

# Foreword



MALACAÑAN PALACE  
Manila

The Philippine economy continues to grow at a respectable pace, with the gross national product averaging 4.5 percent and gross domestic product, 4 percent for the period 2001-2003. This growth was made possible mainly by improved productivity of agriculture and services, both of which benefited from government programs to modernize agriculture and to deregulate telecommunication, shipping and trade.

In the next six years, we must do more. Eradicating poverty continues to be our biggest challenge. Thus, the basic task of our Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan for the period 2004-2010 is to fight poverty by building prosperity for the greater number of the Filipino people.

In my recent State-of-the-Nation Address, I mentioned that before I bow out of my official term as President of the Republic, I will leave behind a 10-point legacy that will comprise the major policies and programs to win the war against poverty. This legacy is elucidated in the Plan under more focused action strategies that include: the promotion of livelihood, strengthening of education, attainment of fiscal stability, decentralized development, and arriving at sustained national harmony.

These strategies also aim to meet head-on the danger signals that have emerged and threaten these gains and promise harder times ahead. Among such signals is a still untamed fiscal deficit, insufficient infrastructure, rapid urbanization that has congested our cities, especially Metro Manila, the growing number of jobless Filipinos, and the inefficient delivery of basic services.

These are the problems that prevent us from effectively confronting our country's challenges, particularly our efforts to eradicate poverty.

Knowing that so much is at stake in such task, I have thus involved myself seriously in the formulation of the MTPDP particularly in the crafting of the basic outline to ensure that the policy strategies and programs therein are more focused. I want the solutions and interventions to our country's problems to be more strategic. My main consideration for the Plan is that it must generate positive impact and must be doable.

Through this Plan, we are guided in all undertakings needed to strengthen and sustain a strong and responsive republic. The targets have been set, and I expect all agencies of government to make sure these are attained. The Plan is the roadmap through which the 10-point legacy of my administration will be achieved.

Beyond this Plan, however, is the more difficult task of making sure that it is successfully implemented. I thus call on the support of all sectors of our society to ensure its realization. The successful implementation of this Plan can only be realized through a strong partnership as well as more equitable risk-sharing among government, the business sector, and the civil society.

Thank you, and God bless us all!

  
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO