

**Social Development Week 2008**  
**“Change for Good Governance, Good Governance for Change”**  
**Caucus of Development NGO Networks & Peace and Equity Foundation**  
 December 11, 2008, ISO, Ateneo de Manila University

**Afternoon Session:**

**Change for Good Governance: Preparing for Engagement in the 2010 Elections**

**I. Opening Remarks**

CODE-NGO Chairperson Ms. Anna Marie Karaos welcomed the attendees to the forum. She went on to explain the almost never-ending cycle of elections in the country – as soon as winners are known, aspiring candidates already announce their intention for the next one. She emphasized that voting is still a very important means of participation in the country’s democratic process. Voting gives people the chance to determine who gets to run the government and how it will be run. It is an opportunity to make a change in the government. She encouraged CODE-NGO to be more deliberate in their plan for electoral involvement.

**II. Presentation of Panelists:**

Subject	Resource Person
Importance of Partisan and Non-partisan engagement	Dr. Benjamin Tolosa Ateneo de Manila University
Non-partisan engagement	Bishop Broderick Pabillo, D.D. Co-chairperson, Task Force 2010
Partisan engagement	Corazon “Dinky” Soliman Trustee, INCITEGov

***Bishop Broderick Pabillo, D.D.***  
***Task Force 2010***

Bishop Pabillo began by reiterating the importance of elections. Election is the way many moderate people believe change can be brought to the country. However, he pointed out that elections do not always bring out the best outcome. Thus, citizens are challenged to engage themselves in the process in two ways: by non-partisan involvement and partisan involvement.

He explained that Task Force 2010’s engagement is non-partisan. However, it is also equally important to have partisan involvement. It is not enough to have clean and honest elections. Good candidates should also be brought forth and chosen by the people.

He said that politics is everywhere and no one can avoid it. Politics is about governance. Any group of people who come together need governance, including families and even barkadas. Given this inevitability, everyone is urged to continually hold our officials accountable. Thus, even the Church should be involved in politics, understood as governance.

He cited examples of activities by non-partisan organizations:

- To encourage citizens to go out and exercise their right and their duty to vote
- To see to it that all are able to register
- To encourage political education to tell people how to exercise their choice
- To cleanse voters’ list
- To help secure
  - Independent poll watchers

- People to give information in polling places
- Legal advisers
- Ballot watchers
- Provisions for volunteer watchers, esp. food and transportation
- To continue monitoring of the performance of elected officials.

The Bishop said there is a lot of work to be done. He also noted that several groups have worked together to coordinate their electoral initiatives, such as the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV), Institute for Political and Electoral Reform (IPER), and Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan (SLB). He is encouraged by the presence of all of these groups and the resilience of the Filipino people.

**Benjamin Tolosa, Ph.D.**  
**Political Science Department, Ateneo de Manila University**

Dr. Benjamin Tolosa began by saying that in the context of this economic downturn, there is a greater demand for social reform. The problem though is that instead of engagement, citizens are more prone to disengage in politics. As issues of socio-economic survival have become more pressing, the call for truth, accountability and reform have been dissipated. The challenge in the 2010 election will be to engage the public instead of letting them slide into disengagement.

He stated that the Philippines is in the midst of a serious democratic recession. Dissatisfaction ratings are lower than ever for the Arroyo administration. The country is now experiencing a crisis in trust, which shows in the trust ratings of Mrs. Arroyo. There is a crisis of trust in the integrity and efficacy of the political system and its actors. There is a deep sense of disempowerment and a crisis of hope in national politics. He challenged CODE-NGO members to empower their communities, to act together in ways that connect social and political change for democratization.

He encouraged the audience to oppose actions that cater to narrow interest, curtail participation and endanger democracy, such as the concrete threats of Charter Change at this time and abuse of appointing power. He said there is a need to enforce a reform agenda that connects political and social transformation; local and national change- in building an electoral constituency in 2010.

He also said there is a deeper reason for this feeling of alienation: many people feel that the democracy we have is a democracy for the elite. This is why the people need to develop mechanisms that challenge politicians to make concrete commitments of genuine and effective response and monitoring systems to make them accountable for their promises. Thus, there is a need for both non partisan and trans-partisan electoral work.

He said that moving beyond the recession involves leveling the playing field and fostering greater socioeconomic equity. Both are critical to building institutions of democratic development. Political engagement between 2008 and 2010 can be seen from a perspective of both defending and deepening democratic processes.

Some ideas to deepen democracy can be found in *The Challenge of Deepening Democracy* from Larry Diamond (2008):

- Horizontal relations of trust and cooperation among autonomous and vigorous NGOs to challenge elitist hierarchies and personal rule
- Need to develop institutions of vertical accountability. Democratic elections are a manifestation of vertical accountability.
- Need to develop institutions of horizontal accountability. There should be institutions that check the work of other institutions.
- Institutions should link citizens, not just to one another, but also to the political process itself. This something we still have not fully mastered in the civil society movement. Our movement has not yet translated into the setting up of genuine political parties, although there have been some

efforts in this front. This is something that need to be addressed, which will probably necessitate electoral reform or constitutional reform.

