

Document Section

The Social Reform Agenda

The Framework of Social Reform

The Government's goals of human development has two dimensions: economic growth and social reform. One is meaningless without the other. Economic growth without social reform is unacceptable. Social reform without an enlargement and more equitable sharing of the "economic pie" will inevitably fail to uplift the lives of their intended beneficiaries.

Thus, Philippines 2000, the Ramos administration's blueprint for national economic recovery, seeks to balance global competitiveness and people empowerment. It aims for economic development that will be propelled and sustained not only through the promotion of efficiency in the marketplace, but more importantly, through the advancement of social equity in terms of asset reforms, just sharing of the benefits of growth, and effective people participation in the political and economic mainstream.

For these measures to be effective, they have to be focused on properly identified participants through a people-driven process at all levels. The Government has thus set up two kinds of targets: (1) *sectoral* — farmers, fisherfolk, indigenous cultural communities, urban poor, workers especially in the informal sector, and other disadvantaged groups — women, persons with disabilities, youth and disadvantaged students, elderly, and victims of disasters — that cut across all sectors; and (2) *geographical* — the country's nineteen (19) poorest provinces and/or poverty pockets.

Key Guiding Principles

- (1) Social reform is a continuing process that addresses the basic inequities in Filipino society through a systematic, unified and coordinated social reform package.
- (2) The Social Reform Agenda (SRA) will not be defined by Government alone, but in equal partnership with the different sectors through appropriate and meaningful consultations and participation in governance.

- (3) The SRA must address the disadvantaged sectors' minimum basic needs: health and nutrition, water and sanitation (for survival); income security, shelter, peace and order (for security); basic education and literacy, and participation in governance (for enabling needs).
- (4) Commitments from both Government and the private sector shall be delineated to ensure a workable implementation of the SRA.
- (5) A policy environment conducive to a sustainable SRA shall be pursued.

Situationer/Issues of the Sectors

The Ramos Administration is committed to address the primary concerns of the disadvantaged sectors of society.

It has focused on specific disadvantaged sectors, bearing in mind the specific needs and characteristics of each sector.

- (1) For Farmers and Landless Rural Workers: limited rural infrastructure; uncertain land tenure; limited access to science and technology and limited access to markets.
- (2) For the Fisherfolk: destruction and overexploitation of their coastal resources and fishing grounds; encroachment into municipal waters by local and foreign commercial fishing vessels and reduction of freshwater fishing grounds by illegal infrastructure.
- (3) For the Urban Poor: the slow implementation or spotty observance of the Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA), as well as the continuing basic injustice of classifying squatting as a criminal offense.
- (4) For Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs): the non-recognition of their ancestral domains; violation of their cultural integrity and lack of infrastructure and support services, especially in education, justice and health.
- (5) For Workers Especially in the Informal Sector: the low level of organization of the labor force; prevalence of irregular employment, exposure to exploitative terms and conditions of employment; lack of social security; lack of technology and access to markets;

- (6) Other Disadvantaged Groups that cut across all sectors, such as:
- (a) Women, whose contributions to the economy have not been recognized, and who are treated as second class-citizens;
 - (b) Disadvantaged Students, Children and Community Youth, whose basic rights and welfare have always been neglected;
 - (c) Persons with Disabilities, who are faced with countless obstacles in joining the mainstream of society, such as discrimination in work and education, and the failure to implement the Accessibility Law;
 - (d) the Elderly; and
 - (e) Victims of Disasters and Calamities.

