

Message by **DIRECTOR AGNES CATHERINE T. MIRANDA**  
*National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC)*  
Forum on Decent Work and Social Justice in Times of Crisis

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Ladies and Gentlemen:

For nearly a hundred years now, the International Labor Organization has been at the forefront of the global effort to promote social protection and decent employment for the most vulnerable sectors of human society.

The men and women of the Philippine National Anti-Poverty Commission therefore extend their appreciation to the organizers for allowing our agency the opportunity to participate in this important gathering.

We believe that the significance of this event lies not in the crisis that the world now confronts, but in the opportunities that it has brought forward.

While we live in difficult times--times when millions of families throughout the world must exist under conditions of uncertainty and peril--we are also moving through an age of historic global renewal.

Ours is a nation that has survived hundreds of years of colonial rule, war, political strife, slavery, poverty and hunger.

Over those many centuries of trial and difficulty, we have learned that most problems of human making are within the capacity of human creativity, industriousness and ingenuity to solve.

The Philippine government's response to the global crisis is therefore founded on hope--on the ideas of personal initiative and equal opportunity, and on work and its many rewards.

We welcome change that corrects the mistakes of the past, and we are unafraid of the possibility of setbacks.

We welcome criticism, and are open to the suggestions of our people. We furthermore stand united with all those who defend decency and accountability in the fulfillment of individual responsibility.

The Philippine's Economic Resiliency Plan (ERP), and the Comprehensive Livelihood and Emergency Employment Program (CLEEP), combine the country's most important economic objectives with cherished social goals.

CLEEP builds partnerships with local government units, non-government organizations or people's organizations, the private sector and academe and taps their- pools of expertise, resources, and logistics.

In the context of limited resources, program/project/activity partners, together with participating local government units, non-government organizations and the private sector work together to analyze problems, real needs and capacities, and seek ways and means to leverage funds. They collectively identify and/or prioritize the programs/projects/activities that generate the most number of jobs, employ the greatest number of individuals.

The implementing framework of the Comprehensive Livelihood and Emergency Employment Program is as follows:

- CLEEP programs/projects/activities are aligned or support super region development priorities-"agribusiness" for the North Luzon Agribusiness Quadrangle (NLAQ) and the Mindanao Agribusiness Region; "tourism" for Central Philippines; "globally competitive industrial and services centers" in the Metro Luzon Urban Beltway (LUB); and "information and communication technology and knowledge economy" for the Cyber Corridor.
- CLEEP programs/projects/activities are aligned or respond to the needs of the 12 poorest provinces (based on the 2006 Family and Income Expenditures Survey, National Statistical Coordination Board).
- CLEEP programs/projects/activities are aligned or respond to the needs of the 12 most food poor provinces.
- With the newly signed Renewable Energy Law, "Green Collar jobs" and all budget" funded environment and energy independence jobs were added. These include re-greening of logged-over uplands or the regeneration of mangrove areas; coastal cleanup and Baywatch groups under the Grassroots Entrepreneurship for Employment in Tourism (GREET), barangay electrification using solar panels or connecting them to hydroelectric powered grids and other clean energy initiatives that the newly signed Renewable Energy Law can unleash,

It is a sound and intelligent response, and it is one that we are prepared to carry out to its fullest measure.

Based on the plans submitted to the NAPC Secretariat by various implementing

agencies under CLEEP (as of 13 April 2009), around 456,595 jobs will be generated and about 280,686 individuals will be employed. As of April 13 this year, some 81,689 poor, displaced, unemployed or underemployed workers have already been hired under various emergency jobs programs.

These workers are now helping to develop small Filipino enterprises, build and maintain roads, repair irrigation systems, and improve our country's port and hospital facilities, among others.

This is a time of national maturity, understanding and willingness to face our problems as they are - not how we would like them to be.

For the first time in our nation's history, we are moving toward decades when our most cherished aspirations are actually within reach.

This is no doubt that the maximum impact of a reduced economy falls on those at the bottom of the income ladder. The first affected in hard times are those who earn less and work with little education and training. They are also the last ones to recuperate when times get better.

The President's Comprehensive Livelihood and Emergency Employment Program combines our economic objectives with our foremost social goal--that of rescuing the underprivileged Filipino family from a life of poverty.

And while this government does not intend to fall short of our people's hopes, we must all make every effort to prevent failure. At this juncture, national progress is not a matter of mere chance. It is a matter of choice.

Let us proceed forward with great consideration--and let US always choose our path wisely.

Thank you