



A Comprehensive Policy Document on the

**ROXAS ROBREDO
PLATFORM OF
GOVERNMENT**

In 2010, millions of Filipinos flocked to the polls to vote for the belief that has defined the past five years: *Kung walang corrupt, walang mahirap*. Through the people's continued trust in the *Daang Matuwid*, the Aquino administration has been faithful to the promise it made.

Today, the Philippines is a country revitalized.

We have regained our ability to dream; and we have demonstrated that if we work together, as one nation, we can turn these dreams into tangible realities. Above all, we have embraced the central principles of *Daang Matuwid*—integrity, transparency, participatory, and inclusivity—recognizing that national development is only possible through local empowerment, which is a cornerstone of incorruptible and effective governance. These principles have been the foundation of our country's resurgence, and they must likewise drive our pursuit of further progress.

While we have already witnessed a large-scale transformation of the country, we believe that we have yet to scratch the surface of the Philippines' true potential. All of us must continue striving to better ourselves. After all, there are long-term targets that must be achieved, as well as rapid global developments that require a proactive government and selfless leadership.

To name a few challenges: We must continue the hard work of improving urban transportation systems; we need to continue the process of achieving a true and lasting peace in Mindanao through the establishment of a progressive and inclusive Bangsamoro region; we must ensure the proper implementation of the Reproductive Health law; and follow through on the promise of transparency and the upgrading of civil service systems. We need to complete land distribution and improve the way we administer and manage land; and we must ensure a power sector that can support our remarkable economic growth.

Given that the Aquino administration has successfully given rise to a government that is more honest and transparent, we have restored our people's faith in our institutions, and are able to devote even more focus to pressing problems that must be solved, such as the following:

- **ENSURING FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY.** The Philippines is considered a lower-middle income country; in 2013, the Philippines was the 9th country in the world in terms of the number of stunted children. We must clearly define the links and the essentiality of agriculture sector to food and nutrition security towards formulating necessary steps that will address hunger and under-nutrition among Filipino families, which is also critical to poverty eradication and sustainable development.

- **UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING INTER-PROVINCIAL DISPARITIES IN HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND OTHER HUMAN DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES.** Economic growth and governance with integrity are only two factors that contribute to human development. Access to the available opportunities must be further improved to ensure growth is inclusive and well-spread among provinces. The wide fiscal space we have now reveals even more how the organization of government—and the efficient devolution of specific responsibilities—is critical.
- **ADAPTING PUBLIC INVESTMENTS—DESIGN, PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION SYSTEMS—TO THE REALITIES OF CLIMATE CHANGE.** We must adapt both to the immediate and long-term threats posed by climate change, whether it is to the rising water levels or the evolving food and nutrition security landscape.
- **EXPANDING THE CHOICES AND HARNESSING THE SKILLS AND POTENTIALS OF OVERSEAS FILIPINOS.** All Filipinos, whether here or abroad, are part of our economy. Apart from extending assistance to overseas Filipinos, we must generate more opportunities domestically so that working abroad is a matter of choice and not out of desperation. With Filipinos being acknowledged globally, we must recognize and harness the skills and potentials of overseas Filipinos to contribute to modernizing institutions and boosting economic development.
- **COLLABORATING WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR.** Job opportunities are best created in collaboration with private enterprise. Government activities are important for short-term relief or stimulus, but sustainable economic growth must be complemented by the private sector creating jobs and giving rise to more opportunities for people. Effective ways of collaborating with private enterprise must be pursued by the government.
- **FACILITATING EFFICIENT INTEGRATION WITH THE GLOBAL ECONOMY.** Certain government interventions—such as having appropriate regulations in place, as well as ensuring fully-functional infrastructures—are crucial to ensure that integration with the global economy would not put local businesses at the disadvantage side, but would rather reap the full benefits from it.
- **FACILITATING EFFICIENT AND INCLUSIVE URBANIZATION.** With the rapid economic growth, which has led to an increasing trend of internal migration, it is a challenge for the government to effectively manage three closely interrelated aspects—economic, environment, and social—that will guarantee the development of inclusive and sustainable urban areas.
- **LONG-TERM ENERGY SECURITY STRATEGY.** Energy must support our development aspirations. What kind of energy is needed and where can it be sourced, given our archipelagic nation, as well as our collective and individual growth targets and dreams should be ascertained.

