

## DISCUSSION

**Discussants:** Mayor Rufilo Tan

President

Eastern Visayas Regional Association of Mayors

Ms. Lilia H. Tiopes

Leyte Sab-a Basin Development Authority

**Moderator:** Dr. Romualdo Cabaluna

Leyte Medical Society, and UPAА (Leyte)

Dr. Romualdo Cabaluna: Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. I feel a little uneasy after that dissertation about substitutes. Because in all candor and honesty, much as I would like to thank the organizers of this conference, I feel like a round peg in a square hub. I was invited to moderate the section on "The Eastern Visayas onto the 21st Century," and that will be for tomorrow. However, because of a conflict in the schedule, I was moved to "Political Development." That was this morning. And finally, I am here on "Regional Development." I have been a substitute in those sections.

In fact, the paper that I read this morning was the paper of Dr. Tadena. I don't regret though, because when I read his paper I learned many things, among them are *baranganic* democracy and all these high-falluting words which, with due respect to Dr. Tadena, I do not understand; and much less the people who are supposed to be the recipients of all these—I doubt if they can understand.

So I will be honest and try to be a good substitute. I will try to moderate this forum about regional development. I mentioned also that my part here, aside of course from being an alumnus of the UP is that I come from the region. Finally, I have found myself.

As I understand from the word "moderator," I will try to be the moderating influence between these two specialists (the discussants) in their fields. When the discussion becomes too hot to handle, I will tell them to shut up. And because we are dealing with the society, political society at that, I should caution them, especially with the tapes all around, that they should not be too leftist or too rightist; just stay in the middle and you will be safe.

So glancing over the paper of Mr. Morell—whom I have the pleasant experience of meeting for the first time. Thus removing all my doubts if he were an Englishman or a member of that fair, opposite, pleasant sex—I will now relinquish this microphone, for the moment, to the discussant who is also being substituted.

Incidentally, if I may be really naughty: Sometime, during the pre-martial law days, there was a candidate who was running for a seat in the national government campaigning among the teachers. Seeing that most of

the teachers were also substitutes. the candidate announced to all that, "My dear teachers, if you will vote for me this election, I guarantee that you will not be substitutes any longer. I will make it possible and very realistic that all of you will become prostitutes."

Mr. Tan, I suppose is a mayor, and you can see he cannot be a prostitute. So please, start discussing Mr. Morell's paper.

Mayor Rufilo Tan: Well, as our moderator said, I'm only a substitute. But unlike our moderator, I'm not a round peg in a square hole or a square ped in a round hole. The paper of Mr. Morell is kind to the Regional Development Council. But during his exposition, he mentioned that he would like to correct the imbalance in the membership now obtaining in the RDC of Region VIII. I am very much concerned as a member of the Association of Municipal Mayors, especially in Region VIII because the ranks of mayors is not represented in the RDC. (We have already an organized regional association of municipal mayors, and in fact, by August 12, we will be having our first regional convention of mayors.) I have made representations already with Director Golez and he said that the NEDA's Regional Office (NRO) Staff (Reg. IX) has forwarded a communication to NEDA Director-General Sicat for the possible inclusion of a representative of the mayors in the Regional Development Council. We felt that this deprivation on the part of the mayors of a seat in the Regional Development Council is contributing very much to the imbalance of the membership in the Regional Development Council.

I do not have much more to say except that on the part of the mayors, we will really ask our Executive Director (Morell) to give attention to our request that the mayors be given a seat in the Regional Development Council.

Dir. Lindy Morell: Mayor, I don't think I still have to refer to my boss because P.D. No. 797 gave the Regional Development Council the authority to decide. But here we are careful, as we pointed out, because in some cases, some RDC's have expanded their membership so much that they can no longer call meetings because of the problem of getting a quorum. And so we have to make a balance here. But we agree with you wholeheartedly, Mayor, that the municipal mayors are resource managers in their own right. So that in the next Executive Committee meeting of the RDC we will designate the representative of the Mayor's League as member of the RDC.

