action. They may follow the footsteps of the pet programs of previous administrations, such as the Ministry of Human Settlements-KKK program of Mr. Marcos and the Department of Agriculture-Agricultural and Fisheries Councils (DA-AFCs) and Department of Trade-Peoples Economic Council (DTI-PECs) of former President Aquino. These programs have faltered after the president's terms.

With respect to the implementation of GATT safety nets and measures to promote growth centers, most NGOs/POs are concerned that the benefits may not trickle down to the vulnerable sectors of the community. This implies ensuring that the provision of safety nets consider both:

- Food security as an integral part of the LGU function i.e., first task is to ensure self-sufficiency.
- Further streamlining the LGU bureaucracy to ascertain the participation of people as stakeholders.

#### ***Recommendations for the LGC***

The following are proposed activities and amendments to the LGC based on the experiences of NGOs/POs:

1. Inclusion of a local special body on sustainable development.
2. Policy review on the integration of nationally initiated programs and laws pertinent to people empowerment and sustainable development with the LGU operations and the corresponding revisions in the LGC based on the review.
3. Study on the present and potential effects of the GATT/WTO and the NICHood thrust of the national government and the inclusion of proposed safety nets with the LGU as the focal point.





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## Status of NGO/PO Provincial Networks

### I. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

#### A. Rise of Provincial Sectoral Formations

The formation of provincial federations started with the cooperative sector way back in the late 60's with the provincial cooperative unions (PCUs). This was followed in the 70s by government-led sectoral formations such as the Irrigators Associations (ISAs), the provincial federations of Kilusang Bayans and Samahang Nayons.

After the EDSA Revolution in February 1986, NGOs mushroomed nationwide, with an estimated strength of 20,000 of various persuasions. The reason for the proliferation include, among others, the increased flow of resources from donors to the NGO sector, the increasing credibility of the sector in its grassroots initiative and the desire to continue the work for change. (Aldaba)

During this time, multi-sectoral provincial alliances among NGOs and POs also gained momentum. This paralleled the organization of the Peoples' Economic Councils (PECs), and the Fisheries and Aquatic Councils (FACs) organized by the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Agriculture.

#### B. The First Multi-Sectoral Provincial Coalitions

The Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) was among the first national networks to initiate provincial level coalition building. With its Provincial Development Foundation (PDF) project in 1987, it piloted the strengthening of a foundation each for eight provinces to think from a provincial perspective.

In contrast to the traditional NGO approach of pilot projects, the PDF ushered in the view that development must be seen from the perspective of the NGO's contribution to provincial development. The PDF approach led to the shift in NGO work from pilot projects to programs and the concept of provincial strategic management. The PDF was followed by another PBSP project called PRONET implemented in Ilocos Sur, Southern Leyte, Antique and Davao among others.

In 1987-88, the first provincial alliances were initiated in Panay Island (particularly in Antique), Negros Occidental and in Benguet province. Similar initiatives were started in Bohol in 1990 and in Palawan in 1991.

#### C. Disaster-related Formations

The series of calamities that hit the country from 1990 to 1991 also led to the formation of coalitions of NGOs/POs. The Baguio-Benguet NGO Congress was an ad hoc coalition designed to "make a better Baguio and Benguet" than before the earthquake. The Nagkakaisang NGO ng Zambales at Olongapo (NNZO) was formed to initially cope with the effects of the Mt. Pinatubo eruption. The Ormoc tidal wave led to joint efforts of local based NGOs with the inter-Agency Network for Disaster Response (IANDAR) and the Corporated Network for Disaster Pespone (CNDR). These



formations paralleled and took on the NGO counterpart of the government's provincial disaster coordinating councils.

#### **D. Association of Foundations and CONVERGENCE**

With fund support from the PCHRD the initiatives at provincial network development were sustained between 1990 to 1991 through the Association of Foundations (AF) which led to the provincial formations in Zambales, La Union, Tarlac, Pampanga Quezon and Laguna.

The community centered area development approach (CCAD) to provincial network development was initiated by CONVERGENCE in 1991 in the provinces of Region 3, parts of Region 3, parts of Regions 4 and 5 and several other provinces in Mindanao (South Cotabato, Zamboanga del Sur, North Cotabato, Davao del Sur, Agusan and Surigao del Norte).

#### **E. Nationwide Consultation on the Local Government Code**

With the implementation of the Local Government Code (LGC), the NGOs and POs were provided the legal mandate to participate in local governance specially through the local special bodies such as the local development council. With the launching of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the LGC in February 1992, the Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO) positioned itself to collaborate with the efforts at decentralization.

However, it was through the initiative of the Association of Foundations that the formation of provincial NGO/PO coalitions was given the impetus.

The AF project entitled "Nationwide Mechanism for NGO/PO Selection and Representation in Local Special Bodies" aimed to launch an information campaign on the Code, list existing NGOs and POs and provide a mechanism for accreditation and selection.

It was supported through the NGO component of the USAID-Local Development Assistance Program (LDAP) managed by PBSP.

Through the initiative of local based NGOs and the concerted support of CODE-NGO members and 7 other national networks of NGOs, the regional consultations led to the conduct of provincial consultations and the formation of NGO/PO coalitions in at least 53 of the 76 provinces. It also led to the formation of the National Coordinating Council for Local Governance (NCC-LG) which was active until 1994.

#### **F. PhilDHRRA's Provincial Strategic Development Program**

The gains at provincial networking was eventually followed through by several NGOs. Among the major projects are the Provincial Strategic Development Program (PSDP) of PhilDRRA for Camarines Sur, Negros Oriental, Iloilo and South Cotabato and expanded to include Bohol, Leyte, Davao del Sur and Bukidnon. In 1996, additional provinces were taken on (Palawan, Bulacan, Nueva Vizcaya, Capiz, Cotabato, Lanao del Norte and Sarangani) through the USAID-Governance in Local Democracy Project (GOLD) project.



Other projects include the support for Tawi-Tawi, Basilan and Zamboanga del Sur by the Private Agencies Collaborating Together (PACT) and the ISLA Project of Evelio B. Javier Foundation (EBJF) in Romblon and Guimaras. The PRODEM project of the consortium of the Ayala Foundation, AF and EBJF in Cebu, Laguna and Misamis Oriental, and the PCHRD supported efforts for provincial and regional network strengthening for Regions 1, 3 and 5 for Luzon, all the 16 provinces of the Visayas, and MINCODE for Mindanao.

With the thrust of CODE-NGO for localization, the various provincial networks are expected to be harmonized first at the regional level then at the area and finally at a national level.

## II. STATUS OF PROVINCIAL COALITIONS

### A. National Perspective

There are 77 provinces (including the split between Kalinga Apayao), 65 cities, 1450 municipalities and more than 40,000 barangays. In contrast there are some 65,000 NGOs/POs, estimated at 35,000 cooperatives 20,000 POs and 10,000 NGOs.

After the 1992 consultation process conducted on the LGC, 53 provincial coalitions were formed. In 1995, the number rose to 70, with 50 active, and 7 inactive while the status of 13 others needs verification. Formations were not recorded for 7 provinces.

#### *Status of Provincial NGO/PO Coalitions By Area*

Area	No. of Prov.	Status* 1992	Status 1995				
			Total	Active	Inactive	Unverified	None
LUZ	38	24	34	24	4	6	4
VIS	16	13	16	16			
MIN	23	16	20	10	3	7	3
NAT'L	77	53	70	50	7	13	7

- National NGO-PO Conference on Local Governance  
National Coordinating Council on Local Governance, Dec. 1992

### B. Luzon

Luzon has a total of 6 regions excluding Metro Manila. It is composed of 38 provinces and 22 cities. If NCR is considered one province, the number of provinces in Luzon is equivalent to the number of provinces of the Visayas (16) and Mindanao (23) combined.



**Status of Provincial NGO/PO Networks by Region**

Region	With Provincial Networks			Without
	Active	Inactive	Unverified	
Reg. I	La Union Ilocos Sur/Norte Pangasinan			
Reg. II	Isabela (Coops) Cagayan (Coops) Nueva Vizcaya Bataanes (PO)		Quirino	
Region III	Zambales Tarlac Pampanga Bataan Bulacan N. Ecija			
Reg. IV.	Palawan Mindoro Oriental Marinduque Rizal (Coop)	Batangas	Laguna Mindoro Occidental Quezon	Aurora Cavite Romblon
Reg. V	Camarines Sur Sorsogon	C. Norte	Albay Catanduanes	Masbate
CAR	Abra Benguet Mt. Province (Coops) Ifugao		Kalinga Apayao	

The NGO/PO provincial coalitions for Luzon are active in Regions I and III which have both their regional chapters. The coalitions in Benguet and the rest of the Cordilleras are primarily peoples movements and cooperatives. The same may be said of Region 2 which have a very strong cooperative federation.

The POs of Laguna, Batangas, Quezon are active but lack a province wide multi-sectoral network. An exception is Quezon which has a very strong provincial cooperative federation.

Only the provincial coalitions for Camarines and Sorsogon are active for Region V. Nonetheless, the Caucus for BICOL Development was organized in 1994 with its members as the local counterparts of the CODE-NGO affiliates.



The major concerns of the provincial coalitions by region are:

- Region I: Agrarian reform, coastal resource management, politics, livelihood, prostitution
- Region II: Illegal logging, politics, agrarian reform, livelihood.
- Region III: Relief, rehabilitation and rebuilding from Mt. Pinatubo eruption, agrarian reform, politics, coastal resource management, pollution and denudation, prostitution
- Region IV: Displacement from CALABARZON, pollution, illegal logging, coastal resource management, agrarian reform, and livelihood.
- Region V: Agrarian reform, coastal resource management, livelihood.
- Region CAR: Ancestral domain, illegal logging, denudation and pollution (mining companies) and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples, livelihood.

### **C. Visayas**

The Visayas has three regions (16 provinces and 20 cities), corresponding to the three major island groupings:

- Region VI: Panay Islands, composed of Aklan, Antique, Iloilo, Capiz and Guimaras, together with Negros Occidental
- Region VII: the islands of Cebu, Bohol, Siquijor and Negros Oriental
- Region VIII - the islands of Samar (Eastern, Western and Northern Samar), Leyte (Leyte and Southern Leyte), and Biliran.

All the 16 provinces have active provincial coalitions comprising the Visayas Network of Development NGOs (VISNET) which was organized in October 1993. Also, a regionwide coalition was set up among the provinces comprising Panay Island and Guimaras earlier.

The Provincial Federation of Cooperatives are also strong in the Visayas, under the stewardship of the Visayas Cooperative Development Center (VICTO), and affiliate of NATTCO and PhilDHRRRA. It has provincial chapters in most of the provinces.

The major concerns for Visayas are land reform, coastal resource management, denudation and ecology.

### **D. Mindanao**

Mindanao is composed of 6 regions, including ARMM, with a total of 23 provinces and 16 cities. The regions were regrouped after the creation of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao and the passage of R.A. 7901 in July 25,



1994 creating Region 13 (Caraga Administrative Region), composed of the provinces of Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur and the cities of Butuan and Surigao. With this act, the province of Sultan Kudarat was also transferred to Region 11.

The Mindanao Caucus of Development NGOs (MINCODE) was initiated in 1991 as a Mindanao-wide organization composed of CODE-NGO members. Towards 1996, it geared up for the strengthening of provincial coalitions. The Lanao Development Network supports the formation of provincial coalitions among the provinces around Lanao Lake-Zamboanga del Sur and Norte, Lanao del Sur and Misamis Oriental (ZALAMO).

**Status of Provincial NGO/PO Networks by Region**

Region	With Provincial Networks			Without
	Active	Inactive	Unverified	
Reg. IX	Basilan Zamboanga Sur	Zamboanga N.		
Reg. X	Misamis Occ. (Coop)		Agusan N. Bukidnon Misamis Or.	Camiguin
Reg. XI	Davao Norte Davao Sur/City S. Cotabato		Davao Or.	Saranggani
Reg. XII	Lanao Norte Sultan Kudarat	Cotabato		
Reg. XIII		Agusan N.	Surigao N. Surigao S	
ARRM	Maguindanao Tawi-tawi		Lanao S.	Sulu

Major concerns for Mindanao include the rights of indigenous peoples particularly the Lumads and Muslims. Environmental degradation and pollution such as in Lake Lanao, Maria Cristina Falls, and Mt. Matutum, peace and order agrarian reform and autonomy.



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### III. LESSONS AND ISSUES FOR PROVINCIAL NGO/PO COALITIONS

The succeeding insights on the commonalities, variations and issues among provincial NGO/PO networks were drawn from various fora and meetings.

#### A. Commonalities Among Provincial Networks

##### 1. *Recognition of Need for Local Collective Action*

Towards the latter half of the 80s and the 90s, more and more of NGOs are acknowledging that community organizing work at the community level (i.e. barangay) is not enough. Equally important is the establishment of a support mechanism that takes into account and engages both the government and the business sector in the development process. This awareness led to the coming together of NGOs to forge points of unity and collective action in an area context.

##### 2. *Localization and Local Autonomy*

The Local Government Code provided the legal basis for the local government units to assume greater autonomy in terms of power and finances for the development in their respective territories. At the same time, the Code provided the avenues for the NGOs and POs to participate actively in local governance through the local special bodies (LSBs), sectoral representation in the sanggunian and other mechanisms.

Majority of the provincial NGO/PO networks formed is premised on the need for the member NGOs and POs to come up with a common agenda which it may advocate with the local government units.

##### 3. *Commitment to A Common Aspiration*

The points of unity and a common vision for provincial development or network institutionalization or both were arrived at in each of the provincial networks. Around a consensus statement, NGOs and POs come together and create a synergy that goes beyond ideology or a particular issue. Thus while the group may start along sectoral lines such as ecology or ancestral domain, it "graduates" to the promotion of the collective interest.

##### 4. *System for Equity Sharing and Joint Undertaking*

Usually starting from a core group with a lead NGO, provincial networks are evolving towards group action with clear roles and responsibilities for each member. The more sophisticated provincial networks have equity from the members in the form of finances, technology and other resources. Most networks have a table of operations that define functional relationships.



## B. Divergence and Variations

NGO-PO provincial networks vary depending on the local setting. The major considerations are: (a) the number and type of NGOs and POs prevalent in the area, (b) local development concerns, and (c) the availability of resources to support coalition activities.

### 1. *Informal vis-a-vis Formal: Active vis-a-vis Inactive*

Informal networks are ad-hoc in nature and more or less unstructured in its operations. Formal networks are duly registered have their own secretariat and have a set of policies and strategies defining the member responsibilities and roles. Normally, informal networks are seasonal and become active during special events.

The coalitions in Regions 1 and III, Isabela and Cagayan (R-II), Palawan (R-IV) and Camarines Sur (R-V), the provinces of the Visayas (except Siquijor), Basilan and Zamboanga del Sur (R-IX), Misamis Occidental (R-X), South Cotabato, Davao Sur and Norte (R-IX), Sultan Kudarat and Lanao NORte (R-XII), and Maguindanao and Tawi-Tawi (ARMM) are formal and active.

The coalitions in CAR, Nueva Vizcaya (R-II), Mindanao Oriental, Marinduque (R-VI), and Sorsogon (R-V), the provinces around Lake Lanao are examples of either formal but inactive or informal formations. They become activated as the need arises. For instance, the Lubong Salacniban Movement, Inc. in Nueva Vizcaya was re-grouped because of the Casecnan Dam issue and the Coordinating Council of Marinduque was mobilized because of the Marinduque Mine tailing problem.

### 2. *Purely NGO or PO/Co-op Network vis-a-vis Multi-affiliation or Multi-network*

Pure formations of NGOs or POs refer to exclusivity in terms of membership ranks and may be sectoral in orientation. Multi-affiliation refers to membership across sectoral lines and ideological persuasions. Multi-Networks relate to the existence of more than one NGO-PO network within a province.

The Coalition of Social Development Organizations in South Cotabato CSDO-SC is purely NGO in terms of membership.

Co-op provincial federations or unions are in most areas, co-existing or are part of NGO-PO alliances. Where there is limited NGO presence or an inactive NGO-PO provincial network, the co-op federation or sectoral formation assumes functions over their sectoral concerns: Cagayan and Isabela (R-II), Quezon and Rizal (R-IV), Mt. Province (CAR), Misamis Occidental, Davao del Norte, Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur (R-IX), and Cotabato (R-XII).

The formations that are active and formal (above) are mostly multi-affiliation with PO federations spliced neatly with NGOs. The Camarines Sur Development Network of NGOs and POs have 15 NGOs and 15 PO federations among its ranks.

Multi-networks are found mostly in cities or urban centers and may imply a network for the province and a separate one for the city. Because of varied concerns, networks among quasi-business-NGOs exist side by side





with the NGO-PO networks . Interestingly, one or several coalitions within the territory become inactive. This is the case of Baguio-Benguet, Cebu City-Cebu, Bacolod-Negros Occidental, Iloilo City-Iloilo, Roxas City-Capiz, Ilagan City-Lanao del Norte, Cagayan de Oro City-Misamis Oriental, and Davao City-Davao del Sur.

Multi-affiliations and co-op federations co-existing within the same area are in Bulacan, Camarines Sur, Misamis Occidental, Davao del Norte Davao del Sur and Cotabato. In these areas, the co-op federation affairs are independent from the NGO/PO network affairs.

