



**UNITED NATIONS COUNTRY TEAM  
2008 Philippines Development Forum  
Clark, Pampanga, 26-27 March 2008**

**Theme: “Accelerating Inclusive Growth and Deepening Fiscal Stability”**

***Revisiting the 2007 PDF***

In the span of the year since we all met in Cebu, much has been achieved; the issues and challenges we face continue to be the ties that bind us to work together for this country's development. We commend the Philippine Government for achieving very respectable economic growth, reducing the budget deficit, making additional revenues available for increased social spending for health, education and infrastructure, and making headway in pursuit of peace in Mindanao.

Even with these gains much needs to be done in the next few years to reach the 2015 target for attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). According to the 2007 Midterm Progress Report on the MDGs, the goals less likely to be achieved - specifically access to primary education, maternal mortality and access to reproductive health services - are directly linked to poverty. As such, more efforts are needed to properly address the fundamental causes of poverty and inequality.

***Progress to Date***

Notwithstanding the remarkable 7.3% gross domestic product (GDP) growth (the highest in 31 years), socio-economic development in the Philippines remains uneven and poverty continues to be characterized by widespread disparities across regions and population groups. The most recent poverty estimates indicate that there were 27.6 million poor Filipinos in 2006, a 3.8 million increase from the 2003 data. The highest poverty incidences, estimated at four times that of Metro Manila and accounting for one-third of the country's total poor, are found in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), Western Mindanao, Bicol and Eastern Visayas.

Poverty continues to be a rural phenomenon. Two out of every three persons in the country live in rural areas and are dependent on agriculture. Poverty incidence among agricultural communities is roughly three times that of the rest of the population and the sector accounts for 60% of total poverty.

Because of rural poverty, migration to urban areas has made the Philippines the fastest urbanizing country in Southeast Asia with 55 million of its 86 million population (64%) living in urban areas. Thirty percent of this 64% live in slums. Although rural poverty incidence remains higher in absolute terms, urban poverty incidence increased from 17.9% in 1997 to 24.9% in 2003, while rural poverty incidence declined from 44.4% to 35.3% during the same period.

Compared to its East and Southeast Asian neighbours, poverty reduction in Philippines has lagged far behind Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and China - countries that started with higher levels of poverty incidence than the Philippines but have successfully managed to lessen, if not virtually eliminate absolute poverty.

Amidst these realities in the country is the major threat of climate change that can exacerbate the situation. Climate change, brought about by global warming, is now described as unequivocal. Climate change is felt worldwide and can totally obliterate development gains unless the country puts in place adequate mitigation measures and adapts to its onslaught.

Indeed, this situation provides a strong need for inclusive growth, where no one is left out, where everyone shares in the benefits of economic growth.

### *What Inclusive Growth Means to the UN Country Team in the Philippines*

The United Nations (UN) supports the call for inclusive growth primarily because it is a means to achieve the MDGs and ultimately, the attainment of human development, which is at the heart of the UN's advocacy and its programmes. And because human development and human rights are inextricably linked, the UN's work in development has consistently been through the prism of the Human Rights Based Approach to Development (HRBA) that covers civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

Poverty, characterized by such factors as unequal access to resources, discrimination, as well as social and cultural stigmatization, is both a cause and a product of human rights violations, and it affects all human rights. Low incomes can prevent individuals from having access to education - an economic and social right - and this consequently hampers their participation in public life and development processes - a civil and political right - and their ability to influence the policies that affect them.

The HRBA enhances the enabling environment for equitable development by empowering people to take their own decisions. It brings in legal tools and institutions - laws, the judiciary and the rule of law principle - as a means to secure freedoms and human development. It is the backbone of good governance.

A human rights based approach provides both a vision of what development should strive to achieve (to secure freedom, well-being and dignity of all people everywhere) and a set of tools and essentials references (human rights standards and principles). It is essentially based on the values, standards and principles captured in the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent legally binding rights, conventions and treaties. It not only defines the subjects of development, but it also translates peoples' needs into rights recognizing the human person as the active subject and claimholder. It further identifies the duties and obligations of those against whom a claim can be brought to ensure that needs are met. The value of a human rights based approach lies particularly in the transformative potential of human rights to alleviate injustice, inequality and poverty. Human rights are moral norms, standards of accountability and weapons in the struggle for social justice.