- Depoliticization and professionalization of the civil service
- Socioeconomic reform that will promote growth and equitable development.

**Corazon “Dinky” Soliman  
InciteGov**

Ms. Soliman began by sympathizing with CODE-NGO’s sense of frustration at the seeming eternity of bad governance. However, she also related that there are islands of good governance present. She then challenged the assembly, “How can we become a nation of good governance? How can we make examples of good governance the norm, instead of the exception? “

She presented four key areas the assembly needs to work on, especially the last two on the list:

- Rights-based approach work
- People drive development
- Transparent professional civil service
- Accountable honest service-oriented political leadership

She also shared that if the situation persists, it will only get worse. She asked the assembly to look at 2010 as an opportunity for people power, as a step towards ethical, service- and reform-oriented leadership. She called on the assembly to help build a critical and significant mass of passionate people determined to assert their right to choose national leaders.

She proposed to change politics in order to have political change. She asserted that NGOs need to be partisan by saying, “We should not leave politics in the hands of politicians. If we do, we have signed off our democracy. Politics must not remain in the hands of people doing the usual politics. We have to make politics sacred again.”

She then further defined the concept of Change Politics. Change politics means transparent and honest politics. It protects and respects human rights—economic, social, political, and civil rights. It serves the people and the public good. It is not populist. It lives and works with integrity and ethics. It strengthens institutions of democracy and civil engagement. It fosters solidarity and the common good caring relationship. It protects the national patrimony and sovereignty.

PHLCOS and CODE-NGO are proposing to conduct sub-regional consultations to do three things:

- Define and further define change politics
- Build consensus on the action and organization for change politics
- Generate names and faces of tested leaders who live and practice change politics, even if they have not figured in national politics. Let us not be limited to the current players in politics.

By mid-2009, she proposed to have a National Consultation to consolidate the results of sub-regional consultations and launch the change politics campaign. She also emphasized that as the assembly continues to look through the ranks for leaders, they should also continue to test their commitment to social reform.

Before she closed her talk, she briefly introduced her organization INCITEgov and its role in promoting Change Politics:

- To develop the framework for political renewal and change politics
- To assist in the facilitation of the consultations and consensus building
- To provide technical support for the movement/ organization for change politics.

She then called on the assembly not to agonize, but to organize.

### III. Panel Discussion and Open Forum

After the presentations of the panelist, the floor was opened for a Q&A session:

Q: *Ms. Jovelyn Benedicto, UMMC*

- What is the agenda of the Task Force 2010 if ever elections will push through? Or if the government pushes for Charter Change?

A: *Bishop Pabillo:*

- We still haven't tackled our next actions should elections in 2010 not push through. Also, our problem is not only Con-Con or Cha-Cha, there is also a possibility that Martial Law will be used as an excuse to hold off elections.

Q: *Mr. Boyet Arreno, WEVNet*

- How can we make a model for political accountability work on a national level?

A: *Bishop Pabillo:*

- We can do that only when the people are engaged. It is easier to enforce accountability in a community because it is only small scale. However, it is more difficult to do on a national level. Perhaps, the members of CODE-NGO can help answer this problem.

Q: *Ms. Remy Rikken, Women in Politics:*

- The process we have in Women in Politics is partisan. We vote for a political entity, but our candidate already has a specific agenda from the people. What can you say about this model?

A: *Bishop Pabillo:*

- It's okay if we vote for one person who carries our agenda, but that is only one person. When he is elected into office, he is only one voice in the system. That's why we need create a party, so that not only one person will help push the agenda.

Q: *Ms. Emmy Santos, NATCCO*

- We lack the perspective of outsiders in our efforts. Perhaps we can get someone from the labeled group to comment on the civil society to find out how they view us?

A: *Ms. Soliman:*

- I agree, but traditional politicians and people who have been co-opted by them only see things in black and white. "If you are not part of us, you are against us." So for them, civil society is sometimes a partner, sometimes a destabilizer.

Q: *Mr. Boyet Arreno, WEVNet:*

- Can an NGO begin by being non-partisan and then become partisan after the situation progresses?

A: *Ms. Soliman:*

- Not only should we present our agenda to our chosen candidates, we should scrutinize our political bets to see if they really are truly committed to our agenda based on their actions. We realize that the NGO as an NGO cannot campaign because that it not their mandate. What we need is a separate organization where individuals can be members.

A: *Prof. Tolosa:*

- I think there maybe organizations that are prepared to make the decision to become non-partisan and trans-partisan. The two could meet. The important thing is that you are developing a reform agenda.

*A: Dodo Macasaet, CODE-NGO:*

- There are limits for NGOs being partisan. NGO workers who want change can join a mechanism as individuals, as part of their commitment for social change.
- The PHILCOS and CODE-NGO partnership is really a work in progress. We would just like to get the assembly's and audience's comments on this. If you are okay with this, we can work together to make this a reality.
- CODE-NGO as a network actually called for NGOs to be engaged in the 2010 elections either in a partisan or a non-partisan way. We feel that there seems to be a vacuum in partisan side. We are aiming to provide a dialog on how one can participate in a partisan way.

