

**Paper for Session 7**  
**“The Local Context 2: A Government Viewpoint –**  
**The Executive Department – Focus on Corruption Prevention”**  
**Integrity Training Programme**  
**Institute for Ethics, Governance and Law (IEGL)**  
**Griffith University of Australia in partnership with DAP**  
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**by**  
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Good Morning!

I am indeed grateful for this opportunity to be with you to talk about the Executive Department's Focus on Corruption Prevention from the Government's point of view. I see this as a very timely opportunity to discuss with you - how the government is addressing the subject matter - by making you aware of some realities, that impact on the fight against graft and corruption - as a means to achieve good governance. This is to be done, by sharing with you – this administration's programs and accomplishments - as regards the country's progress, in the area of enhancing integrity and reduction of corrupt practices –specially, at this point in time, when the most recent results of perception – based surveys done by both local and international survey groups have been released – the latter accordingly labeling our country as the No 8 most corrupt country worldwide.

But before proceeding to my assigned topic, I would like to express my gratitude to the Institute for Ethics, Governance and Law or IEGL under the Directorship of Professor Charles Sampford of the Griffith University of Australia who has exerted extra effort to get an AUSAID grant from the AUSAID Public Sector Linkage Program – to run this program in the Philippines. Of course, without Dr Wito's role, I don't know if we could ever have this program. Thank you very much!

And I also would like to congratulate the participants – for being the first beneficiaries of this Integrity Training Program. I would like to believe that your participation here is a telling sign of your respective desire to assess your respective roles or contribution in ensuring integrity development as a component of good governance in your respective areas or places of work. To me, this is more of an expression of your desire to become more responsive, efficient and conscientious in providing objective and timely response to the current needs of the times – to the kind of challenges that our nation is asking each of us to address. And depending on how each of you would translate the new learnings from this Program into your own plans of action as you go back to your respective offices – then, your contribution or role as part of the new breed of transition leaders would then be established.

It was earlier this week, when the Manila Standard carried a story on the Transparency International (TI)'s report accordingly labeling the Philippines as the 8<sup>th</sup> most corrupt country in the world (the story said that only 163 countries of the 194 countries of the world have been covered by the survey.)

Although the report cited problems in the judicial arena as the alleged culprit for the low rank – people who get to read the story or hear the news take the same as if it is again the entire

country's systems and citizens as generally corrupt – and that what would come to one's thought would be the “perceived” government's inaction to the situation that to them is the reason for the low rank.

As what the surveys are – perception – based – that gives us the explanation that the results are not necessarily a manifestation of what is the real situation on the ground. Perception is based on what one hears or reads – so that when what is being announced is focused on the negatives and none or very little of the positive developments as an offshoot of the government's intervention on the matter find space with the tri-media – it would definitely create a scenario of a corrupt place whose people are corrupt as corruption has become a way of life or part of the daily life of every individual.

Knowing that that kind of scenario is not what is happening in the country – and that such scenario – no Filipino should ever allow his or her own country to experience – the Presidential Anti Graft Commission or PAGC took the initiative of seeking clarification from two of the influential international measuring agencies as regards the hows of their survey methodologies and parameters used – the TI and PERC.

It was in November 2006, when a TI report was published giving the Philippines a 121<sup>st</sup> rating with a corresponding 2.5 score on the Corruption Perception Index or CPI. PAGC wrote Ms Hugette Labelle, the Chair of TI Headquarters in Berlin to seek clarification as regards their basis for saying so – the methodologies adopted and the parameters used *vis a vis* the CPI does not measure trends of corruption but only takes snapshots of the corruption situation in a region.

This relates to the limitations in TI's conduct of survey in covered countries where this issue is found to be part of the limitations referring to the seven failings of a TI survey per assessment done by Mr Fredrik Galtung and Dr Michael Johnston – internationally known authorities on corruption measurement issues

These seven failings touch on the following:

1. only punishes the taker, not the giver or facilitator
2. irregular and uncontrolled country coverage
3. biased sample: more than 90% of the world is missing
4. imprecise and sometimes ignorant sources
5. far too narrow and imprecise a definition of corruption
6. does not measure trends
7. guilty by association

In looking at TI's findings, one must always be aware that as TI rates countries using a scale of 0 to 10, the relative ranking of countries change simply because the number of countries covered by the survey changes – caused by the reality that different countries come and leave so that if two (2) countries with a higher rating leave and four (4) countries with lower ratings come in – the other countries rating goes up but the improvement is not really related to improvement as a result of reforms or changes in perception – but simply because of the changes in the composition and placement of the countries covered in the survey.

Another example of TI's work is on the ability of a covered country to manage perception due to a controlled media as in the case of communist countries vs a covered country that respects freedom of the press as in the case of the Philippines.

We pointed out that in the case of countries with suppressed press freedom – the absence of reports coming from the tri-media on corruption cases does not mean that that country is clean. In fact there were countries in the report with bigger problems on corruption but were placed in better rankings than the Philippines just because nothing is being openly discussed or talked about on corruption-related issues. And the kind of reports that come out in the tri-media contribute to the level of assigned rank – never mind that actual situation on the ground – never mind the anti-corruption measures that are being carried out and, never mind the accomplishments in those areas – as in the past, these things were never factored in in the areas covered by the surveys' variables - those being perception – based surveys which is actually just a survey of surveys.

Likewise, in April of this year, we saw a similar situation with the release of reports pointing to the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC), Ltd.'s alleged labeling of the Philippines as the No. 1 most corrupt country in Asia – dislodging Indonesia. As what was done with TI, we sought clarification from no less than the PERC's Managing Director, Mr Robert Broadfoot as to whether or not the news and information picked-up by the media from the PERC report is indeed true.

To this, PERC categorically denied that they made such an assertion. He explained that they did not rate the level of corruption but only asked how expatriates working in a covered country perceived the variable of corruption as a factor influencing the environment in which they are working. Countries cannot be ranked because of the differences in situation. The parameters or variables being used might be applicable to some but totally won't relate to the rest of the covered countries.

