

THE PHILIPPINES DEVELOPMENT FORUM (December 2008)

The Philippines Development Forum or PDF is the primary mechanism of the Government for facilitating substantive policy dialogue among stakeholders on the country's development agenda. It also serves as a process for developing consensus and generating commitments among different stakeholders toward critical actionable items of the Government's reform agenda.

The PDF evolved from the Consultative Group Meetings, which were co-chaired by the Philippine Government, represented by the Department of Finance, and the World Bank, and which were convened every 18 months or so among the Government and members of the international development partners community. In 2004, while planning for the March 2005 CG Meeting, it was agreed by the Government and the World Bank that there was benefit in widening the participation in the CG Meetings and bringing in other stakeholders (such as civil society, academe, private sector, and legislative representatives) into the dialogue. It was also agreed that the CG Meeting should be more a part of an ongoing dialogue rather than just an annual event. Thus, the format of the CG Meeting was restructured, and the PDF process was launched. Majority of partners also indicated the desire to hold the main PDF event every 12 months or so.

The PDF process involves continuous dialogue on thematic areas through working groups, which are expected to hold meetings in between the formal PDF meetings to follow-up on the issues and agreements at the last meeting. Currently, the PDF has eight working groups, each focused on one of the following themes: MDGs and social progress; growth and investment climate; economic and fiscal reforms; governance and anti-corruption; decentralization and local government; sustainable rural development; infrastructure; and Mindanao. The working groups facilitate wide consultations across a broad range of stakeholders on these specific themes; each is led by a Government agency as lead convener (represented by the head of that agency) with a development partner as co-lead convener. The working groups could have sub-groups under them which may operate independently but, in the end, feed into the ongoing policy dialogue under the broader PDF thematic working groups.

The last PDF formal meeting was held on March 26-27, 2007 in Clark, Pampanga with around 300 participants from Government, international development partners, and other stakeholders.