

The 10-Point Agenda

A SNAPSHOT OF THINGS TO COME



President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has laid out the government's vision for the next six years, during her pre-inaugural speech on June 30, saying, "Our unity as a people will be defined by a strong vision for the nation, built on common values of hard work, shared sacrifice, and love of country. The unity we seek is not one of conformity but unwavering respect for the rules and institutions of democracy. A modern country founded on social justice and enjoying economic prosperity. To achieve a united country, we need to face the deep division of our nation squarely not only on the truth but also the solution. The solution must engage all segments of society in a new government of political reform and economic change. Our nation must embrace a vision of economic opportunity, social cohesion, and always and ever democratic faith."

Consistent with this vision, Arroyo outlined her administration's 10-point agenda:

- Create six to 10 million jobs in six years.
- Construct new buildings, classrooms and provide desks and chairs and books for students, and scholarships to poor families.
- Balance the budget.
- "Decentralize" progress through the trans-

portation networks and the digital infrastructure.

- Provide electricity and water supply to all barangays.
- Decongest Metro Manila by forming new government and housing centers in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.
- Develop Clark and Subic as the best international service and logistic centers in the region.
- Automate the electoral process.
- End the peace process in a just way.
- Put a fair closure to the divisiveness among the EDSA 1, 2 and 3 forces.

National Democratic Front chief political consultant Jose Maria Sison calls it "abominable list of lies." Renato Reyes of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan says it is "laughable." But the business community through the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) is backing up the 10-point scheme. PCCI President Noemi L. Saludo said the chamber's vision is "to see the business climate in the Philippines rise up to the challenges of the global competitive arena, in particular, and boost Philippine economy and make its significant mark in the global world of business, in general."

The government is convinced it is "time to get moving." President Arroyo in a July 2 statement said, "*Nagkaroon kami ng unang Cabinet meeting ng bagong administrasyon kagabi at pinag-usapan ang hinaharap na trabaho sa 10-point legacy. Hanggang matapos ang pagtalakay sa sampung pamanang tinalakay ko sa araw ng aking panunumpa, isa-isa itong pag-uusapan sa lingguhang Cabinet meeting.*" The Cabinet was consequently divided into clusters aimed at addressing social, economic and security concerns. These clusters are scheduled to meet every three months so government can have more time attending to the people's needs

and advocating the ideas, programs and values that would benefit them, Arroyo said. "We need to secure a better future for our nation," she added.

10-Point Agenda Quantified

At a recent Cabinet meeting, Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo L. Neri presented the "fighting targets to achieve the 10-point legacy," quantifying each point.

Among the fighting targets are the creation of 10 million new jobs in six years, increase in growth to a sustainable seven percent or more up to 2010 and the reduction of poverty incidence from 34 percent to 17 percent. Other specific targets include increasing investments from 19 percent to 28 percent of gross domestic product in two years, increasing exports from US\$38 billion to US\$50 billion also in two years, developing two million hectares of agri-business land, and developing and supporting two million entrepreneurs.

The national development agenda that was presented and approved by the Cabinet in its meeting on July 1 fleshed out the 10-point program into basic tasks. Aside from generating 10 million jobs, other primary undertakings include:

- (a) tripling the loans to self-employed and small business owners;
- (b) building 3,000 new classrooms a year, grant a college scholarship to every qualified poor family and put a computer in every school;
- (c) bringing electricity to 1,500 barangays and reducing its cost to become the lowest in the region;
- (d) bringing clean water to all 45,000 barangays; and
- (e) reducing by half the price of commonly-used medicines.

To fulfill these basic tasks, fiscal discipline must be ensured increasing revenue collection, clamping down on tax cheats, and cutting waste, fraud and abuse in government. Furthermore, self-sufficiency in rice production must

be achieved. New roads, bridges and highways must be built to link the nation. The Filipino people should also enjoy more property and legal rights.

The 10-point agenda and national development agenda will be further fleshed out in the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan.

The 10-Point Agenda and the MTPDP

Arroyo's 10-point agenda is the core of the MTPDP 2005-2010. According to Neri, the President has directed the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) to base the new development plan on the 10-point agenda.

A memorandum dated July 1, 2004 signed by Cabinet Secretary and Deputy Spokesman Ricardo Saludo contains Arroyo's directive to make the 10-point Agenda as the policy direction and targets for 2005-2010, and the focus of planning and operation of the government. The memorandum also instructed the NEDA Director-General Neri to issue the appropriate circular for the completion of the task within 100 days.

Neri said the President also instructed all Cabinet members to be directly involved in the formulation of the national development agenda and its translation into specific chapters of the MTPDP. He added that both budgetary and departmental programs would be aligned with the policy directions and targets set in the agenda.

"This marks a distinct shift for the national planning agency from its traditional sector-based approach to one that is more target-based and implementation-oriented," Neri said.

In light of the shift in the approach, "NEDA is already working towards translating the President's 10-point agenda into an action-oriented plan containing programs, projects and activities of national government agencies," Neri added.

Neri has recently signed the guidelines for the formulation of the MTPDP, Medium-Term Public Investment Program 2005-2010 and the Regional Development Plans/Investment Programs for the period 2005-2010.

In the new MTPDP, the 10-point agenda are to be discussed under five themes. Theme 1 is Macroeconomic Stability Anchored on Fiscal and Financial Strength while Theme 2 is Job Creation Through Global Competitiveness. Completing the five themes are Themes 3,4 and 5, which are Direct Anti-Poverty Measures, Decentralized Development and Governance and National Harmony, respectively. ●

