

## **DOCUMENTS**

### **THE PHILIPPINE POPULATION PROGRAM UNDER THE AQUINO ADMINISTRATION**

In this section of *PPJ* we present three views of the Philippine Population Program, as it evolved in the post-EDSA era. The first of these is a "Population Policy Statement" issued by the Commission on Population (POPCOM) in early 1987. The statement reaffirms the government's recognition of the importance of population factors in affecting national development and outlines the basic principles and "policy thrusts" of the population program, as envisioned by the Aquino administration.

The next two documents present critiques of the policy statement and of President Aquino's population program. The first selection is taken from a paper by Alejandro N. Herrin entitled "Population, Health and Education: Policy Initiatives Under the Aquino Administration." Herrin summarizes the policy statement and criticizes it for being "ambiguous as to its position regarding fertility and population growth moderation." In the second selection, Virginia A. Miralao charges that the current program ignores the needs of women and suggests that women should organize themselves politically so as to correct the resulting imbalance. Miralao's paper was originally prepared for a consultation-workshop for women's groups to be held by the Center for Women's Studies, University of the Philippines.

#### **1. POLICY STATEMENT ON THE PHILIPPINE POPULATION PROGRAM COMMISSION ON POPULATION**

The ultimate goal of the Population Program is the improvement of the quality of human life in a just and humane society. The 1987 Philippine Constitution reaffirms the Government's commitment to this goal. It provides: "The State shall promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all." (Sec. 9, Art.II).

The achievement of this goal requires a recognition of the close interrelationship among population, resources and environmental factors. Population factors affect and are, in turn, affected by the availability of resources and environmental conditions. Recognition of these interrelationships involves a broadening of population concerns about family formation, the status of women, maternal and child health, child survival, morbidity and mortality, population distribution and urbanization, internal and international migration, and population structure.

#### **Constitutional Guarantees**

Accordingly, an integral part of the Government's population policy is the provision of support to the efforts directed towards achieving consistency between the country's population growth rate and the state of her resources, as well as a more balanced population distribution within the context of human and

family welfare as provided for in the 1987 Philippine Constitution and the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan, 1987-1992.

Such efforts shall be guided by the following provisions of the 1987 Philippine Constitution:

Article XV, Sec. 3.1: The State shall defend the right of spouses to found a family in accordance with their religious convictions and the demands of responsible parenthood.

Article XV, Sec. 1: The State recognizes the family as a foundation of the nation. Accordingly, it shall strengthen its solidarity and actively promote its total development.

Article XV, Sec. 3.4: The State shall defend the right of family associations to participate in the planning and implementation of policies and programs that affect them.

Article II, Sec. 12: The State recognizes the sanctity of family life and shall protect and strengthen the family as a basic autonomous social institution. It shall equally protect the life of the mother and the life of the unborn from conception. The natural and primary right and duty of parents in the rearing of the youth for civic efficiency and the development of moral character shall receive the support of the government.

### **Policy Principles**

Orientation towards the over-all improvement of family not just fertility reduction.

2. Respect for the rights of couples to determine the size of their family and choose voluntarily the means which conform with their moral convictions and religious beliefs.
3. Promotion of family solidarity and responsible parenthood
4. Rejection of abortion as a means for controlling fertility.
5. Recognition of socio-cultural variations among regions and among localities within regions.
6. Promotion of self-reliance through community-based approaches.
7. Coordination and integration of development efforts at various levels of government.
8. Enhancement of public-private sector partnership through the complementary participation of non-government organizations (NGOs)
9. Maximum utilization of participative and consultative approaches.

### **Policy Thrusts**

1. Integrated approach to the delivery of health, nutrition, and family planning services, a subset of which is the integration of value formation, responsible parenthood and family planning as a vital component of comprehensive maternal and child health.
2. Conduct of information, education and motivation in the promotion of responsible parenthood and family planning services in tandem with other development programs, taking personal beliefs and

cultural values into consideration.

3. Provision of full and sustained information on medically approved and legally acceptable family planning services as the couple's basis for free choice.

Assurance of accessibility and availability of family planning services.

5. Support to programs enhancing the status and role of women.
6. Advocacy of policies and measures which can reduce the imbalances in population distribution as this relates to inequities in the social structure.

## 2. POPULATION, HEALTH AND EDUCATION: POLICY INITIATIVES UNDER THE AQUINO ADMINISTRATION

Alejandro N. Herrin

This paper reviews the major policy initiatives of the Aquino administration in the area of population, health and education....

### 2.2 The Population Policy Statement of 1987

After a year of official silence, the Commission on Population issued in April 1987 a "Population Policy Statement". The policy states as its ultimate goal the improvement of the quality of human life in a just and humane society. It calls for a broadening of population concerns beyond fertility reduction to include concerns about family formation, the status of women, maternal and child health, child survival, morbidity and mortality, population distribution and urbanization, internal and international migration, and population structure. It recognizes that if current economic and demographic trends continue, the pursuit of alleviating poverty and improving the quality of life will become doubly difficult in the future as rapid population growth exerts more and more pressure on scarce resources as well as on an environment that is already showing signs of strain. Accordingly, it aims to provide support to efforts directed towards achieving consistency between the country's population growth rate and the state of her resources. Such efforts will be guided by various provisions of the 1987 Constitution which include (a) the right of spouses to found a family in accordance with their religious convictions and the demands of responsible parenthood; (b) the recognition of the family as the foundation of the nation; (c) the right of families or family associations to participate in the planning and implementation of policies and programs that affect them; and (d) the recognition of the sanctity of family life and the protection and strengthening of the family as a basic autonomous social institution.

The basic principles governing population policy includes, among others: (a) orientation towards overall improvement of family welfare, not just fertility reduction; (b) respect for the rights of couples to determine the size of their family and to choose voluntarily the means which conform to their moral convictions and religious beliefs; (c) promotion of family solidarity and responsible parenthood; (d) rejection of abortion as a means of controlling fertility.

The major program thrusts in the area of population growth consists of the following: (a) integrated approach to the delivery of health, nutrition and family planning, a subset of which is the integration of value formation, responsible parenthood and family planning as a vital component of comprehensive