

MAP Statement on the SONA 2023

July 24, 2023

The Management Association of the Philippines (MAP) lauds the successful transition of our country from a pandemic mode into a vibrantly recovering nation, under the leadership of President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr., posting the following economic gains:

1. GDP growth of 6.4% which is the highest in the ASEAN region,
2. Credit rating upgrade by Fitch Ratings, Inc. from negative to stable, despite the downgrades given to many other countries,
3. Regained market confidence by opening up the economy and generating more investments and jobs,
4. Inflation has significantly improved to 5.4% in June 2023 from 8.7% last January, and
5. Infrastructure-to-GDP ratio of 5% to 6% with focus on digitalization, ease of doing business, transportation and energy.

While we see improvements on the economic front, let us not lose sight of the most important undertaking of the government - to ensure that all these economic gains will redound to the benefit of the Filipino people whose lives need uplifting the most. A more equitable income distribution and redistribution should be at the front and center of our economic development. However, the gap between the rich and the poor is very wide as measured by a Gini coefficient of 41% as of 2021. That translated to more than half (57%) of our population considered as low income class and living in the poverty line and below. This is a heavy burden that the government has to address with urgency.

We welcome the initiatives mentioned by the President that would address critical social development issues, such as malnutrition, low level of education, employment, providing better social services, improving health services, digitalization for financial inclusion. These are the very same advocacies that drive the flagship projects of the MAP.


Thus, we urge the government to continue taking steps to further narrow the income disparity and ensure that economic gains redound to a more equitable distribution of wealth across the board.

The MAP has taken the following big bold steps to contribute to the improvement of the country's Gini coefficient and help pave the way for inclusive development:

1. In support of the government's priority program to refocus health priorities, MAP already initiated its Campaign against Malnutrition and Child Stunting (CAMACS) that called for multi-sectoral, concerted effort to ensure that the first 1,000 days of a child from inception to under 3 years of age are given access to healthy food and micronutrients. Addressing the long-standing problem of malnutrition and child stunting will ensure a better future for our children, providing them with the fundamentals to be mentally and physically prepared to be part of a vibrant, productive and competitive workforce and entrepreneurs of our country.
2. The MAP recently issued a public statement that called for the easing of the education crisis as one of the country's top priorities. We are encouraged by the statement of the President that learning recovery will be undertaken and towards this end, the implementation of the K to 12 system will be reviewed so that it can fully integrate as a TVET program to increase enterprise-based learning and other alternative modes of delivering education, such as certification training, and skills development will be part of the educational ecosystem to give opportunities to our students for better job opportunities and higher wages.
3. Aligned with our CAMACS, we will be creating soon a 5-year blueprint for shared prosperity that will contain a roadmap of commitments on how businesses can help uplift the poor out of poverty as manifested in their dealings towards their employees, customers, suppliers, communities where they operate, the environment and other stakeholders.

We support the call not only for more CSR programs from the private sector for education but also the expansion of this by integrating shared prosperity practices in our businesses, in social responsibility, and in the improvement of our daily lives.

We share the aspirations of the Filipinos and we are one with the government in working for a MAGINHAWA, MATATAG AT PANATAG NA PAMUMUHAY PARA SA LAHAT NG PILIPINO.


BENEDICTA DU-BALADAD
MAP President