



## Philippine Cooperative Manifesto **Centennial Unity March**

The Philippine Cooperative Movement's celebration of its centennial year proves its resilience and reaffirms relevance to the society.

The existence of cooperatives in the country is a strong manifestation of its role in developing businesses from the grassroots and empowering the common tao.

Universally, modern cooperativism offers an alternative business and economic model to the dominant neo-liberal capitalist system. Even Pope Francis has recognized the role of cooperativism as the key better economy – and a better world. The Pope has consistently criticized the dominant economic model as one that “promotes exclusion and inequality,” and “economy that kills.”

And the Pope has this important challenge to cooperatives -- whose intrinsic design is based on members-ownership, value-based and sustainability: “The future of humanity is in great measure in your own hands, through your ability to organize and carry out creative alternatives.”

With very rich experience, accumulated over its 100- year existence, the Philippine cooperative movement remains very relevant and is ready to take on greater challenges ahead.

Aside from being rooted on realities on the ground, the spirit of cooperativism is planted firmly in Philippine laws. The Constitution has declared it as one of the state policies “to promote the viability and growth of cooperatives as instruments of equity, social justice and economic development.”

The Constitution also made sure that this state policy would be translated into tangible service to the people by mandating government, through Congress the creation of the agency to promote the growth of cooperatives – the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA).

In recognition of this important role of giving equal opportunities for the poor to get out from the rut of poverty, cooperatives are given certain privileges that would make them competitive, economically and financially feasible like the privilege of tax exemption.



Thus, as we celebrate the centennial of the cooperative movement, we gather together to reaffirm the morale and legal basis of the Cooperatives' existence in the country.

As a movement, we reaffirm the role of cooperatives as agents of social justice, equity and economic growth;

We further reaffirm the need for the CDA to fulfil its Constitutional and statutory mandates to provide services for the development of cooperatives and at the same time serve as the faithful regulatory agency – all these to protect the interest of the people.

As a movement, we call on government to be faithful to the substance of the Constitutional basis of cooperatives by upholding and protecting its privilege of tax exemption. It is only through this affirmative action from government can poor people be competitive in their enterprises in the free market lorded over by capital from the rich.

As a movement, we call on government to strengthen the agency created by law to provide developmental and regulatory services to cooperatives – the Cooperative Development Authority -- by increasing its budget and provision all necessary powers for it to be a faithful instrument of the cooperatives and the interests of the state;

As a movement, we support the roadmap of the CDA that leads the cooperative movement to become game changers in (1) Poverty reduction and empowerment of the poor and the vulnerable; (2) Rapid, inclusive, and sustained economic growth; (3) Transparency, accountable, and participatory governance; (4) Just and lasting peace and the rule of law; (5) Integrity of the environment & climate change adaptation and mitigation.

As a movement, we call on everyone to be vigilant against any threat to the cooperative movement.

Let this manifesto guide the Philippine Cooperative Movement as its strides to greater challenges and more substantial social impact.