The MDGs are about implementing rights and entitlements based on recognition of the structural and underlying causes of poverty. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights is clear that **development is about freedom**: freedom from misery and suffering, from hunger, from illiteracy,

from disease, from inadequate housing, from deprivation of basic resources and services, and from insecurity.<sup>1</sup>

Looking beyond incomes as the central yardstick of development, the concept of human development presents a more comprehensive tool in gauging the level of development of a country. Fundamental to enlarging these choices is building human capabilities - the range of things that people can do or be in life. The most basic capabilities for human development are to lead long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable, to have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living and to participate in the life of the community. Without these, many choices are simply not available, and many opportunities in life remain inaccessible.<sup>2</sup> Investing in human capital through education and health is primordial to inclusive growth. It is also the lifeblood of human development.

Reaffirming that inclusive growth goes above and beyond economic growth, social and sustainable development are critical to the achievement of the MDGs and it should continue to be the overarching framework for the implementation of policies and programs. Achieving the Millennium Development Goals is a social, human rights, and economic issue and need to be addressed at the same time as deepening fiscal stability and sustaining macroeconomic growth. Policy coherence in the reform agenda across socioeconomic sectors, including partnerships with the private sector, is an important way to ensure sustainable growth and guarantee the human and socioeconomic rights of all sectors, especially the most marginalized. Achieving policy coherence is a challenge but it is also a survival strategy for the developing world in the face of globalization, which while driving trade and growth, key for poverty reduction, is also spurring greater inequalities between the haves and the have-nots.

The UN, as the Co-Convenor of the PDF Working Group on MDGs and Social Progress, believes that significant progress can be made in the Millennium Development Goals less likely to be achieved through the creation of more opportunities for inclusive growth. The principle of “inclusive growth” emphasizes that, to the maximum extent possible, the economic opportunities created by growth are available to all, particularly the poor, and that growth is consistent with and supportive of MDG achievement. Sustainable and equitable growth, social inclusion, empowerment and security are the ultimate outcomes of inclusive growth.<sup>3</sup>

## ***Key Issues***

The UN emphasizes that: (1) social inclusion and gender equity are not “add ons” but a pre-condition for inclusive growth; (2) justice and peace are necessary for development and human security; (3) economic growth is important but must target investments in the social sectors; (4) stable population growth is conducive to inclusive growth; and (5) the convergence of efforts and well-targeted interventions are important in order to ensure maximum impact for women and indigenous people, where resources are most needed.

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<sup>1</sup> Human Rights and the MDGs: Interdependent Commitments, UN Millennium Campaign

<sup>2</sup> Opening Remarks delivered by Ms. Nileema Noble during the Launching of the 2007/2008 Human Development Report, Renaissance Makati City Hotel, 27 February 2008

<sup>3</sup> UNDP’s Medium-Term Strategic Plan and Defining and Measuring Inclusive Growth – Application to the Philippines, ADB, 2007

A vision of poverty alleviation and adequate access to safe and nutritious food at all times for each and every Filipino demands focus striving for a few simple priorities, which reflect an understanding of fundamental vis-à-vis peripheral constraints; the appropriate government role without crowding out participation by the private sector and civil societies; and consider the lessons with respect to rural growth or stagnation.

**Social inclusion and gender equity are not “add ons” but pre-conditions for inclusive growth.** While economic growth provides necessary resources to permit sustained improvements in human capital, building human capabilities would enable people to make better contributions to growth and break the cycle of poverty. Education is considered to be the equalizing factor in moving out of poverty. Improved health and nutrition have been shown to have direct effects on labour productivity, individual learning capacities, especially for the poor. Malnutrition is a crippling legacy from mother to child - malnourished moms give birth to low birth weight babies, leaving those who survive susceptible to illnesses, stunted growth and incomplete development. Among other results, malnutrition can deprive the child of intellectual and learning potential that cannot be recovered. Improved sanitation, along with hygiene education and improved water supply, will underpin efforts to achieve many of the MDGs.

UN/PDF work has contributed to the growing appreciation of, and commitment to, the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA), with progress on school-based management and competency-based teacher standards, as well as an expanded implementation of the Province-wide Investment Plan for Health (PIPH). The Food for Education Programmes reached over 185,000 primary school children in over 800 schools in Mindanao, thus contributing to a recorded 40% increase in school attendance and a reduction of drop-outs to 5%. With UN assistance, the Provincial Hunger Mitigation Action Plans were finalized.