### 3. *The Thematic or Issue vis-a-vis Area Orientation of Functional Committees*

Provincial networks may be clustered according to the committees or task forces formed among the membership. Thematic committees are based on the services of the members and refer to task forces formed around major issues affecting the province such as environment, livelihood/economics, social service. Area-based groupings, on the other hand, relate to the location of the NGO or PO. A third grouping is a mix of both the thematic and the area orientation.

Most provincial networks are thematic in orientation. Examples of them are the networks in Region I (except Pangasinan), II, III, most of the networks in the Visayas and in Mindanao.

The Pangasinan Federation of NGOs is area focused. Its members are four (4) sectors (areas), namely Western, Central and Eastern, Pangasinan and the city sector (Dagupan and San Carlos). Each area is further organized among the 46 municipal associations of NGOs. The PRODEM Project of AF, EBJF and the Ayala Foundation also focus on the formation of municipal networks in Cebu, Misamis Oriental and Laguna.

CADENET is both thematic and area oriented. The NGO-members are divided according to their district of operation. The PO members are clustered according to their sectors, i.e., fishing, agrarian/farming, labor, student and youth. Aside from the thematic clusters, the networks in Negros Oriental, Iloilo and South Cotabato also focused on a municipality as their integrated area development (IAD) site.

## C. **Issues and Constraints**

### 1. *Varying levels of appreciation and commitment*

Members participate in network activities to the degree that the network is meeting their respective organizational needs and objectives. Where the support is found lacking, then they may become inactive. Likewise, their own organizational imperatives, which takes precedent over network matters, should be reckoned with. A member saddled with internal organizational problems like lack of finances and manpower will opt to skip attending network functions.

It also takes a lot of effort to reconcile opposing views of various members. Going beyond issue concerns (which inhibits the unity) towards the broader perspective of social transformation needs a lot of maturity and mutual respect.



## 2. *Sustainability of coordinated advocacy work*

Advocacy work or the coordination of joint programs may be hampered if the necessary logistics to support the initiatives are inadequate. While volunteerism is expected at the initial stages of the endeavor, the degree of commitment will certainly wane and lead to frustration when the backstop support are not provided.

## 3. *Representation of constituency*

Civil Society has come to mean the collective initiatives and experiences of the NGOs, POs, co-ops, sectoral or issue based groups, the academe, the church, civic clubs and other groups concerned with public interest. As a sector it engages the government and the business community towards ensuring that development is sustainable and that the economy is distributive and equitable.

Against such backdrop the NGO/PO networks formed are confronted with the issue of constituency representation and critical mass. Most provincial networks are composed of around 30 NGOs and POs while the rest of civil society or the communities number around 1,000 within a province. Apparently a lot of work still have to be done on integrating the various players in development so that the networks could claim that they have the mandate among the ranks of civil society advocates in the same manner that local officials are elected by the people.

## 4. *Effectiveness of engagement with government and business*

Influencing government towards a desired direction requires skills in effective lobbying and negotiations, at the minimum. This implies an understanding and appreciation of the language of government, i.e. the local public administration processes.

In the same vein, influencing business to think in terms of distributive economy shall require a new set of skills anchored on business. This calls for imbibing the business person's corporate management techniques and styles, aggressiveness in finding or generating funds, and addressing the needs of the market, i.e., the basic sectors and the communities.

## **IV. TRENDS AND PROSPECTS FOR NETWORK MANAGEMENT**

### **A. TRENDS**

The landscape for the next two decades up to the year 2020 depends on how far the civil society is able to influence both the government and the business sectors to think and act in ways that are sustainable and for the public interest. What is clear, perhaps, are the following:

#### 1. *Enbancing Factors*

Localization and empowerment are spelled out in terms of further devolution and democratization. The Local Government Code and other empowerment laws and policies do provide a healthy climate for NGOs and POs to



prosper and come together. Documentation of successful initiatives among the government, the private and the civil society sectors show that harmony may be achieved towards sustainable and people centered development.

The level of NGO and PO work and networking efforts are reaching a sophistication whereby NGOs/POs employ both learnings from government and the business community. This includes an appreciation and application of the intricacies of politics and public administration, and the efficiency and sense of urgency of business.

Continued development of technology and communications anchored on alternative sources of energy is expected. This implies that business groups and government at the provincial, city and municipal levels are eventually being computerized and interconnected through inter-net. This same trend is foreseen among NGOs and POs. Access for information and teaching-learning on a global scale would speed up the process of awareness creation.

## *2. Inhibiting Factors*

The further influence of the growth centered paradigm localized in terms of GATT and NICHood shall impact on enabling the cities to become the center of trade, commerce and technology and the municipalities as raw materials source. The possibility for wealth to continue, to be controlled by the elite in the business and government worlds may imply the further displacement of the POs and the basic sectors of fishers, farmers, indigenous communities, labor, urban poor and special groups such as women children and elderly.

Traditional policies are still a major deterrent to democratization and empowerment. Governance or the mandate to use power still rests on the limited few who have the resources to win elections and push for policy recommendations that are self-serving.

The formal educational system is still geared towards preparing the youth for employment in traditional companies that reinforce the accumulation of wealth. It is not yet responsive to the need for skills that promote distributive economy (i.e, people centered) through self-reliance cooperative ventures and entrepreneurship. This may result in further reinforcement of the traditional values for profit-making (in contrast to promotion of public interest) among the leaders of the future.

## **B. Prospects and Implications**

The reinforcing and inhibiting factors point out to three major directions for provincial NGO/PO networks in particular and civil society in general, if they have to respond to the development challenge.

### *1. Economies of Scale*

The ranks of civil society should be strengthened in terms of membership expansion and inter-network coordination. At this stage when NGO/PO networks are still in their infancy and struggling to survive, they can learn from one another. At the same time, their strength in numbers should bring home the message that the civic sector means business. A major concern is the further localization of the provincial networking-building efforts at the municipal level and integration of efforts with other provincial networks at the regional level.



## 2. *Common Inter-Province Development Agenda*

The provincial NGO/PO networks are primarily concerned with local issues that affect them in a more or less parochial manner. On the other hand, national and regional formations defined their directions on a macro scale, at the expense of setting aside local concerns. A common thread must be forged among provincial networks and between provincial networks and their regional and national counterparts. This implies defining the roles of each network level towards one common goal. This shall permit advocacy and engagement and work at parallel fronts.

## 3. *Relentless Advocacy and Engagement Work*

Continuing empowerment of the basic sectors and advocacy with government and the business community should lead to institutionalization of a positive climate for social transformation in all facets of community life. This implies participatory democracy and government replacing elite democracy: social corporate responsibility for the business sector over purely economic growth; and justice and equity in favor of the development of a select few.

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## Tools of Policy Influence

**PERCIVAL CHAVEZ**

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The journey to change is inevitable. The only question is what direction to take. Influencing policies to create a just, humane and democratic society is the fundamental imperative of such endeavor.

**DEFINITION:**

1. Policy influence, more than the mere formulation of policy or an enactment of legislation, involves an assessment of the actual change in practice that a formal policy change has effected.
2. There are two phases involved when we speak of policy influence:

First is the actual formulation of policy whether through the action of the legislative, executive or judicial branches of government.

Second is the actual change in practice that a formal policy change has effected particularly on government or the people.

3. Some indicators of policy influence are:
  - a. Legislation
  - b. Membership, representation or direct participation in policy making bodies
  - c. Changes in legal practice and judicial decisions
  - d. Participation in local government
  - e. Improved organizational capabilities for policy advocacy
  - f. Improvement in the lives of the people (marginalized sector)
4. Lessons Learned (ULRTF experience)

"Pressure from below (grassroot-groundswell support) to effect creative response from the top."

This was the strategic feature of the UDHA campaign - an effective combination of horizontal organizing (coalition building, organizing, networking among urban poor groups, etc) and vertical lobbying (working with and through power brokers, secretariats, personal contacts and influential and credible personalities.

- a. Historical context and political milieu



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The restoration of formally democratic, albeit still largely elitist institutions opened new avenues for social reform which the popular groups are just now learning to explore and utilize.

The general weakness of political parties and instability of the alliances among the political elite provided opportunities for gaining support from traditional politicians and powerbrokers.

The closeness of the UDHA's lobby to the next national elections coupled with the fluidity of political alignments made the politicians in Congress particularly sensitive, if not vulnerable to, popular pressure.

b. Role of powerbrokers and decision makers

UDHA bill was rated 15th on President Aquino's list of 20 legislative proposals to be enacted.

Moved by what happened in Sitio Kumunoy, Jaime Cardinal Sin called on legislators to heed the constitutional mandate to give highest priority to the passage of an urban land reform law.

BBC played an important role in facilitating the flow of information between the UPOs and NGOs on one side and government on the other.

c. Research and technical work

Having NGOs which had the required expertise in the urban land reform issue and legal resource centers with the know-how in legal formulations, was a strength of the ULRTF.

d. Popular & efficient communications

The NGOs then acted mainly as technical translators and intermediaries and took care of the follow-through activities. The UPOs, on the other hand, were in control of the mobilizable forces.

e. Managing opposition (internal & external)

Meetings with CREBA through the BBC forum was crucial in allowing for middle ground reformulation of crucial provisions.

Coalition dynamics with other urban poor sector federations have to be handled through discussions and assessments.

f. Use of mainstream media

The ULRTF decided to downplay the issue in media so that it could focus more on the lobbying process rather than on parrying the blows of the opposition (since public sympathy is clearly not on the side of the urban poor).



g. Allies and friends in government

The role of government allies and friends especially within the committee secretariats and various government agencies played a crucial role in information and strategy exchange.

h. Sectoral organizing and coalition building

Local campaigns in communities and continuous coalition building among other urban poor groups played a vital role in developing grassroots support.

i. Networking with professionals or experts whose fields of specialization are related to the issue being addressed by the policies

The urban planners, lawyers, architects and other professionals provided valuable technical inputs that were incorporated in the bill.

5. Woes of UDHA implementation

- a. Lack of an enforcing body at the cabinet level
- b. Funding
- c. Political unwillingness
- d. Technical inadequacy/incompetence



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## Effective Advocacy: Balancing the Interests of Grassroots Constituencies, Government and other Stakeholders

MARLENE GATPATAN

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Balancing the interests of grassroots constituencies, government, and other stakeholders is perhaps one of the most difficult challenges of democratic participation.

I must admit that I found the topic difficult and a bit tricky. You see, there are two ways of looking at the issue of balancing interests: One is to look at it from the view of accommodating varied and oftentimes conflicting interests. The other one is looking at balancing interests from the view of levelling the playing field thereby putting enough weight on the scale (which is more often than not tilted in favor of the few who are powerful) so that the scale is balanced at the very least or tilts in favor of the marginalized at the most.

If one is going to look at balance from the point of view of accommodating varied and conflicting interests, then in the case of the urban poor, it is a question of balancing private property rights versus shelter rights; the issue of land for housing versus land for industry, environmental preservation and food security; the issue of the need to demolish squatter shanties for infrastructure development versus the need of the urban poor to be part of the urban economy and to be near their place of work; the issue of land as a limited commodity affordable only to the highest bidder versus land for the housing needs of the urban poor; economic reforms versus social reforms; common good versus community interest.

Ideally, these issues should not be in conflict with one another. But in a country where resources are scarce and where the socio-economic and cultural rights of the poor are not fully recognized, these issues and needs often come in conflict with each other and result in the tilting of the balancing scale in favor of those in command of state affairs and market operations.

As one author points out, "Ours is a world of inequity, of massive exclusion on the grounds of color, nationality, class, gender, ethnicity and all sorts of human bias. It is a world where resources and decisions are monopolized by a few while millions of souls are hardly able to control the events and processes shaping their everyday lives."

In such a world, perhaps it is not our imperative to strike the balance. More often, in the marketplace of competing interests, the interests of the powerful are well packaged and more saleable. So perhaps balancing the interests may not be the question. Rather the question should be how do we tip the balance in favor of the marginalized group?

Either way we look at it, the experience of the urban poor sector shows that this is not an easy task. The issues of shelter and urban development have many stakeholders; there is the urban poor sector, the government, the private developers, the NGOs and the other sectors at large. Our experience in lobbying for the passage of the Urban Development and Housing Act and the current urban poor agenda showed that in order for our advocacy work to





be effective, we have to strike a balance between competing interests in the socio-economic and political arena of these different stakeholders.

How do you do effective advocacy and at the same time balance the interests of the different stakeholders?

- 1) *Formulate your policy agenda and mainstream it. Bring it into the open market of ideas.*

In the case of the lobby for the Urban Development and Housing Act, it took several years for the idea to flourish and sink into the consciousness of the government, the private developers and even the urban poor themselves. However, we can attest to the efforts of BBC to mainstream the concept of urban land reform and urban development beginning even with introducing it to our Constitution. The BBC was instrumental in projecting urban land reform not just as a slogan from cause-oriented groups but more as a valid and seriously thought out reform agenda enjoying the support of important sectors including the Church and some businessmen. Without this effort, UDHA would have been looked at as a class legislation favoring only a single sector.

- 2) *The arguments for your policy agenda should be well researched and thought out.*

Arguments should not only be on the emotional or propaganda level. In our campaign for the repeal of PD 772, we had to arm ourselves with the social, legal, and moral arguments for the repeal of PD 772 so much so that when the time to push for support came, we were ready. The event during the Anti-Poverty Summit was just the highlight of our campaign but the hard work included serious research and packaging of the arguments. The arguments included the assurance to the property owners that there are enough civil laws to protect their property rights and that by repealing PD 772 we are not legalizing squatting but only removing the stigma of criminality on the people who are victims of society's inequities. At some point, even Secretary Ruben Torres was defending the President's decision to repeal the law in media. The support of the President was highlighted when he included the agenda in his state of the nation address.

- 3) *Seek constant dialogue with the stakeholders and oppositions.*

In the UDHA lobbying, dialogues with the opposition, specifically CREBA, was done allowing for "middle ground" reformulation of crucial provisions. Privately owned lands became last in priority for socialized housing and they were given the tax incentives that they wanted for as long as they increased the housing stock in the country.

- 4) *Process your positions with your constituencies and stick to your non-negotiables but know when to stop pushing for a proposal or issue that is clearly going to lead to an impasse.*

Sometimes in negotiations with government during demolition cases, we come across demands from the sector which realistically are also impossible to grant. A case in point is Sta. Clara, Batangas.

Perhaps the most strategic feature of the UDHA campaign was the effective combination of horizontal organizing (coalition-building, networking, building pressure from below) and vertical lobbying (working through powerbrokers, influential people who had sympathy for the urban poor). We did not come out with a perfect law but a realistic appreciation of limited gains given actual political realities. A positive attitude oriented towards maximizing gains already made, helped the Urban Land Reform Task Force appreciate the necessity of balancing interests, and making compromises as part of the dynamics of negotiations and policy reforms.



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## **Effective Advocacy: Balancing the Interests of Grassroots Constituencies, Government and Other Stakeholders**

**LARRY MANAOG**

*National Coalition of Fisherfolk for Aquatic Reform (NACFAR)*

### **FASAR Objectives:**

Increase the effectiveness of NACFAR and its coalition partners to represent the legitimate interests of its fisherfolk constituents in advancing sustainable aquatic reform at all levels.

### **FASAR Program Components**

1. Advocacy/Lobbying/Coalition-Building
2. Research and data gathering
3. Capability-Building and Institutional Strengthening

### **Highlights of NACFAR's**

Experience in its advocacy for a new Fisheries Code

#### ***A. Advocacy/lobbying/coalition building***

1. Legislative and executive lobbying
  - Sponsorship of the unity bill by Cong. Florencio Abad and Sen. Gloria-Macapagal Arroyo
  - Certification of the Fisheries Code by Malacañang as an urgent bill
  - Attendance of NACFAR lobbyists in all national and local public hearing by both chambers
  - Garnering support for the Unity Bill in the House and Senate
  - May 16, 1996, speaker Jose de Venecia signed a covenant with NACFAR leaders for the immediate passage of the House version within the year
2. Media Liaison Work - engaged tri-media to project fish issue
3. Networking/Coalition-Building with other groups
  - Loose coalition with NGO-TWG, BL



- Networking with the Church and other groups thru dialogs, multisectoral fora, etc.
- Resolution with commercial sector

4. Meta-legal actions - mass campaigns and mobilizations

5. Participative consultations

- 29 local consultations
- 13 sub-regional consultations
- 3 regional consultations
- 1 national consultations

- Generated local position papers for legislature

**B. Research and data gathering**

- Research on positions re: FLA tiling, 15 km. municipal waters FRMCS and others

**C. Trainings on coalition - building, advocacy - national leaders, second line leaders, staff**

**LESSONS**

- After 6 years of advocacy, the Fishery RRMCS has been adopted by almost all the bills proposed
- The move to title publicly-owned fishponds at the House was stopped through vigilance, research, lobbying with legislative/executive
- Project legitimacy of coalitions
- Institutional strength - not only in principles but backed by data and research; mass mobilizations
- Lobbyists coming from the sector itself
- Organizational Creativity
  - consensus building
  - ownership of decision
- We should always have the interest of the sector in our mind -- partisanship



## **Effective Advocacy: Balancing the Interests of Grassroots Constituencies, Government and Other Stakeholders**

**DAVE DE VERA**

*Philippine Association for Intercultural Development (PAFID)*

### **INDIGENOUS PEOPLE**

- At least 12 million
- Considered as the most marginalized sector
- Most ICCs inhabit areas that are classified as part of the public domain (i.e. forest zone, military reservation, school reservation, protected areas)
- Demand recognition of ancestral domain.

