

Chapter 6

Good Governance

I. REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Governance, or the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs, is a key factor that promotes socioeconomic growth and development. The UNDP definition states that: "governance includes the state, but transcends it by taking in the private sector and civil society. All three are critical for sustaining development. The state creates conducive political and legal environment. The private sector generates jobs and income and civil society facilitates political and social interaction - mobilizing groups to participate in economic, social, and political activities. Because each has weaknesses and strengths, a major objective of good governance is to promote constructive interaction among all three."

To sustain development, governance must be effective, honest, equitable, transparent and accountable. It must establish political, legal, economic, and social circumstances for poverty reduction, job creation, environment protection, among others. Good governance thereby leads to the improvement of quality of life.

In the Region, the LGUs and private sector are national government's important partners in the attainment of the President's 10-Point Legacy. With the aim of empowering the LGUs, the Local Government Code of 1991 has bestowed on them additional capabilities to improve operations and deliver quality services to their constituents.

Challenges Facing Local Governance

Poor local administration

The Region's LGUs remain wanting in the area of local administration, which has, in part, influenced the efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of social services.

Management capabilities of LGUs need to be enhanced to ensure the successful implementation of programs and projects in their localities. Furthermore, staff capabilities have to be upgraded in order to better handle devolved functions in areas of physical and socioeconomic planning, investment programming, project development implementation and monitoring, among others.

Weak local resource mobilization

Even with higher IRA shares mandated by the Code, LGUs need to mobilize additional revenues from local sources to further fund their development priorities. They have yet to explore the additional fiscal powers given them as they are largely dependent on the IRA.

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For FY 2003, the IRA comprised 88.7 percent of the combined total income of the Region's provinces. Among provinces, Davao Oriental had the highest IRA share in their total income at 93.5 percent, followed by Davao del Sur at 91 percent. On the other hand, the Region's property tax, business, and other income comprised only 11.3 percent of total income.

Inadequate regional and sub-regional linkages

Various mechanisms have been put in place to facilitate planning, investment programming, as well as project development and monitoring between and among national government agencies and LGUs in the Region.

Even with these mechanisms, however, the Region needs to enhance its coordinative and collaborative efforts to link all current activities, vertically and horizontally. For instance, there are duplicating initiatives implemented by NGAs in the different areas of the Region, which could have been dispensed for other projects or in other areas. There are also duplicating projects which, if funds were only lumped, could be implemented to undertake a similar but bigger project with less expense. On the other hand, there are local initiatives which could be better pursued together with contiguous localities to achieve larger benefits with shared resources.

Challenges Facing Peace and Order and Public Safety

Continued threat of criminality

The Region is confronted with various threats from leading separatist groups, communist movement, and local criminal elements. Some intense fighting is being reported from time to time between lawless elements and government troops. As of third quarter of 2003, MILF operations in the area involved about 15 incidents, which included bombings, encounters, harassment, abductions and ambushes. Furthermore, as of the first semester of the same year, the Communist Terrorist Movement (CTM) was held responsible for 29 incidents involving encounters, liquidations, burning, ambushes, harassment, and abductions. Of the 1,158 barangays in the Region, about 126 are classified as infiltrated by the CPP/NPA/NDF and 35 barangays are being influenced.

Moreover, a lot needs to be achieved in the government's campaign against drug abuse. The existence of illegal drug syndicates, as well as the use of marijuana, remains a major problem.

Unfavorable living condition of prison inmates

Prison inmates in the Region receive insufficient food rations due to the meager food allowance allotted for each inmate, which amounts to only thirty pesos per day. This allotment is inadequate considering the high cost of food and commodities. Another predicament in the Region's jails is congestion, which has given rise to health, sanitation, and safety problems.

Various measures, however, are being done to make the life of the inmates bearable and productive. These include the conduct of livelihood projects, literacy and value formation programs, religious activities, physical and recreational activities and exercises.

Lack of capability in disaster management

To effectively deal with natural or man-made calamities, the LGUs have formulated their respective *Disaster Management Plans and Disaster Contingency/Preparedness Plans* pursuant to Presidential Decree 1566. They have also organized Disaster Coordinating Councils to provide

technical and financial assistance in the rescue and rehabilitation efforts in areas affected by calamities, such as flooding. It has been noted, however, that due to the lack of facilities, technology and logistics support, the assistance provided by these Councils had not been very efficient.

However, community participation, which is vital in rescue operations, has been deemed wanting. There is, therefore, a need to invest in the training of more people in disaster prevention, disaster preparedness, as well as disaster operations.

II. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Towards a More Effective Local Governance

Improve local development administration

DILG and other concerned agencies need to vigorously pursue their efforts toward improving LGU capacity in local development administration. Capability-building activities for local chief executives, as well as the other local government staff have to be extensively undertaken to upgrade skills and processes.

On the other hand, LGUs have to be more open and aggressive in seeking the support of the national government in responding to their requirements related to this. They also have to establish a system of prioritization and adopt mechanisms that will allow them to better respond to the needs of their constituents.