There was an interesting information though that PERC provided – that is, on the public relations and substantive dimensions of the problem of corruption that need to be managed. Mr Broadfoot said that corruption is something that can and is being politicized in ways that are not particularly helpful to the country's development but only serve to push the political agendas of those seizing upon the topic in a particular way. In short, it is being said that while corruption is an important issue – it is also one that can – and actually is being – abused by people for their own political ends –

Most of you might be asking yourselves why I am presenting these inputs to you even before presenting to you the government's anti-corruption efforts, actual programs, and actual accomplishments –

I have simple reasons – one of which – is of course to give you an awareness as regards the need –not to be dependent on what is reported as regards corruption situation in the country and much more, not to be affected to the extent that one becomes hopeless and helpless resigning to the belief that indeed nothing can be done to stop this malaise – but rather – focus on what is being

done and what needs to be done – together – to be able to achieve our set goals for a graft and corruption free Philippines.

Yes, indeed, we have set goals on this area. And these are very well laid down in a lot of written documents – that started to come out since several decades ago – which I will briefly summarize to you – if only to emphasize that the government has actually been trying to address this cancer called corruption – a problem that is in existence in our country long before the Macapagal-Arroyo administration came into power.

As I have been tasked for this session to present to you what we had so far as regards integrity reforms in the Philippines, what has worked and what has not, effectiveness of reforms as measured by outcomes and what else needs to be done – I might as well start this by mentioning the government’s efforts towards this area starting from the first recorded efforts in the 1930s.

#### ON WHAT WE HAD SO FAR AS REGARDS INTEGRITY REFORMS IN THE PHILIPPINES

I will start by first showing you a number of variables that help make up national integrity. These are the three branches of the government – the legislature, executive and judiciary -, the auditor general, the ombudsman, the watchdog agencies, public service in general, the media, civil society, private sector, the international actors. And that in the interplay of these actors, there needs to be built a strong public awareness on what is going on and what needs to be achieved under the rule of law and factoring in society’s values and where set targets or goals and the activities to be undertaken should always be towards sustainable development to improve the quality of life. This now gives us an idea as to how and why past and even some of the current efforts have had the kind of result that each registered – why some worked and some didn’t -

Given all these, we now check what we have had in the local arena:

The country’s official war against graft and corruption and enhancement of integrity in the government service started as early as the time that we got our independence as a nation.

At that time, records show that there have been various mechanisms designed and adopted to counteract corruption and to enhance integrity in the government service. Some of these include setting and/or strengthening the legal framework and establishing anti-graft and corruption bodies which I would later on discuss with you.

It has been noted that various constitutional provisions, laws and other issuances that are directly supportive of the thrust to combat corruption have likewise been crafted.

The 1935 Philippine Constitution already provided for a mechanism that address issues on corruption through the General Auditing Office which at that time was headed by a lone Auditor General.

His task was to examine, audit and settle not only accounts pertaining to the revenues and receipts from whatever source but including all expenditures of funds or property pertaining to or held in trust by the Government.

At that time, it was reported that the duty of the Auditor General included bringing to the attention of the proper administrative officer expenditures of funds or property which, in his opinion are irregular, unnecessary, excessive or extravagant.

But the Auditor General was viewed to be powerless as his role was limited to ascertaining the expenditures' correctness and legality. All he could do was to expose the anomaly and recommend corrective or remedial measures. Also, at that time, the Auditor General was accordingly "*hard put in asserting an independent stand when confronted by political pressure.*" This called for a continuing search for better ways of addressing identified issues relating to misuse of public funds.

Come 1950s, the country's official war against graft and corruption and enhancement of integrity in the government service started when then President Elpidio Quirino created the Integrity Board which was a regular agency tasked to handle cases of corruption in the government service created through Executive Order (E.O. 318). This existed for 6 months.

Since then, about sixteen similar Bodies have been created and abolished to give way to the new creation of the incumbent President.

These are:

- The Presidential Complaints and Action Committee created during the term of President Ramon Magsaysay, and was in existence for 4 years and 7 months. During this time, R.A. 1379 on the unlawful acquisition of property by a public officer or employee was enacted.

- When President Carlos Garcia assumed the presidency, he replaced the Presidential Complaints and Action Committee and instead put in place the President Committee on Administrative Performance and Efficiency which lasted for 2 yrs and 5 months. Later, he replaced it with Presidential Anti-Graft Committee which existed for 13 months

- During the term of President Diosdado Macapagal, he made use of the Presidential Anti-Graft Committee for 4 yrs. Also, it was during this period when R.A. 3456 which is the Internal Auditing Act of 1962 was approved on 16 June 1962. This has been amended by R.A. 4177 approved on 26 March 1965.

- President Ferdinand Marcos came into power, he created the Presidential Agency on Reforms in Government Office and settled for it for 8 months, then, replaced it with Presidential Complaints and Action Office for 1 year, afterwhich, he created the Presidential Agency on Reforms and Government Operations which existed for 2 yrs and 4 mths and finally had the Complaints and Investigation Office which he allowed to exist for 16 years.

During Marcos' term, we had the following:

- + the Anti Graft and Corrupt Practices Act or RA 3019 in 1960

- + PD 46 which made it punishable for public officials and employees to receive gifts on any occasion, including Christmas

+ PD 1445 or Auditing Code of 1978

+ 1973 Philippine Constitution which provided for a specific Article on the Accountability of Public Officers that says: “Public Office is a public trust. Public officers and employees shall serve with the highest degree of responsibility, integrity, loyalty, and efficiency, and shall remain accountable to the people.”

But despite these thrusts and reforms – whatever happened then has become part of our history and has left a mark worldwide which up to this time is sending us negative repercussions as in the negative perceptions and being labeled as one of the most corrupt countries in the world

- During the term of President Corazon Aquino, she had her Public Ethics and Accountability Task Force which lasted for approximately 2 years. She also created the Presidential Commission on Good Governance in 1986.