Vision for the Sectors

Specifically, for the:

- (1) Farmers and Landless Rural Workers — ownership, access to and control of tillable lands by the tillers, higher productivity, channels for productivity, and fair prices for produce;
- (2) Fisherfolk — empowerment and recognition, broader access to and control of aquatic resources, rational and sustainable management of fishery resources, wider availability of postharvest facilities, attainment of sustainable development and participation in the planning and implementation thereof;
- (3) Urban Poor — broader access to and security in basic needs, particularly housing and land, and broader opportunities for increased income;
- (4) Indigenous Cultural Communities — recognition and protection of their ancestral domain rights, basic services, cultural integrity and full participation in the Philippine body politic;
- (5) Workers, especially in the Informal Sector — absorption into the formal labor sector, protection by labor laws, access to programs and services for workers of the formal sector, participation in decisions affecting their interests, and organization into unions, cooperatives and other forms of associations;

- (6) Other Disadvantaged Groups that cut across all sectors — legal protection of women and children against all forms of violence (rape, pornography, sexual harassment and domestic abuse); accessibility, mainstreaming and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities; educational reform, and youth representation in both community and national development.

For these visions to become reality, the sectors must be granted access to quality basic services and to productive resources and economic opportunities. For the sectors to be able to choose and to sustain these visions, they must have strong grassroots institutions that can effectively participate in self-governance.

The Three-Point Agenda

Thus, the Social Reform Agenda consists of three main points:

- (1) Access to Quality Basic Services: *The Imperatives of Survival*. These are reforms that are critical to enable citizens to meet their basic human needs and to survive and live decent lives.
- (2) Asset Reform and Sustainable Development of Productive Resources and Access to Economic Opportunities: *The Means to Work and Earn a Living*. These are reforms that widen citizens' share of resources, both natural and man-made, from which they can earn a living or increase the fruits of their labor. Such reforms necessarily address existing inequities in the ownership, distribution, management and control over such resources.
- (3) Institution-Building and Participation in Governance: *Toward Self-Governance*. These are reforms that enable the citizens to effectively participate in the decisionmaking processes that affect their rights, interests, and their welfare. In effect, these are reforms that enhance the democratic processes.

Since the individual can not effectively act alone to promote or defend his/her interests, but has to act in coordination with other like-minded citizens, strengthening the democratic processes thus also means strengthening the social organizations that represent such collective interests so that they can actively get involved in managing the socioeconomic and political affairs of their communities with other sectors and institutions.

Substantive Indicators

- (1) The marginalized sectors actively take part in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policies, programs and structures in government at all levels.

- (2) Structural problems, such as representation in the Government and control over productive resources, are addressed to bridge the gap between the rich and the marginalized sectors;
- (3) Benefits concretely and substantially improve and enhance the quality of life of the sectors;
- (4) Mechanisms are in place to institutionalize, monitor and sustain the benefits derived from these policies, programs and structures; and to protect and uphold the interests and rights of the marginalized sectors; and
- (5) Economic development that recognizes environmental protection and conservation.

The Social Reform Package

Most Government programs and services are already designed to help improve the lives of Filipinos. Foremost among these are in the areas of health and sanitation, access to basic education and literacy programs, justice and welfare services. In the face of specific acute needs of the marginalized sectors of society, however, the Government has decided to highlight particular programs as FLAGSHIPS.

The Nine (9) Social Reform Flagship Programs

The Sector-Specific Flagship Programs:

- (1) **For Farmers and Landless Rural Workers, *Agricultural Development*, including, but not limited to, the following:**
 - (a) intensifying the implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) by increasing funding for CARP;
 - (b) concentration of available resources on Key Production Areas (KPAs), which are the geographical priority areas, using the Agrarian Reform Communities (ARCs) as the main conduits for implementation;
 - (c) increasing the budget for basic infrastructure, e.g., irrigation systems, postharvest facilities, farm-to-market roads; and
 - (d) increasing technology input for improved productivity.