Enhance local revenue mobilization

The fiscal operations of LGUs in the Region need to be improved for the furtherance of development efforts in their localities and the region, as a whole. More creative ways of raising revenues may be initiated by them based on the powers delegated to them by the Code. Together with this, mechanisms to make collection efficient and effective have to be established. Collection targets may need to be accompanied by an encouraging incentive system to persuade both collectors and taxpayers to be conscientious of their responsibilities. On the other hand, development efforts should be made consistent and visible to the constituency to entice voluntary payment of obligations.

Relatedly, with the increased powers given to them by the Code and the supposed increased inflow of fiscal resources, NGAs need to pro-actively undertake a transfer of technical know-how to the LGUs specifically in the areas of project planning and programming vis-à-vis resource utilization to facilitate advancement of local development activities.

Strengthen coordination and collaboration between and among national and local governments

To better pursue regional development activities, the national and local governments need to take a step beyond its coordinative and collaborative efforts. Linkages have to be maintained, both among NGAs and with LGUs, so that development activities are focused and directed. Efforts toward this end need to be constant, consistent, and participatory.

Aside from the usual venues for coordination, initiatives may be geared towards getting together both active players in the national and local governments, outside of their usual work

environments, to discuss and share varied development issues and other similar subjects as a way of strengthening working relationships, thus, making them more effective and efficient partners in development.

Towards a More Peaceful, Orderly, and Safe Region

Intensify police efforts on crime prevention

There is a need to intensify crime prevention and control activities to contain all forms of criminality and preempt terrorist attacks. Continued police visibility should be heightened to protect and secure places where people converge.

The PNP modernization law should be implemented immediately to better equip the police in controlling lawless elements, as well as improve the administration of the justice and criminal law system. Likewise, vigilance and alertness among the citizenry should be enhanced.

To ward off terrorist activities, intensification of intelligence efforts should be aggressively pursued. There should be deployment of more Philippine Army personnel in areas deeply penetrated with terrorist groups.

Impose stringent penalties to drug-related cases

The government's anti-illegal drug programs should be aggressively implemented to curb the Region's drug problem. To support these efforts, there is a need to look into the laws governing drug offenses to discourage repetition. Heavier penalties should be imposed for drug crimes. Persons incarcerated due to drug related crimes should not be granted a parole.

Improve living conditions in jails

The major issues that need to be addressed by correction and rehabilitation are congestion in jails, inadequate food and poor maintenance, and lack of proper equipment and residential facilities and structures.

Improve efficiency in disaster preparedness and management

The national government, in partnership with LGUs and the private sector, need to work together to address the issue on disaster preparedness and management. Considering the presence of flood prone areas in the Region, as well as the possible threats of other calamities, activities related to these need to be pursued. The LGUs have to intensively implement their Disaster Management Plans and Disaster Contingency/Preparedness Plans while, at the same time, the necessary support should be given to the Disaster Coordinating Councils so that related disaster facilities and equipment will be made readily available when calamities strike.

Hand in hand with these, special focus on efforts on advocacy and capability-building have to be extensively undertaken in the different communities, especially those in calamity-prone areas. The involvement of communities in the delivery of the necessary services is vital and would prove to be more efficient in the delivery of services responding to disasters.

III. PRIORITY PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

Establishment of a Regional Government Center in Davao City

The project calls for the establishment of a Regional Government Center which shall accommodate the various national government agencies located within Davao City. It involves the acquisition of lots and construction of buildings, as well as, the provision of necessary related support infrastructure. It will, thus, provide consolidated facilities for regional agencies for easy access of clients to their services, as well as, ultimately reduce government expenditures specifically for office rental.

Modernization of Police Services and Equipment

The project calls for the provision of specialized training to PNP personnel in Region XI to strengthen the skills of the police force, ultimately resulting to sustained peace and order in the Region. It also includes acquisition of vehicles, fire power, and modern and highly technical communication and investigative equipment to make available, as well as upgrade its current pool of resources.

Construction of the Mindanao BFP Training Center and Facilities

The project proposes to establish a Bureau of Fire Protection Training Center in Mindanao for the development of empowered public safety professionals in the area. It involves the acquisition of a 10-hectare lot in Davao City, construction of building, and procurement of modern firefighting apparatus and equipment.

Improvement of Jail Facilities

The project shall undertake the improvement of jail facilities in the different provinces and cities in the Region. It involves the construction, improvement, and/or renovation of additional cells, perimeter fences, administration and jail buildings, pavement and pathways, sewerage and drainage systems, as well as procurement of furniture and equipment.

Integrated Area Public Safety and Disaster Management Program

The project involves the rehabilitation of critical watersheds in Compostela Valley province. It also includes capability-building on disaster preparedness for the Disaster Coordinating and Peace and Order Councils and the flood-prone communities in the area, as well as provision of adequate facilities and equipment for public safety and disaster prevention