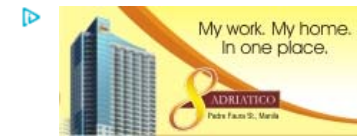


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'Phil still vulnerable to corruption'

By Aurea Calica (The Philippine Star) | Updated February 1, 2013 - 12:00am

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President Aquino addresses the 5th conference of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption at the PICC yesterday.

MANILA, Philippines - Without continuity and long-term structural reforms, President Aquino warned yesterday the Philippines would still be vulnerable to corruption especially if there would be "another corrupt president."

"This is why we are here today," Aquino said at the opening ceremony of the 5th global conference of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (Gopac).

"As people in government, we know that corruption cannot be eliminated by sending a few erring officials to jail, or by exposing a single faulty contract, or by removing from office a single oppressive tyrant," he said.

Aquino cited as examples his predecessor Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and ousted chief justice Renato Corona, although he did not refer to them by name.

"The Filipino people have no doubt taken huge strides toward establishing a culture of fairness and accountability when no less than a former president was charged with plunder, among other things. Our own chief justice of the Supreme Court was impeached and stripped of his position when he was found to have lied about more than 98 percent of his cash assets," Aquino said.

"But while these cases have undeniable impact in our cultural milieu, without structural reform, another corrupt president might one day take the reins of power;

another chief justice might one day again betray the public trust.”

▶ Aquino told the forum of visiting parliamentarians that this was the reason why the problem of corruption must be approached “strategically, always with the long-term in mind.”

“Reforms cannot be mere blips in the radar – they must usher in an enduring mainstream of good, honest governance. Only through legislation can the bedrock of inclusiveness and positive, meaningful change be set. As parliamentarians, this is your task, and perhaps you will be interested in the policies that have gotten us to where we are now, and which can also form the basis of change in your respective home countries,” he said.

“We are all fully aware that, in the coming years, we will continue to grind it out with elements in our respective societies who simply want to profit from the hard work of others – who want to establish, or maintain, an undeserved upper hand over the common citizen,” Aquino said.

With the conference, Aquino said they were now forming a more cohesive force against corruption.

“And the more we share our ideas, the more we listen to one another, the sooner we will achieve our goal of eliminating corruption and reforming the system for the benefit of our peoples,” he said.

Around the world, Aquino said the dominant atmosphere seemed to be one of uncertainty – economies were contracting left and right and businesses had become more wary of risks.

“And people have gone to the streets, clamoring for inclusiveness. The message of our times is clear: The gap between rich and poor, between the powerful and the powerless, has become too huge. Too many people are being left behind,” he said.

“And it has also become clear that inequity is borne of corruption: The few at the top have been allowed to run roughshod over the many, and have gamed the system to benefit themselves, while the rest wallow in poverty. The greatest challenge for any modern society, then, is how to stem the corruption that has feasted on the very moral fabric of our society and institutions,” Aquino said.

While policy formulation can at times be a complex matter, Aquino said the overarching idea behind the country’s efforts was simple: “To put the people front and center in any agenda, and to go back to the basics of public service; in short, to do the right thing.”

Aquino explained this led to the success of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) in reducing project costs and corruption.

He said the country’s key agencies also showed the same spirit as the DPWH, such as the Department of Justice, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, and other agencies that established internal mechanisms or offices to “police themselves, to respond to administrative complaints, and to make certain that they are fulfilling their mandate in an efficient manner.”

The President said the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) had also been taking extra care of taxpayers’ money and, for the past two years, had been using the zero-based budgeting system – a system that made certain that “we would get more bang for the buck, rather than rehashing and funding the same old projects, regardless of whether they worked or not.”

This was to ensure, Aquino said, that the money that the agencies spent on their projects would yield the best equivalent benefit to Filipinos.

In terms of transparency, Aquino said his administration had also been conducting groundbreaking work and the budget department ordered the disclosure of budget information on the websites of all national departments and agencies.

He said the Department of the Interior and Local Government also adopted a full disclosure policy, requiring all local government units to disclose their financial activities and that the DBM and the Department of Finance (DOF) also launched websites called Budget ng Bayan and Pera Ng Bayan, respectively.

“These translate to ‘The People’s Budget’ and ‘The People’s Money.’ These websites allow our citizens to access information about how the government is spending their money and to report corrupt officials from the DOF and its attached agencies,” he said.

Time too short

Two veteran lawmakers, on the other hand, said the rampant corruption in the government could not be resolved within six years of Aquino’s administration.