In short,

While we continue to build on what has already been achieved, we should look ahead—anticipate and prepare for the new set of development challenges facing us. As we continue journeying towards becoming a developed country and economy, the Office of the President must ensure that public services are responsive and efficient to support the opportunities and the aspirations of every Filipino. It must ensure that the entire government is best organized and capacitated for emerging challenges. By this we mean, organizing the interaction of national and local governments in the most efficient and effective way possible.

THE PATH TO ACHIEVE THE VISION

For the country to move forward, the organization of government must evolve to the extent allowable by laws and mandates.

We will view our country not merely as a collection of disconnected cities, municipalities, or provinces. We will rather see it as a collection of barangays and an intricate constellation of social units where no family is left behind.

We will bring principled synergy, cooperation, and consensus-building to all branches of government not only to enhance state efficiency, but also to develop a sense of oneness in all branches of government.

To achieve these, we will shift certain accountabilities and responsibilities away from the national to the local. Through this, the local government units, with the full weight of the national government behind it, will assume a greater role for the progress of their constituencies.

THE PRESIDENT AND THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AS ENABLERS

In the scheme of things, the crucial role of the President is to be an enabler—to capacitate and facilitate, rather than dictate, the determination of development targets and plans of local government units (LGUs). This is dependent upon a better way of harnessing the Executive, and a method that practices management by objective.

The President, together with the national government, will focus on supporting local development by providing the necessary resources and capacity-building for provinces, cities and municipalities to deliver the basic needs of their constituencies and to collaborate with the private enterprise. This requires the national government to implement authentic devolution as envisioned in the Local Government Code (LGC).

There are vast disparities across provinces with respect to physical resources and conditions, sources of income and wealth, and human development outcomes. The best and most efficient way of supporting a sustainable development process that will reach all is to allow provincial, city and municipal stakeholders to identify their goals and priorities and oversee the implementation of government support for those priorities.

The role of the national government in turn is to support provincial, city and municipal efforts, providing the necessary regulatory and policy environment that will level the playing field, thus assuring the delivery of national social infrastructure and public goods – inter-provincial infrastructure, defense, etc., that will enable effective local governance.

THE PROVINCE – THE PLATFORM FOR EFFICIENT AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

The provinces are best positioned to spark inclusive development. Development is an integrated endeavor and involves the transformation of rural areas to more urban ones. The challenge is making this process as efficient and inclusive as possible. While cities and municipalities are assigned the delivery of basic social and public services, provinces can ensure that every citizen in the province has equal access regardless of where they are. They can also facilitate efficient linkages between cities and municipalities so that markets and enterprise can stimulate local economic growth.

Consequently, the national government must recognize the critical role of the provinces in anchoring economic development within their jurisdiction. With the inter-provincial disparities known to us, the national government must equally capacitate every province with the fiscal and administrative powers and resources to effectively carry out its role. This may mean revisiting the Local Government Code, which does not assign enough powers to provinces. The national government must also monitor and act to link “leading” and “lagging” provinces. By these linkages, spatial inequities, which are natural and bound to arise, need not translate to social inequities. That is, citizens should be able to enjoy the same quality of health, education, and other human development opportunities, no matter where they are located.

Through provincial physical framework and development plans, the province has the responsibility of harmonizing local plans and targets, making sure that resources are optimized across their jurisdiction, and that implementation is synergized and not counterproductive. It is through the province that a ‘convergence’ of national sectoral agency programs should be effected. National sectoral agency plans must directly contribute or enable the realization of provincial plans and not operate separately or independently of provincial plans.

CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES: THE DIRECT PARTNERS OF FILIPINO FAMILIES

In the LGC, cities and municipalities are tasked with delivering frontline basic services, directly responsible for the goods, services, and local ordinances that will enable their constituents to pursue their dreams. There is already a direct partnership; we envision taking this partnership to the next level.

Under this administration, cities and municipalities will work with their constituents to identify the most pressing needs of the community. Funding support and capacity building from the provincial level can be augmented by the central government and translated into immediate benefits for Filipino families – from low-rise housing, to health services and medicines, to local livelihood opportunities.

