

Review of the State of Food and Agriculture:
*“Breaking the Cycle of Rural Poverty and Hunger by Strengthening Rural Resilience:
Social Protection and Sustainable Agricultural Development”*

Country Statement
Ambassador Domingo P. Nolasco
Permanent Representative to FAO, IFAD and WFP
Republic of the Philippines

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*Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen*

At the outset, the Philippines would like to congratulate Dr. Jose Graziano Da Silva for securing a second term as FAO Director General. We look forward to his continuous effective leadership of this institution and unwavering support to developing countries in addressing the global food and agricultural challenges. In this regard, we also appreciate the valuable contribution of the men and women of the FAO in achieving its mission.

This year's Conference theme is very relevant, focusing on the role of social protection and productive support in reducing poverty and food insecurity, building resilience and enhancing agricultural development.

We appreciate the Secretariat's report on the current State of Food and Agriculture, which highlighted the progress reached by a number of countries, like the Philippines, in attaining the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target of halving the prevalence of undernourishment between 1990 to 2015.

However, many countries are still stricken with high levels of poverty, hunger, malnutrition and vulnerability, especially in agriculture and rural areas. This is a key concern for the Philippines, as agriculture remains to be the backbone of the economy, being a major source of income and livelihood opportunities in the countryside, particularly for family farmers and rural workers.

The Philippine Government, in response to the challenge of achieving inclusive growth as part of its Social Contract with our people, broadens the scope of social protection in the key aspects of job creation, health care and basic education. Infrastructure building for sustained economic growth is also being pursued alongside rural development, better government service, gender equality; peace and order and environmental protection.

In line with this principle, the government institutes strategies and programs such as the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program*, a conditional cash transfer (CCT) scheme. Its dual objectives are (i) to provide cash assistance to the poor to alleviate their immediate need, and (ii) to break the intergenerational poverty cycle through investments in human capital.

Since its launch, *Pantawid Pamilya* has been rapidly scaled up to become the cornerstone of the Philippine Government's social protection efforts. This program is an important part of a renewed effort to address chronic poverty and meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality, reduce child mortality, and improve maternal health.

The Philippines is also actively working towards to enhance agricultural development through better governance and continued investments. The key objective is to accelerate or sustain the sector's expansion in support of all the concerned actors, notably the family farmers and smallholders.

The Philippine Government has started to implement the six-year Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP), which is designed to establish a government platform for a modern, climate-smart and market-oriented agriculture and fishery sector. In this partnership, the national government together with local government units and the private sector are providing key infrastructure, facilities, technology, and information to raise incomes, productivity, and competitiveness in the countryside.

Other social welfare programs of the government provide direct assistance to the poor, such as those pertaining to education, housing resettlement and individual medical assistance. They come in the form of cash or in-kind transfers and social services to the poorest and the marginalized.

The Philippines continues to attach great importance to collaborative work with Rome-based UN agencies in enhancing social protection and building resilience in our country. For instance:

- FAO has been responding to the needs of farmers affected by typhoon Haiyan to restore rural livelihoods;
- WFP provides school meals to remote areas of Central Mindanao and pioneered innovations such as the mobile phone-based cash transfers for disbursements to programme recipients; and
- IFAD implements the Rapid Food Production Enhancement Program, which supports the government's Rice Self-Sufficiency Plan, targeting poor paddy farmers and irrigators' associations to increase paddy production.

Thank you. Mabuhay!