

## FOREWORD

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The Medium-term Development Plan (MTDP) for CY 2004-2009 comes at a turning point in Bohol's development agenda for the decade. At the end of CY 2000, we were confronted with the troubling information that poverty incidence rose from 37.3% to 47.3% which resulted in our inclusion among the 20 poorest provinces in the country. This situation was paradoxical as it was a time characterized with more development in Bohol in infrastructure and tourism albeit with increasing levels of deprivation. The more development that took place, the greater the level of exclusion of the poor leading to a situation where pockets of poverty coexist with levels of relative affluence that often end up hiding the poor from the eyes of LGUs, policy makers and development institutions.

In recognizing the problem, we have evolved a participatory, comprehensive and focused response to our poverty situation by crafting a Program Framework on Poverty Reduction. To emphasize our firm commitment to reduce poverty in Bohol, we have specified the poverty concerns that each of the development sectors must address under the MTDP. Performance of each of the development sectors shall be measured not by the activities conducted or outputs generated but by its specific and measurable contribution to poverty reduction in Bohol particularly in significantly improving the delivery of basic services and providing sustainable livelihoods. We have likewise incorporated the 10-Point Agenda of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and spelled out in clear and uncertain terms our commitment, where appropriate, to ensure vertical integration of our priorities with that of the National Government. In recognition of our global responsibilities, we have included the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in our targets under this MTDP knowing fully well that the global campaign against poverty needs reinforcement at the local level.

This MTDP has not substantially strayed from its development strategy. On the contrary, it has reinforced the main economic drivers of eco-tourism and agri-industrialization while ensuring that it be poverty-sensitive to avoid a development exclusion paradox. Through these economic drivers, we expect to create more jobs, raise wages and increase tax revenues thereby allowing for higher expenditures in basic services that reduce levels of deprivation. If poverty reduction programs are to succeed, local government institutions must also be strengthened to deal with such a multi-dimensional problem that cuts across the responsibilities of sectoral departments.

The road ahead is filled with road blocks particularly in a situation of huge fiscal deficits. But given better coordination of government agencies and the active participation of the private sector and civil society in a broad united front against poverty, our goal of getting out of the 20 poorest provinces in 2007 is an achievable one.

  
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