

People's Legislative Agenda

(Movement For New Politics)

Introduction

The People's Legislative Agenda (PLA) spells out MNP's position on various issues and services as a minimum basis for unity of our movement. The PLA will also guide the MNP in choosing which Senatorial candidates it will support in the coming national elections. The agenda will be presented to the candidates and, basing on each one's track record and other relevant criteria, the movement will then decide which of them can be relied on to struggle for the PLA in Congress.

MNP will campaign actively for the People's Legislative Agenda during this campaign period. All means of promoting the agenda and reaching out to the public will be utilized. Candidates whom the MNP endorses will also be enjoined to make public their adherence to the PLA and to campaign for it in any manner they deem effective.

People's Legislative Agenda

1. U.S. Bases and Nuclear Weapons

- 1.1 As a fundamental principle, we oppose the presence of foreign bases and nuclear arms in Philippine territory because they violate our national sovereignty and endanger our survival as a people.
- 1.2 The MNP demands the immediate enforcement of the declaration of the Philippines as a nuclear weapons-free zone or the implementation of Article II, Section 8 of the new Constitution.
- 1.3 The movement demands a step-by-step geographic and sectoral phase-out of the U.S. bases to effect their conversion into non-military (civilian), economically profitable, socially beneficial, and politically acceptable uses and purposes by 1991.
- 1.4 The movement strongly urges the creation of a congressional body that will work out and promote viable, nationally beneficial socio-economic alternatives to the bases. Such a body must include representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and people's organizations (POs).

- 1.5 Rentals for the use of the bases between now and 1991 shall be used to support the aforementioned conversion into non-military and peaceful purposes.

2. Participatory Mechanisms and Popular Democracy

- 2.1 The MNP urges the institutionalization of people's power and upholds the principle that the people should be meaningfully represented in policy making, program planning, and project implementation. No single political party or ideological movement must be allowed to monopolize the above functions.
- 2.2 Sectors affected by government policies and programs should be adequately represented in the official agencies concerned.
- 2.3 The movement seeks the immediate implementation of the provision on sectoral representation (Article XVIII, Section 7) of the Constitution through the appropriate legislative actions. The law should include the creation of a body composed of sectoral non-government organizations and people's organizations to decide on the manner and process of sectoral representation in Congress.
- 2.4 Sectoral representation and the party-list system should be implemented in the provincial and municipal levels.
- 2.5 Consultative councils composed of non-governmental organizations and people's organizations should be established, duly recognized, and regularly consulted by government from the provincial down to the barangay level.
- 2.6 The MNP demands that all acts which hinder, obstruct, or prevent mass organizing activities be severely penalized.

3. Agrarian Reform

3.1 The MNP upholds the following guiding principles:

- 3.1.1 Agrarian reform is primarily a social justice issue and an economic matter only secondarily.
- 3.1.2 Land redistribution must cover all agricultural lands and all types of tenurial systems.
- 3.1.3 Given the heterogeneous nature of Philippine agriculture, different models of agrarian reform must apply revolving around two main concepts: family-size farms and cooperative farms.
- 3.1.4 State support is essential in the initial stages of turning the beneficiaries into viable producers.
- 3.1.5 The political will of the government in pursuing land reform is an all-important consideration.
- 3.1.6 The process of land transfer must not be treated as a real estate transaction.
- 3.1.7 National sovereignty and Filipino control over the country's natural resources must be upheld uncompromisingly.
- 3.1.8 Pending issues in the Constitution (i.e., just compensation, retention limits, and prior rights) must be resolved in favor of the farmer and farmworker.
- 3.1.9 Full democratization and people empowerment must go hand in hand with agrarian reform.
- 3.1.10 Agrarian reform must be paralleled with a vigorous national industrialization program.
- 3.1.11 The end result of agrarian reform must be in conformity with the concept of self-reliant and diversified communities.

3.2 The Aquino government must immediately adopt a comprehensive and expanded agrarian reform program without waiting for Congress to convene.