And because of what happened under the Marcos regime, the need to revise the 1973 Philippine Constitution was seen and thus the 1987 Philippine Constitution was crafted. This time, the provision on the accountability of public officers was refined to now include emphasis on the need for accountability of public officers and employees to the people at all times, the need to act with patriotism and justice – and the need to lead modest lives. Even our anti-graft and corruption laws which provided for norms on how one should be guided in his or her dealings with anyone specially as regards official capacities as public servants were enacted during this period.

Thus, we have on 25 July 1987 - E.O. 292 or the Administrative Code of 1987, promulgated to replace the Administrative Code then in force which happened to be forged in 1917 yet when conditions between the people and the government was totally different. This new Code incorporated the major structural, functional and procedural principles and rules of governance with the end view of serving the people

And on 20 February 1989, one clear law, R.A. 6713 otherwise known as “The Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees”, was enacted.

This laid down the norms on how public servants should deliver respective mandates and meet expectations from all stakeholders. The Code highlights the need for transparency of transaction and access to information, incentives and rewards system for exemplary service, prohibited acts and transactions and providing penalties for violations thereof, and for other purposes. And for everyone to be properly guided on the requirements of this Law – everyone, meaning, all officials and employees in the government, elective and appointive, permanent or temporary, whether in the career or non-career service, including the military and police personnel, whether or not they receive compensation and regardless of the amount, the Civil Service Commission issued the Implementing Rules and Regulations for R.A. 6713 on 21 April 1989.

The IRR was very specific on the roles of the heads of departments, offices and agencies in ensuring enough awareness and trainings for everyone in their respective jurisdictions that are geared towards – strengthening value systems to uphold the time-honored principle of public office being a public trust, the need to act on communications received within 15 working days from receipt of said communication and processed within reasonable time invoking a streamlined

process, , public disclosure of business interests and financial connections and the need to avoid conflict of interest at all times. The IRR likewise include a provision on the grounds for administrative disciplinary action and penalties.

Likewise, Administrative Orders enjoining the government instrumentalities to strengthen their internal audit units were issued in 1989 and 1982 for A.O.s 119 and 278, respectively.

- President Fidel Ramos had the Presidential Commission Against Graft and Corruption for over 6 years;

- President Joseph Estrada created an Inter-Agency Anti-Graft Coordinating Council in 1999 and is still operational to date; he also created a Presidential Committee on Effective Governance in 1999 but was abolished in October 2004, and a National Anti-Corruption Commission set up in July 2000 but never activated.

With the assumption to the presidency of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo in January 2001, she created the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC) and the Governance Advisory Council.

#### ON WHAT HAS WORKED, WHAT HAS NOT AND EFFECTIVENESS OF REFORMS AS MEASURED BY OUTCOMES

PGMA's term signaled progress in the anticorruption work and on the thrust towards good governance.

She has taken the fight against graft and corruption and enhancement of integrity as one of her flagship projects considering that her initial assumption to the presidency was triggered by the corruption charges for the deposed President.

Anchored on the constitutional mandate on public office being a public trust, the president's inaugural speech talked of her program and on the aspect of good governance – she said:

*“To ensure that our gains are not dissipated through corruption, we must improve moral standards. As we do so, we create fertile ground for good governance based on a sound moral foundation, a philosophy of transparency, and an ethics of effective implementation.”*

This is something that needs considerable attention and convergence between and among the various units of the government instrumentalities – of all the actors that are a must in forming national integrity.

Effective governance is tantamount to public accountability. And, accountability is actually the crux of public trust.

Thus, for the past six years, initiatives towards these set goals included administrative measures, legislative action and greater people participation.

On fighting corruption, the President said that:

*“Fighting corruption takes time. We cannot fight it overnight. That, it is not like St Michael slaying the dragon with one swish of the sword”* Fighting corruption, she said: *“is like healing an infected wound that must be constantly cleansed and disinfected.”*

The President emphasized that there is a need to change the orientation of the people running the system as the down payment made on anticorruption can gradually lead to the fundamental reforms, but that such is going to happen if everyone will work hard enough on governance reforms – the kind requiring an integrated approach – the need to consider best practices of other countries in their anti corruption and governance’s efforts.

And in one of the July 2001 Cabinet meetings, she challenged her cabinet members to do their respective shares in improving governance, enhancing ethical standards and curbing/combating corruption in the bureaucracy. Given this reality – the President’s strategy has become a holistic approach that covers the areas of investigation, prevention and education factoring in strategic partnership that cuts across each of the three other areas. The other sectors of the society expressed willingness to participate in the fight towards good governance.

In keeping with this President’s call for a stepped up campaign against graft and corruption and good governance, the National Anti Corruption Plan for the Philippines was proposed by the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) pointing to the need to adopt a programmatic approach, looking at the whole cycle of investigation, prosecution and for the first time, suggested to focus on prevention.

The Plan features a long-term sequencing of anti-corruption efforts and a centerpiece 10-point jumpstart program for immediate execution. The plan also touches on the need for a broad coalition of NGOs to ensure success.

While this did not push through, one would note that the succeeding reforms covered most of the areas for development in the DAP Plan.

Also, a number of agencies, composed of both the anti-graft bodies and support institutions whose core functions are supposed to be focused on governance’s thrusts have become more active in the government’s campaign.

These are:

1. The OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN – a constitutional office mandated by law to act on complaints filed against government officers or employees, and enforce their administrative, civil and criminal liability.
2. The SANDIGANBAYAN – a special anti-graft and an appellate court created by the Constitution with exclusive jurisdiction over violations of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act (RA 3019). It also has jurisdiction over offences of public officials and employees connected with their office

3. The CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION - a constitutional office serving as the central personnel agency of the government. It is mandated to adopt measures to promote efficiency, integrity and public accountability in the civil service.
4. The COMMISSION ON AUDIT (COA) - A quasi-judicial constitutional office mandated to audit the revenues and expenditures of the government, and to promulgate audit rules;
5. The DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (DOJ) – part of the Executive Branch which conducts preliminary investigations on criminal complaints against public officials if they rank lower than Salary Grade 27, and if the offence was committed in connection with his/her office.
6. The NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (NBI) - An office under the DOJ, conducts fact-finding investigations of graft cases and entrapment operations, including those against public officials and employees
7. The PRESIDENTIAL ANTI-GRAFT COMMISSION (PAGC) - Created through Executive Order No. 12 to investigate administrative complaints against presidential appointees in the executive department charged with graft and corruption

Administrative issuances include A.O. 70, signed by PGMA on 14 April 2003 on the creation, organization and operationalization in all departments, bureaus and offices of the National Government internal audit services.