### **OTHER STAKEHOLDERS**

- Government
- Business sector
- Migrant farmers
- Others (non-traditional forces)

### **IDEAL SETTING**

- Conservation and protection of the environment as common issue among the major stakeholders. • i.e. consensus that the forest must be protected;
  - The business sector needs it for raw materials and for its other income potential (ex. tourist attraction);
  - The academe needs it for research and further studies;
  - Lowland communities need the watershed to ensure H2O source;
  - The IPs' rely on it for survival;
  - The government relies on it for revenue and others uses
  - The global community depends on it as its CO2 sink.

### **QUESTION OF CONTROL**

- Who has access?
- Who owns the resources?
- Who defines policies?
- Who regulates activities?
- Who has tenure?



- The state invokes its pre-eminence (the Regalian Doctrine);
- Business and other sectors demand equal access and share of the resources;
- The IPs' invoke prior rights and ancestral domain.
- Non-traditional forces invoke their own governance.

### **ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES**

- 200 Kankana-ey families in the Busol watershed in Baguio City have been sued in court for squatting in a restricted area under the control of the Baguio water district;
- Nearly 3,000 families in Tapaz, Capiz, are being driven out of the area since they are within the boundaries of the West Visayas State University school reservation;
- Subanon families in Siocon, Zamboanga. Del Norte, are about to be economically displaced by the mining operations of the Toronto Ventures Inc. (TVI), a Canadian firm recently awarded a permit to operate in the south.
- Tagbanua communities in Busuanga, northern Palawan, are forced out of their traditional grounds due to the pressure of the ever expanding development of tourist resorts.

### **CURRENT MODEL**

- RA 7586 (NIPAS Law) creates an integrated system of managing and conserving protected areas:
  - Promotes inclusivity of all affected sectors through common management of the protected area via a management board (PAMB);
  - Guarantees the representation of local LGU leaders as well as IP leaders in the board (mandated by law);
  - Recognize tenured migrants as well as ancestral domain and traditional resource-use and practices;

### **CURRENT REALITIES**

- The Constitution guarantees the recognition of ancestral domain;
  - The Social Reform Agenda defines it as a flagship target;
  - No law recognizing ancestral domain rights;
  - Limited to a Department Administrative Order (DAO 02) which can be co-terminus with the present dispensation;
- Proposed AD Bill (SB 1476)
  - Faces very, very rough sailing;
  - May be the nth version since the new congress was convened, previous versions authored by Estrada, Rasul, Claver, Andolona did not even reach 1st reading;



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- Current composition of Congress poses a big challenge; House of Whose Representatives?
  - Sectoral representative for IPs' has not been appointed, to this day.
  - Forces which support the IPs' legislative agenda still limited to the Church, NGOs and academe.
  - GO still hasn't shown enough political will.

**IN CONTRAST:**

- Mining Act of 1995
  - Has been enacted to law, was passed rather swiftly; liberalizes the mining industry and allows 100% wholly-owned foreign corporation to operate in the country;
  - At least 67 new financial technical assistance agreements (FTAA) or permits to explore have been filed (two have been approved) with areas ranging from a low of 10,000 hectares to a high of 150,000 hectares;
  - Most, if not all of the FTAA applications are within areas commonly claimed as ancestral domain by indigenous communities.

Balancing interests remains to be an elusive pipe dream!!!!



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## Dealing with the Legislative Process

SHEILA ESPINE

*The Center for Legislative Development*

### INTRODUCTION

In Philippine society, practically all sectors have an organized group: the fisherfolk, the peasants, the workers, the urban poor, the women, the students, and the church. As civil society organizations, they represent various interests that need to be articulated through formal structures and processes of decision-making, and transformed into responsive and gender-fair public policies and programs. In concrete terms, this means organizing popular expression for participation, qualitative change, and development at the level of policy and even politics.

Broadly speaking, one of the challenges of democratic participation is how to ensure a meaningful and productive interaction between the legislature as the formal arena of policy making, and the NGOs and POs as policy advocates. Specifically, we can ask: How should NGOs deal with the legislative process to promote the passage of quality and responsive laws? What strategies can they use to maximize access to the process and create impact on the legislature?

Dealing with or working through the legislative process to transform people's lives is legislative advocacy. To engage in effective legislative advocacy requires two things: **1) understanding of the legislative process, and 2) understanding of the legislative environment.**

### UNDERSTANDING THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Advocacy work requires a clear understanding of the legislative mill or the various stages of law-making. Knowledge of the intricacies of the process, particularly the "critical stages," is necessary so that advocates are able access or participate in the various steps. Critical stages are the **choke points** or levels at which the legislative process may be temporarily stalled or halted. While easy to identify, they may not be easy to declog or decongest. This is especially true at the committee stage where a bill's life or death is initially decided. For committees in our political system, are where the real power for decision-making lie. Another is the Committee on Rules which determines what bills approved by the various committees will move to second reading for floor deliberation and voting.

Likewise, understanding of the legislative process will allow advocates to efficiently monitor the status and progress of bills of interest to their sector, and based on the information gathered, immediately come up with appropriate advocacy strategies. For instance, many of us would assume that after a bill is reported out by the committee, it automatically gets calendared for sponsorship and debate on second reading. This is not a safe assumption. The many competing priorities of Congress affect the decision of the Rules Committee on what measure gets to the floor for deliberation. Often that extra "push" or lobbying effort gets the bill moving, and eventually passed. An example is the successful lobby of the women's groups to prioritize the deliberation of the anti-rape bill over the tax measures in the House of Representatives in the Tenth Congress.



Further, NGOs should realize that the legislative process is not limited to the act of legislation itself but includes the process of policy agenda setting as well. This being the case, NGOs will do well to remember that they can influence and shape the legislative agenda, which serve as the basis of proposed bills and budgetary priorities. Opportunities for this kind of participation are possible through consultation meetings, fora, summits, and the various stages of the legislative process such as committee hearings and plenary action.

In the final analysis, it is the understanding of the legislative process that will serve as a framework for advocates to ensure that the system is open and accessible to all organized sectors in civil society. Consequently, it will be their guide in determining if there is transparency in the policy-making institution that allows for accountability of legislators.

So we ask: have NGOs in the Philippines had access to the legislature and legislators? The answer is yes, but with limited success. The fact that Congress remains to be a haven of traditional politicians makes it difficult for progressive measures such as the log ban bill, anti-ratification of the GATT treaty, the passage of the expanded VAT, and the rape bill to pass. To maximize access to policymakers, NGO advocates should develop a strategic plan of action for advocacy based on an assessment of the legislative environment.

## **UNDERSTANDING THE LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENT**

Legislative advocacy is more than understanding the process of how a bill becomes a law. It involves more than a familiarization with the structures and processes of legislation. It entails some degree of intimacy with the constantly changing legislative environment which has the following essential components--the process, the players and the product.

### *Who are the players?*

They are the diverse people and organized groups within our pluralist society which can have access to and be participants in the legislative process. They are the **advocates and the policy targets or elite**. Advocates include the NGOs, the POs, the business groups, the private voluntary organizations, among others; while policy targets or elite refer to the political party leaders, legislators and their staff.

We can further categorize the policy targets into **entry points, key informants, and access persons**. The entry points are the ones who wield real political power and determines "who gets what, when and how in Congress": the Speaker, the Pro Tempore, the Majority, and the Minority leaders, and the trend setters in voting. Their support will surely put an NGO's advocacy issue on the legislative agenda.

**Access persons**, on the other hand, are those in formal positions of authority such as chairs and vice-chairs of committees and subcommittees, sectoral representatives and those strongly identified with key issues. These persons can be expected to initiate, author, defend and muster floor votes for a bill being pushed by advocacy groups. Thus, advocates must ensure that they are provided reliable and adequate research data and briefed face to face on the issue. The relationship should be mutually beneficial: the Member should also be able to get political mileage from this relationship in terms of winning votes, which basically requires that advocacy groups develop a big, strong national grassroots base that can be mobilized during elections.





In choosing access persons, advocates would do well to begin by profiling the policy targets in Congress. A target's profile may include: the socio-economic class or background, educational training, organizational affiliation: political, religious, and civic performance and voting record on issues. A profile would assist advocates in determining who are possible allies and supporters; and enemies and adversaries of their issues.

**Key informants** in the legislature include the committee secretaries, the Members' technical staff, and their consultants. They hold vital information that could determine the fate of the bill. Committee secretariat, for instance, control the paperwork and by doing so can shape the outcomes of discussions. They schedule hearings, identify participants, prepare briefing papers, document the proceedings, and manage the process in general. It is the committee staff that prepares documents for the committee members such as the summary of positions on a bill presented in matrix form. This is a form of sifting of information or screening that may result in the highlighting of a position at the expense of others.

Finally, it is well worth it to remember that the committee staff provide the necessary continuity to the legislative process. The Members rely on them for information and guidance, especially when they do not participate in all committee meetings.

On the part of NGO legislative advocates, some form of reckoning must also be done, especially with regard to their capability to do and sustain lobby work. This means having clear, well defined goals and objectives with a clear plan of action based on an assessment of their internal strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities and threats of their external environment.

#### *What is the product?*

The product of the legislative process refers to legislation that would favorably impact on the lives of people. It is the desired output of your advocacy efforts in Congress. However, we must note that what is favorable to one group may not be desirable for another. Such is the case because different players and actors involved in the process attempt to pass their own version of a favorable legislation.

For progressive NGOs involved in the advocacy for the debt cap, log ban, VAT, rape, etc. this has meant frustrations. For those NGOs who were part of the lobbying for the urban land reform, the local government code, and the sexual harassment law, the legislative experience was worth the time and energies.

Despite the mixed record, NGOs can safely claim that they were instrumental in elevating the discussion of issues at a policy level and presenting policy alternatives to lawmakers. The impact of advocacy efforts are not immediately visible, but later circumstances can change or public sentiment may shift in your favor resulting in the adoption of an alternative you presented.



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### **Maximizing access and participation in the process**

These are areas where NGOs should prepare themselves to maximize access to and participation in the legislative decision-making process:

1. Advocacy to influence and shape legislative agenda and budgetary priorities
2. Active participation in committee activities by providing expert testimonies in committee hearings, and research and analyses.
3. Efficient and regular monitoring of the status of legislative measures
4. Working with executive departments to draft favorable legislation or progressive rules and regulations
5. Utilizing the media to bring the advocacy issue and message to policymakers, and
6. Broadening alliances within the NGO community and the public.



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## Understanding the Budget Process: Theory and Practice

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The first and most important point to understand in the Philippine budget process is that there is a wide difference between the formal budget rules and current budget practices. The former promotes fiscal discipline; the latter leads to waste and wrong priorities.

### THE BUDGET PROCESS

A full budget cycle has four phases: preparation, legislative authorization, execution, and accountability. The Executive department is primarily responsible for budget preparation and execution, Congress for authorization and the Commission on Audit for accountability. Congress, however, through its oversight powers is also responsible for making sure that taxpayers get their money's worth.

At any one time, the government is looking at three budgets. For example, at the moment, the audit and review of the 1995 budget is ongoing, the 1996 budget is being implemented, while the 1997 budget has been submitted by the President to Congress and is now undergoing review by both the House Appropriations Committee and the Senate Finance Committee.

**Budget preparation:** This phase starts approximately six months before the President's budget is submitted to Congress. For example, the preparation for the 1997 budget started in early January 1996. This suggests that it takes about a year to prepare, submit to Congress, and have the budget finally approved. Let us look at the various activities that led to the submission of the President's budget to Congress. It is typical of other budgets in the past.

<b>Approx. Date</b>	<b>Activities/Notes</b>
<i>January 1996</i>	Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) meets to agree on budget framework. DBCC consists of DBM Secretary (Chair) with DOF Secretary, NEDA Director General and Deputy Governor of BSP as members. They agree on macroeconomic assumptions, overall level of expenditures and size of deficit.
<i>January 1996</i>	Based on DBCC agreements and Cabinet approval, DBM issues the budget call. There is a budget call for national government agencies and separate ones for government corporations and local governments. DBM officials brief agency heads on government budgetary policies for ensuing fiscal year. DBM issues indicative budget ceilings for each department and agency.
<i>January-March 1996</i>	Agency heads conduct budget consultation with clientele and with subordinate bureaus and supervised corporations.



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<i>End March or early April 1996</i>	Agencies submit budget requests to DBM. As a rule, individual agencies submit a higher budgetary request compared to DBM prescribed ceiling.
<i>May-June 1996</i>	DBM evaluates requests, consults with DBCC, and conducts budget hearings.
<i>Late June or early July 1996</i>	DBM consolidates all budget requests, presents the preliminary budget to DBCC and to the Cabinet. At this point some adjustments may be approved by the President.
	President approves the Budget of Expenditures and Sources of Financing (BESF) for preparation by DBM. DBM prepares other budget documents: the Expenditure Program, the Budget Message, Regional Expenditure Program, and the Staffing Summary.
<i>Fourth Monday of July or within 30 days from opening of Congress</i>	President submits the BESF to the Speaker of the House but a similar copy is forwarded to the President of the Senate.

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**Budget Authorization:** This process starts with the receipt of the President's budget and in general takes about 5-6 months to complete. Based on past experience, the following schedule of activities is likely to take place.

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<b>Approx. Date</b>	<b>Activities/Notes</b>
<i>Fourth Monday of July</i>	Speaker of the House receives the BESF. He refers this to the Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations. On the part of the Senate, the budget document is referred to the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance.
<i>Last week of July</i>	Subcommittees are organized by both the House and Senate committees. Oversight agencies — DBM, Finance, NEDA and Bangko Sentral — are heard to evaluate the macroeconomic assumptions and budgetary guidelines used in the preparation of the budget.
<i>August-Sept 1996</i>	Simultaneous hearings will be conducted by both House and Senate finance committees.
<i>Late Sept or early October</i>	House approves the General Appropriations Bill (GAB) on second and third reading. After two weeks of printing, the same is forwarded to the Senate.
<i>October-November 1996</i>	Senate Committee on Finance reviews the GAB.
<i>Early December</i>	Senate proposes amendments to the GAB and subsequently approves the GAB, as amended, on second and third reading.
<i>December 1996</i>	Conference Committee is constituted to discuss the disagreements between the House and the Senate.
<i>Sometime before the Christmas break</i>	Both Houses vote on the conference committee report. The report may not be amended. Legislators may either approve the report in its totality or reject it. The printing of the General Appropriations Act will be rushed.
<i>Before the year ends</i>	President approves the General Appropriations Act. He may or may not exercise line-item veto power.

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The above activities allows intervention on the budget of individual agencies even after the President's budget has been submitted to Congress. It could be done either at the House or the Senate, and if the subject is sensitive, even at the Conference Committee.

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**Budget execution.** After going through the first two phases, the budget is not yet ready for implementation. Agencies have to wait for the release orders — GARO for general programs and SARO for projects and special purpose funds — to be issued by the Budget Department. To make things worse, as a result of the present propensity of the members of Congress to mangle the President's budget in order to accommodate their own 'initiatives', a big chunk of the approved budget ends up being largely alien to the recipient agencies. This requires further work as DBM will not release the authority to spend in the absence of a work and financial program. And in many cases, DBM will not release the spending authority at all. An important lesson is that the budget as approved by Congress is not the real budget — it is what the President and DBM want to release.

**Budget accountability.** This involves internal audit by the concerned agencies and external audit by the Commission on Audit. In general, media, NGOs and almost everyone has a role to play to make sure that public resources are used effectively, frugally and in accordance with the legislative intent.

### **Analysis and recommendations**

There is a wide discrepancy between formal budget rules and current budgetary practices. The formal budget rules include the following: first, Congress may decrease but not increase the budget as submitted by the President and second, the President may exercise line-item veto and still approve the budget after the line-item veto. These two provisions promote fiscal prudence. In practice, lobbying by Executive officials takes place even after the budget has been submitted, Congress increases the budget of the President, and the President fails to exercise his line-item veto power.

There is a strong case for reforming the present budget system; 1.) it leads to overspending; 2.) it lowers the total benefits to be derived from the budget; 3.) it delays project implementation; reduces foreign assistance and distorts financing of the budget by lowering the foreign component; 4.) it does not foster careful budget planning; and 5.) it undermines Congress's power of the purse.

What should constitute as the core of the needed budgetary reforms? I suggest the following. First, Congress should be involved directly in the formulation of the budget framework and priorities. Second, the budget as approved by Congress shall serve as the spending authority. Third, Congress rather than the President shall have the power to embargo appropriations. Fourth, there shall be clear guidelines on the use of special purpose funds such as the Contingent Fund, Calamity Fund, and Organizational Adjustment Fund. Finally, the IRA for local governments should no longer be submitted by the President to Congress for legislative authorization.

### **Concluding remarks**

For the Philippines to sustain its growth momentum, it has to invest heavily in physical infrastructure and human capital formation. But with its low savings rate and widening trade gap, there is increasing pressure for the government to generate a budget surplus. Its surpluses in 1994 and 1995 were artificial in the sense that they were achieved through one-time privatization proceeds and by skimping on needed public investment.

