



# Paglaum

Issue No. 38 HOPE FOR NATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

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## FEDERALIZATION PUSHED

STORY ON PAGE 2



Prof. Nene Pimentel, Chairman of the Pimentel Institute for Leadership and Governance speaks before the faculty and students of the University of the East at the Forum on the Issue of Charter Change (October 8).

### MORE FUNDS, POWERS TO LGUS

By Clarisse Aquino

Despite the enactment of the Local Government Code more than twenty years ago, much remains to be done to attain the law's objectives of speeding up the development of the nation.

This was the message by former Senate President Aquilino Q. Pimentel, Jr., as he keynoted the 2014 International Conference on Public Administration with the theme "Public Administration and Governance Reforms and Innovations" last October 9-11 in Davao City.

Pimentel chairs the Pimentel Institute for Leadership and Governance. *Turn to Page 3*

### Word from the Center

*(Talk of Prof. Nene Pimentel at the Nutrition Council Awards on October 21, 2014, PICC, Pasay City).*

NNC Executive Director; Assistant Secretary of Health Maria Bernardita T. Flores; officers and members of the NNC, distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen:

Your activities as Nutrition Council not only in the past year but over the years as well show that all is not lost in this country.

Sometimes, we, the citizens of this country, get the impression from media that muggings, killings, and violence galore, and thievery by people in-or-out of government are all that our people can expect of their daily fare.

Congratulations, then, to the NNC for singling out some of our provinces, cities and municipalities, and outstanding barangay nutrition volunteers for the awards that your Council bestows on them for their outstanding achievements.

They deserve the awards.

They give honor to our country and people.

More than some politicians, your honorees serve the best interests of our nation.

As you spotlight the achievements of your honorees, let me say that I can only hope that the NNC gets the support not only of the national government, but also of the local government units in the promotion of your vital projects.

I hope that the local nutrition councils are getting a fair share in the budgets of your LGUs.

Unlike in 1990, when the newly enacted Local Government Code was implemented, LGUs only had minimal shares in the BIR collected taxes of the nation.

Now, most LGUs talk of millions, indeed, a good number refer to the billions of pesos in their treasury, either as their internal revenue shares, or even as locally generated funds that they use to serve their constituencies.

That said, I am sure that the usual reaction of LGU bureaucrats would be to assert that "we can no longer allocate more funds

*Turn to Page 2*

### UPDATING THE LOCAL GOV'T CODE

By Jay Dejaresco

The author of the local government code (R.A. 7160) cited the gains in granting more powers to local government units as a key to the nation's economic development, even as he acknowledged the need to update the law to adjust to changing times with a view of strengthening local autonomy.

Former Senate President Aquilino Q. Pimentel Jr. was guest and resource person at the Midanano Island Cluster Conference of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines held at the Oxford Hotel in Clark Freeport Zone Pampanga

*Turn to Page 3*

## Word from the Center

From Page 1

to nutrition projects because we do not have enough money!"

My response to that knee-jerk assertion, my dear friends, is to rebut it with the commonsensical observation that, indeed, money is never enough.

That is why billionaires who are already wallowing in so much wealth are still trying to make more money.

Hence, the workable solution to the problem that we have posed is for the LGUs to PRIORITIZE their funds so that they can allocate more money to address the NUTRITIONAL needs of their people.

There is a proposed legislation called, "the Bigger Pie, Bigger Slice Bill" filed by a certain senator by the name of Koko that may alleviate the lack of funds for local government projects, like Nutrition.

In the meantime, while waiting for the passage of that bill, the feasible solution is for local governments to also PRIORITIZE their expenditures.

Meaning, allocate more funds to matters that are urgently needed by their constituencies.

And I dare say that NUTRITION should be among the top priorities of our government - both national and local.

Indeed, what would be the meaning of good roads, imposing buildings, and other infrastructures in our country if you see skeletons, skin-and-bones, gaunt people walking on the streets of our communities like zombies in some Hollywood horror movies?

And all because those people are hungry - not only in the literal sense, but especially in the nutritional sense?

Some people think that remedy lies in the

enactment of laws.

That is, certainly, one solution.

