



Office of the President of the Philippines
NATIONAL ANTI-POVERTY COMMISSION

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

8TH State of the Presidency Address
Secretary Liza L. Maza
NAPC Lead Convenor

On behalf of the President of the Republic of the Philippines, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, under whose office the National Anti-Poverty Commission or NAPC to which I was recently appointed as Secretary and Lead Convenor, I wish to greet each and every one a pleasant morning and at the same time express our firm solidarity with the partakers and organizers of the 8th State of the Presidency (SOP).

Much as I express overwhelming pleasure at being invited to deliver the Keynote Address in this year's roundtable discussion which is the centerpiece of the annual SOP, I regret that it is not possible for me to fulfill a previous promise to be with you physically today there being a vital need to respond to an important cabinet meeting called for by the President and synchronize with the tempo of how he does things in a pace peculiarly rapid, rather uncharacteristic of any past Presidents of the country.

Nevertheless, I do not have the heart not to be a part of this year's SOP which, in the past eight years, had served its purpose of serving as a setting focal to the methodical and comprehensive dissection of key policies and programs of the sitting president, from Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to Benigno Aquino III, and now President Rodrigo Duterte, with the end in view of arriving into proposed alternative policy directions aimed at addressing and essentially reforming the socio-political-economic problems structures besetting the country, particularly for the basic sectors that, since time immemorial, have customarily been oppressed, exploited, and utterly elbowed out to the margins of Philippine society .

In President Duterte's first State of the Nation Address, he clearly stated the policies and programs he plans for his administration to pursue, that which is centrally focused on the alleviation of the plight of the poor for which he rallies the government stakeholders to draw together towards an inclusive governance he envisions to effect a genuine solution to poverty.

Clear-cut, the President's SONA reverberated with visions towards the perspectives of people empowerment, epitomizing a government truly representative of the basic sectors where will be established the political participation of the masses of the people in drawing out policies the will embody their broader interests vis-à-vis elite politics of past administrations.

Without stating in his SONA, the President relinquished most of the tasks for the fulfillment of the purposes abovementioned to the Commission directly under his office, the NAPC, having central aspect of its mandate the strengthening of partnerships between the national government and key stakeholders that are crucial in order for effective anti-poverty strategies to be crafted.

'The poor' and 'the marginalized' are just two phrases used to describe the nation's basic sectors, who continue to be faced with the glaring inequalities that are characteristic of our social fabric. For my part as appointed NAPC Secretary, I affirm to toe the line upon which the agency I head is mandated to pursue: to come up with programs and projects in mitigating poverty and hunger through subsistence projects and activities such as backyard gardening, organic



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farming, food production, and all other people-focused and community-based interventional undertakings; to strengthen existing systems for social protection in the likes of SSS, GSIS, Philhealth and other devisable social protection mechanisms; and ensure the long-term impact of the above by effecting structural reforms for real economy, foundation of prototypes of projects such as setting up of manufacturing plants, and development of value-added agriculture and industries in every region of the country, towards the perspectives of solving poverty in all spheres.

NAPC enables the basic sectors to intervene in the crafting of policy proposals and to formulate strategies for implementing specific projects on sectoral issues. The Commission also assists them in liaising with government agencies on legislative issues.

The basic sectors are at the forefront of the long-term fight against poverty, and NAPC therefore believes that allowing them to be heard is decisive in the crafting of anti-poverty measures that genuinely respond to their needs.

The sectors are the government's partners in reform and development, and are critical in helping to bring about better living conditions for the poor.

The basic sectors play a vital role in governance. They are not simply beneficiaries but they represent the primary partners of the government's poverty-reduction programs. Their concerns are a reflection of long-prevailing incapacities in alleviating poverty, particularly in the area of asset reform.

These sectors need to be given a platform so they can navigate between government agencies and civil society institutions on issues that are pertinent to them. They are partners in pushing for far-reaching reform resolutions and sectoral agenda framing – both within and outside government – so policy proposals can be forwarded to the Office of the President.

Under my stewardship, I am animating the Commission to actively pursue opportunities for engagement with local government units, local, national and international agencies, and the rest of civil society. I believe this will stir affirmative actions from the basic sectors in corresponding to the essentials they know they need as these are an important lobby in pushing for crucial legislation for the poor, and are indispensable to the vital dynamics of governance, both at the national and local levels.

It is this participation in governance on the part of the sectors that NAPC will effectively institutionalize as it propels all-encompassing programs in addressing all levels of poverty within the term of President Duterte and beyond. This is how important the people empowerment principle is for the current administration. Without people's participation in governance and the peace process, any or all of these will be insignificant and will go nowhere but down the drain.

At this juncture, I congratulate CenPeg for institutionalizing the post-SONA State of the Presidency as a tradition of in-depth critical analysis of the programs of the sitting president. Definitely, results of this activity will be among the guidelines for the Office of the President to utilize in its pursuit of a just solution to age-old poverty through people empowerment.

In essence, the SOP is concrete manifestation of people's participation in governance.

Again, congratulations and good day!