The key to sustainable fiscal balance in the years ahead is the adoption of the set of budget reforms proposed in this paper. Without them, higher taxes will be mindless. It would be a clear case of throwing good money after bad.



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## Framework for Reforming the Budget System

Why fix the present budget system? I can give at least six reasons.

***The present budget system leads to overspending.*** The constitutional budget rules foster fiscal discipline, but the current budget practices don't. For example, the 1996 budget was effectively increased by Congress and the President by P15.0 billion — from P415.6 billion (as requested in the President's Budget of Expenditures and Sources of Financing) to P430.6 billion. Why? Because Congress cut interest payments to finance augmentations and new items in the President's budget and because the President restored the cut on interest payments without vetoing the congressional initiatives. These twin acts, jointly, effectively raised the national government budget by P15.0 billion.

***It lowers the total benefits to be derived from the budget.*** Poorly identified and ill-prepared projects are substituted for more rigorously screened projects. The ideal situation is: (a) for legislators to identify projects before or during the budget preparation phase, that is before the President submits his budget to Congress and (b) for the projects identified by legislators to go through the usual process of review and prioritization.

***It delays project implementation.*** As a result of project substitution, many locally funded projects are delayed. A typical project cycle is time-consuming. It includes identification, budget authorization, preparation of work program, bidding, implementation and review or accountability. For locally funded projects the cycle may range from two years to several years depending on the scope of the project. For foreign-assisted projects, the time spent between project identification and bidding is much longer. Without doubt, project substitution prolongs this process.

***It reduces foreign assistance and alters the financing mix of the budget.*** At the very least, the implementation of foreign assisted projects is delayed because they are replaced by locally funded projects. It also increases the cost of financing the budget as the Treasury has to rely more on domestic financing which is relatively more expensive relative to foreign concessional loans.

***It does not foster careful budget planning.*** The heads of executive agencies do not take budgeting seriously because they know they can lobby for changes in their budget in the House, the Senate and, if more sensitive items are involved, in the powerful conference committee. Failing that, the President and DBM may rearrange the budget as approved by Congress. Depending on the desire of the President, the General Appropriations Act may or may not be implemented to the letter.

***It undermines Congress's power of the purse.*** Under the present system, there is an illusion that Congress exercises enormous power of the purse just because it can rearrange and add spending items to the President's budget. But in reality, the President can undo what Congress has done through his vast power to embargo appropriations and use "savings".

There are many proofs of this vast presidential power. Let me cite two. Proof 1: there was no explicit Congressional imprimatur for the P2.7 billion megadike; yet it was funded and implemented. Proof 2: the congressional initiatives (CIs) of legislators are almost always not funded fully because the Executive through its power of embargo and calibrated releases of funds have adopted a seniority rule for fund releases. Regular programs are the most senior, CIs



the least senior. In effect, while legislators get the flak for the so-called CIs, a large chunk of which will remain unreleased or in some cases, diverted for priority projects identified by the Executive department.

### **Key elements of budget reform package**

So we all know the weaknesses of the present system. Is there a cure and if so, what should it include? It seems reasonable to argue that a permanent solution should include the following features.

***Direct participation of Congress in the formulation of a budget framework.*** At present, the budget framework is driven by the country's IMF program. Congress which is the policy formulating branch of government is not at all involved in setting the macroeconomic parameters and budget priorities. This is clearly one of the major weaknesses of the present budget system. Large, priority upsetting changes in the President's budget through the so-called congressional insertions — GATT fund, poverty alleviation fund, additional public works allocation and so on — may be avoided if only Congress is actively involved in the formulation of a budget framework.

And as the country is preparing to exit from the IMF program, this is the best time to institute the reform. The proposed new arrangement would look like the following. At the beginning of every Congress — that is, every other three years — the President and Congress shall agree, through a Budget Accord, on the framework of the budgets of the national government for the next three years. For example, the new President and Congress who will be elected to office in 1998 will be agreeing on a broad budget framework for fiscal years 1999 to 2001.

The agreements shall be formalized through a joint House-Senate resolution. The Executive and Congress shall agree on the macroeconomic assumptions; size of the deficit; level of domestic and foreign borrowings; sources of financing; priorities; allocation by object, sector, and regional distribution. DBCC shall continue to assist the Executive Department while a joint Development Budget Staff shall be constituted to assist both Houses of Congress.

The annual review by Congress shall focus on deviations from the multi-year budget framework. Through its oversight function, Congress shall monitor the performance of all Executive departments and agencies.

***The budget as approved by Congress shall serve as the spending authority.*** The advantages of this new rule are clear. It will speed up budget implementation since there will be no need for additional release documents of any form prior to execution. The budget as approved by Congress shall serve as the spending authority. This new rule will force all agency heads including those of the oversight agencies like DBM, Department of Finance and NEDA to be serious about budget planning. Lastly, it will make government operations transparent. At the moment, there is a wide difference between what is authorized by Congress as reflected in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) and what is actually authorized by DBM through the release orders (GARO and SARO); and there is a difference between the latter and what is actually implemented by line departments and agencies. By making the GAA as the spending authority, it would be easier for all parties concerned to monitor the implementation of projects.

***Congress shall have the sole power to embargo appropriations.*** What Congress gives, it should be able to take away. Right now, the President has unlimited power to release or to embargo appropriations. The larger the authorized budget relative to actual revenues, the greater the presidential discretion, and the wider the difference between the budget as approved by Congress and actual budget spending.



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But what if there is not enough taxes to finance the budget? Obviously somebody goofed, though the error is rectifiable. If the revenue shortfall is perceived as temporary, then the government can float short-term T-bills. But if the shortfall is deemed permanent — say as a result of the failure of Congress to pass a new tax measure or the failure of economy to grow as planned — then the President shall submit to Congress a proposal to cancel or reduce some items in the approved budget. Congress — not the President — should have the final decision on which authorized appropriations to cut; this is real power of the purse. The proposed new rule penalizes sloppy revenue forecasting and budget improvisation. As a result, the Executive will be constrained to submit to Congress a more realistic budget.

The President may continue to use savings — but only real savings rather than unreleased appropriations — to augment specific items in the budget.

There shall be clear guidelines on the use of special purpose funds such as Contingent Fund, Calamity Fund, and Organizational Adjustment Fund. Outlays for large unforeseen programs and projects should be authorized through separate supplemental budgets.

***The IRA for local governments should no longer be submitted by the President to Congress for legislative authorization.*** This move is consistent with the intent to grant local governments greater autonomy in running their own affairs. The present practice distorts the true distribution of the budget — both by sector and by the share of capital spending.

The inclusion of IRA in the annual budget of the national government does not foster sound fiscal planning by LGUs. Every year, local government officials have to wait for what Congress will do to their share of the IRA before they can formulate their own budget plan for the ensuing year. This remaining instrument of Central government control may be removed by making the IRA automatically appropriated and released.





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## Question and Answer

### **BUDGET RULES, REALITIES AND REFORM**

An interview with Professor Benjamin Diokno, U.P. School of Economics

***Q: What is the economic impact of the present budgetary practices including having the CDF, CIAs and public works allocation per legislator in the budget?***

A: The short answer is that the present budgetary practices lead to overspending on low priority budget items and therefore a waste of scarce public funds. At this time of the nation's life, such behavior is unpardonable.

Let us look at the big picture. The economy's fragile growth depends largely on the country's ability to invest in physical infrastructure, human capital and other productivity-enhancing activities. But where will we get the money? If we rule out foreign borrowings as a means of financing, then we have to look at private sector savings, the excess of exports over imports, and the budget surplus.

But, our savings rate is low—indeed, one of the lowest in Asia. The country's trade gap, the excess of imports over exports, is high and rising. And it could even deteriorate as the developed economies' demand for computers and electronics slows down.

With poor savings rate and widening trade gap, the burden of raising the rate of capital accumulation rests with the national government. It has to continue generating a surplus. But that is difficult to do as the Ramos government is running out of state assets to sell.

So, given the present economic realities, the national government is under heavy pressure to generate a budget surplus. But it is a mistake to assume that higher taxes is the best way of achieving this goal.

***Q: Why is higher taxes not necessarily the best way to reduce the deficit or generate a surplus?***

A: Taxation is a double-edged sword. It means taking away resources from individuals and firms—resources which they could use either to spend or save or invest. The greater good is served depending on how the government will use the taxes. If used in programs and projects which would give a higher social rate of return than when used by individuals and firms, then society would be better off; otherwise, society would be worse off.

***Q: But how important is fiscal discipline in achieving budget balance?***

A: Very important. It is the key to having a sustainable budget surplus. Without it, controlling the deficit without sacrificing physical infrastructure and investment in human capital would be rather difficult.

Q: But do the present budget rules and practices lead to fiscal discipline?



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A: Yes and no. One has to make a distinction between formal rules and actual budget practices. The formal budget rules promote discipline, the current budget practices don't.

Consider the following formal budget rules. Rule one: Congress prepares a General Appropriations Bill (GAB) which should be based on the Budget of Expenditures and Sources of Financing (BESF) as submitted by the President. This means that the House on its own, cannot prepare a bill without the President's submission. Rule two: Congress may decrease but not increase the budget as proposed by the President. A strict interpretation is this rule applies to every budgetary item. A loose interpretation is that it applies to the total budget level. Rule three: The President may approve, veto, or approve with line-item veto the GAB. Once approved, the GAB becomes the new spending authority called General Appropriations Act (GAA). It is clear that the budget rules in the 1987 Constitution, if followed to the letter, would lead to prudent allocation and use of public funds.

***Q: But what is the rationale for restricting the power of Congress to that of cutting the Executive's budget?***

A: Very simple. The Executive is responsible for planning and implementing the programs and projects of the government. The President as Chief Executive is expected to know exactly how much money and personnel he needs to run the government. For example, if the President asks Congress for P300 billion to run his government, it is none of Congress' business to say: "No, you need more—say P325 billion." The real power of the purse is for Congress to approve or disapprove each item in the President's budget request. Since they have the power to tax, Congress should also have the power to allow or disallow each request of the Executive.

***Q: But what happens if indeed the President erred or failed to anticipate some events that may take place between the time he submitted the budget (usually July) and the end of December?***

A: The Executive is allowed to source the unplanned budget items against his discretionary funds. For example, for fiscal year 1996 the President has the Calamity Fund of P2.8 billion, a Contingent Fund of P1 billion, and to take care of new organizations, an Organizational Adjustment Fund of another P1 billion. So, from these three funds alone, the President has at least P4.8 billion to take care of various contingencies. And if that is not enough, then he can ask Congress for a supplemental budget.

***Q: But isn't the process of asking a supplemental budget inconvenient?***

A: First of all, there will be no need for a supplemental budget if there are no major calamities like the Mt. Pinatubo eruptions and the Executive has done its homework. Also, there is an important difference between the pre-martial law Congress and the present Congress. Before martial law, the regular session of Congress was limited to 100 days, while the present Congress is in session the whole year. This means that if the need arises, a request for a supplemental budget or budgets can be filed any time. Without doubt, a supplemental budget is a little bit inconvenient. But that is a small price to pay for the Executive department's failure to plan and budget well.



***Q: Are the formal budget rules as stated in the Constitution generally observed?***

A: Sadly, these rules have been ignored whenever politically expedient. Most legislators feel that budget pruning is not fun. It does not win them votes.

Augmenting the budget through the so-called congressional initiative allocation (CIA) is more in keeping with the politicians' objective of maximizing votes. It would have been less harmful if the legislators would simply reorder the priorities within the same executive department according to some sound economic justification. For example, Congress may reduce the allocation of one program in the DEC's secondary education program and reallocate the same for elementary education. Since the social rate of return on elementary education is higher than secondary education, such realignment is justifiable. The same positive argument could be made for reallocating appropriations from curative health care to preventive health care.

But what is more harmful is when the President's budget is increased by Congress in order to accommodate low priority but highly visible and politically-popular projects (such as purchase of vehicles, waiting sheds, barangay halls, basketball courts or athletic centers, and so on).

***Q: But isn't the augmentation over and above the budget as requested by the President unconstitutional?***

A: It is. But one has to get to the Supreme Court to have the national budget declared unconstitutional. One would expect some members of Congress to initiate that. The harsh reality is that no one has dared challenge the constitutionality of the 1996 budget before the Supreme Court. And that's disappointing. Where have all our lawyers gone?

***Q: Did Congress really increase the 1996 budget as requested by the President?***

A: Yes. No less than the Secretary of Budget and Management admitted that the 1996 budget has been effectively increased by Congress in recent budget hearings in the House.

Let's look at the facts. In 1996, the President asked for a total budget—more accurately, expenditure program—of P415.6 billion. Congress increased the budget as requested by the President. The major increases in billion pesos were:

- a) DPWH - from P31.4 to P40.4, or by P9 billion;
- b) National Defense - from P28.3 to P29.2, or by P900 million;
- c) State universities and colleges - from P8.0 to P8.8, or P800 million;
- d) Health - from P8.8 to P9.3, or by P500 million;
- e) Education, culture and sports - from P47.8 to P48.2, or by P400 million;
- f) Environmental and natural resources - from P4.0 to P4.4, or by P400 million; and
- g) Agriculture - from P2.0 to 2.3, or by P300 million.



In addition, a new fund worth P4.0 billion was introduced, called Poverty Alleviation Fund. The following special purpose funds were likewise augmented:

- a) GATT-related adjustment measures - from 14.6B to P16.9 B, or by P2.3 billion; the adjustment went entirely to the Department of Agriculture;
- b) Calamity fund - from P2.0 to P2.8, or by P800 million;
- c) DECS - Schoolbuilding program - from P4.0 to P4.8, or by P800 million;
- d) Organizational adjustment fund - from P0.5 to P1.0, or by P500 million;
- e) Budgetary support to government corporations - from P3.1 to P3.5, or by P400 million; and
- f) Contingent fund - from P0.8 to P1.0, or by P200 million.

***Q: How were these additions to the President's budget financed?***

A: Initially, by cutting the budgets of other departments and other funds. The DOTC budget was reduced from P6.6 to P5.5, or by P1.1 billion. In addition the following lump-sum funds were reduced: (a) Miscellaneous Personnel Benefits Fund - from P9.7 billion to P2.2 billion; (b) the Foreign Assisted Projects Support Fund - from P1.0 billion to P750 million, or by P250 million; and (c) Unprogrammed Fund - from P16.2 to P13.2, or by P3.0 billion.

Some of these cuts are not real. The cut in the Unprogrammed Fund is hollow since no money can be disbursed out of the Fund unless new sources of revenues are identified or actual revenues exceed the target. But revenues are unlikely to exceed expenditures in 1996. The cut in Personnel Benefits Fund is questionable: Congress was sure that no streamlining would take place in 1996 and decided to realign the amount set aside by the Executive for retirement gratuities and separation pay. But why use such allocation for some other purposes in 1996 if the Executive Department is planning to use the same money say in 1997 or 1998? In effect, the goal of downsizing the bureaucracy is being jeopardized.

But since the aggregate amount for all the cuts including the illusory cut of P3.0 billion from the Unprogrammed Fund was not enough to cover all additions initiated by Congress (now called CIA by DBM), Congress then reduced interest payments by P15 billion in order to cover the difference. But, once more, this is a not a real cut. In his Veto Message, President Ramos vetoed "in its entirety the appropriations for Debt Service-Interest Payment, including its Special Provisions." Invoking a Supreme Court decision, Mr. Ramos in effect restored the P15 billion cut.

The bottom line is that the 1996 President's Budget was effectively raised by P15.0—from P415.6 billion, as requested by the President, to P430.6 billion.

***Q: What are the real costs of the deviations of existing budgetary practices from the formal budget rules?***

A: The most obvious one is that the present budgetary practices do lead to overspending in low priority programs and projects.

But addition to wasteful spending, the present system has other harmful effects. First, the total benefits from the national budget is reduced since poorly identified and ill-prepared projects are substituted for more rigorously screened ones.



Second, the social benefits of projects decline because of project delays owing to the process of substitution. And finally, foreign assistance is lost or at least delayed to the extent that foreign assisted projects are crowded out by locally funded projects.

***Q: But legislators argue that as elected officials they are expected to respond to the request of their constituents?***

A: I agree. In fact, there are cases where projects identified by senators and congressmen are more worthy than projects chosen by agency heads. But having said that, the correct procedure is for the requests of legislators to go through the same review process as any other project. That way, projects are prioritized and waste is minimized. The present system is flawed in the sense that there is no established mechanism by which the preferences of legislators are taken into account during the time that the budget is being prepared. The present system of consultation through the Regional Development Assembly does not work.

***Q: Is there a way out of this budget mess?***

A: There is, but it requires a lot of statesmanship and political discipline. "But no lasting solution is in sight unless the parties involved—the President, his Cabinet and top officials, and legislators—recognize that the present system is harmful to the economy and society." Unless they accept that the present system needs to be reformed, then it is highly unlikely that a permanent cure will emerge.

***Q: The President has recently issued an instruction to his Cabinet and other executive officials to discontinue the practice of lobbying for a bigger budget in Congress. Will this help?***

A: The Presidential memo is a move in the right direction, but was met with mixed reaction. Some legislators say that the Presidential directive is impractical. And some executive officials have already violated the Presidential directive according to the chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. In order to make the directive stick, the President has to apply severe sanctions against violators. But the real test of political will is whether the President will veto additions to his 1997 proposed budget come December 1996 or whenever the 1997 general appropriations bill is submitted to him for approval.

