

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS FOR REFORMS UNDER THE AQUINO ADMINISTRATION

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AWAKENING HOPE

- ▣ Cynical reversal of our highest aspirations
- ▣ Sense of betrayal, retreat into self-absorption, indifference, cynicism
- ▣ Easy to promise change, more difficult for people to believe
- ▣ Basic requirements:
 - Leaders of integrity armed with a legitimate democratic mandate
 - A platform of action based on an acknowledgment of our basic problems
 - A citizenry that can be inspired to be active participants in change

OUR MOST URGENT PROBLEMS

1. **MASS POVERTY AND SHARP INEQUALITIES IN WEALTH, POWER AND OPPORTUNITY**
2. **CORRUPT, INEFFECTIVE AND ABUSIVE GOVERNANCE AND WEAK PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS**
3. **DETERIORATING SOCIAL SERVICES ESSENTIAL TO SURVIVAL ESPECIALLY IN EDUCATION, HEALTH AND HOUSING**

OUR MOST URGENT PROBLEMS

1. **ABSENCE OF A COHERENT PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**
2. **GROSS NEGLECT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**
3. **BALLOONING PUBLIC DEBT AND THE MISUSE OF PUBLIC FUNDS**
4. **ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION**

OUR MOST URGENT PROBLEMS

1. **SYSTEMATIC VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FAILURE OF THE JUSTICE SYSTEM**
2. **THE ELUSIVENESS OF A JUST AND LASTING PEACE, ESPECIALLY IN MINDANAO**
3. **WORSENING ORGANIZED CRIME AND THE PROLIFERATION OF ARMED GROUPS**

OUR MOST URGENT PROBLEMS

- ❑ FAILURE TO CHART A LONG-TERM FOREIGN POLICY DIRECTION APPROPRIATE TO A SELF-RELIANT NATION
- ❑ GROSS NEGLECT OF OUR PEOPLE'S CULTURE AND HERITAGE WHICH HAS LED TO THE FURTHER WEAKENING OF FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

3 MAIN PRIORITIES

- I. REDUCING THE BURDEN OF POVERTY AND DEVELOPING OUR HUMAN RESOURCES
- II. REBUILDING PEOPLE'S TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT AND STRENGTHENING DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS
- III. LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTIONS TO CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

REDUCING THE BURDEN OF POVERTY AND DEVELOPING OUR HUMAN RESOURCES

- ▣ Despite touted economic growth, the number of poor people has steadily increased (30% in 2003 – 32.9% in 2006) or from 23.8M to 27.6M.
- ▣ In 2008 self-rated poverty ranged from 50-59%
- ▣ Dismal performance in poverty reduction compared to East Asian countries

	RP	EAsia Ave	Vietnam
Late 80s	40	55	
Late 90s	22	37	50
Mid 2000s	22.6	19	22.6

REDUCING THE BURDEN OF POVERTY AND DEVELOPING OUR HUMAN RESOURCES

- ▣ Expansion of the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) Program after improving on the targeting mechanism
- ▣ Universal PhilHealth coverage upon presentation of a valid NSO certificate especially the 7 most depressed regions (ARMM, Zamboanga, Samar-Leyte, Bicol, MIMAROPA, SOCSARGEN, Agusan-Surigao)
- ▣ 12-year basic education

REDUCING THE BURDEN OF POVERTY AND DEVELOPING OUR HUMAN RESOURCES

- ▣ Job generation, initially by small scale, labor intensive agricultural and urban development projects
- ▣ Hasten land tenure improvement by prioritizing the largest landholdings where would-be beneficiaries are organized, asking for coverage and prepared to work with each other
- ▣ Delineate the final forest line to arrest the further decline of forest cover

REBUILDING PEOPLE'S TRUST IN GOVERNMENT AND STRENGTHENING DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

- ▣ Transparency mechanisms
 - Curtail public displays of power, i.e., excessive security escorts and “wangwang”
 - No wastage of resources for signages attributing projects to government officials
 - Issue an executive order ensuring freedom of information
 - Package budget information for the media and post all transactions on the DBM website

REBUILDING PEOPLE'S TRUST IN GOVERNMENT AND STRENGTHENING DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

- ▣ People empowerment through enlisting the support of citizens in
 - Monitoring government projects
 - Reporting feedback through the most accessible means, i.e., SMS, internet, etc.
 - Involving the people in the design of projects similar to KALAH-CIDSS
 - Undertaking small steps to instill discipline and the rule of law, like Singapore's no spitting
 - Implement people's participation mechanisms already enshrined in law

REBUILDING PEOPLE'S TRUST IN GOVERNMENT AND STRENGTHENING DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

- ▣ Strengthening the career service
 - Eligibilities and qualification standards
 - Delegate the appointing authority of the President to Cabinet Secretaries below Assec
 - Abide by the legally provided plantilla of positions
 - Stop practices that undermine professionalism like “desire letters” and appointments in acting capacity
 - Review all midnight appointments to both the career and non-career service
 - Institute a measurable performance management system at all levels of government

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTIONS TO CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

- ▣ Corruption
- ▣ Government Reorganization
- ▣ Human Rights
- ▣ Peace
- ▣ Foreign Policy
- ▣ Population and Migration
- ▣ Culture and Heritage

THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

POLITICAL PARTIES

CITIZENRY / CSOs

ADMINISTRATION

LEADERS

BUREAUCRACY

POLITICAL PARTIES

- ▣ No real political parties to speak of
- ▣ Leadership devoid of direction --- personality, not platform-based
- ▣ The erosion of the standards of leadership --- popularity and name recall, patronage and accessibility
- ▣ Self-interest above service
- ▣ Leaders with negotiable virtues

THE CITIZENRY AND CSOs

- ▣ Poverty and disparities in wealth, power and opportunity
- ▣ Cynicism and suspicion formed due to years of failed expectations
- ▣ CSOs schooled in opposition
- ▣ **Proven capacity for volunteerism**
- ▣ **The need to convert the volunteers mobilized for electoral victory into a force that can be a partner for sustained reform**

THE ADMINISTRATION

OUR LEADERS

- ▣ **Victory without majority**
- ▣ **The burden of extremely high and immediate expectations**
- ▣ **Getting their act together**

THE ADMINISTRATION

THE BUREAUCRACY (the GMA legacy)

- ▣ A culture of corruption
- ▣ Weakened public institutions
- ▣ Budget deficit
- ▣ Claiming the credits and passing on the liabilities
- ▣ Appointments beyond 2010
- ▣ Midnight appointments

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

- ▣ **Some similarities with 1986**
 - **The legacy of the dictatorship**
 - **The heroism of a people's movement**
 - ▣ **Years of opposition**
 - ▣ **The victory of the electoral struggle**
- ▣ **The hopeful difference: we will not fold our banners**
- ▣ **Can we strike a balance between blind support and being critical but not damaging?**

Thank you