



## COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

827 Aurora Blvd., Service Road, Brgy. Immaculate Conception, 1111 Cubao, Quezon City, Philippines

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April 7, 2020

### **AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL COOPERATIVES**

Fellow Cooperators:

With a firm collective belief that cooperativism is the countervailing force against poverty, hunger, deep inequality, decline in social justice, ecological turbulence due to climate change and violent extremism, the 18,000 cooperatives nationwide with some 11 million members have stood up to the call. This is the categorical mandate of the cooperatives pronounced by no less than the highest law of the land that “cooperatives are instruments of social justice, equity and economic development.” As manifested in the Research Study of the USAID, cooperativism is the empowering path “to make life better for those in the margins and the Philippines is the cooperative leader in South-East Asia and the Pacific.”

There is no other moment in history than now that we are facing a horrible crisis – COVID-19 – that if not responded to with utmost urgency will cause unimaginable consequences – our very own extinction! While the Cooperative Development Authority has released several issuances especially on the imperative use of the Community Development Fund as a countervailing measure, we are so inspired to hear from the Honorable Senator Christopher Lawrence “Bong” Go who is appealing to the country’s cooperatives “to utilize their community development fund (CDF), in order to contribute to the government’s efforts to fight COVID-19 and help their respective community members mitigate the socio-economic impact of the crisis.”

Indeed, this is the moment that the essence of cooperativism, its humanity and compassion must shine through. The cooperatives like major religious traditions bid special attention to the poor. Jesus’ teachings then pay particular attention to the poor, notably in His teaching that he who feeds the hungry, clothes the naked and cares for the sick, serves the Lord. In Islam, one of the five pillars of faith is charity. For Buddha, the aim of life was escape from suffering by ridding the mind of illusions. For Buddha as for Confucius and Aristotle, our material desires are poor guides to our long term happiness.

For the Cooperatives, their very essence is one of service, equity and compassion and that they are mandated by law, being taxed exempt, to utilize their community development fund (CDF), which under Article 86, Sec. 3 of RA 9520, shall not be less than 3% of their net surplus, for project or activities that will benefit the community where the cooperative operates.

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The pronouncement of Sen. Bong Go for the cooperatives to show compassion is also in line with CDA's Memorandum dated March 26, 2020 that "food packs, vitamins, alcohol, soap and other basic necessities maybe distributed to those community members who are in dire need of help but with adherence to safety protocols, and ensuring that the procurement of these goods will not shortchange the members."

To quote the good Senator, "Hinihikayat po natin ang ating mga kooperatiba na gamitin ang kanikanilang community development fund upang mas lalo pang mapalakas at mapalawig ang paglaban natin sa mga banta ng COVID-19. Malaki po ang maitutulong upang mapunan natin ang pangagailangan ng ating mga komunidad habang sumasailalim tayo sa enhanced community quarantine. Lahat po tayo kailangan tumulong sa ating komunidad. Lahat tayo naghihirap at lahat naman tayo gustong malampasan ang krisis na ito. Gawin natin ang lahat ng ating makakaya para pagserbisyo ang kapwa natin Pilipino. Magbayanihan tayo."

No less than our beloved President Rodrigo Roa Duterte has also announced for a whole country approach to mobilize our collective efforts and resources to fight such dreadful disease.

What is so amazing is that there is now a continuing outpourings of reports nation-wide on how the cooperatives are exemplifying to the highest degree the spirit of compassion and service in consonance with Senator Bong Go's appeal. Humble as they are, these cooperatives have always been there when they are needed but they are doing those charitable works in silence. No less than Asec. Virgilio (Dr. Boy) Lazaga has shared to me those amazing stories that I believe must be given due recognition by CDA.

In behalf of CDA, we in the Board of Directors are one in banner the good Senator's appeal for the cooperatives to be steadfast in exemplifying the essence of cooperativism. In response to Sen. Bong Go's appeal, let us continue our full support, our oneness, our compassion and our love to manifest the truism that transformative cooperatives are indeed for people, planet, prosperity and peace.

Thank you so much Sen. Bong Go for your oneness with the cooperative movement nation-wide in confronting an unseen enemy – COVID -19, that am sure will have no match against a determined people.

Very sincerely,

**Usec. ORLANDO E. RAVANERA**  
Chairman

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