***Q: What's a good prescription for the President and lawmakers in order to improve government budgeting?***

A: Simple: Obey the law. One can expect a quantum improvement in the way public funds are allocated and spent if only the President and the legislators would play by the budget rules as stated in the Constitution — the same law of the land that they have been sworn to defend and obey. The Executive should be serious in budget planning and implementation while Congress should stick to budget authorization and, through its oversight powers, review of executive performance.



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## The Social Reform Agenda from the Point of View of NGOs and POs

**TERESITA QUINTOS-DELES**

*Executive Director, Gaston Z. Ortigas Peace Institute*

First of all, I would like to thank the USAID for the opportunity of a forum like this to present a PO/NGO perspective on the Social Reform Agenda. It is important to recognize that there is such a perspective and that there is a very serious effort among a large segment of the PO/NGO community to make their claim on the SRA, as equal stakeholders who try to influence the direction of government's reform agenda and process, and ultimately to draw from it concrete and palpable gains for the basic sectors where it counts in the here and now. Right off I must say that I do not claim as I think no one can claim today to be able to present a single definite PO/NGO perspective on the SRA. There is not one single PO/NGO point of view that binds all of us in one concerted effort, even those of us who may share a common or similar perspective or language on development and democratization. The discussions and debate on the SRA are still on-going within the PO/NGO community regarding the issues of engagement or disengagement, the assessment of opportunities and risks, the balance sheet of gains and costs in pursuing principled partnership with government towards the achievement of genuine social reform. I represent a segment of civil society led by the basic sectors who have been engaged in the SRA. These groups comprise a significant spectrum of POs and NGOs that have been going both horizontally and vertically, that is, in numbers and in depth of involvement, which today see the SRA as a major if not primary arena for forging and consolidating civil society positions and capabilities towards asserting their voice and exercising their choice as to the direction of the national development agenda and vision. This effort includes the joint forces of the National Peace Conference, which has the basic sectors on the forefront, and the Anti-Poverty Coalition which is the particular NGO expression or intervention on the SRA, and which is the coming together of the 15 CODE-NGO networks with convergence, the Agrarian Reform Network, the environmental community represented by Green Forum and the Sustainable Agricultural Coalition and the Women's Network. Finally, there is the SRC, basic sectors counterpart council which is an attempt to institutionalize the fullness of civil society participation led by the basic sector and the SRA. I shall say a little more of this later on.

My presentation this afternoon may be seen, then, as an evolving narrative of the still unfolding saga of the effort of this civil society groups to engage government towards the achievement of Social Reform for the poor and marginalized sectors of our society. I organized my talk this afternoon in three parts. I will start by presenting the context of PO/NGO participation in the SRA, the motivation and the terms of our participation. Next, I will briefly describe the complete structure and mechanism of this participation as these have evolved to their present form. Finally let me and with the discussion, perhaps debate on the most conscientious part: what have been the gains? what are the problems? if any, and where do we go from here? I will try not to take more time for my talk than Secretary Garilao did in his presentation. But as I think we both acknowledge, between Sec. Garilao and myself, sometimes promises or intentions may have to be broken. So to move on to the substance of my presentation, first, a short discussion on the context of PO/NGO participation in the SRA: where are we coming from? what operates to determine our point of view? Let me just focus on three aspects. First, we must recognize the reality that the people's agenda preceded the SRA. For the POs and NGOs that first entered the SRA process, the SRA was not at all the starting point. For these first participants, the SRA launched by government was a response to their advocacy constituting a distinct history of



engagement to insert an agenda wrought from their own experience and consensus to become an indispensable element in the determination of the national agenda. While the people's agenda is rooted in the long struggle of our people for freedom, justice, and democracy, the centennial of it we commemorate this year, the agenda traces its immediate specific history on the National Peace Conference held in October 1990, which comprise a ground breaking effort to forge consensus and common peace agenda, and vision across 17 sectors of society including the basic sectors, business, academe, civic and professional organizations, and the churches and faith groups. Under the Ramos government, the agenda provided the impetus for sharpening the peace agenda in the so-called government doables, categorized as first, immediate executive responses, second, legislative initiatives, and third, agreement and long term policy directions. These events which were marked by serious basic sector participation in the consultation held by the National Unification Commission under the chair of Haydee Yorac in December 1992 and the multi-sectoral Economic Summit which produced the Social Path on Empowered Economic Development or SPEED in Aug 1992. Until finally, the launching of the SRA and People Empowerment Caucus in June 1994, SPEED IN 1993. The sector's basic peace agenda continues to serve as the standard and impetus for the basic sectors participation in the SRA. The SRA is not the beginning nor the end; it is a critical moment in the process. Second, PO/NGO participation in the SRA must be seen as being connected to or in a continuum with our organizing work in and as communities and sectors. The impetus to participate arose from our complete experience of the limits imposed on our organising and empowerment efforts by the constraints of or gaps in the existing policy and legislative landscape. Even our best efforts on the ground could only go so far because of the inadequate, misplaced, wrong, or simply unimposed laws or policies. If you wanted our efforts on the ground to push thru, then we would have to take part in changing the legal and policy landscape to ensure the community sectors' claim their rights in determining and fulfilling the law. Thus, we have always said that our SRA advocacy only has meaning to the extent that it is guided by and contributes to perhaps, not immediately but in the medium term, the improvement of the welfare and promises, and processes pursued by communities and sectors. A third and final aspect of the context that I would like to discuss is our terms of participation, or what we may refer to as a term of endearment between POs and NGOs, and government as people's stakeholders in the SRA. Let me simply go to a short list of its features. First point, the terms of engagement include the claim to and respect for the right to and debates. The basic sectors' position to participate in the SRA was never a form of submission or co-optation, rather it constituted a resolve by the basic sector to take their rightful place to claim and assert their voice and choice on the on-going national debate on the directions of the social and economic policies and the meaning and vision of the Philippines 2000. For the basic sectors, that it is better and offered more political gains to take seat on the negotiating table, to argue their position face-to-face with national leaders and the discussion-makers. The discussion constituted their assertion that the rightful place is not just a street mobilization but also in the conference room around the negotiating table. Thus, we say in one of the papers that we issued for the National Anti-Poverty Summit entitled "A Framework for the PO/NGO Involvement in the SRA," "where we can converge with the government, we negotiated and proposed principled partnership, where we diverge, we exposed and opposed government policies and programs. Second point, we see our participation, in particular, as part of the peace process. It is testing hopefully in time, validating the ground by which we may forge and pursue a peaceful pact to peace. It is a commitment to the process of dialogue and negotiation over the use of force and violence. As such, we move by stages taking one sensitive step at a time with the results of each step determining what and where the next step would be. Third, the process of SRA engagement is and has always been basic sector led. Thus, the deliberate use of the acronym PO/NGO rather than NGO/PO, while also promoting multi-sectoral interest and consensus. The process we pursue undeniably demonstrate a sectoral bias with the basic sector themselves stating and determining the force of the frontline. The final decisions regarding engagement or disengagement is theirs ultimately to take. Forth, it is also understood that the SRA should not be the only arena of



advocacy for us. Other fora, other steps to government should continue to be explored and strengthened. Since, as in other time, effective engagement with government can only be pursued with a strong PO/NGO presence and consensus, with structures and mechanisms that ensure and promote the autonomy, integrity of the civil society. Thus, we have painstakingly built at our basic sectors counterpart structures which we hope we'll be able to find expression on all levels, national, regional, and local. Sixth and finally, we affirm that being a process, our SRA engagement will always be subject to review, reflection, assessment, and even, if it need be, also to withdrawal, or even termination and disengagement. Just as we should be ready to push the process as far as it will go, we should also know the time to call it quits. I think from all of this points that I would like to raise, it is easy to conclude that the primary and overriding principle in our participation in the SRA is the assertion of ourselves and therefore, our rights and responsibilities as members of the civil society. We play our part best if we insist in pursuing our strength as civil society. That's the focus of a large part of our effort in building the basic sectors counterpart structures. I will not dwell long on this, let me just say that we have taken pains to nurture and are now beginning to institutionalize basic sector counterpart structures on the SRA which include the continuing work on the agenda building and not simply accepting the agenda set by government. It includes developing counterpart processes and bodies for all SRA levels -- the counterpart council for the SRC, the National Sectoral Council of leaders to interface with the flagship bodies, a counterpart secretariat and technical working groups and local counterpart structures especially on the provincial level. We undertake levels of negotiations and consensus-building within our ranks before we meet with government. We collectively decide on our spokespersons and we try to issue position papers that says our stand on important issues. We asked to share the chair or stage with government on occasions such as the Anti-Poverty Summit. We combined ours with tactics, we open and close in negotiations, marching with our banners and chants into the PICC plenary hall. Perhaps the only thing in counterparting the government that we lack are the material resources and budget. We have tried to institutionalize these counterpart processes thru a document which spelled out our levels of structures, their functions, response of representatives and alternates, and community system of accountabilities between sectoral representatives and alternates, and their sectors thru the provision of mechanisms for grievance and reform. In this way, we hope we are contributing to the strengthening of civil society and advancing the cause of genuine democratization in our country. In this way, we hope of improving our capabilities and expanding our opportunities to make the SRA an irreversible reality of a transformed Philippines 2000. The fact that we have invested so much time and effort in building PO/NGO structures and processes, we know that the road to genuine social reform will be long and difficult, and that we have to be prepared for this. Thus, as we move to the final part of my talk, an accounting of the gains and problems, we know that this is the part that is still unfolding, still evolving, calling for further basis of reflection and self-examination. Let this last part then be a provisional ledger of what looks like initial gains we can build on, as well as some of the existing needs to overcome. First, the gains, can we talk about real palpable gains in terms of actual SRA achievements? I think after all is said and done, any honest PO/NGO assessment of where the SRA stands at this time will have to acknowledge that the bulk of what we now have from the SRA is a pour of promises. We have won several times over government commitments to policy and legislative response especially on the needed legislation on the fisheries and ancestral domain codes, on the enactment of and the repeal of the Anti-Squatting Law. And this has moved perhaps further unlike any other times in the past. But until the laws are passed its true, its only a promise. The sectors have won executive insnuances such as those of the official agenda, but these are still begging to be implemented just as the UDHA still needs to be fully implemented, and all of these implemented with adequate funds. We said a commitment towards reform and transformation of DSWD-sCIDFS or the Comprehensive Integrated Delivery of Social Services which is a flagship program for six pro-sectoral sectors and as well as in the organization of government credit or micro finance programs, as well as in other several initiatives including significant segment of local government. But it will take





time for this to become palpable reality in our communities. In short, despite the SRA, agricultural land and fishing grounds continue to be encroached upon, urban poor communities are still being demolished, women continue to be battered and raped. Nevertheless, POs and NGOs have not withdrawn their participation in the SRA. If anything they seem to be pursuing the SRA with their agenda with even more and dedication. I think what is being said is that where the SRA is, is not the end of the line. It is the starting point for a stronger charter advocacy and follow-up on the agenda. Perhaps basic sectors are saying we have never before come this close. Now is the time like never before to close ranks and with our allies in government exert to move the agenda across the line that divides tentative processes and intention and irreversible non-stoppable commitment. Let's call it the final test for political will, not just for government but also for civil society. Is that wishful thinking or is that not perhaps a mix of shrewdness, boldness and courage? Perhaps naive but nevertheless a belief in people's rights and the reality of people's empowerment, such that made Edsa possible just ten years ago. I, for one can't say for sure. At any rate I don't see the basic sector marching out the door at this time. But there are gains that also need to be counted which are real and important. First, is the articulation of policy reform statements. True, the achievement of actual reforms still need to be seen or to be tested on the ground. But, I think it is important and significant that on the highest level of government, that is, at the level of the president, one must take and accept full responsibility for poverty alleviation. Two, the state has acknowledged the legitimacy, even the centrality of the basic sectors agenda to any vision of the country and the role and contribution of civil society towards this vision. Three, that the state has identified definite goals and concrete poverty alleviation targets by which it can and could later be judged. And that the state has acknowledge that there may be a point to the questions raised regarding its economic agenda and has agreed to open the arena for debate of civil society on the direction of Philippines 2000. By these developments, the government accepts this responsibility for carrying out the social reform agenda and will perhaps stop pointing to deficiencies of civil society. As people like to say, we can't beat any of this, but we have these gains, and the transformation of the government's viewpoint, this must be important too. Second, the SRA has helped to recognize the advances made by basic sector asserting their legitimacy, in fact, the positive and necessary contribution of their agenda and struggle to the project of national transformation. The SRA has opened many important doors to the basic sectors and acknowledged their right to place in asserting their claim over government, just as the business and other resource sectors have long assumed as their right.

The SRA has given the basic sector perhaps the longest period of the government yet. True, the output up to this time are still mostly promises that still need to be kept, but it should not be denied that this is important for certain sectors who have gained recognition and separate identity only with the SRA. And we refer particularly to the fisherfolk coming out of the shadows of the farmers sector. The informal sector, claiming their right to place but not subsumed under the labor sector. We speak of invisibility who have gained visibility under the SRA. Third, and I will not elaborate on this anymore, the advance on people capability building and institution building for the basic sectors. We have to recognize as valuable the continuing exercise of representation of marginalized sectors raising issues to the Cabinet members and the President, and to see the sharpening of minds and tongues, as well as assertion of confidence and hearts in these encounters. We have to recognize that the structures and mechanisms we have begun to build for civil society are our gain for the very long. And then I have mentioned the potentials that we hold from the track of localization that was acknowledged during the Anti-Poverty Summit by both government and civil society as the next challenge. The promise lies in the local target and agenda that are being set if not in the entire Philippines at least in some facets of the country. The promise lies in the capability being developed and the alternative development indicators that may be built around the minimum basic needs. The potential lies for us to develop and showcase pilots of social reform where they can count on the ground. In this track too, we may claim



local civil society empowerment and for developing mechanisms for state accountability especially in the allocation and use of public funds and resources. Whatever happens to the SRA on the national level, there are very real possibilities to launch initiatives that will spark movements in the local level. The next challenge of localization is for each of us to address. I think it would be wrong to assess the gains on the SRA without looking at the gains on these developments. You can ask the skeptics within our ranks who like to remind us that this is not the important thing and that we shouldn't decide what the SRA should in the end deliver. But if you don't see the development of sectoral capabilities and the growth of civil society institutions as also important, I think you are also missing something very important. *Mababa na ho ito* at I've run out of time and energy to discuss the process ; obviously there are many. A brief run down of the problem areas includes one problem of integration between related government initiatives especially on the operational level confusing the civil society from government workers. Second, the major issue on the actual and potential conflict between the SRA and government thrust. Third, question on government capacity to deliver on the SRA involving questions on the technical capacity as well as a political will of the bureaucracy, LGUs and the legislative. Four, the reform commitment and the government budget, the allocation or misallocation on public resources on the people's money. And five, the need still of the civil society of getting this act together and running more effectively. We can discuss this more later if you are interested. At the end of the day, and its been a long day, where do we go from here? Maybe that's a topic for another talk. But let me just say that we won't go anywhere if we don't have faith in ourselves and in the basic sectors. We won't go anywhere if we're not willing to take risks. We won't go anywhere if we're not willing to explore alliances in most unexpected places. We won't go anywhere perhaps if you don't believe that work can work miracles. By my count, ther's still enough of POs and NGOs , and let's count to our dwindling allies in the government. If that's the case, we do have somewhere to go from here. We can get there.

Maraming salamat po.



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## Moving From Policy to Implementation

**OSCAR SANTOS**

*Chairperson, Coconut Industry Reform Movement (COIR), Inc.*

Magandang umaga po sa inyong lahat!

Mayor Fernando and I have been asked to speak on "Moving Policy to Implementation."

As political science students would know, state policies are set out in the Constitution. Thus, our constitution has a declaration of principles.

Government policies which are couched in more specific terms, are found in the laws adopted by Congress, in the Executive Orders of the President and sometimes in administrative orders of the Departments and Bureaus.

Let us consider the laws passed by Congress since government policies are usually set by them.

A report quoted in the September 9, 1996 issue of the *Inquirer* says that members of the Ninth Congress, that is, the previous Congress (1992-1995), filed some 20,000 bills and resolutions. 1,491 of them were processed, meaning they underwent the First Reading (binabasa lang ang title of the bill), committee deliberations and of course the Second Reading where they were deliberated upon on the floor. About a thousand of these bills and resolutions were adopted by both House and the Senate.

Without considering the numerous bills passed by the previous congresses, the question is how many of these 1,000 or so bills passed by the ninth congress will see honest-to-goodness implementation? As said by (was it Lisa or Ruth Callanta) - they may be beautifully worded, but implementation is another thing.

Five days ago, on the September 8 issue of the *Philippine Star*, this news item appeared:

Senate Minority Leader Edgardo Angara said the failure of the government to put into motion the programs provided in eight specific laws he cited showed "a penchant of the administration to pay lip service to the plight of the underprivileged sectors." Our government is a Scrooge when it comes to investing in human capital formation. This is a miserliness that will cost our people their salvation from poverty."

