

## Open Forum

1. From **Ronnie G. Cainglet, New Era University**: Regarding the awards and recognition to those who do volunteer work based on this program or roadmap that you were able to frame, are there criteria or guidelines or mechanics on how to choose best volunteers so that we have an idea if ever there will be some people we know who are qualified, they will know why they are chosen.

**Cora, PNVSCA**: We have the Search for Outstanding Volunteers, this was institutionalized in 2001 and this is at the moment the national recognition given by government to outstanding volunteers. So we have two major categories: the national outstanding volunteer award where we give award to individuals under the youth and adult category, and then we also give award to organizations, under not-for-profit and corporate category. There's a special award which we call the Volunteer Lifetime Achievement Award for individuals and organizations with lifetime volunteering.

For the criteria, we look at the commitment, performance and the sustainability of volunteer work. Every beginning of the year, we issue a call for submission of nominations and we have information materials available at our website and distribute flyers which we send out to our partners.

2. From the **Lopez Group Foundation**: I congratulate you for putting together these programs, projects and activities, but really my concern is that it is more like a directory rather than a roadmap. When you have to draw a roadmap you must have an objective in mind which results to a long term goal. And I would just like to propose that we should characterize the menu that we reviewed, if we can define the role of government, private sector, academe because we have our own expertise, the private sector is doing a lot of volunteering work but we need government to some activities which we go into...

So I would propose if we could categorize these in terms of the role, and I do appreciate we have now a national body that does coordination and perhaps it will play a very critical role if it is able to orchestrate or enforce or perhaps give recognition to what the different sectors are doing. That is my comment more than a question.

**Dir. Salentes**: Any reaction from PNVSCA? None. My personal reaction on that is that the long term and short term objectives, we have not defined them as of now because we would like to link it with the new directions of the incoming administration. Remember that we are proposing to include this in the successor plan of the next administration, then we would like the policies to cascade also to the sector. But that comment and observation is very well taken.

3. **Jeth Flores representing ERDA and PAVE**: I have just one point to raise under the item "research, monitoring and evaluation" on the effects and impacts of volunteerism. Will you also include here the importance of monitoring the volunteering hours of the volunteers?

And then also on the item on the formation of a consortium. Has there been any initiative take up as to what form and shape will it be? Or, it will also carry the same concept that Phil. Council for NGO Certification was able to undertake? And also the manner of volunteer accreditation and certification will be done.

**Dir Salentes:** PNVSCA, any comments on that?

**Cora:** On the study and impact of volunteering, yes. I think one of the variables that we would like to include of course is this number of volunteering hours because it is one of the concrete measures how we value the amount or volume of volunteering.

On the consortium, it is included in the IRR of the RA. Honestly, we have not really formulated very concrete concept of how to operationalize the consortium. What we are thinking is that it will be formed by the different sectors as provided for in the RA and that the consortium will address specific programs and projects that may be undertaken. For example, if we have the roadmap what will be the programs and projects that we will undertake, which are the organizations that have the expertise and would like to get involve and this can be part in the consortium. But in terms of the set up itself, we have not laid down the very concrete system.

We have just convened our Multi-sectoral Advisory Body and I think this will be referred to the MSAB also.

**Dir Salentes:** I think PNVSCA is open to the idea of in future post forum meetings, maybe we can invite appropriate representatives from the sector to further flesh out specific directions of moving forward the Roadmap. I see Asec Willy is nodding his head. He is the Chair of the MSAB. So I think we can have clear policy directions in moving forward from the MSAB and PNVSCA.

4. **Adora Rodriguez of PIA:** I would like to congratulate first the PNVSCA for having this roadmap for the voluntary sector. I also noticed that the information, education and advocacy item were explicitly and clearly defined as doable proposed programs. Now, I would like to suggest that these items should be prioritized while we are waiting for the next administration to come in so that we will be able to accomplish just before the May election. In that light, I would like also to suggest that for appropriate strategy, if we could come up with appropriate strategy, all the items from #1 to #19 we will be able to cover all these things in the proper dissemination of RA 9418.