The IAS is supposed to assist management to achieve an efficient and effective fiscal administration and performance of agency affairs and functions. Succeeding issuances related to IAS provided for the expansion of the supposed to be coverage of the order and hoped to further strengthen the internal control systems of each agency/office in the national government.

Then in 2004, for the first time in our history, a full chapter has been dedicated on Anti-Corruption and another on Bureaucratic Reforms in the MTPDP for 2004-2010 of the Macapagal – Arroyo administration.

Chapter 21 of the MTPDP or Medium Term Philippine Development Plan, that is on Anti-Corruption, specifically stresses three areas of reforms on anticorruption efforts which are:

- a) punitive measures that include effective enforcement of anti-corruption laws; enforcement mechanisms within revenue generating agencies; lifestyle check and other programs
- b) preventive measures that include strengthening of anti-corruption laws; improvement of integrity systems; improvement of systems and controls
- c) and, promotion of zero tolerance for corruption through societal values formation and active participation and involvement of the public in the fight against corruption

Chapter 22, on the other hand, says:

“To improve the quality and efficiency of public service, the government shall adopt institutional improvements in the bureaucracy...”

The improvements/radical reforms being put in place by the current administration to address the problem of graft and corruption towards good governance are backed up by statistics.

A general presentation of what was done point to

- strengthening of anti-corruption bodies by expanding respective mandates and providing additional investigators/prosecutors as well as additional funding to cover operational requirements
- re-engineering of the bureaucracy through E.O. 366 marked by streamlining requirements both for functions and manpower complement to ensure focus on core functions
- adoption of financial reforms like the electronic new-government accounting system (ENGAS)
- budget reforms through computerization
- procurement reforms through R.A. 9184 in 2003
- procedural reforms
- factoring in the importance of strategic partnership paving the way for an enhanced collaboration with the stakeholders coming from all sectors of the society
- preparation of agency-specific anti-corruption programs with emphasis on the need to set up or strengthen internal audit units, conduct integrity development review and other measures under the national anti-corruption framework, both for the executive and the entire government as well
- putting in place a comprehensive judicial reform program to provide fair, speedy and impartial justice system that is accessible to all, and
- adoption of other reforms in the other pillars of justice

On the strengthening of the government's focus on corruption prevention, the Executive Department, through PAGC did the following:

Focused the anti-corruption plans and programs in accordance with how the MTPDP set the government's goals on this area by first crafting PAGC's vision, mission, goals and sharing the same to the other members of the executive department

As for the Vision, Mission, and Goals, we set the following:

*"A Graft and Corrupt-Free Philippines characterized by transparency and accountability in governance, honesty and integrity in the bureaucracy in a corruption intolerant society"* for the vision

And for the Mission, we say:

*"To be the President's arm in eradicating graft and corruption through effective Deterrence, Prevention and Education in partnership with all stakeholders"*

For the Goals, we have:

Under Deterrence (investigation/enforcement) – *"to make graft and corruption a high-risk, low-reward activity"*

Under Prevention – *"to minimize opportunities for graft and corruption and ensure that systems of agencies are corruption-resistant"*

For Education – “To promote corruption-intolerant society by raising awareness that mobilizes citizenry and by disseminating good citizenship values and institutionalizing the code of ethics in agencies”

We worked towards professionalization of the Commission through capability and capacity building efforts.

PAGC investigators were sent to trainings and made to attend short term courses on field investigation, advanced fraud audit techniques, public corruption and ethics, and even internal controls. Investigators were guided to ensure credible case build-up per case with a given standard timeframe of 90 days with extension to be considered depending on the type and nature of the cases.

We established a database of Personal Data Sheets, Sworn Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Networth and appointment papers of presidential appointees (PAs) from various agencies so that we no longer have to subpoena these documents when a particular PA has been a subject of a complaint --- to avoid getting the subject alarmed on any PAGC investigation being conducted on him or her.

Through the assistance of USAID, we designed a Complaints and Case Management Manual of Operations in the last quarter of 2005.

This manual aims to be a quick and ready reference for technical and support staff responsible for the tracking, monitoring of cases and investigation and enforcement of the laws administered by the Commission. Hence, transfer of technology and phasing in of new investigators is easier.

With this manual is an Excel programmed case monitoring and document-tracking system to ensure that all incoming documents are acted upon within the required period and to ensure that all cases are acted upon and moving.

We employed a “shame-campaign” by reporting to the public, thru press conferences and press releases, offenders with cases that have punitive recommendations.

This include sanctions involving dismissal from service with forfeiture of benefits, cancellation of civil service eligibility and perpetual disqualification from holding public office.. This campaign promotes corruption as a high-risk, low reward activity.

For the first time also, PAGC initiated the setting up of its website, wherein the public could read the press releases on sanctioned officials as well as file complaints to PAGC. And newsletters too.

We also forged partnerships with other government agencies, CSOs and stakeholders to increase the number of cases filed against abusive public servants.

Some of these agreements include:

- Partnership with the Transparency and Accountability Network (TAN) and the Coalition Against Corruption (CAC) for these CSOs to provide qualified volunteers to PAGC in its lifestyle check crusade against erring officials and employees in all government agencies, departments, and instrumentalities
- MOA with 10 select agencies which were challenged by the President to file at least 1 case per quarter involving a “big fish” to PAGC or to OMB.
- MOA with the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption or VACC for their volunteers to act as informants particularly in lifestyle check cases.
- MOA with the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLAC) to strengthen investigative processes to ensure air tight cases that would warrant affirmation of recommendations with sanctions

PAGC also saw the need to go heavy on advocacy (education) and media campaign to respond to the worsening level of perception on corruption. We worked on our communications plan. Then, in December 2004, PAGC spearheaded the conduct of a three-day unprecedented Presidential Anti Corruption Workshop to craft the Integrity Development Action Plan (IDAP) which talks about agency-specific measurable initiatives and action plans towards improving images of respective agencies attended by over a hundred top officials from more than 40 government departments and offices.

