

What's up for 2016?

Chairman Ravanera's New Year's Message

Dearly beloved kindred spirit in the Cooperative Movement:

A blessed happy new year!

We look back at 2015, the Centennial Year of the Philippine Cooperative Movement, as the year when the movement evolved into a solid force for sustainable development. A hundred years of experience has prepared the Cooperative Movement to take stock of its role in national development and to look beyond our shores in promoting social enterprise through cooperativism.

The New Year ushers in a new era for the cooperative movement. We have prepared several programmes based on the Cooperative Roadmap the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) had laid down for 2016.

We will start the year seeking audience with no less than His Excellency President Benigno Simeon C. Aquino III to report to him directly how the 24,652 cooperatives nationwide have advanced the President's Social Contract with the Filipino people remarkably in all the areas of poverty reduction and empowerment of the poor and the vulnerable; on rapid, inclusive and sustainable economic growth; on transparent, accountable and participatory governance; on just and lasting peace and rule of law; and on the integrity of the environment and climate change adaptation and mitigation. Moreover, His Excellency must be informed how the cooperatives have consistently promoted, advanced, and supported services on Health; Employment; Housing; Agrarian Reform; Environmental Protection and Rehabilitation; empowerment of the marginalized sectors especially the Indigenous People to be drawn into the mainstream of development process; advancing peace in Mindanao by uprooting the root causes of war such as social injustices and gross inequities; and Financial Inclusion.

Furthermore, we are very proud to inform His Excellency, that at the start of his term in the year 2010, cooperative membership only numbered to 7 Million. Now, after 5 1/2 years, the count has reached 14 Million, directly employing 520,758 persons and indirectly employing or generating entrepreneurs by 1,923,047; and contributing a withholding tax amounting to Php 3.9 Billion from the cooperatives Php 600 Billion combined assets.

The cooperatives, as a sector, are readying itself to the challenges posted by the ASEAN integration with the aggregation of its products and services through value-chain; sustainable agriculture; and other programs of the CDA. By February of 2016, we will hold a summit in Mindanao to strengthen its bid in the management of Angus Pulangi Hydroelectric Power Plant

and to promote peace and entrepreneurial activities especially in the poverty-stricken area of Mamasapano, Maguindanao to advance the welfare of the Filipino people.

Many good stories need to be told to the President. The CDA together with the one hundred (100) cooperative leaders, representing at least 5 leaders from each type of cooperative, will have then the great honor to present to the President the state of cooperativism in the country and the roadmap ahead to advance inclusive growth and sustainability underscoring the cooperative sector's contribution to the "Daang matuwid" program of His Excellency.

We will hit the road running in the first quarter of 2016 with the country's hosting of the Regional Network for Development of Agricultural Co-operatives in the Asia and Pacific (Nedac) on January 19 -23 in Cagayan de Oro City. Our hosting of the Nedac Conference signals the escalation of our engagement in global economic integration, specifically the Asean Economic Cooperation (AEC). We shall showcase to our neighbors in the Asia and Pacific our readiness to engage in inter and intra cooperative trade with our globally competitive products like coconut sugar and other by products of the new coconut industry. Aside from economic trading, we are also opening to our neighbors our readiness for technical cooperation, centered on our highly capable cooperative human resources.

We do believe that long-term national development is anchored on sustainable agriculture. Thus, the CDA shall work hard in partnership with agriculture cooperatives, the civil society and concerned government agencies in mainstreaming sustainable agriculture and effacing of conventional agriculture that had resulted in exclusion of farmers and food insecurity.

On February 18 -20, 2016, the CDA will partner with agriculture cooperatives and civil society in the Cooperative Sustainable Agriculture Summit in Ilo-ilo City.

Later in March, we plan to roll out the Cooperative Development Program for Conflict Areas in Mindanao. This peace and development initiative will mobilize government, civil society, foreign aid and cooperative investments in Central Mindanao. We plan to hold a symbolic launching of this program in Mamasapano, Maguindanao.

The CDA shall also work to strengthen further the cooperative sector's best performing cluster, the financial cluster. It shall provide developmental and policy intervention to increase the role of cooperatives in financial inclusion. In partnership with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the CDA will promote the Credit Surety Fund (CDA) and strengthen cooperative banks nationwide.

As the agency mandated by the Constitution "to promote the viability and growth of cooperatives as instruments of equity, social justice and economic development," the CDA shall focus its resources for the micro and small cooperatives who represent over 80 percent of the country's registered cooperatives.

In the genuine cooperative tradition, the CDA shall overcome budgetary constraints not only with the indubitable hard work of its officers and staff, but with judicious strategies, like

building development partnerships with other government agencies, the civil society, academe, Church and Church-based institutions, international financing institutions and investments from the country's cooperatives.

On the policy side, the CDA in partnership with both the Senate and the House of Representatives and other agencies of government shall work to substantiate the legally mandated benefits of cooperatives and strengthen existing ones.

It shall be vigilant in protecting the cooperatives' privilege of tax exemption and at the same time work for the fruition of the benefits embodied in Republic Act 9520 to transport cooperatives, housing cooperatives and other types of cooperatives.

As a regulatory agency, the CDA shall work to become an efficient and effective regulator of cooperatives.

We steer the Cooperative Movement to become genuine organs of poverty alleviation, sustainable and inclusive growth, good governance, peace and development and in environmental stewardship and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Finally, let us all say good bye to 2015 with fond memories that inspire our hearts and drive our minds to achieve even more in the new year!

After one hundred years of cooperativism in the Philippines, we are now ready to face the next one hundred years underscoring that all along the cooperatives in the Philippines have been advancing a brand of cooperativism that has been embodied in the recent issuance of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. Yes, the UN's SDGs call for Transformative Cooperative for People Planet Prosperity, Peace and Purpose has been the battle cry of the Philippine Cooperatives since 2012.

It is also amazing that His Holiness Pope Francis's recent encyclical, *Laudato Si*, has jibed well with the Cooperatives's *raison d'etre* of advancing social justice, equity and economic development when he recently pronounced that "it bids us all to break the bonds of poverty and social injustice that give rise to glaring and scandalous social disparities."

Yes, the road ahead will be long and tedious; the climb will be very steep. But we will get there to make life better for our people.

To all kindred spirit, may the good Lord in His Infinite goodness bless and guide us as we work to liberate our people from the quagmire of poverty and inequities.

To God, be the glory.


ORLANDO R. RAVANERA, CEO VI, CSEE
Chairman