

## **VIEWS ON THE THREAT OF OIL PRICES SPIKES NATIONAL ANTI-POVERTY COMMISSION (NAPC)**

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The National Anti-Poverty Commission is keenly giving attention on how to ease the emergent burden on the Filipino poor that can result from the successive increase in oil prices.

It joins government in its bid to craft “greenprint” to find ways on how to lessen the vulnerability of the poor from the impacts of the recent oil prices spikes. Accordingly, NAPC is duty-bound to heed the call of Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to “do everything in our power to share the burden and relieve the poor from bearing the biggest burden.”

Economic analyst project that prices of fuel and other basic goods would only rise “moderately” this month. Still, there can be inevitable rise in basic commodities prices, especially agricultural foods. Meanwhile, prices of basic commodities are expected to remain at their present level as there was an ample supply of these goods. (Favila)

Nonetheless, NAPC adopts a perspective that should be able to meet the challenge of the oil prices movement. Greater push on accelerating the ongoing poverty reduction programs is necessary to cushion impacts on the poor, especially the rural sector.

Labor employment and livelihood efforts must be doubled. The farmer and the fisherfolk sectors should be provided with facilities and services that can allow them to generate more incomes. Multi-cropping and services generating-incomes of smaller and landless peasants and fisherfolks. Frontloading government’s targets and resources allotment for irrigation, food production and processing, farm to market roads, fisheries facilities and other related infrastructures even earlier than projected, will result to increased agricultural employment, especially in the rural areas.

NAPC’s cross cutting concern also lies on enhancing our efforts towards sustaining the social gains derived from the continuing growth of the economy, the steady increase in the remittances from overseas Filipino workers, and the strong rise of peso against the US dollar.

Energy conservation and savings are the challenges that our consumers must address at this time.

NAPC will enjoin all the basic sectors to help in making the public understand and appreciate the critical importance of conservation and savings. It is crucial

that we further enhance our efforts towards consumer empowerment, especially among our most vulnerable sectors like the urban poor, women, youth and children. It is imperative that we focus on skills, education and technical competence development to ensure that our sectors are armed not only with better skills but also with the right attitudes to meet the adverse effects of the present problem.

Community based advocacy and dialogues will be good vehicles to reach the consuming publics. Schools and other institutions, like the churches and homeowners associations, will be tapped to expand the network for information dissemination and communication.