These agency plans and department commitments, served as an integrity pact between the President and the Agency Heads, to ensure implementation of the same starting January 2005.

The 22 doables are:

On the area of Prevention, we have 7:

1. strengthening of internal control through the institutionalization of internal audit service
2. conduct of Integrity Development Review or IDR in 5 agencies
3. fast tracking of the electronic New Government Accounting System and electronic bidding for the procurement of goods, services and infrastructure projects
4. incorporating integrity check in recruitment and promotion of government personnel
5. institutionalization of a multi-stakeholder personnel and organizational performance evaluation system
6. protection of meager income of government employees by ensuring a level for take home pay
7. adoption of a single ID system for government officials and employees.

We have four for the Education Strategies,

1. dissemination of compendium of anticorruption laws, rules and regulations
2. preparation of agency-specific code of ethical standards
3. conduct of ethics training, spiritual formation, and moral recovery program for agencies and stakeholders
4. integration of anti-corruption modules for elementary and secondary levels.

On deterrence or investigation and enforcement, we have seven:

1. development of agency Internal Complaint Unit (including the protection of whistleblowers).
2. setting up/strengthening of agency Internal Affairs Unit.
3. publish blacklisted offenders and maintain on-line central database for public access
4. holding superiors accountable for corrupt activities of subordinates
5. effective use of existing agency administrative disciplinary machinery and publication of results of administrative cases handled
6. advocacy for the submission of Income Tax Returns as attachment to the Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Networth
7. PAGC's carrying out of an independent survey to check anti-graft and corruption program effectiveness

And on Strategic Partnership, we have four:

1. linking of existing databases of complementary agencies and sharing of information
2. need to enlist or enhance participation of private sector and civil society in various areas of governance
3. need to tap international development agencies and private sector for support
4. institutionalization of the participation of stakeholders in agency activities

Many lessons on best practices can be derived here and these are shared between and among the IDAP focal persons during the regular sessions that PAGC conducted to help others improve on their performance level.

Some of the best practices point to: planning what needs to be done and who shall be asked to do the tasks, capturing agreements, decisions taken, action plans, timelines, and the like, in written form, disseminating information to the rest of the public officials and employees in their respective offices and taking time to bring reforms for their regional or provincial offices

The reasons cited for failure to register improvements in ratings include failure of the IDAP designated focal person/s to report to their respective superiors – not even the Department's Secretary is given updates on IDAP, targets and accomplishment reports are personally set/prepared by the focal person hence no action has ever been taken by the Department,

IDAP started with 39 agencies in January 2005. Now, it is in 119 offices nationwide. IDAP has actually become a showcase of how honest to goodness anti corruption programs can succeed.

One of the strategies employed by PAGC to ensure IDAP's institutionalization and sustainability is the continuous monitoring and mentoring that is provided to the IDAP – covered agencies through consultations, regular submission of plans and accomplishment reports, issuance of needed circulars or other written order upon which reforms can be anchored on and the sharing of experiences. Another one is the application of a rating scale where indicators and grades have been identified and agreed upon among the IDAP implementers, thus, the sense of ownership and as such – cooperation as regards adoption is not a problem anymore. There is also that challenge for each office to go for the most compliant award as announcement of performance level is done before the President in a cabinet meeting with other big groups.

IDAP's success has been noticed by donor communities and they have been continuously matching our efforts by giving us assistance in all forms along the areas of capability and capacity building projects and even actual releases of financial grants plus of course the provision of support base that pushes us to continuously move on.

In June of 2006, the President ordered the allocation and subsequent release of the biggest financial assistance ever allocated to fighting corruption – this is the P1.0 billion anti-corruption fund for the executive programs to match the P1.0 billion grant from the Millennium Challenge Account.

Beneficiary agencies include:

- the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) which has gotten the biggest chunk of the Fund for capacity building and establishment of evidence and storage and destruction facilities as well as establishment of information systems enhancement program and activation of the PDEA operation Private Eye Reward Committee and court watch project. They got P407.0 million.
- the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) for systems improvement and strengthening of controls including establishment of new internal policies, systems and structures. They got P153.0 million including the counterpart budget for their RATE program.
- the Bureau of Customs (BOC) which got P105.0 million to strengthen the capability of their legal group, to improve the auction and cargo disposal process and development of operations manual, operationalization of the BOC Training Center, strengthening of internal control office and preparation and implementation of a communication plan.
- the Presidential Council for Values Formation (PCVF) which got P60.5 million to be spent for program management, development of an assessment and accreditation system, deployment of government values formation program and conduct of tri-media public information and values education campaign. This is directly responsive to this Integrity training whose objectives point to the promotion and enhancement of education and training towards institutionalization of values-based governance and anti-corrupt practices in the public service. PCVF's chair is PGMA and vice Chair is DepEd Secretary.
- the Philippine National Police (PNP) for the Anti Kotong Project and procurement management information system. They got P37.0 million.
- the balance is being managed by PAGC to roll out the Integrity Development Review (IDR) in the remaining offices of the executive branch that have not been covered by the EU-Ombudsman project, the roll out of the anti corruption course, and other projects that would help achieve the administration's objective towards good governance through anti corruption measures. Part of the funded activities is of course the strengthening of PAGC as an oversight body for a number of projects for the offices covered by the executive department.

Also in 2006, another direct response on the President's challenge for everyone to actively participate in the fight against graft and corruption was the launching and actual conduct of the first Graduate Certificate Course on Corruption Prevention which is being run by the Development Academy of the Philippines in partnership with USAID-ROLE and PAGC. The course aims to generate awareness, understanding and appreciation of anticorruption reforms and initiatives and matched with very specific pre-approved anti corruption project for implementation in respective participating agencies and monitored by the public officials –

scholars who have volunteered themselves to be transformed into becoming in house experts or graftbusters.

