

Henceforth: Anagat

CRITIQUE OF THE MEDIUM-TERM PHILIPPINE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (MTPDP) FOR 2001-2004 AND SOME POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BASIC SECTORS

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I. Introduction

Any discussion on financing for development cannot be complete without a critical look at the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan or the MTPDP. In fact, it should be the starting point. This is because the blue print that outlines in bold strokes the development path that the Philippines will traverse under the incumbency of the executive leadership is contained in the MTPDP. Institutionalized by Marcos a few years after seizing power through martial law, the plan is crafted by the government's foremost think tank—the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), a government agency created by a presidential fiat for that purpose.

Cicilo F. Habito, former NEDA Director General, with a twinge of derision, commented that "The MTPDP gets better every time. Or so the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) tends to assert with each new Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) it churns out."¹ Is it really getting better, especially in the context that the MTPDP's formulation came with some consultations with a few of NEDA's more favored civil society groups?

This paper will try to critically examine the MTPDP (henceforth referred to as the Plan) of the Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo administration for the remaining years of its incumbency (2001-2004). A synoptic appraisal, this paper is by no means exhaustive and is limited in focus to what the author and his colleagues in the Basic Sector of the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) deemed essential and have direct bearing to the fight against poverty. The paper benefited a great deal from the inputs of the Agriculture, Agrarian Reform, and Natural Resources Working Group of the NAPC Basic Sector as well as the inputs of the workshop that tackled the first draft of the paper during the National Consultation on Financing for Development: Civil Society Agenda Building, as well as from comments and suggestions of colleagues and friends in and outside of NAPC. The author is, however, solely responsible for whatever error in interpretation and analysis forwarded in this paper.

II. Structure of the MTPDP

* Prepared for the National Consultation on Financing for Development: Civil Society Agenda Building, sponsored by Social Watch Philippines, August 13-15, 2001, SEAMEO Innonoch Bldg., Diliman, Quezon City. The author is a Sectoral Representative of the Formal Labor and Migrant Workers Council of the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC). He is also a lecturer at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology of the Ateneo de Manila University.

¹ Cicilo F. Habito, "The MTPDP 199-2004 (a.k.a. Anagat Plan) 2004: How Not to Implement a development Plan," manuscript, undated.

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