The Local Government Code is one such example.

But, my dear friends, the Code is not the panacea for all the ills of our country. Although, it must be admitted that, at the very least, the Code empowers local communities to address more directly matters of vital concern to their residents.

Good laws need good implementors.

Good laws will not turn this country around for the better.

You still need good people in government to implement them, faithfully and well.

And you need good citizens who are conscious of their rights and obligations to the nation to put in good people in government.

May I, then, stress this point: that some of our local officials are probably inhibited from doing things for their people unless these are enumerated in black and white as among the powers devolved to them either in the Code or in some other pertinent legislation.

That is the safest way of doing things. But there are more innovative ways that are also legal and beneficial to the nation. Such as those shown by the likes of Jesse Robredo, God rest his soul, when he was mayor of Naga City.

Essentially, what Jesse did was to use not only the express powers of cities as embodied in the Local Government Code, but he also availed of the broader powers guaranteed in the Constitution and reflected in the Code for the promotion of the common welfare.

*Ang ibig sabihin, kahit wala doon sa enumerated powers of the local governments, basta't ito ay makakabuti sa mga taong bayan, kayang gawin ng mga probinsiya, syudad, munisipyo at barangay. Basta't di labag sa Constitution at mga batas na umiiral.*

Thus, to go back to our topic today, allocating

more funds for the nutrition of people is a function that should be given top priority by the national as well as by the local government units.

That the NNC is giving credit where it is due deserves our applause.

And because we are only human, it is also important that good people working to advance the cause of good governance like the members of the NNC, and their volunteer workers at the provincial, city, municipal, and barangay levels must be given a pat on their backs which the awards that are being handed out to them on this occasion try to do.

As I close, I would like to advert to one of the major miracles of Our Lord. And that is the feeding of thousands of hungry people from a few loaves of bread and some fish.

That the Good Lord was moved into addressing the hunger of the people who followed him into the desert by performing a miracle should be a sufficient motivation for us to do likewise - not that we can replicate His miraculous ways, but, at the very least, we can begin to see the vital importance of our feeding the hungry even in our own small way.

Here's my favorite quote on the issue of feeding the hungry "If you cannot feed one hundred, feed one."

Congratulations, then, are due to Secretary Ona, the officers and members of the NNC where good ideas on nutrition probably enunciated at the national level meet factual reality through the intervention of the Barangay Nutrition scholars who do their thing in their provinces, cities, municipalities, and barangays.

And to the LGU officials and employees who provide palpable proof that when national and local government units get their act together - in the area of nutrition as the affair today graphically shows - inevitably the common good is advanced in a concrete matter.

## Federalization pushed

From Page 1

Former Senate President Aquilino Q. Pimentel, Jr. renewed his call to federalize the system of government in the Philippines in order to disperse both political and economic power throughout the nation.

The federal proposal has a dual nature. Aside from being a political undertaking, federalization is also an economic effort by immediately creating thirteen centers of power, finance and development throughout the country.

Pimentel made the call as he spoke in a forum conducted by the University of the East College of Arts and Sciences entitled "It Takes Two to Cha-cha: Will the Philippines Groove to the Change?" held last October 8, 2014.

Pimentel outlined his proposed federal system which entails the creation of eleven federal states out of the existing political subdivisions in the country and one federal administrative region.

Under the proposal, Metro Manila will be converted into a Federal Administrative Region along the lines of Washington D.C., or New Delhi or Kuala Lumpur.

The proposal also includes the conversion of the current Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao into a Bangsamoro federal state, plus the inclusion of Sabah as part of Philippine territory thereby establishing the federal

state of Sabah.

Under Pimentel's proposal the disputed territories west of the Philippines including the Kalayaan and Scarborough Shoal and other surrounding islands will be part of the federal state encompassing these areas.

Pimentel's proposal seeks the institution of a national legislature composed of the Senate and the House of Representatives, installing federal state governors and vice governors to head the different federal states.

Within these federalized states Pimentel proposed that it establish its state legislatures authorized to make laws for state purposes, plus the election of federal state senators.

The federal proposal seeks the retention of the presidential form, and the structure of the judiciary, as well as the different local government units.