Cabaluna: Mrs. Tiopes.

Ms. Lily Tiopes: Thank you for this opportunity to allow me to give my comments. Actually, I was caught unaware because as I was listening to you, it seems that what you have said is only part of what you have written.

I will give my reaction to what you have written where I have made some preparation, and to what you have said as to how the RDC should be managed, in which you opted for more administrative authority. I do not believe that giving more authority to the RDC would enable it to

complete its goals in relation to regional development especially if the function and role of this agency is to integrate and coordinate the different functions and activities of agencies in the region.

Viewing the membership of the organization, we can see that there are actually two cliques, or what you call two groups: the political group and the professional group which is composed of the regional directors. If the function of the RDC is to coordinate the plans and programs of the cooperating agencies, then I would disagree with your suggestion which is more an authoritarian, rather than a participative way of management, because the people involved are actually equal in rank, and one director cannot just be dictated by another director. So what is actually important here, I believe, is better human relations. No amount of authority can make them work if they do not think that the programs that are being handed down to them do not coincide with the programs of their own agencies.

Morell: Thank you. You have raised very good points. But I would like to clarify the point that I raised—administrative authority. I made that recommendation based on my experience in Regions VII and IX. In these regions, especially in Region IX, the directors are not satisfied with the extent of their authority. They do not even have the authority, for instance, to grant permits, like the Bureau of Fisheries or the Bureau of Forest Development. Some of the decisions have to be given all the way from Manila. We are not asking for authority over a regional director. And as I explained earlier, there is no *prima donna* agency that will control the activities and actions of the other agencies. *No!* We agree with you regarding human relations and also a lot of common sense would point out that the cooperation of one agency is vital to the accomplishment of the objectives of another agency. Otherwise, the objectives of that agency will suffer and its clientele will pay the price. Also, its activities will be wasteful. So we will try to link up the activities of one agency with another. Not from the standpoint of administrative control where one agency will say: "I order you." *No!* But the relationships will be that of a team. We try to identify: "Can you help me here at this point in time? If not, when? So that I can adjust my programs accordingly."

I agree also that there are national programs that have to be implemented. But this is where the RDC comes in to define to what degree the national programs can be administered without necessarily sacrificing the priorities set by the RDC. And in the different localities, say for instance, Masagana in Cebu. . . How can you plant rice in Cebu? Yet that's a national program. You have to make adjustments. In Cebu, this is not only over-used. It has been abused. And I don't think we will grow rice there. So, you have to make adjustments. We shift Masagana 99.

It is up to the RDC to make adjustments. In the light of national priorities, where in the region can we apply a national priority? Then where in the region can we push it with the help of these agencies so that we can balance the priorities? Not a perfect balance, mind you. Because as pointed

out by Dr. Tadena earlier, there is no such thing as perfect balance. Otherwise, there will be a standstill. There has to be some tensions, there has to be some imbalance. But the imbalance must not be so great that it will end instability also. This is where we will try to strike the relationship of cooperation, a relationship of complementary efforts. We will help one another. We are part of a team. We are part of a total system. Nobody lords it over the others.

Mayor Policarpio Cruzada (Silago, Southern Leyte): I don't think I have to introduce myself. I have already been introduced earlier.

As far as the functions and the policies of the Regional Development Council are concerned, I have no comments. But what I would like to ask Mr. Morell is, we have already a regional development plan in Region VIII. How come we in the municipalities did not know the contents of the plan? You have not given nor furnished us copies of the plan. Or did you give the governors only who will then call all the mayors and inform us about these things so that we must know the plan in the affected areas? In Northern Luzon, for example, the Igorots in a settlement there were ordered to vacate their land because the area was declared . . . there was a development project that was to be undertaken there—a dam. Those people complained to the President because they were being punished by being ordered to vacate their land.

The land was owned by their forefathers. According to them, the land had sentimental value.