For the year 2007, Earlier this month, June 2 to be exact, the President, Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal Arroyo signed into law Republic Act 9485 otherwise known as the Anti-Red Tape Act of 2007.

This Anti-Red Tape Act of 2007 will ensure that honesty and responsibility among public officials and employees shall be maintained through measures that shall promote transparency with regard to the manner of transacting with the public. This covers streamlining of processes and continuous assessment and upgrading of frontline services.

This also covers the need to attend to the needs of every client that is already within the offices' premises within the same day.

RA 9485 requires all government offices to adopt simplified measures to expedite transactions by fixing deadlines for the completion of both simple and complex transactions to within five and ten days respectively where simple or complex transactions involve any application for any privilege, right, permit, reward, license, concession, or for any modification, renewal or extension. This also calls for the reduction of signatories to a maximum of five signatures.

RA 9485 likewise holds the heads of the agencies accountable to the public in the delivery of fast, efficient, convenient and reliable services and these can be easily done as the new Law requires the establishment of service standards or a Citizen's Charter.

This Charter shall come in the form of information billboards to be posted at the main entrance of offices containing the list of procedures per transaction, the persons responsible for each step, the documents and fees required.

And there will be public assistance or complaints desk to be set up.

Any official or employee found guilty of violating the new Law's provisions shall be sanctioned with varying level of penalties depending on the nature of violation, i.e. for light offenses - 30 days suspension on the first offense with mandatory attendance to values orientation program, 3 months suspension without pay on the second, and dismissal and disqualification from public service on the third.

Grave offenses, on the other hand, like fixing or colluding with fixers will merit dismissal and perpetual disqualification from public office.

The fixers themselves face a maximum of six years' imprisonment or a fine of P20,000 to P200,000.00

All of these tell us of a fertile ground of governance marked by a growing anticorruption coalition among government agencies and other stakeholders, broad support from international development partners, success in the lifestyle checks and investigation areas resulting to a more effective prosecution towards increased conviction

However, there have been instances when despite of these situation, public servants are unable to respond fully and are pulled down by procedural, resource and governance constraints. These can be addressed though by collective action marked by a high degree of local political participation and self determination, after all, all sectors of society are called upon to contribute to nation-building – a sacred task whose concept encompasses the social, economic, political, cultural and spiritual forces of a nation. A daunting task requiring tremendous roles to play.

A very crucial and hard task that the Filipino people committed to undertake as they solemnly proclaimed this responsibility in the preamble of the Constitution, which says:

*“We, the sovereign Filipino people, imploring the aid of the Almighty God, in order to build a just and humane society and establish a Government that shall embody our ideals and aspirations, promote the common good, conserve and develop our patrimony, and secure to ourselves and posterity the blessings of independence and democracy under the rule of law and a regime of truth, justice, freedom, love, equality, and peace, do ordain and promulgate this Constitution.”*

As ordinary citizens then, we bound ourselves to ensuring that the kind of society, the kind of nation that we then pictured to have shall be met.

#### ON WHAT ELSE NEEDS TO BE DONE

We have seen what we had, we are reminded of what the results of those efforts were as measured by outcomes, this time – we need to focus on what else needs to be done – by not reinventing the wheel – but by taking off from what we have in our respective internal and external environments.

Today, the same Philippine Constitution poses to us a bigger challenge – not just as ordinary citizens – but as public servants – as public officers - who are supposed to take the roles, at this challenging times of our lives, the roles of heroic leaders.

Heroic Leaders in the public office.

Coming from these mandates, it becomes a glaring reality that our Constitution envisions a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life (Sec 9, Art II); and directs the State to promote social justice in all phases of national development (Sec 10, Art II)

Tall order indeed! But for heroic leaders, these challenges can easily be internalized and operationalized – guided by what Chris Lowney once wrote on Heroic Leadership as he said:

“Leaders thrive by understanding who they are and what they value, by becoming aware of unhealthy blind spots or weaknesses that can derail them and by cultivating the habit of continuous self – reflection and learning.”

If this is so, then, it becomes imperative for a leader – that’s us – public servants - to really prepare himself or herself for the kind of job that he or she is to embrace

The preparation should cover an understanding of the needs, patterns and tools for public management or governance with emphasis on the roles and responsibilities and the attendant accountabilities for such.

The preparation should touch on ethics as a basic component of the day to day living not just during working hours but this goes beyond working hours as this shall cover even one’s personal life.

The preparation should look into relevant ethics and accountability issues –

- the ones that could lead us to failure because of mismanagement, graft and corruption,
- those that could lead us to success, making an impact as regards steering respective jurisdiction into progress because of leadership attitudes and work culture that talk about the basic requirements expected of public service...

To be able to address these requirements, the study and application of ethics at all times is therefore of paramount interest.

WHY is this so?

It is simply because, anyone in the public service must have full awareness on the importance of ethics, social responsibility and accountability in one’s way of life particularly as this applies to the leaders’ role in the pursuit of the welfare of both the family and the common good of the larger society that they govern, so that, the society can, in turn, look after the common good and well-being of the other members of the society – - a means that will ensure unique participation of every individual in giving respective share in helping shape a strong republic through a strengthened “family which serves as the foundation of the nation”(Art XV Sec 1) and a basic autonomous social institution (Art II Sec 12)

To do these would necessitate exhibition of one’s love for country. Probably not the kind of love for country that our forefathers hundreds of years ago exhibited – nor the kind of love for country that our heroes have shown us – that is by dying for the country. This time though, the challenge could be for us to experience death –not physical death but death to one’s desires that do not contribute to the welfare of the greater majority – desires that don’t contribute to shaping a strong republic through a strengthened family which serves as the foundation of the nation and a basic autonomous social institution.

Examples could be death of relationships – kinship and friendship – something that is given so much premium by us – Filipinos. But we are aware also that these can both be an advantage or a liability in good governance.