- (2) For the Fisherfolk, *Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Conservation, Management and Development*, including, but not limited to, the following:
- (a) active lobbying for the immediate passage of the Comprehensive Fisheries Code, and the Magna Carta for the Fisherfolk;
 - (b) approval of the Executive Order on the formation of the Fisheries Resource Management Council (FRMC) at the local levels;
 - (c) establishment of specific implementing guidelines on the Local Government Code's provision to give preferential treatment to the Fisherfolk Sector on the use of municipal fishing grounds;
 - (d) implementation of the Seven (7) Lakes Reform Program covering 10-12 percent total area to be used for fish culture; control of stock-density from 15-20 pieces per square meter, according to the carrying capacity of the lakes; implement anti-pollution control; and, strengthen the participation of the Fisherfolk in existing bodies in the Seven Lakes;
 - (e) review and conduct consultations on projects/programs in the CALABARZON reclamation areas regarding water conversion, demolitions, dislocations and tourism;
 - (f) strengthening of ongoing projects, specifically:
 - provision of post-harvest facilities and credit to fisherfolk cooperatives;
 - better enforcement of fishery laws including the deputization of fisherfolk leaders as Bantay-Dagat/-Law/-Karagatan officers; and
 - provision of basic education services and literacy programs for the fisherfolk.
- (3) For the Indigenous Cultural Communities, *Protection of the Ancestral Domains*, including but not limited to, the following —
- (a) certification of House Bill No. 595 as urgent;
 - (b) review of all policy issuances pertaining to ICC concerns;

- (c) full and immediate implementation of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR's) Administrative Order No. 2, Series of 1993, in the priority areas for 1994 (Bukidnon, Agusan del Sur, Davao del Sur, Mindoro Occidental and the Cordilleras);
 - (d) interfacing of political/legal structures of governance with ICC traditional sociopolitical structures; and
 - (e) creation of appropriate mechanisms for an Integrated Area Development (IAD) program for priority ICC settlements.
- (4) For Workers, especially in the Informal Sector, *Workers' Welfare and Protection*, including, but not limited to, the following —
- (a) enhancing institution-building and removing obstacles to effective union organizing;
 - (b) stricter and improved enforcement of labor standards and social welfare legislation;
 - (c) expansion of coverage and benefits in Social Security and other legislation;
 - (d) improvement of workers' conditions in the informal sector;
 - (e) certification as urgent of the passage of laws on workers' welfare and protection, specifically on the following:
 - regulation of subcontracting;
 - limitations on the hiring of nonregulars (especially part-time, temporary workers); and
 - (f) provision of access to employment and livelihood programs of the formal sector.
- (5) For the Urban Poor, *Socialized Housing*, including, but not limited to, the following —
- (a) faster implementation of the Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA);
 - (b) improvements in the Community Mortgage Program (CMP);

- (c) decentralization of socialized housing efforts;
 - (d) provision of resettlement areas with basic services;
 - (e) implementation of the Slum Improvement Program;
 - (f) strengthening the Presidential Commission on Urban Poor; and
 - (g) certification as urgent the passage of the Integrated Shelter Financing Act and the Magna Carta for the Urban Poor.
- (6) For members of other disadvantaged groups consisting of disadvantaged families, women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, the elderly and victims of natural and man-made calamities, the Comprehensive Integrated Delivery of Social Services (CIDSS), including, but not limited to, the following —
- (a) convergence of social welfare services in the identified 19 provinces based on the Minimum Basic Needs (MBN) approach;
 - (b) intensified implementation of safety net measures to the sectors such as SEA *Kaunlaran*, Food Security, Parent Effectiveness, Responsible Parenthood, Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS), Day Care, Educational Assistance;
 - For disadvantaged children and youth, including disadvantaged students and out-of-school youth, *Kabataan 2000*, including the following:
 - o Program for Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances;
 - o Child Placement and Protective Services;
 - o *Sulong Dunong Para sa Kabataan*;
 - o Integrated Human Resource Development Program for the Youth;
 - o enhancing the quality and relevance of education; and
 - o broadening the accessibility of education.

• For Persons with Disabilities and Senior Citizens, Accessibility Program:

- o advocacy for the implementation of the Accessibility Law (BP No. 344);
- o nationwide implementation of the Community-based Integrated Rehabilitation;
- o *Tulay 2000*;
- o advocacy for Local Government Units (LGUs) to allocated funds for PWD programs and for organizing self-help groups; and
- o social mobilization of PWDs and their families and Senior Citizens.