Generating decent and productive jobs is one of the major preconditions for sustainable development. The latest Philippine labour force survey indicates that despite high growth rates, the economy has not been able to produce sufficient jobs and employment actually dropped particularly in the manufacturing and export sector. Young men and women are more likely to be unemployed. There is high rate of underemployment indicating the inadequate quality and productivity of existing jobs which is contributing to the outflow of critical skills and the increasing skills mismatch with many unfilled vacancies which in turn stifles business growth. While jobs can sometimes be a derivative of economic growth, in most countries this is not automatic and a multi-pronged strategy for employment and decent work is required. Key elements are support to small medium enterprise (SME) growth as labour intensive job generators, relevant skills and entrepreneurial training, social protection and upholding of labour rights, strengthened labour market institutions and local economic development.

The UN works with governments, employers, workers, and labour unions to directly help child labourers and young people through training, livelihood, business start up and local economic development programmes to address the challenge of employment and decent work. We also work at the policy level for strengthened labour market institutions and sustainable solutions such as child labour free supply chains to large firms. Over 4,000 family members have generated and increased their income through livelihood support in the form of microcredit, basic literacy, vocational training and microenterprise start up.

Migration forms an important part of this picture for the Philippines. While work abroad continues to play an important role in the sustenance of families at home, through remittances, the social

costs of absent family members can be considerable, and the general drain in talent from particular sectors, such as the health sector, is an area of genuine concern. The Government has recognized the challenges and opportunities presented by traditional, widespread migration of Filipinos. Active measures are needed to target human resource development in areas most affected by the loss of talent, to build national employment models in these sectors to naturally attract and retain that national talent. Further, creative and practical mechanisms are needed to better encourage the use of remittances for sustained local community economic development. The Government of the Philippines will host the second Global Forum on Migration and Development in October 2008, where these and other issues can be discussed and expanded. The UNCT applauds this leadership from Government and will lend its support to this initiative.

Gender equality and empowerment are cross-cutting issues. In the 2006 Gender Gap Index study of the World Economic Forum, the Philippines ranked 6<sup>th</sup> out of 115 nations indicating the opportunities in health, education and decision making that women enjoy in the Philippines compared to other countries. However, there is still much to be done on other gender equality indicators, such as the low access to reproductive health services, high maternal mortality rate, feminized migration and trafficking and violence against women. More than 10 mothers die everyday leaving more than 30 children motherless. It is estimated that there are 3.1 million pregnancies in the Philippines every year, half of which are unplanned, with one third ending in abortions.<sup>4</sup> Four babies are born every minute, exerting pressure on the country's resources to support these children and plan for their future. Furthermore, new gender issues emerging affect men and boys, with higher school drop-out rates for boys and higher unemployment rates for men.

The Philippines situation reminds us that positive gender-sensitive policies and programmes are needed for both men and women. It has been realized that through appropriate family planning methods, maternal mortality rates (MMR) could fall by almost 30%. The CEDAW Concluding Comments urges the Philippine government to ensure that the CEDAW Convention and the principle of non-discrimination becomes fully applicable in the national legal system, and emphasizes that a full and effective implementation of the Convention is indispensable for achieving the MDGs. The inclusion of women as development partners in all areas of economic and social policy making and programme implementation is not only the right thing but the smart thing to do in order to attain the MDGs.

To further support progress made in advancing women's rights in 2007, the UN launched and began implementing (in cooperation with the National Commission on the Rights of Filipino Women) a Joint Programme to respond to the CEDAW Committee's recommendations to the Philippines. On its first full year of implementation, the programme provided assistance, inter alia, in enhancing capacity of selected national stakeholders, UN programme staff and academic partners. The Country Programme Action Plans and annual work plans of UN funds were gender audited and made human rights and gender compliant. Another Joint Programme on Violence Against Women is in the pipeline.

**Peace is necessary for development and human security.** Peace and security are, without a doubt, the basis for any development in Mindanao and the rest of the Philippines, for that matter. The long running conflict in the South has affected the country's overall development performance. Eleven out of the 20 poorest provinces are in the region, with poverty worsening in

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<sup>4</sup> Singh, S., et.al, Unintended Pregnancy and Induced Abortion in the Philippines: Causes and Consequences, New York: Guttmacher Institute, 2006.

conflict-afflicted areas of CARAGA, Central Mindanao and ARMM. Prices of food and basic commodities are high because political instability discourages farmers from planning crops and raising livestock, resulting in importation of commodities from neighboring provinces. With poverty and conflict contributing as key factors to low school enrolment and cohort survival rate, there is a need to support mechanisms that will make schools more inclusive and flexible. This means more affirmative action (traditional and non-traditional interventions) to: areas with high concentration of out-of-school children and youth; those communities with high proportion of incomplete schools; those which are isolated and remote; or where schools are constantly disrupted by disasters and conflicts which affect the ability of children to fully participate in the learning process.