Interpersonal relationships are ideal if they result in greater cooperation between the government and the general public. But the same strengths of relationships may serve as the seeds of corruption if abused for self aggrandizement.

First is on giving Heroism - in the past decades meant offering one's life or dying for a cause - but today, heroism, could mean offering one's life as once faces the trials and challenges of every day living - and dying - not physically, but emotionally - if what is involved is death of relationships as we experience fighting it out with those closest to our hearts in the name of justice, freedom, truth and in ensuring that good triumphs over evil - every time - wherever we are and whenever the situation calls for us to do so.

This could mean self sacrifice as we set aside our vested interests over and above our desires to give way for the good of the majority.

Love for country, during these days, can be manifested on one's level of sharing in the task of good government.

A task that is not easy to carry out. A task where the weak of heart, the uncommitted, the fence-sitters, and those who sleep on their rights cannot be counted in the struggle.

A special kind of task where only the stout-hearted, the brave, the committed, the vigilant can make a change, can make a difference, and build the nation, preserve our democracy, save the Philippines.

We need to reflect on what happened in the past because today's events show stark parallelism with those of yesterday, and none of us— I suppose would not wish to see a repeat of past mistakes.

The similarities, far from being superficial, show that the people's discontent and ensuing government action have focused principally on poverty, injustice, inequality, elitism, graft and corruption, immorality and threats of foreign control in our economy.

And chances are, these might not be concluded during our working years or probably not even in our lifetime.

But just the same, we must go on – we must not be disheartened – for the fruits of our efforts can be cascaded into our children and our children's children. They will be the ones to carry the torch long after we are gone –

Hence, we must ensure, that it is going to be a torch with good flames, one that represents the very ideals handed down from one generation to the next. Ideals that are immutable yet capable of imitation, adamant yet flexible and adaptable.

We do not even have to do much to deter corruption. Just be incorruptible, lead by example, and almost everybody at the office will think twice first before engaging in corrupt practices. Report to office 1 hour or 30 minutes before 8 in the morning and pretty soon few will be coming in late.

Please remember: all changes or reforms will have to start from ourselves. That is the main and only strategy.

This is the reason why it is important to be ethical – to be responsible – to be accountable. For no one can ever effect changes if there is no admission as regards limitations. If one will not set aside pride and personal interest – the welfare of the greater majority will not be addressed.

And for the Philippines, it is believed that an awareness of the Filipino values, both positive and negative, strengths and weaknesses in the Filipino character, should be made to better appreciate the opportunities for temptation that could lead to failure and result to mismanagement or poor governance.

It can be gleaned that an understanding of these values will help one to give his best, specially, in his dealings with others: in the workplace, in the school, in the community where he lives, in whatever arena he is thrown into. As public servants (officials or employees), we are to be guided by the Constitutional provision on Public Office is a Public Trust.

We have to be very firm in saying NO to anything that will not be in conformity with the standards for public service as explicitly stated in our Constitution. We have to say a big NO to graft and corruption –

There are many trigger points on how a public servant can be exposed to temptations and finally yield to temptations...

When this happens, we can expect mismanagement resulting to poor governance and loss of trust and confidence of the people we all vowed to serve.

But if the public servant is aware of what is supposed to be the roles and responsibilities and of course accountabilities of everyone in the public service, specially the ones leading – a bigger percentage of success in achieving good governance is assured.

And I know that we all know that this is not an easy job to do.

May I now invite you to take a look at a number of things you need to work on, individually and with your teams – these are:

- to show your leadership capabilities;
- your value systems and character;
- your capability to influence others;
- to set people in the right direction—where right direction is gauged based on values—of being truthful, ethical and principled;
- to exhibit integrity—where integrity is tied up with honesty and where honesty means doing what one says he will do—with no trace of deception nor cover-ups;

- to provide consistency between words and deeds;
- to take a stand on important principles—saying NO when everyone else says YES;
- of making a difference in the midst of conformism; and,
- to basically serve like candles in the dark.

Very hard job indeed! As this is actually a call for sacrifice for our country — as what is likewise being carried by the following biblical guides...

Sirach 2: 1-3, gives us an indication of what we mean here....it says:

“...if you have decided to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for trials. Keep your heart upright and remain resolute; do not be upset in the time of adversity. Hold fast to the Lord, do not separate yourself from Him so that you may be successful till the end of your days.”

Further, Sirach 4:28, says:

“Fight for the truth till death and the Lord will fight for you”

This could be taken to mean, death in terms of relationships – this I earlier mentioned.

We see here the cutting off of ties with the other party if the latter is doing the wrong thing that the other party is addressing... the other party could be a member of one’s immediate or extended family, a friend, an officemate, an associate....; or death in one’s ways – from being wasteful to having concerns about judicious use of government’s scarce resources; and the list goes on and on.... This just tells us of the need to effect radical reforms and that the change must start within ourselves, within our own circles of association; within our own sets of ways.

And with GOD’s grace, with your resolve to work with passion and do your respective mission in the task of building a graft and corruption -free Philippines through your own offices, I am sure you will all succeed.

And for you to have something to hold as you face the heroic journey you are to take on specially during trying times, I would like to share with you the following guidance:

You need to prepare yourselves for the kind of fight you are to face head on...

You need to professionalize yourselves and your organization as a whole...

You need to be more committed to the kind of work that public servants are tasked to deliver...

You need to go beyond doing what has been there as a result of tradition handed over to you by those who have resigned thinking that what is in there is already a hopeless and helpless situation...

When you were younger, I am sure you dreamed about change. You crafted recommendations contained in reports. .. but most of the times they remained as such – reports and totally untouched.

Now, you are given the chance to do something and see if you could get your recommendations working. You could finally effect changes. That is precisely what would be expected of you, of us all, ...to effect changes...

The challenge is obviously not how one can get away with doing as little as possible and leaving the unpleasant work to everyone else but rather how each and everyone of us can contribute most effectively and meaningfully to this crucial struggle  
I am confident that you can deliver...

We all need to begin our efforts with a big HOPE.... as the seedbed of all great endeavors is HOPE... where the WILL is planted and nourished.