• For Women, an Integrated Health and Welfare Program:

- o Productivity Skills Capability-Building cum Livelihood;
- o services for Women in Especially Difficult Circumstances;
- o strengthen Responsible Parenthood information and service for Family Planning and Reproductive Health of LGUs;
- o implementation of barangay-based Day Care Centers especially in urban areas, in support to working mothers and disadvantaged women;
- o provision of a broad range of information and services for Responsible Parenthood, Family Planning and Reproductive Health;
- o establishment of a mechanism for women to participate in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs that would promote their welfare and development, e.g., self-enhancement, Productivity Skills Capability-Building cum Livelihood, population, personal and child care, functional literacy and community participation;

- o set up Substitute Homes for Women in Crisis/ Especially difficult Circumstances that would provide temporary shelter to protect them from further harm/hazardous situations and provide appropriate services that would restore their normal psycho-social functioning; and
- o certification of Congressional bills on anti-rape and sexual harassment in the workplace as urgent.

• For Victims of Disasters and Calamities, Rehabilitation Programs —

- o capability-building and disaster preparedness;
- o food-for-work schemes;
- o resettlements;
- o basic services for restoration and rehabilitation; and
- o Core Shelter housing.

Cross-Sectoral Flagship Programs:

- (7) For all sectors, Institution-Building and Effective Participation in Governance, including, but not limited to, the following —
- (a) strengthening of local government capabilities to undertake social reform programs;
 - (b) in partnership with the NGO/PO community, LGUs, Leagues of Local Governments, Institutes of Local Government Administration and the Cooperatives Development Authority, strengthen the Integrated Capability-Building Program (ICBP) adopted by Proclamation No. 284 and implemented by the Local Government Academy (LGA) by emphasizing capability- and institution-building for People's Organizations (POs) and cooperatives;
 - (c) opening of Official Development Assistance (ODA) windows for the capacity-building of NGOs and POs;
 - (d) expansion of national government agency programs that provide financial assistance and incentives to cooperatives;

- (e) encouragement of "joint ventures" and other "cooperative undertakings" between Government on the one hand and NGOs and POs on the other for the delivery of basic services, as mandated by the Local Government Code;
 - (f) provision of a package of local tax and other forms of incentives for the growth and establishment of community-based organizations in LGUs;
 - (g) implementation of the Local Government Code provisions on sectoral representation and on a preferential option for the poor and marginalized sectors; and
 - (h) appointment of sectoral representatives to Congress and other policymaking bodies.
- (8) For all sectors, Credit, including, but not limited to, the following —
- (a) launching a "Credit-for-the-Poor" program, using a strategy of clientele segmentation by economic brackets, with a socialized credit program using the Grameen Bank approach for the ultra poor, an active and sustained cooperative formation and development program for the average poor, and a dynamic mainstreaming program for the near-poor;
 - (b) establishing partnerships between Government Financial Institutions (GFIs), e.g., the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP), and cooperatives and other nongovernmental organizations, with the LBP acting as the trustee bank for socialized credit programs and cooperatives and NGOs/POs as actual program implementors; and
 - (c) designating specific roles for different players in the financial system, e.g., for the LBP to provide credit for small farmers and fisherfolk, commercial banks to mobilize financial resources; rural banks and thrift banks to lend to small- and medium-scale entrepreneurs.
- (9) For all sectors, Livelihood programs, including, but not limited to, the following —
- (a) creation of more opportunities to train individuals for more and better incomes;
 - (b) strengthening of the community-based aspect of livelihood creation; and

- (c) building institutions responsive to the need for livelihood.

Implementing Strategies

- (1) Energizing and reorienting the bureaucracy to effectively address the social reform concerns of the basic sectors;
- (2) Encouraging, developing and institutionalizing concrete mechanisms for basic sector, NGO/PO, Church and business sector participation, on both local and national levels, in the whole process of governance;
- (3) Synchronizing, systematizing and integrating all social reform policy and program initiatives of Government to optimize the use of limited resources and benefits;
- (4) Mobilizing all possible internal and external resources to sustain the gains derived from these reforms; and
- (5) Local governments to assist in the implementation, institutionalization and localization of the Social Reform Agenda.