

Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO) E-News March 27, 2008

UNCSA Statement on the Current Situation of the Nation

Corruption Works Against Inclusive Development

We are civil society organizations (CSOs) that have come together in the United Nations [\[1\]](#) Civil Society Advisory Assembly (UNCSA) in the Philippines. The UNCSA was formed in late 2006 to provide the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) with strategic and substantive guidance on policies and programs to improve development effectiveness.

Good governance, macro-economic stability/ broad-based and equitable development, basic social services, environmental sustainability, and conflict prevention and peace building – these are the 5 themes of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) in our country. These are development concerns that are important to us all, including the UNCSA and, we believe, all bilateral and multilateral aid and development agencies.

We know that corruption and government's lack of transparency are detrimental to these development concerns and hinder the efforts of the UN, civil society and other sectors to attain our development goals. Corruption leads to the loss of substantial government resources that could otherwise have been used for development. Corruption also weakens the credibility and capacity of our political institutions. We are thus alarmed by the ZTE-NBN scandal and other major government projects that have been tainted by reports of corruption.

We are also concerned that the recently released government official statistics show that poverty incidence has increased from 30% of the population in 2003 to 33% in 2006 – despite continuous economic growth during this period. It is apparent that the poor have been excluded from the benefits of our country's economic development.

We are further concerned that the present Administration's focus on its political survival has meant that the poor are also being excluded from participation in governance by recent government actions. Foremost among these is Administrative Order 187, issued on July 31, 2007, that constricts the space for CSO participation in the National Anti Poverty Commission (NAPC).

We believe that Truth, Accountability and Reform are necessary for the satisfactory resolution of the ZTE-NBN and other corruption scandals. We believe that both immediate action and long-term solutions towards comprehensive systemic change are needed to ensure transparent, accountable and participatory governance and inclusive development.

All sectors of our society, including civil society organizations and the UN and other multilateral and bilateral development agencies, need to reflect on our role in and contribution to the current situation. Why is it that, after all our development and governance work in the past years, poverty and corruption are on the rise?

We ask the multilateral and bilateral agencies to ensure that their supported programs and projects are not used to cover up wrongful governance nor by corrupt government officials to deflect criticisms against them.

We also ask these agencies to help ensure that government resources are used effectively for inclusive development.

We further ask all multilateral and bilateral development agencies to ensure that their supported programs and projects adhere to the laws and standards of good governance, including transparency, accountability and meaningful civil society participation. As a start, these agencies should provide widely distributed regular reports on their projects' compliance with procurement laws and good governance standards.

Let us together work to put an end to the worsening poverty and corruption in our midst.

Approved by the UN Civil Society Advisory Assembly on March 13, 2008, at Quezon City, Philippines.

Signed by:

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[1] We wish to clarify that we are CSOs independent of the United Nations (UN) agencies in the Philippines. This is our statement, which we have agreed on among ourselves in the CSA. Our views do not necessarily reflect those of the UN.

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