And for us to do this, there is a –

- + Need to direct our energies to things or activities that best benefit not only ourselves but others;
- + Need to bloom where we are planted, give our best shot to whatever we do or are tasked to do.

We may not always choose the circumstances that life finds us in, but, if we give our best in whatever situation, then we are sure to reap a harvest of good fortune, not necessarily financial reward, but recompense of a greater value and one which would give us greater satisfaction;

- + Need to live our virtues. And these are hard work, patience, honesty and integrity. We need to hold on to them no matter what it costs us

as Frederic Flach once said:

*“Whether by accident or design, there are the moments when, because of a readiness within us and a collaboration with events occurring around us, we are forced to seriously reappraise ourselves and the conditions under which we live and to make certain choices that will affect the rest of our lives.”*

Let us seize this opportunity and let us make our choices and let us act NOW!

At this point, please allow me to share with you some guidance on how you could do a personal reflection as public officials to maintain and sustain integrity in governance.

This guide has been provided by Fr Albert E. Alejo – a Jesuit priest who was once a local official and now an active participant in the government’s pursuit of quality governance which his group advocates through their Ehem Aha advocacy to finally put an end to the much delayed reforms in public service

The guide questions are:

1. How have I changed as a person since I took public post?  
What do people who really know me tell me about myself?  
(“Iba ka na talaga!” or “Ikaw na Ikaw pa rin”)

2. Corruption in the country has been very much documented, and is still being exposed.  
To what extent am I part of this problem?
3. What are my fears in my public office?  
What are my joys?  
To whom do I share my fears and consolation?
4. What is my attitude toward words?  
To public oaths?  
To documents and contracts?  
To numbers?  
(“Sa taong may hiya, ang salita’y panunumpa” – Kartilya ng Katipunan 1896)
5. What groups of people feel comfortable talking or working with me?  
What groups of people find me unapproachable?
6. Do I pray? How?  
How important is religious faith in my personal life?  
In my public service?
7. How do I improve myself?  
Do I read books?  
What new skills have I learned the past year?  
What new ideas am I developing?  
What do I do to help me make good analysis?
8. I look at my house. What does my house say about me?  
What does my car say about me?  
My library?  
My recreation?  
My office?  
My guns?
9. How do I feel about my body?  
My health?  
What is my form of relaxation?  
How is this related to my job as public servant?
10. How do I feel about my lifestyle?  
How do I develop this?  
What does my lifestyle say about my principles?  
My priorities?  
How does it affect my performance as a public servant?
11. How do I feel about the lifestyle of my family?  
My spouse?  
My kids?  
My relatives?  
How does their lifestyle affect my decisions as a public servant?
12. How do I look at gifts?  
How do I classify them?  
How am I affected by them?  
To whom do I owe “utang na loob”?

13. How do I know what occasions or moments of life that are really important to my people?  
What events do I normally attend?  
What invitations do I tend to refuse?
14. Do I believe that the Filipino way of life and thinking can support a scientific culture?  
How does this relate to the need for better governance?
15. How did I come to power or position of influence?  
Does my view and practice of power essentially include the “common good”?
16. Does my office promote a culture of efficiency, transparency and service?  
Or does it tolerate a culture of mediocrity, ambiguity, and exclusion in its design, formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of programs – specially for the poor?
17. Am I better public leader because of my membership in a political party?  
How loyal am I to my party?  
How sincere is my party to serving the common good?
18. What is my stand on the proposal to abolish the so-called “pork barrel”?  
On the standard “commission” on government projects?
19. Do I have unexplained wealth? How do I explain it to myself?  
Is there anything in what I have done or in what I am doing right now that could be a source of scandal in the future?  
Can I imagine its impact on my family and constituency?
20. Do I know some corrupt officials in the offices/agencies within the sphere of my influence or responsibility?  
What have I done or what keeps me from doing something to correct the situation?  
How do I see the work of COA? The Ombudsman?
21. How am I employing the new developments in information technology for more effective governance?  
Do I do benchmarking based on award-winning practices?
22. Do I have enemies?  
How do I treat them?  
Have I directly or indirectly killed anyone?  
How do I feel about this?
23. Do I have a personal vision for my people?  
Is this vision aligned with their expressed needs and interests?
24. Do I think of death?  
How do I feel about death?  
What if death becomes part of my work as public servant?
25. Who is my model in public leadership?  
What do I really want to leave as my legacy?  
What would really give meaning and inner joy to my life as a public servant?

These are some of the most important questions that need to be visited and honestly responded to every now and then.

And may be, as one does the personal reflection – then Senator Jose Diokno’s position on honesty can be another reflection guide as he posed the question: “Why be Honest” (Garcia 1993:83). He said:

“Why be honest, when it pays to be dishonest? We fight for others, when they won’t fight for you?...or even for themselves?...the answer I think lies in what life means to you. If life means having a good time, money, fame, power, security...then you don’t need principles, all you need are techniques. On the other hand, if happiness counts more than a good time, respect more than fame, right more than power, and peace of soul more than security; if death doesn’t end life but transforms it, then you must be true to yourself and God and to love the truth and justice and freedom that are God’s other names”

Another food for thought could be the one from then Senator Jovito R Salonga (2003. The Intangibles that Make a Nation Great). It says...

“In all areas of national endeavour, there is a need for imagination, careful planning, thoroughness, hard work, sweat, integrity, dedication, self-discipline and the willingness to sacrifice all for the common good...All the funds in the world will be to no avail if we suffer from lack of these intangible forces that make a nation great.”

And finally, on Dr Jose P. Laurel’s statements in his inaugural speech which could serve as another inspiration for all of us, as he said:

“Every drop, every trickle of individual effort shall be grooved into a single channel for common endeavor until they grow into a flowing stream...a raging flood, hurdling all difficulties”.

In these difficult times for the world and our country, these words must stir and move us to unite and consecrate ourselves for our country and our people.

May our Creator, through HIS Blessed Mother, continuously bless all your undertakings – our undertakings - as we do all these for the greater glory of HIS name.

Let us not fail HIM.