“No doubt that President Aquino has good intentions in eradicating if not reducing corruption,” Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile said during an interview at the sidelines of the conference.

“In fairness to him, he was well intentioned in starting it, started with the highest magistrate of the land in the belief that there was corruption there, and we succeeded in impeaching the chief justice,” he said.

Enrile recognized the impeachment of former chief justice Renato Corona as an achievement of the Aquino administration in the fight against corruption.

“As to other cases that are now pending, I think six years is too short to really stamp out corrupt practices in any society,” he said.

Enrile said it is important that cases, backed with evidence, are filed against respondents to show how earnest the administration is in trying to stamp out corruption.

Enrile said the President cannot do it alone in because it depends on “many layers of government bureaucracy” and the success rate of conviction in the courts.

For his part, Sen. Edgardo Angara, the newly appointed chairman of Gopac, said there is a new dimension of corruption that has reached the private sector.

"How can you expect to wipe it out overnight?" Angara remarked.

"The common misconception is that corruption is only prevalent in the government and public officials," Angara said. "Corruption is not unique to the public sector, it is prevalent even in the private sector."

Angara said massive corruption has been a plague in many societies for several years.

"Corruption has taken a more sophisticated and deadly dimension. It wrecks economies, impoverishes nations, and will keep the poor poorer," he said. – **Christina Mendez**

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[Corruption WILL come back WITH GREATER FORCE ... in 2016](#)

IF and ONLY IF the filipinos vote for the short , black guy who became MULTI-Millionaire (if not a billionaire) after years of being a mayor of Makati... a lowly human-rights lawyer who was given a chance to sit a Mayor and became an instant Multi-millionaire.... PNoys sacrifice and efforts to rid the Philippines of corruption will become meaningless if this person wins the Presidency.

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[That's why we have to vote](#)

That's why we have to vote wisely. Actually we are lucky to have pNoy as our president.

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[Still there and Thrivingti](#)

Corruption in the government still exist and thriving. Using the word "vulnerable" is picturing as if it was gone or totally eradicated. The only difference now is that "the corrupts" are more cautious and laid low but its still there. Singling out 2 corrupts in the past administration is not helpful of putting together the Filipinos, Its DIVISIVE. The President should go beyond.....include FM, Cory, FVR and Erap administration to highlight his crusade against Corruption.

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["Corruption has taken a more](#)

"Corruption has taken a more sophisticated and deadly dimension. It wrecks economies, impoverishes nations, and will keep the poor poorer," ---- That is correct senator Angara. Congrats to you and I know that you'll do well as the new chairman of GOPAC.

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papelito
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[Vulnerable?](#)

Corruption still very much pervade the government and noynoy should be clear enough into admitting it. One cannot just accuse someone of being corrupt without a firm indictment and evidences must prove without a shadow of a doubt the accusation! Who among us can say that he is clean? More so these very same official who occupy the corridors of power? Noynoy? Roxas? Binay? Enrile? Bemonte? Who, anyone? The rhetoric that noynoy spew is just a camouflage on the ongoing corruption within his administration. He is quick to absolve his KKK because if he goes into detailed investigation on their corrupt practices, he will prove that his administration is corrupt in the same manner as what his predecessors did! The corruption of noynoy goes into his paying off the politicians to achieve his goals! This is the very reason why he chose to raise the value of the politician's pork barrel and withhold the same to those he perceives to be unsupportive of him!

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[Corruption Yesterday Today Tomorrow](#)

We who react to and are against corruption should understand some basics about this social issue. Corruption had been with mankind since the very beginning, circa BC, circa AD, today, tomorrow, and days and decades to come. Corruption will be with us till kingdom come. In modern day business, corruption remains as a problem and a reality in countries such as but not limited to rich countries such as Germany, UK, the USA, Japan, and China. Just remember what happened to the CEO of Enron who was fired. Just remember the recent case involving Barclays bank of the UK involving LIBOR, US banks such as Morgan-Chase and others, etc. and these are private corporations. What more in government bureaucracies? Corruption will be a continuous battle for all, government, society, and the church. The starting point is a strong judicial system and framework. Jurisprudence will ensure no one gets trampled and left behind, rich and poor. Justice will ensure that the police and military does not become adventurous hence ensuring peace and order, decreasing not increasing crime rate. Justice will put corruption in check and manageable so that economy will grow. Presence of justice will ensure increasing investments, jobs, and improvement in education, especially the underprivileged and minorities. You and I will either be part of corruption or part of keeping it in check. Let's understand and remain participative. Mabuhay.

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