So, Mr. Morell, will you please furnish us copies of the development plans so that we will know also what projects will be introduced or undertaken in our region or in our municipalities or in our province. In this way, we will be able to tell our people in our municipalities. I have been asked by my people: "When will that Abuyog-Silago road open?" I cannot tell them because I have not seen the plan. Sometimes, I tell them that I don't know.

Morell: Thank you, Mayor. In fairness to my predecessor [Director Golez], the copies of the plan are now being printed. As soon as they are available, we will furnish the mayors. But you will have to pay the cost of printing. We will not only furnish you with a copy of the plan, Mayor, we will try and visit you so that we can discuss. Furnishing you a copy of the plan without explaining its consequences and your role in it won't have much impact. In our program of lending technical assistance to local governments, it is not enough that we give them materials. We have to explain them.

As pointed out earlier in the discussion, we have to sell the concept, the rationale of the plan to you. If you don't buy the rationale of the plan, that plan will just be a plan. It will never be implemented. And we don't want that to happen. So we will furnish you a copy, Mayor, and hopefully we can discuss your role in the plan.

Cabaluna: Corollary to that, Mr. Morell, suppose the Honorable Mayor from Silago feels that your plan will not be adopted, that it is not practical

and realistic for their municipality, does he have the option to, at least, suggest that your plan be revised at no extra cost to his copy?

Morell: Thank you. A very good question. Plans are not prisons. Plans are formalized expressions of intentions. Plans are directions and objectives. However, we have to qualify this. It is possible that what you demand may not also be acceptable. You have to make some concessions based on a hierarchy of values. As we have pointed out, there has to be resolution of conflict. There has to be some adjustments. But definitely, if you can rationalize to us that there is a need to adjust the plan in the light of changing situations confronting your municipality, I think it would be unreasonable on our part not to make the necessary adjustments.

Dr. Alejandro Fernandez (PPSA): Mr. Director, I'm a little shocked at the revelation of the mayor that they have no participation at all in the formulation of the regional plan which includes the planning for his particular municipality. Because if any development plan is to be meaningful at all, isn't it the idea that that plan should reflect the needs and aspirations of the people?

You mentioned in your talk that in the RDC's where you have had involvements, you had encouraged private participation. I think that this matter brought up by the mayor is very crucial because, ultimately, since any development plan is designed to improve the lot of the people, the ultimate criteria for judging the success of the plan would be how it improves the conditions of the people. I don't think that we should be satisfied with the plan that is imposed from the top with a minimum of participation from below.

I wonder if in the course of implementing the plan, you have been encountering any opposition and whether such resistance or failure in implementation might be on account of this lack of participation from below?

Another thing that was coming across my mind as I was listening to you was whether there is an assumption on the degree of government intervention in the process of implementing plans. For instance, is there any thinking about the role of private initiative vis-a-vis government involvement as the plan progresses?

And finally, I think you would be interested in the formation of the system of monitoring the feedback between those in charge of implementation and those in charge of planning. That is one. Another would be the specific mechanism you have for constantly seeing to it that there is really coordination between the various organizations in charge of the different aspects of implementation. I'm sure that the RDC itself is some kind of a regional authority that is playing this role but I myself would like to know about the mechanism of the whole thing.

Morell: Thank you, Dr. Fernandez. As the Mayor himself admitted, he worked with the DLGCD in preparing the plan, a plan from below.

Mr. Pacifico Maghakot (Samar Integrated Rural Development Project): There is now a plan for the Island of Samar. How would you revise the regional plan now to include the 5-year plan for Samar which is like a sub-regional plan knowing that there are three provinces in the island?

Morell: That is one of the best news I've ever heard. Mind you, the printed copy carries the caption that the regional plan is provisional. So that if we can get the input, we can modify the printing of the plan so that we incorporate the plan of the Island of Samar into the printing of the final copy. How soon can you give us a copy of the plan? I'll throw back the question to you? Next week? So that we can modify the original plan. It's still in the press actually.

Fernandez: Along the same line, Director, is there any participated impact of the creation of the new Ministry of Human Settlements? This is a new dimension altogether which you may have to take into consideration, human settlements and ecology.

