

Chapter 1

The Long View

President Rodrigo R. Duterte through Memorandum Circular No. 12, s. 2016, directed the preparation of the national and regional development plans and investment programs to translate his 0+10 point socio-economic agenda into concrete policies, strategies, programs, projects, and activities. As with the other regional development plans (RDPs), the Central Visayas Regional Development Plan 2017-2022 is anchored on the *AmBisyon Natin 2040* which is the 25-year long-term vision for the country.

AmBisyon Natin 2040: The Nation's Long-Term Vision

In response to calls for a more forward-looking and people-centered approach to development planning that goes beyond the term of a single political administration, the Philippines embarked on a long-term visioning exercise in 2015. Dubbed as *AmBisyon Natin 2040*, the activity aimed to capture the aspirations and vision of the Filipino people for themselves and for the country in the next 25 years upon which government's plans, programs, and projects would be designed and built upon to achieve the desired outcomes.

The vision of the Filipinos for the Philippines in 2040, as revealed through the visioning exercise, is to be a “prosperous, predominantly middle class society where no one is poor” and “where people live long and healthy lives”.¹ The country in 2040 is also envisioned to be a major player in the global knowledge economy with smarter and more innovative people. This translates to the following economic goals that the Filipinos believe the country should aim for: eradication of poverty, elimination of hunger, and

generation of local jobs. For the people in the Visayas, in addition to the aforesaid goals, the provision of housing is also a sought after goal for the country.

A high-trust society is also aspired by the Filipinos for the Philippines where human security is assured and government enjoys the people's trust because it is clean, efficient, fair, just and service-oriented. In particular, Filipinos in the Visayas believe that eliminating corruption, fair enforcement of laws, and fast and easy processes are important aspects of government service that should be pursued.

On the kind of life that the Filipinos want for themselves, the people envision a life that is stable, comfortable, and secure (*matatag, maginhawa, at panatag na buhay*) that includes the family. It consists of: having a home; owning a car or accessing to good public transportation; having a steady source of income; earning enough to support daily needs of the family, contingencies, and savings for retirement; having the capacity to

¹ National Economic and Development Authority, *Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022*, (Pasig City: NEDA, 2017)

provide a college education for the children; and being able to go on local trips with the family for vacation. Essentially, it is a lifestyle that is more middle-class.

Realizing the Vision

With the right policies and programs, the vision of a prosperous Philippines can be attained in 25 years, according to a study done by Ramon Clarete as part of AmBisyon Natin 2040. Without the needed reforms, the Philippines will not likely attain middle-class status for majority of its citizens by 2040.

Central Visayas is expected to be among the regions in the country whose residents can enjoy a middle-class standard of living sooner or before 2040 with the right policies and proper support from the government. At present, Central Visayas is one of the country's best performing economies. Its economic growth has consistently been among the highest in the country. From 2011 to 2016, the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) of Central Visayas grew at an average annual rate of 7.5 percent, the fastest growth rate in the country, and much higher than the national average of 6.1 percent. As a result, per capita income of the region rose to PhP64,858 in 2015, the fourth highest in the country.

Economic growth must be sustained and be made more inclusive for the region to eradicate poverty by 2040 and allow the majority of the residents to enjoy a middle-class standard of living. Based on learnings gained from the implementation of the previous regional development plan, economic growth alone cannot drastically reduce poverty. Strong economic growth must reduce income disparity supported by a sound population program.

Growth strategies shall consider spatial/location and sectoral components to ensure inclusivity.

The Regional Development Plan 2017-2022

Similar to the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022, the Central Visayas Regional Development Plan (RDP) 2017-2022 is anchored on the country's long-term vision (AmBisyon Natin 2040) of a stable, comfortable, and secure life (*matatag, maginhawa, at panatag na buhay*). It also takes into account the 0+10 point Socio-Economic Agenda of the Duterte Administration and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (SDA) adopted by the United Nations in 2015.

Given the long term nature (25 years) of the AmBisyon Natin, four medium-term Development Plans (PDP and RDP) shall be crafted and implemented until 2040. This is based on the conviction that a long-term vision could not be achieved in a few years or within the term of a single political administration. The pursuit of the vision could take several years extending to several political administrations. It is essential that subsequent PDPs and RDPs build on the gains of previous plans and sustain the strategies, policies, programs, and projects to ensure attainment of the vision.

The RDP 2017-2022, like the PDP, is the first of four medium term plans that shall be anchored on the AmBisyon Natin 2040. The thrust of the RDP 2017-2022 is to lay down the foundation for more inclusive growth, a high-trust and resilient society, and a globally competitive knowledge economy. The period will therefore be characterized by filling the gap or shortfalls, meeting standards, and catching up.

The development agenda of the current RDP are the following: (a) increasing public trust in government, (b) reducing inequality in access to

development opportunities, and (c) attaining high and sustainable economic growth. These will be supported by a strong foundation in public order and security, infrastructure development, and ecological integrity.

Organization of the Plan

The Plan document is organized into seven parts. Part I provides the overall context for the RDP. It includes a discussion on the long-term vision of the Philippines or the AmBisyon Natin 2040, the global and regional trends and prospects, the desired spatial distribution of human activity in the region, and the development framework.

Part II is about increasing public trust in government leading towards the attainment of a high-trust society. Strategies to improve the different aspects of government service are discussed in this section.

Part III presents the approaches for reducing inequality in accessing to development

opportunities. These include accelerating human capital development, expanding economic opportunities in agriculture, industry, and services, and reducing vulnerabilities of individuals, families, and communities from disasters and calamities.

Part IV focuses on attaining high and sustainable economic growth. The use of science and technology to propel growth is discussed in this section.

Part V calls for a supportive economic environment that will enable the economy to sustain growth. This includes maintaining macroeconomic stability and promoting competition.

Part VI discusses the foundations for inclusive and sustainable development, namely: peace, security, public order, and safety; better infrastructure; ecological integrity, and a clean and healthy environment.

Finally, Part VII describes the institutional arrangements for implementing the plan.

