

IMPLICATIONS OF PUBLIC POLICY IN COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

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I cannot begin without expressing to each of you a word of commendation that you should, for the first time, confer together on ways to devote your background of experience and knowledge to a deeper understanding of the process by which people transform their economic and social life. I find that you choose to call this process "community improvement." Whether you imply by this term a broader context than that given to the more popular terminology "community development" I do not know. I presume however that both are essentially the same and aspire towards identical goals. I therefore look forward with keen anticipation to the results of this Conference as a source of new and different approaches to a problem of great significance to all of us.

During the past recent years, a national effort to improve the conditions under which the majority of us live has been gathering momentum. We have been tagged as "underdeveloped." Along with India, Thailand, Indonesia, Pakistan and others in this side of the hemisphere, we are the object of friendly concern and assistance from the "more developed" countries. It is estimated that about two-thirds of the world population live in this areas. This simply means that the majority of the world population live in poverty, ill-health, hunger and ignorance. Not so long ago, we were deeply sunk in this poverty, ill-health, ignorance and while not the stark hunger which plagues India and China, a hunger nevertheless evidenced in a much reduced productive capacity.

We have come a long way from where we were a few years back. We are still underdeveloped but we are developing. In contrast to the pace of traditional development, we can safely claim that we are "rapidly developing."

We are now on the threshold of social and economic progress and stability. The war left us broken and ravaged but in the ten years of reconstruction, the material means with which to achieve prosperity and improvement have increased tremendously. The national per capita real income is higher than expected. Our national production is estimated to be nearly four per cent over that of last year. Now lands have been opened. Coupled with fertilization, irrigation, the use of high-yielding seeds, improved methods of cultivation and the control of pests and diseases, agricultural food crop production has almost doubled in ten years. Production is export crop and in animal and fish is even more impressive. All taken, the progress in agricultural production upon which 80% of our people depend for a living has beneficial effects on the income and the diets of the people, improving the level of health and the productivity of labor.

While the Philippines can not as yet be called an industrialized country, its industrial development is progressing satisfactorily. Mines are being

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opened. new industries are being established and incentives are being thought of to encourage the establishment of more and more, particularly those with a high-income and high-employment potential.

Better facilities are now available for easier communication and transportation so that the distribution of goods and services would be wider. In consonance with a public policy to gear economic development for the benefit of the rural people the national system of highway has been expanded. Even more significant is the construction of feeder roads which frees the remote barrios from the bondage of isolation.

Trade, both foreign and domestic has increased its volume. Institution savings has consistently grown and credit facilities have expanded.

In spite of a deliberate limitation in the expansion of the social fields, development in that area is most encouraging. The national health has improved. Infant mortality has dropped from 114 in 1948 to 94 in 1955. Over-all death rate has gone down to 10 per 1000 population. Today we can expect to live 51 years compared to only 40 years life expectancy a generation ago. Malaria and influenza are no longer health menaces. We do not any more have periodic epidemics of dysentery, cholera and typhoid. We are gradually building up our rural health services and the medical facilities to reach even the remotest community in our country.

Particularly during the last five years, education has begun to take a new look. This is characterized by an expansion of the education for vocational skills needed in economic development. The accent is now on the man who produces, thus developing a new kind of dignity. Training in agriculture, in industrial arts, in the trades, in handicraft and in the distribution of goods is beginning to gain acceptance along side with the professions.

We are starting a housing program which will guarantee to the low-income industrial family and to the rural family as well a comfortable home at a cost within the limits of their income.

As we look over the entire picture, we see a Philippines different from what it was ten years ago.

The physical features of our towns and cities are better looking than they ever were. The rural areas are throbbing with life and activity. Industries unthought of in the past are now sprouting at satisfactory speed. Peace and order is better than it was in previous years. We are indeed a fast developing country but as the rewards of achievement pile up, new challenges are sounded, new frontiers open up, new tasks await the labor, the leadership and the vision of every citizen.

This unprecedented development has not come accidentally. This is the result of a planned, of a directed national effort in economic development. Such still need to be done and efforts must be maintained.

Our aspirations are dynamic. As we reach our goals, there are new and higher goals to reach up for. New demands are and still be imposed calling for the highest degree of national discipline and dedication. As befits a democracy, the demands of economic development and the benefits therefrom must be shared equitably by all.