Morell: Of course, we have to anticipate the impact of the Ministry in the region. Right now, if I understand it right, their area of concern is physical planning. This is good if they will go into that area. Then we can channel our expertise to the region, down to the municipal level. We really need a lot of expertise helping them. But it is not easy to get this expertise down to the municipal level. Let's admit it, many of the municipalities do not have the funds to finance adequate and well-trained staffs.

Indeed, we will continue to relate to the Ministry because we perform the other aspects of planning—the economic and sociological aspects, because we feel that development is a very wide field. There is room for everyone.

Cabaluna: Is there somebody in the audience who has a good news for Tacloban or Leyte? Maybe a good news that somebody has found the solution to the brownout problem or any other problem that confronts the province. Yes, the gentleman with the long sleeves?

Mr. Ruben Oliver Ensoy (Ministry of Social Services and Development): The idea of an inventory of resources is a very good idea. However, one time when I went to the Bureau of Customs, I came across a letter from a Japanese importer inquiring how he can get 50,000 tons of ginger. But the letter just remained in the Bureau of Customs. It was not referred to anybody. I remember one time when I was still in Palompon, I had a friend who had several hectares planted to ginger. And he had nobody to sell this ginger to. So, he did not harvest the ginger. I was thinking that the RDC can do something about this through some arrangement regarding the inventory of resources.

Also, one time when I went to Dolores, I came across a plan of Mayor Rivera. But I heard that his plan was only passed from hand to hand in the DLGCD. Nobody was attending to it. There is also a plan, by *Sangguniang Panlalawigan* member de Veyra to put up a marketing cooperative. I was thinking that if these plans for regional development could be referred to a

formal body, a body that can receive suggestions from the public, then perhaps Region VIII will be more progressive.

Morell: For the information of the body, recently I sat with a number of leading citizens in Tacloban. Hopefully, we will form another task force in the RDC comprising the private sector which will serve some sort of coordinating and clearing body for private entrepreneurs and investors. I formed it upon my assumption of office here in this region because I feel that there is a need for this. We are now in the process of formalizing it. And already we are getting reactions. This is the reason behind the resource inventory so that as we get the result of the inventory, a lot of questions may be asked especially by investors, which can be answered right away.

Cabaluna: Somebody from the back?

Mr. Pedro Panis (Divine Word University): I'm raising no problem, but I'm simply making some comments on what was said earlier concerning your planning exercises and how your plans are implemented.

I refer to the target of the plan—man himself. You mentioned earlier that man is always a problem generator. Do I get it right? So if that is the case, then your planning exercise is only looking at the mouth of the person but not at the hands of the person. Maybe, during the planning exercises we should not only consider man's mouth but also his hands inasmuch as he can be a good resource. He can also be a very good source of tax and not only of expenditures. He can be a very good source of manpower and a market for business.

Morell: It is a well-taken point. I thought I was explicit about that. But now I need to clarify. First, we have to consider the demands of the people. That is a problem because they will demand so many things. On the other hand, when we said we are going to make a resource inventory, it shows the orientation about resource utilization and management. This is the balance of that aspect because we don't want to be putting on a pair of blinders. We will see the situation only from the viewpoint of a problem. But we know that many of the problems that we view—and there is no end to problems by the way—will be solved by proper resource utilization and management. By sheer weight of the proper utilization of the resources, many of the problems that we identify, and those we have not identified, will be solved.

That's why there is a need to establish an inventory of the resources. In the light of the magnitude of the resources available, we will solve the problem. If it is beyond our authority and capability, then we look for the other resources for we have actually tried to see the situation from all factors, from the demand situation, from problems, and the possible demands that can arise from population increase and also the utilization of resources and manpower. We are going to monitor and also ask the different institutions here if their training curricula are geared to the requirements of industry in the light of new developments that we are going to have. The copper smelter plant, the geothermal plant. . . Boy, you better

look into your curricula because we are going to demand a lot of trained manpower. Are you geared along that line? So, we are also participants in manpower and resource utilization.