He also cited the landmark measure creating the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PHIC) which is supposed to ensure medical insurance coverage for all Filipinos as one of the major failures of the administration. He noted that the program would cover even indigents not capable of paying the monthly insurance fee who would be allowed to avail themselves of medical services for free or at much reduced cost. He said, "Congress legislated these measures with the hope that we are giving the poor the tools to fight poverty, but the executive is frustrating our job,"



Angara noted that . . . the national health insurance program has yet to be implemented because of lack of funding.

Of course, according to Prof. Diokno yesterday, the Senate and Congress are in effect partly to blame for channeling P15 B to the CIA.

Many other "frozen" laws can be cited. Allow me to cite some of the more prominent ones.

Our existing fishery laws are aimed at allowing catching of fish and aquatic life as we need — without however endangering the right of future generations to exploit the same aquatic resource. That is the policy. But how have our fishery laws been implemented?

Let me tell you my experience in the 4th district of Quezon. Out of 10 towns, at least 4 mayors or their relatives had at one time or another been operating what is known as Buli-Buli — a very destructive fishing method since its nets scrape the seabed, destroying the tiny fish fries and eggs. Alquerez, an environmental-oriented NGO whose mission is to help conserve fish and aquatic life in Lamon Bay, had been at odds with those local government executives who instead of implementing the laws and ordinances which is their sworn duty — have become the destroyers of the dwindling aquatic life in the area. A clear case of "Bantay -Salakay" which I am sure is happening in many parts of the country. Despite our support to Alquerez, the mayors concerned or their representatives, to my knowledge, are still at it. We have in this gathering a BFAR Acquaculturist in the person of Jessica, an indefatigable worker, who probably can confirm this.

And what about our Forestry Laws? I think it was Marites Vitug of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, who wrote that only about 500 Filipino influential families benefitted from the massive destruction of our forest. Her studies found that some 500 Filipino families of loggers generated a total income of \$42 B in a logging span of 20 years. Money, Mr. Grazel—more than enough to pay our foreign debts which according to Prof. Ben Diokno yesterday, we will have to pay till God knows when. The loggers by law are obligated to plant 3, yes 3 trees out of every tree they cut. But have they done that? DENR has a record of the loggers given timber licenses but has DENR gone after the erring loggers? The mindless destruction of our virgin forest (we used to have 15M hectares of them. Now we have less than a million remaining), I submit, has been criminal. The tragedy of Ormoc where some 5,000 of our countrymen were engulfed by raging flood waters from denuded mountains, is still fresh in memory. Many more Ormocs are bound to happen, because of our forestry officials' failure to implement our forestry laws!

A classic example of unimplemented government policy is set out in our election laws mandating the holding of clean, honest, fair and orderly elections.

It is basic that we must have good laws, and if these good laws are to be duly implemented — then we must send to office good lawmakers and implementors, men whose primary interest is public interest, the public good, the general welfare— not the adoption of laws titling fishponds which they own, not the extension of the municipal waters to 15 KM just so their big fishing boats can freely catch fish in those waters to the utter prejudice of the fisherfolk which Larry Manaog and company are trying so hard to protect, almost to the point of futility. Men who, according to Ruth, are rooted on what is right, who are consistent regardless of inconvenience, who will promote public good instead of personal interest.



Going back to our obtaining electoral processes. We held our latest national election last year. It took place on May 7. Shortly after voting day we were deluged with daily reports on election law violations. The Philippine Daily Inquirer reported these violence thus:

May 9, 1995: (p1) Visayas, rampant buying of votes noted (p1) Voter sellers get fake P500 bills (p.1) Poll violence, 27 killed 40 wounded (p1); Cops ng Makati mayoralty et, guards; guns seized (p1)

May 11: Dozen hurt in Angeles melee (p16); Protester clash with sympathizers of reelectionist mayor (p16) Olongapo protesters with force (p.16)

May 12: Ventura, Abadilla to contest poll results in Laoag (p.19); Coffin heightens poll tension in Caloocan (p.23); Lopez pushes poll protest in Manila (p.24)

May 13: NPC Pimentel, Biazon cry foul (headline); Slain teacher cited for defending ballot (p.1); Comelec pursues disqualification case against 19 Senate candidates (p.4); 1,596 fall in Comelec gun ban (p. 12); Comelec pursues disqualification case against 19 Senate candidates (p.4) 1,596 fall in Comelec gun ban (p.12) Grenade misses INC church (p.17); Ruth Guingona accuses Emano of poll fraud (p.19); Poll violence hits Makati (p.24);

May 14: Comelec sets probe of NPC fraud charges (headline); Maguindanao canvass area bombed (p.1); Vera-Perez cries fraud in Albay (p.18);

May 15: Poll body moves to stop cheating (headline); Fake bills circulate in Mindanao towns (p.1); Losing mayoralty bet leads rally, demands new polls (p.17); Ecija town police force fired over election irregularities (p.17); Bets debate if elections failed in Cotabato town (p.19) Radio station rapped for political bias (p.20); Women voters up in arms in Mt. Province (p.20); Candidates admit discrepancies in Ilocos Norte tallies (p.20)

May 16: Comelec execs finds more cheating errors (headline); Familiar faces, same class (elected) (p.1) CB orders probe of fake money used in buying votes (p.2); FVR seeks investigation of teachers in poll scam (p.2); 8 police execs face proe for election deals (p.5)

May 24: "Comelec confirms cheating in 30 provinces" "Pimentel says Enrile got his votes, wants recount."

I can go on and on but I am afraid Mr. Grayzel will caution me to proceed with our assigned topic.

But given these reported violations, ay maitanong ko po sa inyo—meron bang Bigshot — maybe a Senator, a Congressman, a governor who was sent to jail for election law violations? Wala po akong alam.

In the beautiful country of our colleague from VOCA, Yoo Mi, they are jailing former Presidents who went astray. Here, a big number of our people still idolize one. He might even be cannonized one of these days. His widow is now strutting in Congress, threatening to sue a former US Ambassador.



It is not easy to talk on "moving from policy to implementation" without reference to a specific government policy and efforts made at moving the same towards implementation.

Let me therefore share with you our experience on the Coco levy issue. Virgilio David, the dynamic and fearless Administrator of the Philippine Coconut Authority calls it "20M Coconut Farmers are Victims of the levy racket" in his book. (exhibiting book)

The levy issue exemplifies implementation of public policy in the reverse. Here the intended beneficiaries the small coconut farmers, have instead become the victims of continuing injustice.

But let me first tell you briefly what this coco levy is all about.

From 1973 through 1982 — during the Marcos dictatorship, our 1.4M coco farmers and their 18M dependents, were assessed a total of P 9.7 B. The avowed purpose was to fund investments intended to benefit the coco farmers, especially the lowly tenants and farmworkers—the small coconut farmers. The levy was in varying amounts—from a low of P15 to a high of P100 per 100 kilos of copra. This money, deducted from the farmers' copra sales, diminished further the farmers' meager income from copra.

Let me tell you my own personal experience. I come from Alabat, a small island town somewhere in the waistline of Luzon. A small town with some 12,000 people, producing about 5,000 kilos (5 tons) of copra daily. In 1974 when the levy was P100 per 100 kilos of copra, our small town—without us knowing—was in effect contributing P5,000 daily to the levy fund. We did not then realize that. A strong typhoon devastated our island town that year. The roof of our small pier by the sea was blown off. It took the townspeople two months to accumulate P1,000 to replace the roof—not realizing at that time, that we were being assessed, forced deduction P5,000 daily!

The total collections taken from 1973 through 1982 amounted to P9.7—the single biggest assessment imposed by the government on a single sector in the history of the country.

A big part of the levy collection was mismanaged, misspent and or misappropriated. Cronies of the dictator Marcos helped themselves freely, lavishly in fact, to the fund. In 1986 the dictator was literally driven out of the country. Cory Aquino was installed in office as President on Feb. 25, 1986. A few days after, she asked me to serve as chairman of the Philippine Coconut Authority, the agency charged with the development of the coconut industry. I promptly caused the audit of the collections. The Commission on Audit, a constitutional body, confirmed the misspending, the misappropriations, and in blunt terms—the thievery. Details of all that are set out in this book written by the incumbent PCA Administrator David, in his book "20M Coconut Farmers are Victims of the Levy Racket" (exhibiting same), these 27 series captioned "Understanding the Coco Levy" written by known journalist Manuel F. Martinez and published in the Philippine Journal and of course, this pamphlet "SMART File" by Ricardo Manapat.

Fortunately, not all the levy collections were squandered and taken advantage of. Part of it was invested in a number of companies, notably in 1/3 of the total outstanding shares of stocks of the San Miguel Corporation—one of the biggest corporations in the Philippines. The levy assets are now estimated conservatively at P60B.



Now you may ask: How come the farmers have been unable to make use of this levy assets—funds they themselves painfully contributed to?

Well, during the Marcos dictatorship, a number of our unscrupulous countrymen succeeded through manipulations and through the Marcos Decrees, in making it appear that the fund is "private"-- the greater portion of which, according to them, belongs to just a few individuals who were close cronies of the dictator. For instance, with respect to the UCPB--the coco planters bank so called --1/2 of its 700M outstanding shares of stocks were made to appear as belonging to 64 individuals, yes, 64 individuals, while the balance of 1/2 has to be shared by some 1.4M coco farmers (exhibiting the List of Top UCPB Stockholders).

Further details are set out in the book of PCA Administrator David and writer Manuel Martinez's series, and in the "SMART File" of Ricardo Manapat.

By its very nature and under the Marcos decrees authorizing the levy collection, the levy-funded assests are "public funds" held in trust by government for the benefit of the small tenants and farm workers--the overwhelmingly 1.4 small coconut farmers.

I have to stress that the very Marcos Presidential Decrees authorizing the levy collection proclaim in their "whereas clauses" and statements of policy that it is the intent of the decrees to make the coco farmers "direct participants in and beneficiaries of the benefits of the industry" and said benefits "shall accrue to the greatest number" of the coconut farmers--certainly not to just a few Marcos Cronies!

You may ask what have you and COIR done?

For my part, as early as 1980, 13 years before COIR came into existence, I had already taken the cudgels for the farmers. As member of our Quezon Province Provincial Assembly (Sangguniang Panglalawigan), I had already sought inquiry into the levy. That was during the heyday of the Marcos regime when asking questions like "Why the levy collections" was a risky proposition and could very well send one to the detention center.

In 1984, still Marcos era, I was elected Congressman of my district in Quezon Province. On the very first day Congress opened sessions on July 23, 1984, my first official act was to file House Resolution No. 3 - asking for an accounting and auditing of the levy collections. Three times I brought the matter on the floor. Three times I was blocked. We, of the opposition, were outnumbered 3 to 1!

In 1987, I was elected again to the House of Representatives. There I filed the House Bill seeking to confirm that the levy and the levy funded assests are public funds held in trust for the use and benefit of the coconut farmers. Proceedings on the bill could not go beyond the Committee level. A big number of my colleagues did not want to antagonize this man appearing at the cover page of Ricardo Manapat's SMART File. And yet during the campaign period--many of them swore to high heavens that they were for the poor and disadvantaged farmers!

In 1993, soon after we organized COIR, we lobbied in congress and had the same bill refiled. We were able to obtain the signatures and commitment of some 119 Congressmen, majority of the Members of the House, plus the assurance of the then Presidential Legal Adviser to have the bill treated as urgent.



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To this day, the same version of the bill is still pending action by both the Senate and the House.

While serving as member of the Cabinet -- (though not belonging to the Presidents' Party, Pres. Ramos appointed me Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process in 1993) -- I pursued the same advocacy, every time I had the chance, during the Cabinet meetings. To a point that I must have sounded like a broken record.

COIR in September 1993, caused the publication of this article "Moving Beyond Rhetoric" -- with this blunt subheading-- "Testing President Ramos' Commitment to Alleviate Poverty of Coconut Farmers." published in the country's top paper "The Inquirer". This article somehow must have contributed to the President's issuance of Executive Order No. 277, "Directing the Mode of Treatment, Utilization, Administration and Management of the Coconut Levy Funds."

The farmers were naturally jubilant. For a while, that is. Because a few days later, the President came out with a clarificatory circular stating that the levy funds may be used only upon approval by the Courts.

The Solicitor General in G.R. No. 96073, filed on December 3, 1993 an "Urgent Motion to Resolve Legal Questions on the Character of the Coconut Levy." This was summarily denied as unnecessary by the Supreme Court in its Resolution dated December 13, 1994 declaring that its previous ruling that "the coconut levy funds are clearly affected with public interest," (Cocofed vs. PCGG et. al. promulgated October 2, 1989) "has long since become final and executory, and the import and signification thereof being adequately determinable from, and indeed exclusively determinable from and indeed exclusively determined by, the explicit terms thereof."

COIR's position has been and continues to be:

Declare the Coco Levy Funds as a Public Trust Fund for the use and benefit of the small coconut farmers and farmworkers and the industry.

COIR will continue to pursue this advocacy on behalf of the disadvantaged farmers.

The present status on the coco levy assets is simply this:

Our Supreme Court seems to be of the belief that having already declared that the funds are "affected with public interest," it is now up for the Executive to act and authorize the utilization of the funds for the farmers' benefit.

On the other hand, the incumbent administration appears to be unable to exercise enough political will. It proclaims sympathy and being one with the coconut farmers yet it feels that the Supreme Court should still come out with a definitive ruling that the P60B or so levy assets are "public funds" -- not just "funds affected with public interest".

On its part, the legislature (both Senate and House) is dragging its feet on the bills long pending before their committees - bills confirming that the levy assests are public funds held in trust for the use and benefit of its forced contributors--the coconut farmers.





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The following, it seems to us, are clear: The three departments of government—Legislative, Executive, Judiciary:

- Are perfectly aware that it was the coconut farmers who were compelled to contribute to the coco levy;
- They are perfectly aware that the levy was collected for the benefit of the small coconut farmers; (... the benefits of the industry, "shall accrue to the greatest number.")
- They are perfectly aware that unless they act decisively now--within 2 years -- only a few former cronies of the dictator will continue to benefit from the levy assets;
- They are perfectly aware that those influential cronies had already freely and lavishly helped themselves from the levy assets:
- They are perfectly aware that 1.4M coconut farmers and their 18M dependents have long been in need—badly in need;
- They are perfectly aware that the situation has long been crying out for Justice;
- They are perfectly aware—Congress, the Executive and the Supreme Court—that they can no longer be passing on the buck till God knows when;

And yet, to this date, they allow the matter to remain unresolved.

May I stress that in our efforts to get the policy to help the coconut farmers—implemented, we have gone to the highest levels of government—to Congress, to the Executive, to the Cabinet and to the Judiciary.

Just two Fridays ago, August 31, we caused the closure of Padre Faura to traffic for 3 hours. We and some 5,000 coconut farmers from Laguna, Batangas, Quezon and Mindoro converged at the Luneta as early as 5 AM, travelling during the night to march to and demonstrate at, the Supreme Court at 10AM which is the appointed time. Joey Faustino, Ka Fely, Administrator David of PCA and I addressed the Honorable Magistrates with a big sound system asking them to come out and meet with the farmers so they can have a first hand knowledge of what is happening to them and their long tedious crusade to recover and make use of the levy money they have painfully contributed to. In the afternoon, the march and rally resumed at Malacañang but could not go beyond Mendiola Bridge.

Perhaps you will now ask: With the commitment of support by some 119 members of the House who have affixed their signatures to the Bill confirming that the levy money is public fund for the benefit of the coconut farmers, how come that bill could not get through Congress?

Well, as I commented during our session Wednesday, according to a study caused to be conducted by Congressman Gillego—out of the 215 or so House members, 116 are landowners and 56 are corporate directors. And possibly giving justice to the 1.4M coco farmers and their 18M dependents — is not one of their priorities. Marahil bumabangga pa nga sa kani-kanilang interes.



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At this point let me share with you the findings of a study made by the Philippine Human Rights Information Center, quoted in Amando Doronilla's column of Sept. 9, 1996. Excerpts read:

"A study of the performance of the Ninth Congress on human rights yields a rich mine of information that give insights into the behavior of the legislators and the political system in which they function."

"Congress as a focus of study assumes importance in the light of the controversy over abuses of the now bloated pork barrel as a source of patronage largesse. The largesse at the hands of lawmakers helps explain in part why many incumbents in the Ninth Congress were reelected."

"Legislators vote for bills that not only promote or protect their economic interests but also for bills that translate into political support and votes."

"Only a few legislators voted solely on the basis of their intellectual conviction. An example was the bill which proposed imposing a cap on foreign debt payments. More than 100 congressmen originally supported the bill. However, after the house leadership campaigned against it, only 14 were left in favor of the bill."

So now I go back to what I said earlier: For as long as the basic sectors- the peasants, fisherfolk, unorganized labor, the urban poor and the indigenous sectors—are unable to send enough of their own, people who will truly speak for them — to seats of power, to Congress and the Sanggunians, honest-to -goodness, pro people measures will find difficulty of approval.

The same holds true to elective executives—the implementors —the President, the Governors, the Mayor and even the Barangay Captains, in so far as their job to implement public policies is concerned.

When we shall have levelled the playing field, at least to a degree as would give the farmers, fisherfolk, unorganized labor and indigenous sectors even just a fighting chance in electoral contests (hindi iyong paglalabanin ang tulad ni Tyson sa tulad ni Onyok) perhaps we can then have more policymakers (the legislators) and executives (the President, Governors, Mayors, and Barangay Captain) who will have public interest and the common good truly at heart. Haydee will, I am sure, share with us her thoughts on how to go about this in her talk this evening. *Mabirap. Ngunit dapat pagpilitan. Iyon ang ating pag-asa.*

Till then we will continue to have situations such as those mentioned by Larry Manaog, Dave de Vera, Marlene Gatpatan and Alette Cepe where getting pro-people measures passed through Congress has become almost exercises in futility.