We envision the evolution of the Executive Branch, led by the Office of the President, in active support and partnership with the governors of each of the 80 provinces in the country, who in turn, will partner with the mayors within their jurisdictions.

The national government will, above all, remain guided by the goal of empowering the Filipino people: from providing support to local governments that have identified their key targets and needs, to implementing a governance framework with a policy of creating an enabling environment in which every Filipino can thrive.

To accomplish this, we will:

- (i) Revisit agency budgets to determine which parts involve devolved services and consequently design mechanisms so that these can be transferred to the supervision of provinces as is provided for by the LGC;
- (ii) Continue and expand the bottom-up budgeting program, with provinces responsible for the vetting of, and the oversight of city and municipal proposals (which must be included in the provincial development plan and strategy). On top of the Internal Revenue Allotment due to each city and municipality, the expanded bottom-up budgeting program will make additional allocations (based on population) available for the specific purposes of ensuring that all citizens have access to jobs, basic health services, education, infrastructures for water and sanitation, housing, and security against crime and disasters, wherever they are and regardless of cost. Transparency and accountability mechanisms co-designed with provincial, city and municipal governments will be further enhanced to ensure that public resources are spent responsibly; and
- (iii) Capacitate and strengthen the barangays, through the passage of the Barangay Reform Act, to make them truly effective as partners of cities and municipalities in identifying the needs of the communities and delivering services to the people.

The abovementioned describes a central government and local governments whose efficiencies are maximized: through active interaction and strong partnerships, LGUs are fully empowered. This allows them to ensure the successful delivery of basic social and public services that will support the dreams of every Filipino family to attain a better life—one characterized by freedoms fully realized under a Roxas Administration. We shall achieve this through prioritizing the most impactful policy areas, and through clear programs and initiatives that have immediate, near-term, and long-term benefits for Filipino families:



FREEDOM FROM HUNGER

Guarantee the access of every Filipino family to quality employment as well as entrepreneurial and livelihood opportunities higher up the value chain, so that they can have enough food on their tables every day, sufficient fund for education, medicine, and other daily needs.

For access to quality employment opportunities, we will:

- (i) Further develop the manufacturing and tourism industries and boost productivity of the agriculture sector to spur jobs creation in these sectors of the economy;
- (ii) Expand infrastructure and the interconnectivity of different sectors of the economy to improve access to and encourage the creation of employment opportunities;
- (iii) Make higher investments in technology to provide internet connectivity to all communities, particularly those in far-flung or relatively rural areas, towards making the most of the opportunities available online;
- (iv) Devolve labor market information to each barangay (for workers) and to each city and municipality (for employers) to facilitate skills-job matching;
- (v) Study and develop flexible and lawful work arrangements to adapt to the needs of employees and employers, thereby securing humane working conditions and encouraging the creation of jobs; and
- (vi) For youth employment, provide assistance by exempting first-time jobseekers from government licensing, clearance, and permit fees, as well as by providing jobseeker counseling in every barangay to facilitate efficient skills-jobs matching among the youth.

For entrepreneurial and livelihood opportunities, we will:

- (i) Create an environment that will unleash the entrepreneurial talent of every Filipino and further simplify and standardize processes for business licensing and regulation;
- (ii) Implement mechanisms to make credit more easily available to Filipinos who wish to start an SME, or to those with the goals of expanding their SMEs;
- (iii) Continue the establishment of Negosyo Centers in every city and municipality; and

- (iv) Devolve dissemination of market information to barangays for the efficient adaptation of goods and services according to inputs and demand.



FREEDOM FROM FEAR

Ensure the delivery of affordable, available, and accessible quality health care services to every Filipino family.

To make health care services responsive to the needs of Filipinos, we will:

- (i) Reduce out-of-pocket expenses, and address gaps in utilization of health care services provided by the government;
- (ii) Further reduce drug prices through bulk procurement;
- (iii) Ensure the availability of appropriate health facilities and human resource for health (HRH) at different levels of care, with the goal of ensuring that every barangay has a health station with sufficient primary healthcare providers, equipment, and medicines;
- (iv) Continue the establishment of PhilHealth-accredited women and child centers in isolated barangays;
- (v) Sustain the provision of complete immunization from infancy to adolescence, and to senior citizens; and
- (vi) Supply free maintenance medicines for the poor through the Rural Health Units or Urban Health Centers for the following conditions – diabetes, symptomatic gout, leukemia, tuberculosis, breast cancer, and colorectal cancer.