Effective and sustainable peace-building will require strong political will, broad consensus building, flexibility and sustained resource inflows. Similarly, government and development partners should prioritize geographical targeting and ensure sustainability of development programmes. These must be viewed in the context of peace and development and should be pursued in line with principles of good governance and anti-corruption.

Important contributions by the UNCT to the national peace agenda have included support for preparation of an updated National Peace Plan, reflecting human security concepts, as well as institutionalizing Peace Education in the basic and teacher education. Significant progress was achieved in mainstreaming conflict sensitive and peace promoting planning in local governance, specifically in Mindanao. The UN food-supported programmes for peace keeping/building, included provision of temporary food rations to some 200,000 internally displaced people in central Mindanao, Sulu and Basilan; and distribution of nutritious food supplements at health clinics to cover over 8,000 pregnant and lactating women and young children. An important by-product of this latter intervention has been the increase in the number of women who attended antenatal and postnatal health clinics in the conflict areas. Agri-based projects in six regions in Mindanao complemented government efforts for enhancing self-reliance and sustainability, while the adoption of UN-supported Training for Rural Economic Empowerment methodology for community based enterprises, documented an 80% increase in incomes of former combatants and their families.

In an environment of insecurity, issues of human rights protection and promotion come to the foreground. Mindful that political violence had become a fundamental moral and governance, actions were taken by government, supported by its partners, to implement key recommendations of the Melo Commission and the Alston Report. The downward trend in the number of reported cases of extrajudicial killings in 2007 is evidence of gains made in this regard.

Another important development was the establishment of the Philippine Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) on grave violations of children's rights in armed conflict, as prescribed by Security Council Resolution No. 1612. A first report, covering the period 2005-2007, has been submitted. The UN also conducted a Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the state's fulfilment of human rights obligations and commitments.

**Stable population growth is conducive to inclusive growth.** Philippines' high population growth rate is inextricably linked to persistent poverty since it reduces both overall economic growth and prospects for poverty reduction. A high population growth rate hinders development for several interrelated reasons. First, it reduces per capita incomes thereby reducing savings. Secondly, a high population growth outpaces the capacity of education sector to teach children and of industry to absorb new labour, unemployment. Underemployment in both urban

and rural workspaces become manifests which further pull down economic growth.<sup>5</sup> Third, rapid population growth strains the environment due to competition for scarce resources.

Well-managed populations, such as those of Thailand and Vietnam, have historically reached a balanced standpoint, serving as impetus for growth and better quality of life for a greater majority. In Thailand, where the total fertility rate (TFR) has dropped to just 1.9%, the GDP per capita income grew eight times more by the year 2000 from its 1975 rate. Whereas in the Philippine experience, with its weak population policy resulting in a growth rate of 3.6%, the same figure was only 2.6 times higher in that same period.<sup>6</sup> A new study, noting high fertility rates and unclear government support for a family planning program, warns that a 150 million population is a likely possibility soon if no clear and direct actions are taken now.

UN support for the Health Sector Reform Agenda included provision of medical equipment for comprehensive and basic emergency obstetric facilities. In support of evidence-based advocacy on MMR, the UN has undertaken a series of analytical and research work on maternal and newborn health and on reproductive health commodity security in the Philippines. In this light, we welcome the release of the forthcoming Census for a more informed policy formulation and decision making.

**Economic growth is important but insufficient and as such, sustained investment in the social sector is needed.** The UN commends the government for the recent passage of the 2008 National Budget and welcomes the focus on the three E's considered to be the building blocks of the nation: Economy, Education and Environment. These are found to be consistent with the recommendation of Prof. Jeffrey Sachs, Millennium Project Director. In light of having an alternative budget for the MDGs, the UNCT supports advocacy to institutionalize civil society participation in the budget process at the national, regional and local levels.