The President of the Republic has set forth the fundamental objectives of our economic development effort... "to provide a progressively increasing

number of jobs, to expand and diversify production, to minimize our dependence on imports, to bring about a more equitable distribution of income and to raise the living standards of our people." Our public policies around which programs revolve are formulated towards the attainment of these objectives.

We are seeking self-sufficiency in food. Generously endowed with fertile lands, water sources, and manpower resources, we have all the basic factors for the attainment of self-sufficiency in food. The Department of Agriculture, the ACCFA, the NARIC, the NARRA and the other agencies are developing effective incentives to increase production such as the maintenance of floor prices and the expansion of credit and marketing facilities. Further incentive to a high level of productivity and satisfaction is the acceleration in the distribution of land and the broadening of the base of land ownership.

Without a full utilization of our natural resources in economic development, it does not seem possible to create enough jobs through which our present large number of unemployed and those who are just entering the labor force may earn a living and devote their time and effort in productive activity. It is essential that while the methods of agriculture are being improved for more effective production, more new industries should be developed to absorb those which agriculture will release as well as utilize the materials and resources which are produced.

A sound monetary and fiscal policy is an essential stimulus to agricultural and industrial production. However prejudiced we are to any kind of control, they nevertheless are necessary at this stage of development. A properly directed allocation of foreign exchange and expansion of credit facilities is a strong determinant in the development of enterprises which will make for a greater use of available raw materials and which have both high-income and high-employment potential.

One of the causes of the delays in our development is the inadequacy and the timidity of capital investment. The government alone can dissipate the uncertainty with which private capital approach the investment field. This calls for stability in government policy and a high level of public administration which can inspire faith and confidence in the people.

Basic of all changes and possibly the most important single factor in economic development is education. Education must lend itself to the objectives of economic development. It must prepare people for a change. Though education, must come a new outlook upon life, new attitudes towards labor and employment, new skills, and better ways of doing, and new ideas and ideals. Education must bring about a growth in the political concepts of our people, and ready them for taking more responsibility in the management of the government and the formulation of major policy.

As in any underdeveloped country, we have defined the goals of economic development in measurable terms. Conceptually, economic development is materialistic. This is necessarily so since there is a more ready acceptance of such goals as higher per capita income, improvements in technology and better standards of living which again makes us think of the physical aspects of communal life—what and how much to eat, housing, clothing, health, education. The conventional description of an economic program is an activity which produces a direct income and the criteria again must be

efficiency, productivity and economy. We are beginning to feel dissatisfaction in a program which is totally materialistic. Although probably not too clearly recognized as yet, there is now an awareness that economic development is not necessarily synonymous with happiness. The years since economic development became a planned effort has been fruitful of lessons. It is still important that the economic base must be improved. The dominant note are still the economic factors such as increased production, better goods and services, better homes, more food, more incomes. It will remain to be so. However, we now note in our pattern for economic development a concept which connotes a wider social horizon than just the improvement of the physical aspects. It is now generally recognized that development of any kind is impossible of satisfactory achievement unless every citizen cooperates. The government sees people, not as recipients of goods and service, but as active participants in the process of production as owners of capital, of equipment, of labor and management. Recognition is also forming that no economic development can take place unless people want it badly enough work for it. The kinds of development desired varies from place to place and from person to person. The extent of the development is determined by what people seek and what they want to pay in terms of the changes which must of necessity take place in their ways of life. It is easy to double, even triple income but such a change means new skills, new habits of work, a change in social institutions and social structures. Are we prepared to for this?

I believe that the concept of community improvement was born with the definition of the participation of people in creative roles for economic development. This is the conceptual basis of the government's present community development program. To borrow a definition, community development is local improvement by local effort. Public policy reflects this definition. Based on the principle of "self-help" and on the community approach to improvement, the responsibility for advancement is thus transferred from the government machinery to the people. The achievements thereof are more truly the achievement of the people themselves. The administrative agency is only an instrument to bring the official and the non-official workers together in a common cause. The government provides the incentives, it creates an atmosphere conducive to progress, it furnishes assistance to initiate and the "know-how" to do, it stimulates the discovery of new methods. And as the movement starts, the people themselves, in organization and as individuals must take the responsibility for its growth.

