

Keynote Message

SECRETARY NASSER C. PANGANDAMAN

ARCP2 Launching and Inception workshop

08 May 2009, 9:00 AM

Mar co Polo Hotel, Davao City

(Standard Intro)

VIPs

A. Asian Development Bank

1. Mr. Ki Hee Ryu - Project Administration Head
2. Dr. Manoshi Mitra - Senior Social Development Specialist

B. Project Executive Committee

1. Vice President Liduvino Geron - Landbank
2. Commissioner Felicito Masagnay -NCIP

C. Governors

1. Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan - ARMM (to be confirmed)
2. Gov. Mamintal Adiong Jr. - Lanao del Sur
3. Vice Gov. Datu Acmad Ampatuan - Maguindanao

D. Others

1. Undersecretary Virgilio Leyretana - MEDCO
2. Mayor Rodrigo Duterte - Davao City (to be confirmed)
3. Mr. Crescente Paez -Pres. And CEO, NATCCO

Good morning.

CARP Extension

In June 2008 the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program turned 20 years old. After two decades of implementation, the CARP turned in a report card that showed much have been done in terms of accomplishing targets. The Department of Agrarian Reform and other CARP implementing agencies have succeeded in effecting substantive gains in rural development.

The development gaps are huge and not easy to fill, however. Admittedly, much remains to be done. Nonetheless, the argument has been made especially in agrarian

reform communities helped by foreign- assisted projects – that more equitable landownership coupled with integrated support services delivery leads to poverty reduction and rural growth.

Even before June 2008 and until today, the DAR has sought to maintain the separation of politics and administration, and endeavoured to carry out “business as usual” operations. Nonetheless, the past two years has been fraught with apprehensions on the future of the Program, a future that Congress is tasked to define and spell out.

Let me now give you some good news. From all indications, based on our talks and representations with both Houses of Congress, the CARP will be extended. The period of extension is at least five years. We have been assured that the new CARP bill will be passed and signed by this June.

From the start we have known that Program Beneficiaries Development will be continued. There has never been a doubt that the delivery of support services under P-B-D would be implemented beyond 2008.

Meanwhile, our talks with legislative leaders also revealed that compulsory acquisition will likewise be continued. This is significant because as we all know; the redistribution of land is a constitutional mandate. It represents the heart and soul of agrarian reform. Thus, under the extended CARP, the DAR shall be able to complete the remaining balances in land acquisition and distribution in favour of even more agrarian reform beneficiaries.

PBD and ODA

As the land redistribution targets are met, the challenge progressively shifts to providing farmers access to other resources. These other resources will allow them to make the awarded lands productive and help them lead the socio-economic development of their communities. This challenge, we are proud to report, has been met head-on by the Department of Agrarian Reform with substantial and meaningful results.

The DAR has chalked up solid accomplishments across a range of targets and indicators in Program Beneficiaries Development. In collaboration with our implementing partners, we have constructed or rehabilitated farm-to-market roads and bridges, post-harvest facilities, and irrigation and potable water systems. These and other physical infrastructures have helped enhance agricultural productivity and uplift the welfare of residents within and outside Agrarian Reform Communities.

Efforts to promote technology dissemination, access to credit, agribusiness development, market linkages and basic social services delivery have similarly yielded many gains towards poverty reduction and the development of vibrant A-R-Cs. Equally important, achievements in community organizing and capability building have made

major contributions to the empowerment and socio-political development of farmers and their organizations.

We could not have delivered the P-B-D accomplishments without the support of international financial institutions and donor agencies. Official Development Assistance, or O-D-A, has greatly augmented the inadequate resources of government for A-R-C development.

ADB and ARCP2

We especially thank today the Asian Development Bank for renewing its partnership with the DAR for the implementation of the Agrarian Reform Communities Project 2. The first A-R-C-P, we are proud to report, was implemented successfully from 1999 to 2007. It is reportedly "considered to be among the best performing A-D-B assisted projects in the country."

This new Project adopts an approach similar to its predecessor, under the A-R-C Development Framework of the DAR. At the same time, this new Project takes off from the experience and learnings of A-R-C-P 1 and other foreign-assisted projects of the Department. Thus, we can say it is an improved version that incorporates better approaches and processes. Among these are the coverage of A-R-C Clusters to extend the reach of the CARP, and the enhancement of A-R-C connectivity towards agribusiness development. A-R-C-P 2 will also promote community-driven development, self reliance and good governance. It will be mainstreamed at all levels and it will look at the long-term sustainability of gains.

Let me also assure the A-D-B and all other partners that if we did good in A-R-C-P 1, we will do even better in A-R-C-P 2. I have instructed Undersecretary Narciso Nieto, our Project Implementation Officer, as well as Director Nelson Genito, our National Project Coordinator for A-R-C-P 2, to put together a topnotch management and implementing team, from the Central Office down the Municipal Agrarian Reform Offices.

We will hit the ground running. We will optimize the use of resources. We will plan well and deliver our targets. We will do our best. We can do no less, in view of the urgency of addressing poverty and powerlessness in the countryside.

Challenge to LGUs and other Partners

We may note that A-R-C-P 2 will cover 152 A-R-Cs in 18 selected provinces in southern Philippines. Let me tell you that the DAR has been under heavy pressure for the inclusion of other areas and provinces. This may well be expected, given the scarcity of resources and given the many opportunities offered by the Project to effect substantive gains in the development of rural communities.

A-R-C-P 2 envisions an impact of poverty reduction and sustained improvements in incomes and quality of life in its target areas. We also call on our partners in the Project Executive Committee, among the Oversight and CARP Implementing Agencies, in civil society and the business sector, and in the Agrarian Reform Communities to join us in actualizing this vision and achieving the Project goal.

(Extro)

Thank you and we look forward to working with all of you in implementing A-R-C-P 2.

Mabuhay!