The budget increase for the social sector should be complemented with a timely release of budget, quality public spending and well-targeted intervention and empowerment of local stakeholders to manage these resources, taking into consideration widening regional disparities and the most marginalized and vulnerable groups, with women and children among these groups being at even higher risk. The rights and conditions of the indigenous peoples are of particular concern in the promotion of meaningful social inclusion strategies. Public finance management should ensure a multi-year perspective to give a fiscal platform of predictability and allow sustainability of reforms and programmes. We also welcome the continuous roll-out of OPIF-based (Organizational Performance Indicators Framework) budget to ensure performance accountability in the government (i.e. agency's limited resources on core and vital functions are directed towards the achievement of desired societal outcomes).

Given that financing for MDGs was identified as an area of challenge, UN supported research and policy studies on MDG financing were brought to the arena of debate, policy reform and change. These significantly contributed to political endorsement of the Debt-for-Equity proposal to fund MDG projects, including at the ASEAN Summit in January 2007, forming the basis for a region-wide effort to address the MDG financing gap. UN support for the formulation and advocacy for an "alternative budget" for MDG-related expenditures - a first in 105 years of budgeting - contributed to increased expenditures for health, education, agriculture and environment, and reduction of debt

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<sup>5</sup> Poverty in the Philippines: Income, Assets and Access

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. Citing Balisacan and Tubianosa study of 2004

interest payments by PhP17 billion. Prioritization of MDGs in the preparation of national and local budget proposals formed an important part of the policy guidelines and procedures issued by the Department of Budget and Management.

**Increased resources are essential but so is the convergence of efforts and well-targeted interventions in order to ensure maximum impact of investments on MDGs less likely to be achieved, and in sectors/areas/population groups (e.g. women and indigenous people) where resources are most needed.** It is the duty of the state to ensure that all appropriate steps are taken to guard against unequal realization of basic rights, well aware of the social and cultural dimension that may put some groups at a disadvantage. At midpoint before the 2015 target year to achieve the MDGs, three out of eight Goals will be difficult to achieve, to wit: achieving universal access to quality education, increasing access to reproductive health services and reducing maternal mortality.

The current net enrolment rates (from as high 96.7% in 2000 to 84.4% in 2005) and cohort survival rate trends (drop from 72.4% in 2002 to 70% in 2005) show that the country is moving further away from reaching those MDG targets. Gender disparity in education persists, in favor of girls, which deepens as children go up the educational ladder. While education has been considered as one of the most prominent determinants of movement out of chronic poverty, it has been noted that the education share in the national budget has fallen progressively over the last 11 years from almost 16% in 1998 to just under 12% in 2008 (based on the projected budget) resulting to a drop in per capita expenditure for basic education, in real terms, from PhP4,727 in 2000 to PhP3,880 in 2006. The underinvestment in basic education (international investment benchmark is 20%) has affected the quality of education, weakening participation of the poor in growth, productivity of the workforce and opportunity to break from the poverty cycle.

Human development is also intricately linked with the environment. The 2007/2008 Human Development Report<sup>7</sup> underscored the need to focus on the development impact of climate change that could bring unprecedented reversals in poverty reduction, and in gains in nutrition, health and education. While the Philippines belongs to the climate takers, those who do not emit large amounts of greenhouse gases, it nonetheless suffers the consequences of climate change. We are all aware of how climate shocks can lock people into a downward spiral of poverty. With limited access to insurance, savings or assets, poor households are faced with stark choices in the face of climate shocks that can wipe out crops, reduce job opportunities, push up food prices and destroy property.

UN assistance has contributed to the crafting of a consolidated Renewable Energy Bill and adoption and implementation of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) for the Bio-Fuels Act, providing for an important policy platform for levelling the playing field for renewable energy technologies in the Philippines. The conduct of the historic First National Conference on Climate Change Adaptation and the adoption of the Albay Declaration reflected a national consensus to address global warming as an urgent priority. In addition, the UNCT was successful in drawing down US\$8 million of the Spanish MDG-Fund for the Joint Programme on Climate Change and Adaptation, as a very practical expression of UN action on adaptation measures on the ground.

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<sup>7</sup> Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World

Apart from the disastrous impact of climate change to the poorest of the poor and the most vulnerable groups, the frequent occurrence of natural disasters in the country impinges negatively on the attainment of the MDGs by drastically cutting back the gains achieved in previous years. Natural hazards will continue to frequent the country but disasters could be averted through a coherent and comprehensive mitigation and preparedness programmes that seek to continuously build the resilience of communities to natural disasters. The laudable efforts of the Government in taking this direction deserve recognition which needs to be pursued with all the support it could muster from its development and humanitarian partners to make a difference in achieving the MDGs. Investing in mitigation and disaster preparedness means laying down the groundwork for inclusive growth and sustainable development.