I submit that honest-to-goodness elections not the near farcical ones we have been holding would in a big way provide the way for improved citizen participation and better governance. Not the impossible suggestion of my friend Gov. Orbos that perhaps we may have to go back to a system of direct democracy where the people will, by themselves decide public issues affecting their lives. Oca knows that was probably possible a hundred years ago when we lived in small villages, where the headman could just call the villagers to decide public issues by the simple expedience of raising hands. Not anymore. Times have changed. Villages have grown to towns and cities. And we



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have grown to 68M by last count. Besides, public issues have become complex and complicated. I think Gov. Orbos was only exhibiting his growing impatience over what is happening to our country and was only provoking us to think and ponder on the valid points he spoke of.

*Mga kasama, kayo pong mga NGO, POs leaders na nagnanais na patinuin at maisaayos ang ating bansa sana'y mapag pilitan na nating magkaroon na ng tunay na balalan upang ang basic sectors, iyong makararami, the silent almost voiceless majority, could really have a fighting chance sending good leaders from their ranks to seats of power. Policymakers and implementors who are "rooted on what is right, leaders who are consistent even in the face of inconvenience—men who have the public interest and the general welfare truly at heart."*

*Maraming Salamat po.*



## Moving From Policy to Implementation

**MAYOR BAYANI F. FERNANDO**

*Municipality of Marikina*

Magandang umaga sa inyo, mga kaibigan. First, I'm so glad to announce that yesterday, the City Bill of Marikina passed the second reading in the Senate. So, we will be a city in three weeks and probably change the perception of Marikina as an earthquake fault community.

Anyway, Marikina is a government and industry of a happy working class community. That's how we would want to define Marikina, what it is now and will be in the future. We would not want Marikina to be a first class community. Ayaw namin ang Forbes Park or Bel Air, we just want Marikina to be a town for the working class. Everything is designed for this purpose.

In 1988, I presented to the voters of Marikina a platform of government which spelled out the policy on how to handle the squatting problem. In that policy, I stated that all those in Marikina would be taken care of by the municipality. If ever they would be transferred, it would be within Marikina. But no new squatters were to be allowed because we can't handle all problems of the world. The population of Marikina is just right and we don't want to add more. We have a population of about 125,000 in depressed areas out of half a million residents, in Marikina.

In 1992, when I got elected, Marikina had a budget of about 78 million. In 1996, we were able to raise the budget to 384 million, 300 million of which came from locally generated income. Marikina contributes 9 billion to the national treasury. Of the 9 billion, only 65 million returns to us. Of the 300 M internally generated income, very little, if at all, comes from the depressed areas. They don't need to pay any form of taxes.

We have 2,100 hectares of land and of these about 400 hectares is full of squatters. That is about 10% of our land area. We have 85,000 households in Marikina and 35,000 are in the depressed areas. Today, we have 3,200 of more squatters to relocate. We have made a survey of all these resettlement areas, of individual families and have pinpointed exactly who to relocate and where they have to relocate. Unfortunately, we are running short of relocation areas so the municipality bought a dredging machine. We are now going to dredge the Marikina River to recover land. These low-lying areas along the river bank will be transformed into relocation areas only to be true to my promise that nobody would be transferred anywhere outside of Marikina. This we want to finish by 1998. So, Marikina will be squatter-free by 1998.

Marikina is not so blessed with public lands. We have lost it all since the Spanish time when Marikina was given to the Tuazon family. So, these relocation areas, a hundred of hectares of them, are actually private lands.

We are just talking to the private land owners to transform their properties into relocation areas. We signed a random agreement with them, hoping that someday they could collect money from the CMP. But today not a single property has been paid by CMP because the CMP has no money to pay. This is one advocacy which I think the NGOs around here can work on. Let us ask government to channel all the funds, not to first class development or middle



class development but to the CMP. It is the only way we can solve the problem of squatters. Before I forget, another advocacy that you can work on is for the passage of a law that will give all rented apartments to the tenants. Practically speaking, this means confiscation by the government and whoever the tenant is will own the house. That will, overnight, solve 30% of our squatting problem and remove vested interests in this community. The syndicates will have no more funds to pursue in their activities. So, that I will give to you. I don't know how you will work it out. It's a little critical in a way because it's confiscation of property. But shanties are illegal because it is renting out of property on lands which is not yours. So that is taking advantage of everybody.

Right now, we have transferred so many squatters and we have 3,210 of them left. We have hundreds of hectares of relocation areas to do-building of roads, drainage systems and all things. With that we will have to pay for 26 kms. of roadways, 50 kms. of drainage systems to be put in place and such other expenses totaling 300 million. That, probably the USAID will provide. To the best of our intention, I still have to serve 75% of the residents of Marikina and those residents paying taxes. When I took over in 1972, of every 300 km. of roadways in Marikina we have only 50 kms. that can be considered as roads. Even if we become a city and get a hundred million more, I don't think we will have enough money to finance all those things and to finish them at the end of my term in 1998. So, I think I have delivered my message for the 300 million.

In 1992, when I finally became mayor of Marikina, I was called to a meeting by Cardinal Sin and the church people and some NGOs in attendance. During the meeting they were talking of humane considerations in handling the squatter problem. I said, "let us first define what you mean by humane" \_but nobody could answer. So, I volunteered a definition. I said " 24 square meters of land payable at no more than P220 per month for 25 years and that is humane. P 220 is the eighth affordable rate according to a study made some time ago. This amount would be the cost of two packs of cigarettes. Anybody who could not afford to pay P 220 pesos is not fit to live in the Metropolis. He can find some other way to survive or go back to the province. 24 square meters is not big enough to invite relatives to stay with you. It is big enough if you have 2 doors which is usually the case and you will have 48 square meters. Too small by American standards for light and ventilation. In my program of government I stated that technology of the future would take care of that. For light, the program of Meralco is going very well because people are getting connections to power.

To be effective, we have to relocate the squatters by colonies leaving no house or any post standing. Before I became mayor and being a member of Mandaluyong Chamber Commerce of Industry, Mayor Abalos asked our help to start a housing program for Mandaluyong. Being a contractor, I was charged to be chairman of the committees to help Mandaluyong. I had to build 100 rooms, 100 units, 4 storeys, medium- rise, housing units in Mandaluyong. Up to this time I have not received full payment for that housing project because so many of the tenants could not even qualify for a loan.

With that, I found out that if you really want to solve the squatter problem you have to consider the basic concepts. You have to relocate by colonies. To do that, everyone has to qualify in the relocation. So, you don't have any choice, whether your house is 4 or 5 storeys in a squatter area, all will receive 24 square meters, but all will have to move out and should afford the P220. If you cannot afford that, then we will give you passage to your province. When the time came to implement these things, we had to name the program. So, we named it "Squatter free" or in Tagalog, *walang squatter sa Marikina*. I had the posture of being *walang biya*. It took some time before I was able to say that in public.



There are so many things that I have learned in four years time. One, we are recognizing all squatter colonies as well as commoners associations, organizing them into Puroks. But one thing we do not allow is for organizations to federate. We give them all the powers that would make them effective in managing their communities but discourage them to organize federations because a federation will become a parallel government. Another thing, I have made an announcement *na walang koleksyon, dabil ang koleksyon ay ang bumubuhay sa sindikato*. Nobody will contribute any single centavo. All your expenses (your paper work, follow-ups) will be handled by the Municipal Settlements Office. Let the transaction be government to government. Local Government to National Government. You toss it to us and we will do the necessary follow-up.

I also said *na walang negatibo* to the point that I asked them, to change their name. Usually in depressed areas, the names of their associations are like *Samaban ng Walang Makain*. That's brandishing that you are poor and you will not get anything. So, I am asking them to change it to something like *Samaban ng mga Yayaman*. These kinds of things work to at least soften their images a little bit. But all these things didn't get to my mind that easily. In Marikina now, though we have lost all our public lands, we have replaced them with 220 hectares of open space. So, a little more time and the squatters of Marikina who have been relocated right in the middle of Marikina will be living in an environment much better than Forbes Park. In Forbes park, when you look out in the window you see the streets. In Marikina, you see the river and park.

In our program, we give the best that we can afford but then, you have to be a good citizen of Marikina or else we are going to do everything, short of killing you. At least we are happy in all these things. In the past four years, after so many thousands of squatters relocated, there's not one single casualty. Yet when we started, we would hear such things as "over our dead body, you cannot get us out of here, *magkakamatayan muna tayo*". That would prove one thing, the effectiveness of our program.

Before I joined the government, I noticed that I would get to know all the names of the programs. Very nice, a marvel of copywriters such as "green revolution" or , "clean and green" but I could not hear the instructions of what I would have to do to have that "clean and green." We always lack in that aspect. There are no orders.

But I make sure that things are clean and green. I have millions of candies manufactured. So, every morning after the flag ceremony every student in the school is given a candy. They are told, "Okey class, open the wrapper, eat the candy and fold the wrapper in your pocket" and that's the exercise. Now at least I think its working. Until last year we were the cleanest Municipality in Metro Manila and for that also, we won the most coveted "best in Local Government Unit in the country" award last year.

So I think my time is up. I would like to repeat my challenge to the NGOs. For our part, I think for four years we have proven to you our sincerity and our program. By 1998, expect Marikina to be squatter free. For NGOs, I would like to repeat, please work for the passage of a law giving rented housing units to the renters. Make it to solve 30% of our squatting problems overnight. Work for the government to fund the CMP. Fight the syndicates and not the LGUs.

I think we really have to work in a more positive way so we can get things done.

Good Morning.



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## What is in Store for Coalitions?

**DR. ANNA MARIE A. KARAOS**  
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When my friends in the Urban Land Reform Task Force asked me if I could give a talk in this conference on the subject "What is in store for coalitions?" I was sure that I didn't want to accept it. Coalitions are always in themselves a messy thing. Talking about them can only be even messier. In Philippine politics, whether we are talking about party politics or popular movements, nothing can be more unpredictable than coalitions. When I told my boss at the office about the invitation to speak on this topic, he had only one word in reply to the question "what is in store for coalitions?": chaos. Of course he said it in jest but knowing him and knowing how many coalitions he has witnessed collapse in the last decade or so, I suspect that he was half serious when he said it.

When the question is posed "What is in store for coalitions?" one image that pops in the head is that of someone gazing at a crystal ball and, having the extrasensory powers of a gifted psychic, foretells the future with extreme clarity and detail. In this image, the future seems to exist already and it is up to the clairvoyant faculties of a gifted one to reveal this future to others not quite as visionary.

These two images, one of chaos, which I got from my boss' joking remark, and the other of the crystal ball, which is my own way of imagining this topic, represent notions about coalitions and what the future holds for them which are useful for highlighting some ideas I want to pose to you.

Before we begin to talk about the future of coalitions, or the challenges that they face or what they could possibly achieve -- questions to which you might be expecting this talk to provide you with answers -- it might be good to first take a minute to reflect on what coalitions are today, what they mean, why they are here, and more important perhaps, why we insist on forming them despite repeated "failures" in keeping coalitions together.

### **Coalitions today**

Coalitions, as we understand them in our present context, refer to groups coming together to pursue a common goal, mostly political in nature. As such coalitions imply diversity and commonality at the same time. We have also come to understand coalitions as formations aimed at achieving some amount of political influence. In other words, they are political organizational expressions. The very act of coming together is for the purpose of being able to publicly display power in numbers, whether to influence policy, legislation or public opinion.

Coalitions have become a standard item in the repertoire of action of political movements and social activists in recent times. This has become so in the eighties and nineties as the more politicized sectors of the mass movements of the earlier decades became disillusioned or disconnected with both the catechism and the organizational apparatus of a vanguard political party that has assigned to itself the role of leading the struggle for the emancipation of the oppressed and the powerless in our society.

In more recent years activists and people's organizations have had to experiment with new ways of doing "radical" or



non-traditional politics outside the modes of traditional leftist politics where people's organizations and mass movements merely acted out the strategies and tactics formulated by political parties. In the mid-eighties, even the leftist parties attempted to build popular coalitions as part of their united front work. There was the multi-sectoral coalition BAYAN, and the sectoral advocacy coalition CPAR as examples of these efforts.

In these coalitions, there were other actors, namely independent people's organizations and non-party political formations, which were not affiliated with leftist political parties and which played pivotal roles. Perhaps for the first time, the dominance of the more organized leftist formations were challenged by new groups that were mounting their own political initiatives. In these coalitions, groups began to assert their autonomy from entities that sought to dominate decision-making processes. Perhaps for the first time, differences in policy positions, strategies and tactics were allowed to come to the surface, to be debated openly, even though it sometimes led to unfortunate resolutions in the form of splits, as in BAYAN, or dissolution, as in CPAR.

Despite the many unhappy experiences with coalitions, they have emerged in contemporary political practice as a useful way of doing politics for groups marginalized by traditional political institutions. In the urban poor sector where I have been most involved in the last few years, we have had a succession of at least five major coalitions in the last ten years beginning with NACUPO in the early days of the Aquino administration, to the Urban Poor Forum in 1987, followed by the Urban Poor Coordinating Network (UPCN) in 1988, then the Urban Land Reform Task Force in 1991, and most recently the Anti-Demolition Working Group (ADWG). Some of these coalitions were intended to be short-lived tactical alliances while others were attempts to forge a more lasting unity within the urban poor sector.

We need not be so harsh or pessimistic about coalitions in general. We have seen a number of coalitions that have worked sufficiently well and endured for a considerable length of time. There is the Coalition for Peace, the National Peace Conference, and the Freedom from Debt Coalition which are advocacy coalitions that have somehow managed to keep diverse groups together in a loose network of sorts, have spoken out on very important national issues, advocated policy and social reform agenda supported by and drawn from grassroots constituencies and engaged state actors in critical policy issues. Even the so-called political blocs or nonparty political formations like Bisig, Pandayan, MPD, Siglaya and Confredem have for some time been engaged in some kind of coalition-building effort to arrive at some common framework for working together not only in the political arena but also in the social development field in which their allied POs and NGOs operate.

I think that the value of coalitions lies not so much in their ability to consolidate numbers when and where it matters or to exert pressure on the government, which is often the more explicit goal of coalitions, but more in the fact that their structure and modes of operating allow for greater autonomy, grassroots solidarity and diversity. And these things -- autonomy, solidarity and diversity -- have become irrepressible characteristics and aspirations of the popular movements and organizations that are being formed today.

Coalitions therefore have become the new organizational expression of contemporary popular politics. The diversity of groups mounting socio-political reform initiatives has made coalitions necessary. But as such, they are not just tactical formations; they are more importantly expressions of the values of the actors that comprise them and are collectively evolving a new political practice for articulating popular issues and demands with the dominant political system.





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At this point, I want to go back to the notion of chaos as an image we cannot avoid having about coalitions. What may appear as chaos -- because what we see are groups constantly being formed and breaking apart, break-away factions fighting each other then coming together again, new alliances and realignments happening ever so frequently; so many discontinuous initiatives with no strategic coherence -- may in fact be a necessary process by which coalitions continually reaffirm the values of popular movements: the values of autonomy, diversity and solidarity with marginalized sectors.

I say this because as one looks at the reasons for the splits experienced by a number of these coalitions, they centered around these issues. Groups have asserted their autonomy from other groups that sought to dominate a coalition. Some of the most bitter differences within coalitions have arisen over the issue of how a coalition is to maintain its autonomy from government. Some organizational crises have had their origins in leadership structures being alienated from base groups, or tensions between local/regional and national structures. What has been referred to as "NGO-PO dynamics" which many coalitions are experiencing, or have experienced, to some degree is also rooted in difficulties in defining roles, expectations and mutual accountabilities while keeping in balance the values of autonomy, diversity and solidarity.

What am I saying here? I guess the point I want to stress is that the "growth pains" of coalitions are in a sense the necessary consequence of the values that coalitions, or the groups that comprise them, want to bring into their political practice. These are the same values they want to inject into the dominant politics. In the coalitions, groups learn how to live out these values and live with the conflicts and tensions that these values create.

Is this not idealizing or romanticizing coalitions? I do not know. It is true that not all popular organizations that are part of coalitions are consciously motivated by the values of autonomy, solidarity and diversity. There are undeniably groups that are driven by self-interest, or simply by motives of survival or self-preservation. What I think, however, is that we need to begin to look at coalitions not only as political organizations, valuable only in terms of achieving political influence or benefits for the groups they represent. It is true that coalitions necessarily have a political orientation. Groups come together to form coalitions to gain policy concessions or to influence government decisions.

But they are more than just political.

In and through coalitions, popular groups are living out and fashioning a political culture of which they are the principal subjects.

Perhaps a better way of looking at coalitions, in the "chaotic" state we find them today, is to see them as schools of this new political culture. In coalitions, activists and popular organizations learn new ways of doing politics, fashion new strategies unrestrained by ideological orthodoxies, experiment, make mistakes in the process, learn and teach one another on ways of negotiating and making compromises, on making adjustments in response to political opportunities. They learn to respect diversity and to honor and exact commitments. Through the experiences afforded by coalitions, groups gain a better understanding of the government bureaucracy, its culture, the possibilities, dangers and limitations of working with government. Coalition-building teaches us many things.