3.3 The terms and conditions under which the new program shall be implemented should not be any more burdensome to the beneficiary compared to the past regime's program.

3.4 Executive issuances of the previous government regarding the disposition and use of agricultural lands must be reviewed for possible violations of agrarian reform laws.

3.5 All pending Executive Orders on agrarian reform must be immediately signed by President Aquino.

3.6 Funds allocated for servicing the country's foreign debt should be rechanneled to fund the land transfer program by either limiting interest payments to a minimum level or imposing a moratorium on such outlays.

3.7 The provision that rental payments by rice and corn tenants made since 1982 should be counted as amortization payments on the farm must be strictly implemented so as to lessen the burden on the beneficiary.

3.8 For all beneficiaries of land transfer, a five-year moratorium on amortization payments must be declared.

3.9 A cabinet level body must be created to coordinate the various government departments and agencies whose cooperation is essential to the success of agrarian reform.

3.10 Beneficiaries must be protected and ensured against any future attempts to take their lands away from them by: (a) clearing the political atmosphere of all groups whose activities threaten agrarian reform, and (b) on the economic front, providing generous financial and appropriate technical assistance to the direct producers.

4. Foreign Debt

4.1 Our scarce resources should not be used for principal and interest payments on debts that were simply used to support the lavish spending of the past regime. Furthermore, a new policy limiting the use of foreign loans only for purposes consistent with the nation's economic plans must be formulated and implemented.

4.2 Interest payments should be limited to a manageable percentage of export earnings so that foreign trade revenues can be used to finance agrarian reform and other socially beneficial programs of government.

4.3 The government should adopt and implement a policy of selective debt repudiation on loans contracted under questionable and illegal circumstances and utilized for dubious purposes.

4.4 A full public disclosure of details of all foreign debts incurred by the past regime must be made by the government agencies concerned.

4.5 A Congressional body must be created to investigate all aspects of the foreign debt and look into which specific loans should be repudiated. The body should include NGO representatives and be multi-sectoral in character.

4.6 The MNP also seeks the immediate implementation of Article XII, Section 20 which empower Congress to establish an independent monetary authority. In addition, the movement asks that the authority's governing board should include member-representatives from NGOs and people's organizations and from sectors affected by the manner and the conditions under which the foreign loans are incurred.

5. Military Reform

5.1 The MNP proposes the following short-term reforms:

5.1.1 The immediate prosecution of: (a) all military personnel guilty of human rights violations especially those committed under the Marcos regime, (b) those involved in the past six coup attempts against the Aquino government, and (c) corrupt military men.

5.1.2 The immediate abolition of the CHDF and the immediate implementation of Article XVI, Section 4 of the Constitution providing for the creation of a citizens' armed force.

5.1.3 The reorientation of the AFP into an external defense force and logistical support force of the citizens' army.

5.1.4 The transfer of authority over the police forces from the ArP to the local civilian governments after the local elections in accordance with Article XVI, Section 6 of the Constitution.

5.1.5 The immediate, conscious, and systematic implementation of Executive Order No. 27 which requires military men to undergo education programs on human rights.

5.1.6 The MNP seeks full public disclosure of all military expenditures.

5.2 The MNP proposes the following medium-term reforms:

5.2.1 The assertion of civilian authority from the top down to the local leadership beyond the mere control of civilian officials over police forces through the formation of people's councils comprising the local elected leadership and the various people's organizations.

5.2.2 Democratization of the Crisis Management Committee formed to counter right wing coup attempts by constituting it at the regional and local levels.

5.2.3 The institution of mechanisms that will end U.S. influence over the AFP, especially in the ideological sphere.

5.2.4 The creation of a commission that will prepare for an alternative military education program with a nationalist orientation and which emphasizes democratic values and traditions.