An important development for the UN in 2007 was the decision to implement UN Humanitarian Reform, reflecting an important shift in UNCT's response in the Philippines focusing on contingency planning, preparedness, response and early recovery, as part of the more coordinated disaster risk management. The UN Disaster Management Team was expanded into an Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) with improved coordination and strengthened partnerships between UNCT and non-UN actors in relief and early recovery. 'Cluster' arrangements were fully adopted by the IASC and the Government. Some important outputs of the work of the IASC included: the decision to set up an Integrated Early Recovery Coordination and Emergency Operations in Bicol; finalization of a National Cluster Preparedness Action Plan and an IASC Contingency Plan.

Mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction in the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) was complemented by simultaneous preparation of multi-geo hazard mapping in the most vulnerable eastern seaboard provinces, to enable implementation of community-level first-response actions on the ground. Resource mobilization for residual humanitarian and early recovery needs in 2007 yielded an additional US\$11 million through the Consolidated Appeal Process, providing the operational base for the IASC to make a visible impact in the typhoon-affected regions.

By and large, the presence of good governance, strong institutions, transparency and accountability measures affect the ability of the state to carry rights-based governance, and the lack of it jeopardizes equal fulfilment of rights or seriously threatens the capacity of the government to implement programmes for the benefit of all. While the responsibility to respect, protect and fulfil certain human rights lies with the State, the concept of mutual accountability enjoins development partners, local government units (regional, provincial, municipal and barangay), civil society, private sector and individuals to have clear delineation of each other's roles and responsibilities (as claimholders and duty bearers), including effective mechanisms of cooperation and transparency in allocation of resources to avoid overlap and duplication of efforts.

Capacity development has always been at the heart of the UNCT's programme intervention - enhancing capacity of organic national institutions as opposed to parallel structures such as Program Management Units/Program Management Offices (PMUs/PMOs); going beyond 'training' to learning; going beyond workshops and development of training modules to focus on processes and 'systems' and 'leadership' development at all levels for attributable and measurable results on the ground.

Participation is fully achieved when the members of the society have the timely and accurate data to make informed choices in matters affecting their well being. A recurring challenge for many stakeholders is the need for harmonization and data collection disaggregated by income groups, regional to lower levels of government, and gender. While there has been an adoption of the

alignment of national and local planning and budgeting policy, it has yet to be fully implemented. The UNCT supports the rationalization of the different targeting systems and full utilization of generated data.

Mindful of the widening regional disparity, the localization of the MDGs has continued to be an important thrust of the UNCT's work. This has included, preparation of additional Sub-National Progress Reports on the MDGs and development of MDG Rights-Based Indicator System as a basis for tracking progress; establishment of a Model Human Rights City; and support for monitoring of LGU Action Plans on the MDGs. Support for building consensus on key policies and mechanisms that address legal barriers to empower the poor, with focus on claimholders, especially women and indigenous peoples, was supported, alongside with improving capacities of local public administration institutions to provide services and undertake continuing education on human rights and gender at the local level.

### ***Towards a More Coordinated and Harmonized UNCT***

2008 is a critical year for the UN system in the Philippines since it marks the start of a new Common Country Programming Process, leading to finalization of the common country analysis (CCA) and UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) documents for the period 2010-2015. In line with the Paris Declaration principles and the government's desire to see the UN System transition to 'Deliver as One', we will continuously implement country-specific reforms to be able to 'Deliver Better.' The UN system's diversity is its strength and will be better coordinated and with stronger complementarities to better capitalize on more effective support to national development priorities and the MDGs.

By 'Delivering as One', we aim to pursue the ultimate goal: a UN that makes a real difference in the lives of men, women and children whom it serves especially the socially excluded, a UN that provides meaningful support for national development priorities, and a UN that helps countries and their peoples attain the Millennium Development Goals. The UN's mandate also includes technical assistance in upholding a wide array of international norms, to many of which the Philippines is a signatory.

The UNCT congratulates the Government and the World Bank for a successful PDF and underscores the need to look beyond macroeconomic perspective to more broad-based and inclusive growth. We look forward to even more meaningful collaboration in the year to come with national agencies and development partners to achieve inclusive growth and the attainment of the MDGs