Cabaluna: Any other participant who would wish to be heard? Dr. Fernandez. . .?

Fernandez: For a change, I would like to ask a very specific question. I was here during the inauguration of "The Bridge of Love," the Marcos Bridge linking the two islands here, Leyte and Samar. We understand, of course, that roads and bridges are arteries of trade, of commerce. I wonder if we can be informed about the full impact of the construction of the bridge. For instance, did the Tacloban City market more than double its display of goods coming in from the hinterland, etc.?

Morell: That is a very good question, Doctor. I myself would like to know the answer. I must, in all candor, admit that I'm very new in the region. So I won't even venture to give the answers because I don't know. But I'd like to know the answer myself.

Cabaluna: I see Mr. Go-Soco at the far end. Mr. Go-Soco, do you visit the market place? And have you experienced any change? Is there anybody from the development staff of the region who can answer that question of Dr. Fernandez? It seems that maybe they have not collected their statistics. Or they cannot reveal them. If they have, it is in the process, and maybe they are not significant. . . .

Fernandez: Maybe, I was not really asking for a very precise answer. But what was at the back of my mind was a thought about Northern Luzon, Central Luzon, because we see the North Expressway heading from Manila towards Angeles being doubled up. A second lane is being built. As Dean of the UP College at Clark Air Base, I travel that road almost everyday and the traffic is very light.

I was wondering if it would pay more to extend the superhighway from Angeles up to Tarlac and/or beyond and not maintain a white elephant lightly travelled.

Maybe I'm thinking of the wrong thing. But I feel that there is a need for information because these things consume a lot of capital investment. And it should be a very good piece of information if we know what is happening aside from that Brazilia travelling back and forth from Manila to Davao via Tacloban on this highway. I think we will all learn something from statistics on this very specific project.

Morell: I think a member of my staff would like to react. Okay, Junie?

Go-Soco: "The Bridge of Love" as we call it is part of a network. And therefore, if the network is not yet complete, then we cannot really say, offhand, that it is of little efficiency.

Assuming that it is inefficient, we have to consider that the bottleneck in the Pan-Philippine Highway today is the Samar portion. And that's because of the rocky portions there. They say that the best way to flatten the rocky portion in Northern Samar is to use the Seventh Fleet which I think is very



improbable. Even then, the link from Tacloban to Calbayog, even if there are pockets of unpaved roads along the way, has greatly facilitated travel.

It now takes three hours' road travel from Calbayog to Tacloban. Before, it would take maybe over a day because we had to wait for the boat trip from Catbalogan to Tacloban or take a very rough road from Catbalogan to Tacloban with only one or two trips, two buses a day.

The highway has made the people, the officials in Samar nearer to the regional capital where most of the administrative matters are done.

In terms of flow and faster travel, and of course, more goods coming in from the portions of the highway served today, then we can say that the bridge is beneficial although it has not really attained its peak yet. This may be attained in the next two years.

Cabaluna: Thank you. We started late. And I forgot to tell you that it is another job of the moderator to act as a glorified timekeeper. So with your indulgence, we give you five minutes more to shoot your last question. . . I think it is also the privilege of the moderator to field some questions.

I'm particularly intrigued by the statement here about inadequate participation from the private sector. I unfortunately, belong to the private sector. I was wondering what the RDC means by inadequate participation. How far would you want us to get involved?

Morell: We are glad to hear a comment from a member of the private sector. For example, if the private sector will build factories, we have to link those with infrastructure. If you don't tell us that you are going to put in that factory, at what point in time, then you will say that it is not linked properly. Here in the region, I would like to know the intentions of the private sector. We can relate manpower training to your requirements. This is another reason why we would like to look into your plans. We would like to know whether you might need more investments for loans. This is one of the reasons why we are going to form that task force in banking and finance. As an arm of the RDC, we found it very successful in Region IX, so that such things as the magnitude of the loans, the types, percentages, what agricultural loans, how could they be met in terms of industrial loans, commercial loans, etc., can be studied. We have monitored this very well in Zamboanga. We hope to be able to do the same here in Tacloban. And it was only made possible with the active cooperation of the private sector. Here we will solicit the active participation of the private sector.