So the first is to prioritize the things we can do while waiting for the next administration and the 2nd one is to disseminate immediately RA 9418 so that we can be able to take the 1st step towards the ladder of our achievements. Thank you.

**Dir. Salentes:** For purposes of leveraging resources, is there from among the 19 activities that PIA can commit in terms of assistance?

**Adora:** As I can see, we can help a lot in these following items. We can discuss the details later on the future post forums.

5. ***Congressman Oca Francisco:*** Just to comment on the roadmap, especially on the term cascading volunteer program at the barangay level. I walk on two legs before I became a congressman I used to be with the NGO sector for 30 years. I still sit in the steering committee of one of biggest poverty reduction programs in the Philippines-KALAH! SEEDS. Kapit bisig laban sa kahirapan comprehensive and integrated delivery of social services.

It covers 42 poorest provinces, 185 municipalities and 5,000 barangays and it uses the participatory approach to the cycle of social analysis, situation analysis, planning, budgeting, resource mobilization, implementation, monitoring and evaluation makes more participatory, transparent and accountable at the barangay level.

What I'm saying is, may be PNVSCA should look at government programs, poverty-reduction programs, like KALAH! SEEDS. In my interaction with the program, we have to put a community-based framework to volunteerism because in our study of social capital, especially under our economic crises, social capital is the glue that keeps community together. And they have developed 193,000 community volunteers nationwide. If we tap these volunteers, I think we will be able to change society from the bottom up. Last year they gave rewards to 5 community volunteers and I was amazed that one community volunteer from Monragon, Eastern Samar, by mobilizing the community, they were able to build a 3 rooms school building in 26 days, which usually takes 90 days.

What I'm saying is, may be PNVSCA should look at government programs like KALAH! SEEDS or that of DSWD and look into volunteerism in these communities. So cascading, implying going down to the local level, but I think its looking at the other way around, there are actually existing programs run by government in partnership with NGOs which develop volunteers at the local level. Right now DILG is also cascading the participatory approaches to local development planning. So may be these two agencies could be looked into by PNVSCA for partnership and penetrating the barangay level. That's my comment on the roadmap.

The other one is, the law or the IRR doesn't mention about the role of community-based organizations. It mentioned about NGOs, I come from the NGO sector. But the NGOs are, you know, externally fund-driven. When there are no funds from abroad, they fold up. But the ones existing at the community level are the CBOs. These are built up, driven by people themselves in the communities. Maybe we should also look into the IRR and include them as part of the voluntary sector. Maraming salamat po.

***Dir Salentes:*** Quick response from PNVSCA, one on the cascading issue and then to the possible amendment to the IRR.

***Cora:*** Thank you very much Congressman. We'll take note of that but on the matter of community based organizations, our currently working definition for the not-for-profit sector, that includes the community based organizations. But you're

right that it was not explicitly identified in the IRR but in our discussion it is a part of the big sector of NGO.

6. *Sister Jojo/Volunteers International for Development, Education and Services (VIDES)*. So my comment is on IRR, because this was signed in Feb 2009 and according to the provision PNVSCA will sit as the major convenor of the Multi-sectoral Advisory Body. There are a lot of government agencies listed here and also some representatives from the corporate, private academe, NGO and so on. My observation is that there is bureaucracy, that is why it takes so long before we can implement things.

Another observation is they lack budget, because we have been a member of PNVSCA since 2006 and when we were applying for the renewal of our membership, we were informed that they could not move unless the MSAB is convened. It is also hard for PNVSCA to coordinate with the barangays because now with this law, they will have to seek permission with the barangays and they will coordinate with many bodies before they could move.