The establishment of the federal form will entail the increase in resources for the local government units anchored on the sharing of national revenues.

Pimentel said the federal system of government seeks to attain two objectives.

First is to cause the speedy development of the entire country by unleashing the forces of competitiveness among the states.

Second is to dissipate the causes of rebellion in the country particularly in Mindanao, Pimentel said.

"The federal proposal will hopefully provide a just and lasting redress of the grievances of the powerless and the neglected sectors of society, like the Moro and Lumad peoples of Mindanao," Pimentel said.



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## More funds, powers to LGUs

From Page 1

Governance (PILG), a non-profit organization advocating empowered and informed local governments, through conduct of seminars, trainings, and workshops among local government leaders.

“It is a sad admission that the Local Government Code’s devolvement of powers, responsibilities, personnel and funds of certain national government departments had not been exactly fulfilled,” said Pimentel

He espoused the advocacy to move the thrust of the Local Government Code forward, not only in terms of granting more powers, but also more funds to local government units.

“Let the local governments now have the primary say on matters of the environment, public works, construction of wharves, and other infrastructures needed for development and progress,” Pimentel urged.

Pimentel expressed support for a bill in the Senate that expands the financial basis of the funds that the national and local governments divide pursuant to the provisions of the Code.

As of now, he said, the Code limits the funds that are divided according to the formula of 60% for the national government, and 40% for the local government units monies that are collected by the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

Pimentel noted that many other funds collected by other national government agencies like the Customs Bureau, or from gasoline taxes, or from wharves, are



Prof. Nene Pimentel delivers the keynote speech at the 4th International Conference on Public Administration organized by the the Philippine Society for Public Administration, held at Waterfront Hotel Davao City (October 10).

excluded from being shared with the local governments.

The Senate bill includes all revenues collected by the national government for sharing with local government units.

At the same time, Pimentel said, the bill also seeks to increase the sharing formula to 50% for the national government, and 50% for the provinces, cities municipalities and barangays.

Pimentel said, once the bill is approved, the local governments will get several billions more in terms of shares from all the revenues collected by the national government agencies, addressing to a great extent their money woes.

## Updating the Local Gov't Code

From Page 1

last October 28, 2014.

Pimentel laid his advocacy which is to move the thrust of the Local Government Code forward, not only in terms of granting more powers, but also more funds to local government units.

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He also proposed inclusion of the collections of all government agencies like the Customs, the LTO and even gas revenues in the totality of the funds to be divided between the national and local governments.

He also called for prohibiting the central government from re-centralizing directly or indirectly the powers of agencies like the Health, Agriculture and Social Welfare, which already have been devolved.



Prof. Nene Pimentel conveys his message to the Mindanao Municipal Mayors during their Mindanao Island Cluster Conference sponsored by the League of Municipalities of the Philippines, held at the Oxford Hotel, Clark, Pampanga (October 28).

Among the proposals for amendment of the local government code, Pimentel suggested reducing the internal revenue shares of certain cities that are awash with money, and redirecting excess funds to municipalities and barangays in dire need of development assistance.

# RECENT PICTORIAL EVENTS



Dr. Alex Brillantes (standing), PILG Senior Fellow and President of the Philippine Society for Public Administration discusses the highlights of the PSPA Program. He also highlighted the significant gains of devolution through the implementation and enforcement of the local gov't code (October 10).



Senator Nene Pimentel delivers his speech at the 2014 National Nutrition Awarding Ceremony held at the Philippine International Convention Center (October 21).



PILG fellows grace the birthday celebration of Ms. Coylee Gamboa at the Emerald Garden (October 22).



Participants of the 3rd Batang Transformers held at the Phillip Sanctuary, Antipolo City, experience the beauty of nature and acknowledge the importance of protecting the environment for the continued survival of future generations (October 23-26).



PILG Chair Nene Pimentel receives foreign guests during the Round Table Discussion with Laos Delegates. The visitors gained insights on the success of decentralization in the Philippines through the implementation of the local government code. (October 27).



Birthday Celebration of Commissioner Alex Brillantes at the Pancake House, Mandaluyong City (October 29).