

Message of MMDA Chairman Bayani F. Fernando during the Launching Program of Citizen Report Card (CRC) and Continuous Improvement Benchmarking (CIB) E-Learning Toolkits Component Activity Asian Development Bank held 13 July 2006 at Auditorium A, ADB Headquarters, Mandaluyong City.

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- Director General BINDU LOHANI of the ADB Regional and Sustainable Development Department,
- Chairperson Dr. SAMUEL Paul of the Bangalore Public Affairs Centre,
- Dr. SITA SEKHAR, also of the Bangalore Public Affairs Centre,
- Director BRIN CAMPBELL of the Australian Continuous Improvement Group,
- Ms. ASHA NEWSUM of the ADB Capacity Development and Governance Division-RSDD,
- Vice-Chancellor Dr. VICTORIA BAUTISTA of the UP-Open University,
- (Former) Secretary CORA ALMA-de LEON of the DSWD and Civil Service Commission
- Dean ALEX BRILLANTES of the UP-National College of Public Administration
- Dr. JOEL MANGAHAS also of the UP-National College of Public Administration, other ADB officials, my colleagues in public service, other distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

***Doing the Right Thing and Overcoming Challenges
in Service Delivery***

First of all, thank you for this invitation. I also would like to thank you for trusting me to discuss a topic such as “doing the right thing” and allowing me to also share with you how we beat, at MMDA and earlier, in Marikina City, the challenges in service delivery. I hope that telling our story would give you all a fresh definition “Doing the Right Thing” – either as a method of Overcoming Challenges in Service Delivery or as something one has to do while Overcoming Challenges in Service Delivery.

While Marikina flourishes under Mayor Maria Lourdes Fernando’s term, its growing community continues to demand added services,

amenities and all other assistance from its local government not so much because services are wanting but because residents are aware that better levels of service are forthcoming.

At the onset, among the right things that we endeavoured for Marikina local government was to regain public trust and confidence . We have thereafter gifted Mariqueños a government that knows its territory, works to solve problems and carries out the work at high levels of efficiency and effectiveness.

From a 3rd class municipality known only for its shoe industry, Marikina City is now a 1st class address that has been recognized by local and international governance award-giving organizations.

Marikina's roads, that include sidewalks, are now mostly flood-free and easily walkable.

The Marikina River is now a showcase, not so much for river rehabilitation and waterfront amenities, but more so for the political will and concerted government action to remove unsafe squatters' homes from its banks.

The city market and all others in Marikina City are now models for other local public markets as Marikina's markets are clean, all-weather and with ample parking areas. Safe food is ensured by the city's food laboratory located right at the marketplace.

The city emergency and rescue service that responds in 5 minutes is thrice faster than North America's 911.

Marikina is also "green" even beyond the riverside areas. The whole city is a nursery. City Hall's Tree Spade machine transfers, on request, full-grown species with high survival rates. The city also is able to collect and dispose its waste efficiently and cheaply; it has the lowest per person trash collection cost in Metro Manila.

the 1 and 1st right thing I could go on and on about Marikina but all those good things about the city lead us back to one, initial move that we did right for the city. We passed a local ordinance that declared all materials that do not belong in sidewalks

as common garbage that must be disposed of as such. Garbage or litter and merchandise were thus regularly collected from the sidewalks and brought to the city dump.

Early in my term as Chairman, the MMDA also passed a similar ordinance for metro-wide application that had the support from the local chief executives who make up the Metro Manila Council.

obstacles that must be overcome. Such action brought about much resistance from the affected parties and the public at large. Resistance include lawsuits.

While long-drawn litigation may easily be considered as obstacles in managing territories, our court battles gave the Marikina government it's day in court that it deserves. Our numerous victories served but to strengthen our stand that rule of law and order always prevails over the greed exhibited by encroachers of public space and the resultant chaos and disarray.

That we have succeeded, by now, in convincing the great majority of residents of Marikina and also Metro Manila, that it is for the common weal and the public good that sidewalks must be recovered from a greedy few and returned for the use of all and that we continue to win all our court cases should serve as evidence that passing that ordinance on garbage on the sidewalks was the right thing to do.

Also, it was the first right thing to do because it gave the local government the legal basis for its action; perhaps, more importantly, it gave the local government an opportunity to show its constituents that they are under governance by rule of law. We are hopeful that, ultimately, all Metro Manilans will abide by all rules as their way of showing support for a government that knows its job and does it well.

The protection of all public spaces – roads and sidewalks, and riverbanks and other easements – through law enforcement must remain a persisting priority of government, be it local or national, if inroads are to be achieved in such areas as *anti-squatting, traffic improvement, flood-defense, sanitation and public health, and disaster mitigation*, among others. This priority will exempt all urban

and emerging urban centers from the many deficiencies that now beset Metro Manila and the newer metro areas.

Central to the concept of clearing of sidewalks is its value in maximizing limited road space to enable better traffic management. Added road space make for faster traffic. Clear sidewalks allow pedestrians and commuters to move about freely and safely. With authorized parking areas and public transport terminals, in addition to those provided by private business, road clearing is key to our search for safe mobility.