Until a year or two ago, development in community life was thought of in particular items of improvement in crops raised, wells sunk, credit extended, roads and houses constructed, cooperatives and organizations organized, poultry and piggery, toilets and fences and gardens. The different agencies and departments approach the person each from the aspect of its own work. Individually, these are essential items in community improvement but their effect on the individual is often confused and temporary. Life can not be cut up into departments. The elements are so interrelated that it is disastrous to isolate each. Today, a coordinated approach to community life finds favor. This approach begins at coordinated planning of national policies and programs such as the National Economic Council has been created to do. Through coordinated planning, it is possible to assess in totality the resources and the needs of the country and to set up

a system of priorities which will enhance a balanced development in both the material and non-material aspects of community living. Coordinated national planning and policy formulation assures a certain degree of stability in government and in the country's economy. Coordination for community improvement sweeps down to implementation with the organization during the past few months of the Presidential Assistant on Community Development. This agency does not take over the community improvement functions of the other departments. It only makes possible that coordinated approach to the community through a common worker—the community development officer.

What does all this imply? We are a democracy. The government is only an instrument by which people may voice their will and translate their authority. The final responsibility for the improvement of the conditions of living lies with the people themselves. It is therefore, imperative that we become aware of our needs well enough to desire for the fulfillment of those needs. It is necessary that we become aware of our potential capacity to produce the goods and services with which to meet our needs. This awareness is probably the most dynamic thing in community improvement. How this awareness can be quickened is our common problem.

Sociologists have been looked upon as swivel chair thinkers, as college professors who love to peer into corners and bring out skeletons. They have been known as people who can tell why a cat died but who could not have done anything to prevent the cat from dying. It surprised me indeed to find that the sociologists are now taking an active interest in community improvement—in progress and are anxious to help in the furtherance of the development objectives. I see great possibilities for your participation in this program. You can, more than any other group keep this government constantly aware that society is a dynamic and changing thing. You can keep reminding the government that its great task is to help people keep abreast of changes and to give direction and guidance so that these changes may be utilized for the increased security and happiness of all. You can find the effects of induced technological changes which must be introduced to increase our material wealth on the "value" pattern of the people. We who have been elected by you to represent the interest of the masses of the people are eager to increase the return from economic and development. You can tell us why progress can not be faster. Or can it? We desire that these returns be used for community improvement and the furtherance of the common weal. How can this be achieved?

During this Conference, I hope you find the answer.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES: OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS*

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Professors are in the habit of starting lectures with a definition, and I do not wish to break the honored custom on this occasion.

What is Community Development?

The term "community development" designates the utilization under one single program of approaches and techniques which rely on local communities as units of action and which attempt to combine outside assistance with organized local self-determination and effort and which correspondingly seek to stimulate local initiative and leadership as the primary instrument of change.¹

The Philippine Community Development program emphasizes certain desired goals for the improvement of barrio living. I am indebted to Dr. Robert T. McMillan of the I.C.A. staff for the following statement of them:

Principal Objectives of the Community Development Program

- To assist in the development of self-government in barrios;
- To increase the productivity and income of the rural population through self-help projects in agriculture and other industries;
- To facilitate construction, largely on a self-help basis, of roads which will connect barrios with principal highways or feeder roads;
- To provide governmental services in barrios more nearly equal to those now available in poblacions;
- To promote better coordination of government services at all administrative levels;
- To improve through a maximum of self-help, rural facilities for education, water-supply, irrigation, health, sanitation, housing and recreation;
- To increase the educational and vocational opportunities for the adult population in rural areas;
- To increase citizen awareness and action with respect to enforcement of laws on tenancy, usury, labor and other subjects; and
- To take steps needed to improve morale of barrio citizens and strengthen their participation in the economic life of the nation.

* A paper presented to the Philippine Sociological Society, First Sociological Conference, University of Santo Tomas, July 15, 1956.

¹ United Nations Document E/CN 5/291, Programme of Concerted Action in the Social Field of the United Nations and Specialized Agencies. Quoted from Ross, Murray G., *Community Organization, Theory and Principles*, Harper and Bros., New York, 1955, p. 7.