#### **IV. Synthesis and Closing Remarks**

Mr. Dodo Macasaet, Executive Director of CODE-NGO, summarized the afternoon session. He emphasized the challenge to cultivate engagement and find more effective ways to get involved in political change. He also said that with the heightened political impasse, CODE-NGO is faced with a choice: to either give up or to continue. He hoped then that the members will choose to fight for change, rather than to back down.

Prepared by:

Karen Jao  
Documenter

**SDW2008 Forum on Change for Good Governance: Preparation for 2010 Elections  
December 11, 2008, ISO-Ateneo de Manila University, Quezon City**

**List of Attendees**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>
1. Calica, Carlos	AADC
2. Mabaso, Francisco	AGB
3. Cano, Cesar	AGB
4. De Leon, Richard	AGB
5. Rovira, Cherry	Alterplan
6. Redoblado, Sarah	AMLCS
7. Bumatay, Ruel	Association of Foundations
8. Jiao, Norman	Antique Federation
9. Navallasca, Lorena	Ateneo de Manila University
10. Aduna, Dana	Ateneo de Manila University
11. Brillantes, Dominique	BANGON
12. Palo, Aepril Maita	BMFI
13. Hernandez, Ariel	BPI
14. Almogino, My	Capiz CODE
15. Fantilaga, Eliseo	CMI – CORDNET
16. Lumdang, Ely	CMM Ugaw Net
17. San Agustin, Ed	Coalition for Bicol Development
18. Bahia, Mildred	Coalition for Bicol Development
19. Bañares, Joy	Coalition for Bicol Development
20. Samar, Ram	COPE
21. Marcelino, Rolando	CTRC
22. Butz, Ma. Tita	Eastern Visayas Network
23. Docena, Agustin	Eastern Visayas Network
24. Lawsin, Paulina	Eastern Visayas Network
25. Maray, Godofredo	Eastern Visayas Network
26. Mosquiza, Ian	Environmental Legal Action Center
27. Barbarona, Raul	ERDA Foundation
28. Fabros, Conchita	ERDA Foundation
29. Flores, Julieta	ERDA Foundation
30. Paulino, Noel	ERDA Foundation
31. Roxas, Paul	FORGE Cebu
32. 100. Firmase, Josephine	Iloilo CODE
33. Areño, Emmanuel	Iloilo CODE
34. Lim, Liza	Institute of Social Order
35. Baldoza, Chona Evelyn	Josefa Segovia Foundation
36. Zabala, Celerina	KAPPIA Network
37. Paraguaya, Sylvia	MASS-SPEC / MINCODE
38. Corro, Dolores	Mindanao Coalition of Development NGO Networks
39. Digal, Ian	Mindanao Coalition of Development NGO Networks
40. Mang-usan, Abraham	Mt. Province Network
41. Avelino, Michelle	National Confederation of Cooperatives
42. Carillo, Luis	National Confederation of Cooperatives
43. Estocada, Jennifer	National Confederation of Cooperatives
44. Gandiongco, Reynaldo	National Confederation of Cooperatives
45. Lim, Emilia	National Confederation of Cooperatives
46. Magdaong, Romeo	National Confederation of Cooperatives
47. Omalin, Paulo	National Confederation of Cooperatives
48. Santos, Emelina	National Confederation of Cooperatives
49. Nuqui, Ma. Teresa	NORFIL Foundation
50. Lanuza, Zaldy	Operation Compassion

51. Cucio, Dong	Operation Compassion International
52. Abando, Rolando	PHILDHERRA Mindanao
53. Baang, Paul	PHILDHERRA Mindanao
54. Dela Rosa, Renato	Philippine Business for Social Progress
55. Guevarra, Kathleen Joy	Philippine Business for Social Progress
56. Labit, Janelle	Philippine Business for Social Progress
57. Madronio, Lady Diane	Philippine Business for Social Progress
58. Quiobe, Marivic	Philippine Business for Social Progress
59. Catacutan, Elvira	Philippine NGO Support Program
60. Balderrama, Benedict	PHILSSA
61. Angeles, Jocelyn	PHILSSA
62. Karaos, Anna Marie	PHILSSA
63. Pindang, Geraldine	PHSJ – Davao
64. Rikken, Remedios	PILIPINA
65. Magpayo, Cezario	PLCPD
66. Iting, Simplicia	Providence Home of St. Joseph
67. Paragas, Marietta	Shontoug Foundation – CORDNET
68. Garcia, Margreth	SNHU-SCED
69. Neva, Johanessen	Streetlight Philippines
70. Permejo, Nina Majarlika	Streetlight Philippines
71. Magbitang, Myrna	Union of Metro Manila Coops
72. Cabile, Ruel	World Vision