Ensure an adequate, affordable and accessible housing program, complete with basic necessities

For a responsive and efficient housing program, we will:

- (i) Reform and expand the housing finance system to ensure that it truly caters to the housing needs of the poor and homeless;
- (ii) Ensure that housing subsidy is transparent and well-functioning;
- (iii) Focus on providing in-city, near-city resettlement areas with medium and high-rise housing units;
- (iv) Ensure that housing programs will provide habitable, livable shelters complete with the basic necessities (e.g. flowing water, electricity, sewage); and
- (v) Craft a clear urban policy (remodeling) to restructure urban blight and urban informal settler communities into habitable living areas. This will likewise address related issues such as traffic, flooding, pollution, and crime in urban areas.

Safeguard the life and property of every Filipino family against crime and disasters.

For security against crime, we will:

- (i) Continue and strengthen the Lambat-Sibat program; and
- (ii) Further raise the involvement of citizens in scientific, programmatic crime prevention and reduction programs as well as in maintaining peace and order. All these go hand-in-hand with our efforts to further enhance the capabilities of our uniformed services and law enforcement units.

For security against disasters, focus must be on:

- (i) Improving, through regular assessment, local disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) plans to make sure its responsiveness to the changing local terrain as well as local resources and needs; and
- (ii) Opening up more spaces and develop mechanisms for people's participation in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of local DRRM plan, encompassing its four aspects – namely, disaster preparedness, response, prevention and mitigation, and rehabilitation and recovery.



FREEDOM TO DREAM

By freeing Filipino families from hunger and fear, we empower them to dream—and we will ensure that they can realize these dreams by continuing reform for quality education and further expanding Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps).

To continue reform for quality education, we will:

- (i) Continue and improve on programs that will enhance educational infrastructure and ensure the sufficiency of basic education inputs to meet the growing requirements of the K to 12 program;
- (ii) Focus on further boosting the performance of teaching personnel through more extensive capacity building programs;
- (iii) Adopt international standards in assessing performance of schools, colleges, and universities to raise their competitiveness, as well as that of their graduates;
- (iv) Develop technical vocational centers in provinces to expand tech-voc education both in and of itself, and as an integral part of our formal education system; and
- (v) To support deserving Filipino students, we will establish a fund to provide financial support (tuition and allowance) to high school graduates who finish at the top of their class nationwide, to allow them to pursue their tertiary education in quality schools; and honors high schools in the provinces, where education is subsidized and students will be provided with allowances.

To further expand Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, we will:

- (i) Widen the coverage of Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) to cover near-poor families to prevent their downward slide to poverty; and
- (ii) Recalibrate the program to allow beneficiary families to transition to decent jobs or livelihood opportunities and to extend family investment in health and to post-secondary education.

THE PHILIPPINES IN ONE GENERATION: A MODERN AND DEVELOPED COUNTRY

This is our plan; this is our goal for the Philippines—a modern and developed country where the different branches of government have shared accountabilities and responsibilities in working with the Filipino people to ensure that every family enjoys freedom from hunger and fear, and has the freedom to dream. A modern and developed country with a government that puts the needs and aspirations of every Filipino family at the heart of all decisions; a government that prioritizes empowerment of the local in the pursuit of further progress of the country.

We are determined to make this vision into reality because we know that the future is not something that just happens. It is something we must work towards, together. It is something we fight for, and we are fighting for the futures of all 100 million Filipinos and even the next generations.

This is the expansion, the acceleration of the Daang Matuwid, founded on the same principles: integrity, transparency, participatory, and inclusivity. This is our opportunity to institutionalize a government that delivers and empowers—a government fueled by the meaningful participation and trust of the people. Continuity with intensity—one that builds on the achievement of the vibrant present—is the surest way by which we can join the developed world within one generation. We must not let this opportunity slip through our fingers.

We must, and we can, summon the solidarity to continue the Daang Matuwid. This is our commitment to every Filipino family.