

STATEMENT

ERNESTO M. PERNIA

Socioeconomic Planning Secretary of the Philippines
and NEDA Director-General

UN High-Level Side Event on Measuring and Tackling Poverty in All Its Dimensions

United Nations Headquarters, New York City, USA

September 22, 2016; 1:15-2:30 PM

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

1. The Philippines has long recognized the multidimensional and transdisciplinary nature of poverty. Over the past four years, we have strongly supported the push for the inclusion of multidimensional poverty measures as an important part of the performance indicators for the post-2015 development agenda. We have also shared some of the challenges and possible solutions in using a multidimensional poverty index or MPI.
2. In 2014, the midterm update of the Philippine Development Plan 2011-2016 explicitly included the reduction of multidimensional poverty into the desired outcomes of our development agenda. The MPI was also included as an official indicator of poverty. This paved the way for accelerated poverty reduction initiatives such as the increase in the coverage of our country's conditional cash transfer program and the implementation of many wide-ranging governance reforms.
3. Today, we are pleased to share the Philippines' modest success in this initiative. Studies in 2011 and 2014 conducted by my predecessor, the former Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan, show a

declining trend in acute deprivation, indicating that the quality of life of Filipinos has improved.

4. This affirms that inclusive growth can be attained by improving human capital, access to services and facilities, and asset build-up among the poor in a multidimensional context.
5. Under the new government of President Rodrigo Duterte, addressing multidimensional poverty to attain poverty- and inequality-reducing economic growth will further be integrated into the Philippines Development Plan, 2017 to 2022.
6. To monitor this and to complement the poverty incidence metric which is based on income, the Philippine Statistics Authority is currently developing an official MPI for the Philippines. This is part of the deliverables under the Philippine Statistical Development Plan 2011-2017 and is expected to be released in 2018.
7. However, more efforts are still needed in attaining our poverty target of 16 to 18 percent MPI for 2016. As of 2011, the country's MPI was estimated at 27.5 percent, which is 9.5 percentage points above the full-year high-end target of 18.0 percent.
8. Thus, the main strategy in our upcoming medium-term development plan (2017-2022) is to rebalance growth and development opportunities across regions, sectors, and socio economic groups in the country. This will be key to addressing multidimensional poverty as it involves increasing access to

economic opportunities of marginalized socioeconomic groups and MSMEs, reducing vulnerabilities of the poor, and accelerating human capital development.

9. We, in the Philippines, have been redoubling our efforts from the policy level to program level in reducing poverty in its multiple dimensions. Let us also continue to work together in ensuring that poverty is eradicated by 2030, so that our fellowmen will enjoy a life of prosperity and dignity.

Thank you.