5.3. The MNP proposes the following for the long-term:

5.3.1 The creation of a self-reliant Philippine military.

5.3.2 The thorough democratization of the defense component of the government.

6. Urban Land Reform and Social Services

6.1 The MNP recognizes that the phenomenon of squatting is a symptom of the problem of socio-economic underdevelopment which should be solved in a comprehensive manner over a long-term period. In the short-run however, squatting may be initially dealt with by preparing a nationwide urban regional development program.

6.2 The movement seeks the creation of a Congressional body whose primary task is to prepare the nationwide urban regional plan and whose members should include representatives from NGOs and urban poor community organizations.

6.3 Such a plan should include the following components:

6.3.1 Expropriation and appropriation of public and idle lands occupied by the urban poor for some length of time and the sale of said lands to the occupants at affordable prices and acceptable conditions.

6.3.2 The formation of community cooperatives that will assure affordable prices, ensure prompt and regular payments, and prevent residents from renting out lands for personal profit.

6.3.3 The implementation of an improved and modern flood control program with minimal relocation of urban poor residing in idle or government land and the demolition of all illegal constructions (buildings and offices located along esteros).

6.3.4 Relocation programs should have adequate sites and services in accordance with the residents' daily needs and be situated in areas where employment opportunities are present.

- 6.4 The enactment of a legislative bill providing incentives and allocation for a program of mass housing.
 - 6.5 A general moratorium on demolitions while a comprehensive urban development program is being prepared.
 - 6.6 Representation at all levels in government agencies concerned with urban poor issues including provincial and municipal legislative bodies.
 - 6.7 Channel part of tax revenues for increased social services.
 - 6.8 Provide for free basic education, health services, housing, subsidies, and other basic social services for lower income groups.
7. Industrialization and the National Economy.
- 7.1 The underlying principle is that of a mixed economy where government grants the private sector a more decisive role without abdicating its responsibility for establishing the economic basis for recovery and long-term development.
 - 7.2 Redistribution of income and wealth to create a dynamic domestic market through legislation on progressive taxation, increased social services to disadvantaged groups, agrarian reform, and labor policies that will not allow real wages to deteriorate as labor productivity rises.
 - 7.3 Strict regulation and control over the operations of transnational corporations particularly in payments of royalties and franchises, domestic credit borrowings, and profit remittances. Anti-trust and anti-monopoly policies should be strictly implemented.
 - 7.4 Legislation on incentives and sanctions to encourage labor intensive and light industries that promote employment, require less financing, produce high value-added goods, are not labor displacing, and establish forward and backward linkages between industry and agriculture. A program for regional dispersal of industries should also be included. The underlying principle is a balanced agro-industrial policy.
 - 7.5 Formulation of a state plan that will define the economic areas where foreign investments may be allowed and encouraged but only under terms and conditions that will be beneficial to our economic growth and are not harmful to Filipino industries.
 - 7.6 Government regulation of vital social services such as health, education, and welfare and the production and distribution of public goods. For essential consumer and producer goods, some amount of indicative planning is necessary. For all non-essential consumer industries, the market should operate unencumbered by government intervention.

Congress for a People's Agrarian Reform (CPAR)

Declaration of Principles

(May 31, 1987, Quezon City)

The agrarian problem lies at the root of the Philippine economic and social crisis. A key solution to this crisis is a genuine and comprehensive agrarian reform program.

The core principle in agrarian reform is the primacy of the right of all members of the agricultural labor force who do not own land, near-landless farmers, farmworkers, small fisherfolk and other direct producers to own and control the land, have full access to other natural resources and gain full disposition over the produce.

Agrarian reform addresses six major issues, namely, (1) social injustice and inequality; (2) low productivity; (3) lack of control by the rural masses over their lives and destiny; (4) under-industrialization; (5) environmental breakdown; and, (6) foreign domination.

Therefore, the people's agrarian reform program will aim first of all, to transfer landed wealth and power over the land and its produce to the actual tillers. Unjust concepts of private land ownership have led to the concentration of land in the