

HIGHLIGHTS

Meeting of PDF Working Group on Sustainable Rural Development

30 March 2007

2:00 in the afternoon

Office of Undersecretary for Policy and Planning

3rd Floor, DA Main Building

Diliman, Quezon City

A. Attendees:

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|------------------------------------|--------|
| 1. Undersecretary Segfredo Serrano | DA |
| 2. Mr. Peter Keller | GTZ |
| 3. Mr. Arcadio L. Cruz | FAO |
| 4. Ms. Emily Mercado | EC |
| 5. Ms. Reyna Reyes | AusAid |
| 6. Ms. Carol V. Figueroa-Geron | WB |
| 7. Mr. Felizardo Virtucio Jr. | WB |
| 8. Ms. Juliet Texon | DENR |
| 9. Ms. Jeslina B. Gorospe | DENR |
| 10. Ms. Moonyeen Manrique | DENR |
| 11. Mr. Ronaldo Tolentino | DAR |
| 12. Mr. Rhodermel Lagaza | DAR |
| 13. Ms. Ma. Jayd-da Mayoralgo | DA |
| 14. Ms. Erlinda F. Dolatre | GTZ |

B. Highlights of Discussion

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 in the afternoon by Mr. Keller, who also presented the agenda for the meeting.

1.0 Feedback on the 2007 PDF Meeting in Cebu City

In general, the 2007 PDF Meeting in Cebu was well attended. The Break-Out Session D: Nurturing Regional and Local Growth was likewise well attended - with about 70 participants, many of whom are high-level representatives including some ambassadors and heads of delegation.

Mr. Peter Keller was commended on his very good moderation of the break-out session.

The body also expressed satisfaction on the high priority accorded by the session plenary on all the 3 issues presented by the WG.

However, the WG was not able to come up with the timelines for addressing these priority issues.

The format of the break-out sessions was changed this year, i.e. three Working Groups (Local Governance, Mindanao and SRD) were merged into Session D: Nurturing Regional and Local Growth. While this encouraged a more active participation of LGUs , the merging of the working groups made some participants unhappy because the discussion on the different topics became broad and made it difficult to focus on specific issues. It was also perceived that other issues such as peace and security seemed more important for others, such as the donors. It was suggested that in future, the PDF format should be communicated in advance to allow enough time to prepare an appropriate methodology for information exchange.

The body also requested for a stronger presence of DENR considering that importance of the environment in sustainable rural development.

2.0 Action Planning 2007 for issues raised in Cebu

Referring to the presentation made by Sec. Yap on the key issues for Session D, Undersecretary Serrano pointed out that while four (4) issues were presented in the plenary, only two (2) are most relevant to the WG , i.e. **competitiveness and profitability of agriculture** and **land use, administration and distribution**.

a. Competitiveness and Profitability of Agriculture

The sub-issues *rationalize investment in agriculture sub-sectors and more comprehensive convergence of rural development agencies and LGUs in sustainable rural development, inclusive of sustainable rural development in the uplands* can already lay the ground in developing the 2007 Action Plan. Usec. Serrano further suggested that the WG can also focus on convergence because as a strategy, it also includes the rationalization of investments in agriculture.

b. Land use, administration and distribution

The WG (in particular EU, AusAid, WB) expressed interest on the issue of CARP extension considering that some AR projects are near completion where there are concerns raised on sustainability after CARP ends in 2008. On the other hand, there are also projects in the pipeline which approval/implementation would depend on the government's clear position on the CARP extension issue.

DAR will have to find an ally in the new Congress who will file the bill for CARP extension, however, Usec Serrano raised the concern on the government's willingness to certify such bill as urgent considering the usual long congressional/senate process of passing a new law. Mr. Keller reiterated that the WG's important role will be in facilitating the continued discussion on the CARP issue.

Ms. Geron informed the body of a recent meeting with ADB and DBM where the donors' uniformity of approach in supporting CARP was discussed. There will also be a DBCC meeting in mid-April on the 2008 AR budget .

Ms. Dolatre updated the body on the government's effort to take up the issue on CARP. Last March 29, the PARC Secretariat and DAR conducted a roundtable discussion on issues relative to the findings of the study on CARP Scenarios and Options for Future Development (funded by GTZ). The discussion was expected to identify and recommend priority actions for PARCouncil chaired by the President herself. Further updates will be provided in the next meeting.

The body agreed to a one- or two-day action planning workshop to be held in May 2007. The workshop aims to formulate the 2007 Action Plan of the WG, to include indicators, detailed activities and timelines . A small group composed of Jaydda Mayoralgo/DA, Cynthia Cardenas/DAR, Juliet Texon/DENR and Linda Dolatre/GTZ was tasked to develop the workshop design.

Ms. Geron suggested to invite representatives from the oversight agencies (such as NEDA, DBM and DOF) to participate in the workshop and get their support in pushing the agenda of the WG.

3.0 Operational/Organizational Matters

a. *Frequency, location of meetings, duration, hosting*

The body agreed to have regular monthly meetings starting at 1400 hours (with a duration of about two (2) hours) , every last Thursday of the month; member-agencies will take turns in hosting the meetings. In addition to regular monthly meetings, it was also agreed that there will be one-day workshop/s every second month for , open participation.

b. *Secretariat of the WG*

The Secretariat of the WG was formally created with GTZ designated as its head. The Secretariat will be responsible for organizing/coordinating the activities of the WG as well as serve as link with the PDF Overall Secretariat based at WB headed by Ms. Bei Zonaga.

c. *Participation: institutional/personal , number of participants*

In previous meetings, it was observed that different persons have represented the agency-members of the WG. It was recommended for each member-agency to send *regular* representatives and the representatives present in today's meeting were requested to work out this process internally through Special Orders in their respective agencies. In particular, a stronger presence of the DENR was requested. Ms. Texon/DENR informed the body the Director Argete has already been appointed as DENR representative to the WG.

d. *Proposal: project/program presentation as a regular topic*

The WG agreed to regularly exchange information among its members, specifically on the different programs/projects. Hence, program/project presentation would be a regular topic in the subsequent meetings of the WG. The first presentation on the *Mindanao Rural Development Program (MRDP)* was made by WB/ Ms. Geron in today's meeting.

e. *Updating PDF-SRD website*

The WG Secretariat in coordination with the members of the WG, will be responsible for updating the PDF-SRD website. Among the documents to be posted include the WG Minutes of Discussions and other relevant information the WG members would like to share.

- 4.0 The next meeting of the PDF- Working Group will be held on April 26, 2007 and to be hosted by DENR. It was suggested to invite NEDA-PIS in the next meeting to make a presentation on ODA Portfolio Review as well as ODA inflows, on-going and pipelined projects for the WG's information.
- 5.0 There being no more issues to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 4:25 in the afternoon.

Prepared by:

ERLINDA F. DOLATRE
GTZ Manila