

NATIONAL ANTI-POVERTY COMMISSION (NAPC)

PRESS STATEMENT

AT THE NSCB LAUNCHING OF THE 2006 OFFICIAL POVERTY STATISTICS

05 March 2006, National Statistical Coordination Board, Makati City

The National Anti-Poverty Commission remains steadfast and confident that by 2010, we can achieve the targets set for poverty reduction, as enunciated under the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (2004-2010). However ambitious these targets may seem, they are achievable for as long as we sustain our momentum towards higher economic growth and ensure equitable distribution of wealth.

In 2006, upon instruction of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, NAPC together with all concerned national government agencies, focused on delivering real and social results to the people, especially to those that have not felt the benefits apparent at the top of the economic pyramid -- the poor.

Since then, the national government embarked on critical interventions that can ensure the delivery of social and economic investments that uplift the quality of life of the people. The "8 by 08" Social Payback Agenda signalled the acceleration of government's efforts in investing in people, particularly in the areas of health, education, housing and hunger mitigation, aside from job creation, cost of living, strong peso, more investments, strong anti-terrorism and green Philippines. The Accelerated Hunger Mitigation Program (AHMP) was also immediately packaged in response to the rise in hunger incidence in the country. More focused attention was given to pro-poor programs and projects' implementation and additional allocations were earmarked.

Recognizing that the fight against poverty cannot be won without our local champions at the ground, the National Anti-Poverty Commission pursued the forging of stronger partnership and coordination with local governments. Localization and convergence of efforts at the local levels are now aggressively being initiated. Synchronization of plans and activities including capacity-building interventions are making headway towards improved delivery of basic services, especially at the identified priority provinces under the AHMP.

With the growing need to promote conditions that assure better basic services for the poor, it has become necessary to determine – with absolute precision – where the poor are, why they are poor, and what service they require. Thus, NAPC embarked on a nationwide initiative to promote among the local governments the use of the Community-based Monitoring System or CBMS – a local-based poverty monitoring system. As of 22 February 2008, CBMS has been adopted by 46 provinces (20 of which are implementing CBMS province-wide), 447 municipalities, 31 cities and about 11,634 barangays.

All in all, 2006 and 2007 saw government's intent in bringing the fruits of progress to the poor. While poverty remains as our greatest challenge, NAPC under the leadership of the President, is resolute in exercising its mandate itowards achieving its targets to arrest hunger and improve the quality of life of the poor.

Today, the latest official poverty estimates based on the 2006 NSO survey will provide us some guideposts for further action. This set of data is not merely a gauge of the country's poverty situation and how many Filipino families are adversely affected in the various regions and provinces in the country; but more importantly, it would enable us to track our targets in poverty reduction, to analyze potential obstacles in achieving these targets, and to draw up adjustments and innovations, if needed, in order to meet targets within set timeframe.

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