Cabaluna: Thank you for that clarification. Incidentally, I would not like to leave this room with some misinformation. I am listed as the President of the Leyte Medical Society but that was three years ago. We do not have martial law in our society. I relinquished the position. We have had two presidents now. The incumbent president is Dr. Mendoza. He should have been here really.

And I would like to be assured that the Leyte Medical Society would be given its share in the developing and planning in the region. Because when I was the president, I remember sitting down with Mr. Go-Soco to formulate

a 5-year plan up to 1980. I don't know if that had been revised. I was shocked at their statistics that lie regarding the medical and health facilities in the region. Their information, I think, was five to ten years behind. I don't know where they got it but we were able to correct it. In view of the rapid changes that have come into the region, maybe you should get the new president to give you the new data.

I see Dr. Fernandez frantically raising both his hands. This should be your last question, Dr. Fernandez! (Laughter.)

Fernandez: I am really trying to ask the last question or else I'll leave the floor.

But seriously, the Director, when he talks, really generates so much thinking among us. I refer specifically to that part on comprehensiveness of planning and involvement of all sectors, government or private. Well, I have had this sad experience during the last six months or so. I think one matter that has been neglected is the provision of credit facility. This has not been integrated well into planning as it should be. Just try borrowing from DBP or a rural bank, for instance, and I think you'll give up before you are through filling up the blank forms that are half an inch thick. And the length of time required is fantastic. It looks like our credit system, I am sad to say, has been neglected by our planners. They should look into it. It seems that if you have money, it's easy to borrow. If you do not have the money, you cannot borrow. This collateral orientation—rather than the evaluation of the project as to profitability or feasibility—I think, has been inadequately explored. If we are after development in the sense of increasing production, there are a host of small farmers who are inadequately attended to in a very crucial part of their effort in production, namely, the provision of adequate credit.

Morell: Thank you, Dr. Fernandez. We'll take cognizance of that viewpoint. Actually, that's one of the reasons why, as we announced earlier, we're going to form a task force on banking and finance. As an output of that task force on banking and finance in Zamboanga, a resolution for the establishment of a Central Bank regional office in Region IX was made. The private sector there complained that they could not compete as exporters vis-à-vis the exporters of other regions because of the lack of credit facilities. But because they articulated this in their meetings with us in the task force, a resolution was made backed up by the necessary study. The Central Bank reacted favorably and established a regional office there.

Cabaluna: Now the real test of all these sessions is accord and implementation. Someone said that we have so many planners but we have very few achievers. Maybe we should again hold a seminar on how to achieve or how to implement all our plans. And finally, I would like to read to you here from the paper of our speaker before I give you the last comment. "It is clear, therefore, that the RDC is the heart of the regional development

process. It is the nerve center of coordinated efforts to promote regional growth." My comment is: Where is its soul?

I started with an anecdote about teachers not that I have something against teachers. I revere them very well and very highly. In fact, if not for them we will not be here, for one reason or another.

This last anecdote is about teachers; and it may also be relevant to our planners. One well-qualified teacher whose credentials were excellent, at least on paper, applied for a teaching job. She was a good student, an outstanding one at that, and for all intents and purposes, she would have been a good teacher. After the interview the interviewer said, "I could really hire you as one of our teachers. The only reason why I can't is because you have no experience." And the mother who was with the applicant enthusiastically asked the interviewer, "Sir, where is that school for experience? I will send my daughter to that school. I'm sure, she'll pass there and qualify in their exams."

I hope you will remember the more essential items propounded and discussed here, and not the jokes that I gave you, so that when we will get out of this hall, at least if we all cannot be part of the planning, we can at least be part of achieving. But let me caution you: We have enough problems in this world, please don't be one of them.

Thank you.