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In the day-to-day interactions that happen within coalitions, not just during big mobilizations or those occasions when coalitions are publicly visible, groups negotiate and affirm the values of this political culture. I have attempted to name some of these values: the values of autonomy, diversity and solidarity; perhaps there are others.

I see in coalitions today a more open-ended, spontaneous way of doing politics, which in a way can be more creative, responsive and ultimately more radical. Activists often speak of political projects. Coalitions are engaged in a politico-cultural project. Their most important potential for social transformation does not lie in gaining power for the politically marginalized or in "empowering" them but in creating a new political culture in which autonomy, diversity, solidarity and the values that people hold can be negotiated and concretized in new social and political practices.

### **What is in store for coalitions**

Seeing coalitions in this way makes it easier to appreciate the difficulties coalitions often have to face. In fact the two goals of coalitions which I describe here leads to some definite tensions.

On the one hand, coalitions are oriented toward gaining power or some degree of political influence. This is the principal reason diverse groups forge a unity.

On the other hand, coalitions as schools of a new political culture or consciousness are in some sense subverting old conceptions of power that are based on domination. After all, autonomy, diversity and solidarity, if I am correct in my interpretation that these are the values of today's coalitions, are not about power and domination.

An illustration of how a serious conflict can arise from this tension is when a successful advocacy coalition begins to gain some political influence, perhaps as a result of having its key leaders appointed in government or being recognized as an official representative of a sector in official policy deliberations. It can happen that a coalition in this situation may feel compelled to preserve this influence by integrating itself more fully into established political structures which are more "efficient." A coalition which might have been extremely effective in fostering the new political culture or consciousness may lose some of this effectiveness once it becomes preoccupied with nominating its leaders as candidates in established political parties or to some bureaucratic positions.

So going back to our crystal ball, what the crystal ball reveals to me is not the future of coalitions. What it reveals is a dilemma confronting coalitions.

In the past, coalitions were mainly formed to serve the political goals of organizations. Today, coalitions may often find themselves choosing between the prospect of gaining more political influence and realizing their counter-cultural potential. They face a choice of whether to take the more efficient road laid out by established political structures or to remain weak and fragmented as a result of constantly negotiating and remodelling their political practice. Sometimes the dilemma comes in the form of choosing between building bigger coalitions that can negotiate and speak out in one voice on national issues and maintaining smaller, independent coalitions that may sometimes take different positions on a given issue. The recurrent coming together and breaking apart of coalitions today in a sense reflects the inherent tensions which this dilemma creates.



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If coalitions become totally engaged in the logic of power and how to attain and preserve it, their "cultural" dimension will tend to be deemphasized. For such is the logic of power -- it subsumes everything else to itself. Power then becomes the sole criterion by which decisions are made and relationships are defined. This is not to say that the tensions will always resolve themselves in the direction of opting for greater power at the expense of the politico-cultural project. I am merely saying that opting for the politico-cultural project will be less efficient, more "chaotic" and prone to more tensions.

These are, without doubt, disconcerting thoughts. But to me they also offer some comfort. Thinking this way about coalitions frees us from judgmental notions of who is right and who is wrong whenever splits happen. It frees us from the frustration that comes from thinking that a coalition breaking up is always a bad thing. It liberates us from the assumption that there is a uniform rationality, or morality, to which all groups and individuals subscribe. In this new way of doing politics, we become conscious of diverse identities and moral orientations and learn to respect and live with them. We learn to understand that every experience, every point of view, is a valuable input into the construction of this new political culture.

Most important, we learn to appreciate ambiguities in our political practice because we know, or rather we believe, that it is ambiguities, rather than certitudes, that give birth to new and better things.



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## The Role of Civil Society in the Electoral Process

ATTY. HAYDEE B. YORAC

When I was scanning the program last night, it was with some measure of relief and perplexity. Relief that I had time enough to compose my thoughts from yesterday until today because I had just returned from Marawi City to observe the elections in the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao. And elections in Muslim Mindanao have a unique way of unhinging you. Then I went on to speak before the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, Makati chapter on Wednesday in the course of which I gave them my candid complaints about the bar and law profession. And I am here today.

I was also very perplexed on the sequence of the organization of the program. I was wondering why the "Role of Civil Society in the Electoral Process" comes to be the final lecture of the entire program. It seems to me that so much have been discussed, so much conclusions have been arrived at that election would, at the very least, be anti-climatic for everyone.

Filipinos don't care about democracy, they love elections. But I think there might be a possibility that in the future, we may find a process better than elections to select and repudiate our leaders. But at this particular time, less than four years before the end of this century we have not found such a replacement. And elections, are, by far the most efficacious way of determining political leadership in a democratic system such as ours. In mature democracies, where respect for the rule of the law has become an entrenched value, elections are fairly routine. The rules are clear: procedures are followed and results are arrived at quickly and are largely uncontested.

It is not so in this country. Elections here are rough and there is every conceivable evidence of attempt to circumvent and violate rules, in efforts to gain unfair advantage and to win at any cost. Every process in our elections is marked by an opportunity to do some hanky-panky. Let me just give you some examples: the usual padding of voters' lists by flying voters or inexistent voters; diversion and control of ballots and election returns when they are on the way to precincts; the capturing of precincts and filling up of ballots by a few persons in controlled areas; falsification of entries in election returns through coercion or intimidation at the precincts. After they leave the precincts they are hijacked, switched and the contents are changed for the purpose of unfair advantage again. When we come to the canvass proceedings, we have what we call "*Dagdag Bawas, or Dagdag ng Dagdag or Bawas ng Bawas,*" or any combination of all this. And then the canvassing are at two levels, the municipal levels and the provincial levels. In some instances, even three levels, the national canvass for senators, president and vice president. And then we have vote buying violence in order to secure failure of elections. There are many more that we are familiar with in this country, and we must strive to change things for the better. Where government or its agencies cannot be relied upon effectively to enforce rules or at the level of the political parties or candidates there is failed expectation of wholesale and systematic violation of rules, civil society becomes very crucial in electoral exercises. By civil society, I mean, the definition that is given by Lynch and Alfred Stefan, Professors of Political Science in Yale University, and Central European University. It says civil society as that arena of the polity where self-organizing groups are autonomous from the state, attempt to articulate values, create associations and solidarities and advance their interests. Civil society can include manifold social movements, womens' groups, neighborhood associations, religious groupings



and intellectual organizations and civic associations from all social levels such as trade unions, entrepreneurial groups, journalists or lawyers. For the purpose of our discussion, civil society refers to NGOs, POs and movements whose aims and purposes are principally directed to or include fair, honest, orderly, peaceful and credible elections. It is often said that the laws of the country reflect all the problems that the country confronts continuously. And the mere fact that our constitution specifically directs the Commission on Elections to administer election laws and rules in such a manner that elections will be fair, honest, peaceful, orderly and credible shows just what kind of problems we have had through our history in relation to elections. What can actually go wrong in elections? The first is that we might have a COMELEC that is partisan, not independent and is susceptible to manipulations and therefore we might conduct elections with wholesale fraud and violation of election rules. And it is very possible. I will make specific, practical suggestions about this afterwards. It is possible that our system of electing our officials is seriously flawed, so that even with the most honest Commission on Elections it would still not be fair, honest, orderly, peaceful and credible. The third is, it is possible that the rules which are meant to make elections fair, honest, peaceful and credible are inadequate or ineffectual. And fourth, people who are actually indifferent and possess low levels of judgement that even if you had a good Commission on Elections, the best systems and rules in the world, we would still vote for the wrong people to govern us.

Now, let me go to the Commission on Elections and make my practical suggestion. When I was in the Commission on Elections until 1993, our margin of satisfaction never went below plus fifty. The last survey of the Social Weather Station relative to the Commission on Elections now, shows that the margin of satisfaction of the present commission is minus sixty one. Truly terrifying. The credibility is lower than the temperature in Siberia. And for valid reasons. The Commission has been involved in one scandal after another which undermines both confidence and respect. And it is possible that if the trend continues, we might not have a really credible Commission on Elections by the time we engage in our next electoral exercise in 1998. This is something that we must avoid and should be an area of practical intervention for civil society interested in elections.

In 1998, two commissioners who are fairly strong and fairly credible are ending their terms in the Commission on Elections, Commissioner Remedios Fernando and Commissioner Regalado Maambong. Therefore, there will be two new appointments to the Commission on Elections. This new commission will manage the elections in 1998. Fairly important elections too, because short of a force majeure, we will see the implementation of the limitation of terms of all public officials from the President down to the local government level. It is also a very important and historic election because we would be implementing for the first time a new system of voting, counting and preparation of election returns in the election. We have something to say about that. The recent appointments to the Commission on Elections does not inspire much confidence. So I think it is very important that civil society -- NGOs, POs -- and so on, and I am not speaking only about my own organization ( the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting), who are interested in changing the country for the better should be interested in the coming elections and therefore in the appointments of these two new Commissioners. Otherwise, the rate of approval of the Commission in 1998 might go below minus sixty-one. And where would our faith in democracy be?

So therefore, I would like to suggest, even now, that you think of people who might creditably occupy the positions in the Commission in 1998. To make a resolution that we will all lobby together for the appointment of this kind of persons in the Commission on Elections. If the present trend continues, I would also like to suggest that we express our objections to this appointment before the Commission on Appointments because this is the only way to protect both the character and the credibility of the Commission on Elections. The words in the Constitution, the resolution



and the laws are all the same. We were appointed in 1986 and we were governed by the 1987 Constitution. The Constitution directs us to be independent, fair and honest and non-partisan. The same rules of the Constitution are now operative but we see an entirely different performance from the incumbent Commission on Elections. The same resolutions that the Commission passed for the Elections in 1995 under the ARMM elections were passed by us in 1992, and yet the implementation of these rules are entirely different from what we did in 1992. It is therefore important to guarantee the institutional independence, integrity and honesty of the Commission on Elections because this will be enforced by people who sit there to guarantee the honesty, independence, fairness and non-partisanship of the elections. Without this you cannot have an independent, fair, honest and impartial Commission on Elections.

Now, regarding the system, I just came back from Marawi where the so-called computerized system of voting and counting was pilot tested. The conclusions that I draw are the following. First, the new system is definitely better when it comes to counting and preparation of election returns. You no longer have the long drawn-out process of public school teachers shouting out the names of the different candidates voted for, and everyone quarrelling with each other as to where this particular vote shall be entered. And you don't anymore have the system where people, out of fatigue, boredom or mischief, actually enter different results in the election returns because the machines take care of that. At the same time however, there are a number of things that we should be concerned about. It rained very heavily in Marawi during the ARMM election, and what happened was that some ballots got wet, and the room where the machines were stored became humid. And instead of the expected two minutes processing for the counting, it became thirty minutes per precinct initially. Therefore, I think that we as well as the Commission on Elections, should think of how to overcome this physical difficulties. At the same time however, the employment of machines does not really guarantee the cleanliness of elections. There will be no more cheating in the counting and in the preparation of election returns, but we still have many controlled areas in this country. And in these controlled areas, people are open to obtaining control of the ballots on its way to the precincts or at the precinct level since the machines only read the shades against the names of the ballots being used by the COMELEC. There will be no telling when this is being done by one or two or three persons either at the precinct level or elsewhere. Therefore, I can safely predict that in 1998, if there is going to be fraud in the electoral process, it will no longer be at the counting and preparation of the election returns level. It will go back to the precincts. Therefore, it is necessary for people once again to mobilize and organize, to watch every precinct in this country for possible manipulation and fraud.

Second, we now have a new system of registration. This has already been passed into law. This is the so-called continuous system of registration and I think that this will be enforced beginning 1998. We have general pre-registration every 12 years and our last general registration was 1986. I know exactly what self-serving and self-interested politicians can do. They are even very systematic about this. They go to the precincts and find out how many people have died or how many have gone on overseas contract work. They find out how many people have transferred provinces and they conveniently assign their own people for the purpose of controlling the precincts. What can civil society do with respect to this? The precincts are supposed to represent a specific territory where people know and identify each other. Don't let the politicians beat you. I think civil society should also go around to determine just how many people are actually in the area represented by the precincts and present their data to the Commission on Elections so that we don't have many flying or in-existent voters in the next election.



I said a while ago that a third problem which we might have would be rules which are inadequate, or ineffective in the implementation of certain rules of the Commission on Election. I gave an example this morning with respect to the fire arms and terrorism provisions of the Omnibus Election Code. The problem in many areas is that politicians, their hatchmen and private armies are not impressed at all about being sued for criminal violations of the Omnibus Election Code. Our justice system is so slow that by the time the case reaches the Supreme Court, most of the parties are maybe nearly dead or in fact dead. You know that people with good lawyers and so on, can just waive these criminal cases aside. The answer here is to have a form of punishment for violators which is immediately effective. Therefore, I am suggesting that we advance the proposal to our Congress that rules must be made to expand the authority of the Commission on Elections to disqualify people on many grounds. Not all violations of the Omnibus Election Code are grounds for disqualification. I think all the serious ones must be made grounds for disqualification so that the Commission on Elections can immediately punish people for their violations. This is a Legislative Agenda that civil society can espouse and support.

A while ago, I sat with a group that tackled problems in Local Government and I was amazed when somebody came out with the suggestion that one of the tasks that must be addressed is to raise the level of consciousness of the ordinary voter in order to avoid vote buying and voting on the basis of personalities. When I was head of the NUC, we had a dialogue with a number of organizations belonging to the urban poor. And I can understand the impatience and the anxiety and the anger of the members of the urban poor. Many of them said, "the time for dialogue is over.. What we need is a sit down strike so that government will hear us. We are the majority in this country. There are millions and millions of us and yet we do not have a representative in the Municipal or City Councils and in Congress." I was disappointed that this was the attitude. I simply reminded them there are millions and millions of you and you have the right to vote. Yet when you exercise the right to vote, whom do you vote for? Ramon Revilla. My whole point here is that even if we have the best Commission on Elections, even if we have the best rules, even if we have the best system for voting, as long as our judgement about electing our public officials remains flawed, we will have the same kind of government that we are complaining about now. When I speak about voter education, I do not mean only to address this problem of the urban poor who invariably sell their votes in the course of elections. I think all of us need voters' education so that we would depart from the traditional measures by which we judge our candidate for public office and shift to the politics of issues, programs and policies. If we are able to do this, our politicians would cease to buy votes, cease to clown, cease to sing and dance to entertain us, and they would cease on referring to themselves as "you vote for me because I am from the University of the Philippines or Ateneo de Manila, and I went to Yale University and Harvard afterwards," which are really irrelevant to the question of the serving of public office. I know one candidate who got carried away like this before and said "we are all from UP so you should vote for me." I think we should all remember in humility, that if there is any one institution responsible for the mess of the country is in, that is the University of the Philippines, mostly the College of Law. But don't let the people from Ateneo find comfort in this. You know, you also have your own scoundrels, but second rate ones. And so therefore, I would really suggest that all of us, starting from ourselves, should start a voter education program so that our choices are not based on personal and monetary and popularity considerations but on the basis of track record, qualifications and programs of government of the different candidates for public office. I suggest to start at the Local Government level since the new Local Government Code has made the local governments more important, powerful and more vibrant .



With respect to civil society, beyond the practical suggestions that I made so far, I have certain suggestions to make to the NGOs and POs elsewhere as to problems about establishing coalitions and so on. My own experience with NGOs and POs is that there invariably arises some tensions as a consequence of the struggle for turf, money or monopoly of the immutable truths. As long as these organizations and tensions persist, it will be difficult to combat the enemies of fair, clean, honest, peaceful and credible elections because these people are entrenched, well organized and have access to vast resources. I do not suggest that we turn around and decide to love each other because this is impossible. What I am suggesting is that we establish certain bottom lines for cooperation in relation to elections. I think these bottom lines can be identified. Shall we go and poll watch at the precinct level? What will we do by way of instruction to people about the technical aspects of elections, counting and canvass of votes? How are we going to conduct our voter education program and what kind of material will be produced so we can reach effectively in the shortest time possible, the most number of people and actually affect and move them? I think these are the areas where cooperation can be established. Because of our new system there is again a need to mobilize people down to the precinct level. Let me tell you, the cheating in the 1998 elections will occur even in the course of the delivery of the ballots to the precincts, in the precincts or at the computer system. But it is easier to cheat during the delivery and at the precinct level because there are not too many people there. And since it is already impossible to cheat at the counting and preparation of the election returns level, we must go back to the precinct in anticipation of the mischief that many people, even now, are already developing in their minds. Third, I think that we should study the technology being studied by the Commission on Elections so that we can also put in our own suggestions and recommendations. We have a big chance to really change this country in 1998. As I have said, majority of the people who now occupy public positions will be disqualified from running again. And there is a real chance that we will have, not only new faces and new names, but different kinds of people who will occupy public positions in this country. It will make a lot of difference to all the sectors who are marginalized and excluded from the corridors of power. And I think there is a real chance that we might make in-roads into the corridors of power. This is a chance that we must take. But we must be ready and informed because it is only in this way can we really establish the value of fair, honest, peaceful and credible and hopefully, intelligent elections in this country.

Thank you very much.





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**SEPTEMBER 10-13, 1996**  
**L'Fisher Hotel, Bacolod City**

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