The world-wide crisis of high fuel consumption and resultant degraded urban air quality has much earlier been acted on by Marikina City through its Bikeway project, a 66-kilometer network constructed through a World Bank grant. This local bikeways network will form part of the MMDA's Metropolitan Bikeways Program or *Metro Padyakan* whose aim is to provide a safe thoroughfare for non-motorized transportation in limited-access/dedicated secondary roads that will interconnect the 17 towns and cities of Metro Manila. These roads shall be for the exclusive use of bicycle-riders and walkers.

Estimated at 200 kilometers and with about 500 intersections, an added benefit of this bike- and walk-ways program is the opening up or the improvement of the accessibility of the affected roads to economic opportunities in addition to some form of urban renewal that will be brought about by better traffic conditions.

Illegal structures on riverbanks and bridges hamper maintenance of critical drainage facilities and equipment. While considered as water polluters, residents experience serious social dislocation, severe congestion and low sanitation as well as the continuous threats of both floodwaters and demolition.

With shelter services as one of its mandated functions, the MMDA is working with national housing agencies and LGUs to remove some 70,000 illegal settler-families from Metro Manila's waterways. It goes without saying that relocated families from danger zones now enjoy improved quality of life in their new homes

Congestion is both a root problem and an outcome in the urban setting. With rapid population growth in both formal and informal communities, encroachment of easements and other public space, and personal financial difficulties are being manifested by blighted neighborhoods with their run-down housing structures, inadequate utilities, congestion and an ambience of hopelessness and even hostility.

Our on-going *Pook na Bulok, Negosyo di Papasok* program is a neighborhood regeneration program initially focused on the frontage of blighted areas along the so-called “investors’ route”. With support from LGUs and beneficiaries, MIA and Domestic Roads, Quirino and Lawton and Andrews Avenues, Ayala and Buendia and Nagtahan now sport clean and clear sidewalks and easements with improved vista, visibility and accessibility. Distressed housing structures have also been fixed and repainted.

Pleasant and livable environments that have proven to be conducive to small business enterprise have thus been recreated from formerly decaying neighborhoods along Metro Manila’s major roads. Most importantly, residents in these project areas now exhibit a fresh sense of community and more positive and productive attitude.

In the light of these projects, it is essential that public officials pause to reflect on the results and responsiveness of their programs and projects, as well as the doability of their future plans. Having realized that there is not enough and there will not be a surplus of public funds in the very near future, I have recommended to the President that limited funds for road infrastructure be focused on significant road projects. Improvements need to be responsive, realizable and palpable.

[Sometime after my appointment as MMDA Chairman, the President has also charged me with the technical supervision of the projects of the DPWH in the NCR.]

By planning projects in this manner, government is assured that the impact of these projects on the lives of Metro Manilans is evident and expeditious. MMDA’s current 7 Major Roads Project, that is also a

component of our *Metro Guapo* program, also aims to maximize the use of our limited road network.

These 7 major corridors are:

Commonwealth Avenue
EdSA
Radial Road 10
Quezon Avenue
Circumferential Road 5
Marcos Highway and
MacArthur Highway.

Our priority is Commonwealth Avenue that we are expanding to a well-lighted, 8-lane high-speed clear way and where street furniture and amenities that are standard and critical components for road user safety and convenience are being installed.

New, well-located footbridges will reduce pedestrian deaths. Waiting sheds and urinals are for commuter safety and convenience. Gantries and signs are for highly visible way-finding information. At emergency bays, motorists can park their defective vehicles for a maximum of 3 tow-free hours for trouble-shooting. Standard-sized sidewalks and median fences make for safe and easy walking. And loading and unloading bays will eliminate illegal terminals and unauthorized passenger pick-up and discharge.

The component thoroughfares of the 7 Major Roads Project is government's response to the clamor of residents for a fast, safe and reliable road network that will bring them to and from their workplaces, schools, and other destinations.

Without the use of formal feedback mechanisms such as the Citizen Report Card, we continue to rely on broad-based public and inter-agency consultations and correspondence with Metro Manila residents to obtain feedback on our plans and programs.

Our agency ratings by professional survey groups, such as Pulse Asia, have reinforced that, so far, our feedforward-feedback

mechanisms: the proposals we present and projects we undertake, and the reactions received, (while not always favorable) are in place. Our website www.mmda.gov.ph is in place, albeit evolving. MMDA may be accessed via text messaging; the number is (0920) 938-9861; also through mms after registering your account with Smart. To register: type "mms" space "on" and as soon as Smart confirms your registration, you can send your picture message reactions, reports, complaints to MMDA by sending them to "333".

endorsing the CRC.

I am happy to note that some Metro Manila LGUs and others in the rest of the country have employed the Citizen Report Card or CRC. Beyond its efficiency and relevance, the CRC's great selling point may well be its ability to imbue in public sector workers a stronger sense of public trust. Among the services and amenities that government can offer, nothing beats its ability to give citizens that feeling that theirs is a government that listens to and perceives the expressed needs of its constituents. In like manner, smart public agencies can learn from and be heartened from genuine citizen feedback of productive criticism and popular wisdom.

To the designers of the CRC from Bangalore, and to the ADB officers and their partners in developing the e-learning tools on CRC and continuous improvement and benchmarking techniques go my heartfelt congratulations and best wishes that use of these methods and techniques would extend far and wide so that public agencies may design truly responsive programs and perform delivery of public services with direction and dedication.

Thank you very much. *Mabuhay!*