So coming from the private sector, from the religious group and also from the volunteer sector in our case the volunteers are just a text away, or you just plug the activities to be done on facebook and everybody flocks, and then we have the action. There were fires in Pasay and Delpan. We were able to gather goods, volunteers and so on and we were able to help at ounce. But the politicians have a lot of tarpaulins but the people are telling us “Sister, buti pa kayo at mga volunteers nyo ang gaganda ng binibigay nyo, mga bago, at papano nyo natatapan ang mga kompanya, yung mga mayayaman na sector, tumutulong”. So I think we can also learn from the volunteers because I think its not the money that would motivate the people. I was listening the first reactor, from the Maguugmad Found. Of course I was not yet born during the time of Magsaysay, but I was really touched because I should relate to what he was saying that money is not everything. Money is very trivial. What did the volunteer, the commitment and the dedication and the drive to give themselves is the fulfillment which money cannot buy.

So I think this is where we could encourage and inculcate volunteerism. And now that the academe sector is here, in the young people we can plant many seeds, and among the seeds would be the seeds of volunteerism, in very simple ways.

I am also very happy because now that this has been passed as a law, then maybe we can really move forward, we would only need to be a little bit patient and we would really need to help each other, thresh out the objectives of why we are here. Because I'm also thinking, VIDES has been a member of the PNVSCA but what did we get from PNVSCA and what did we give to PNVSCA?

As a volunteer organization, we are following the Millennium Development Goals and our mother organization, VIDES International has a consultative status in the United Nations in Geneva. So, all our programs are anchored in the UN programs and particularly on the MGDs which will soon be evaluated by 2015. So we have aligned our programs there. I'm suggesting that may be we could also use this because anyway when the Philippines would report at the UN later on, we will be

held accountable to what we have done, or how did we perform on the MDGs. Thank you po.

**Dir Salentes:** Just to summarize, there were two issues raised, one on the perceived bureaucracy of the MSAB, as you mentioned something, or of the entire voluntary sector institutions in government, and second, the need to align the programs, the PPAs, in the proposed roadmap with the MDGs.

On the first issue, may be perhaps Asec Willy... can you share your insight? He is the Chair of the MSAB.

**Asec Willy:** The Multi-sectoral Advisory Body elected its Chair and I was the one elected as Chair of the MSAB. It's true that the MSAB is composed of different government agencies and also by the volunteer sector representatives. Now the main purpose of this is really to look into the policy aspect of volunteerism because as we all know volunteerism has no really clear image as of the moment, it is so broad and is still evolving. There's a need to look into the different characters, the different idiosyncrasies of the different volunteer organizations. And that's why they are represented in this MSAB.

The Body does not intend to be a bureaucratic layer in the organization, in the PNVSCA. The main function of the Body is to just to guide the PNVSCA on the road of advocating volunteerism. That's why in my mind there would be less rules and more of the spirit of volunteerism because really volunteerism is based on your free will without any need of return. But there are certain aspects of volunteerism that need to be look into. Like for example, there are privileges given to volunteers like the visa, and also some security aspects of volunteers when they go to different areas. And no matter how good the intention is, there are some aspects that have to look into so that what is good should prevail.

It was not our intention to have any delay in activities of volunteerism. Actually the PNVSCA is a coordinating agency and it gives policy. I don't know exactly an incident wherein there was a delay. Could you site an incident sister so that, when you look at it, it seems bureaucratic because there are government agencies. Well, that shouldn't be the case. If you feel its bureaucratic just tell us anytime. We will act on it, its really the spirit of volunteerism.

When we were crafting the law (we participated in the drafting of the law), some say that the law shouldn't be so rigid, it should be flexible because we are talking about volunteerism here. That's why when you look at it, it's not so rigid, it has a lot of flexibility. May be in one of the roadmap that was drafted, may be we could place there a legislative advocacy also because the law may be amended, as things change and volunteerism is an evolving way. May be that can also be included.

If you see the law and you see agencies there, they are not there to provide bureaucratic red tape. Actually there are already policies taking away bureaucratic red tape. The main purpose there is to see the different views of the different government agencies in relation to the different volunteer sectors in our society so that we have a holistic perception. When we discuss things, we see so many views and then we integrate it.

Now, if discussion is long and causes a lot of delay then that's not really the intention. So the MSAB is not there to provide bureaucratic red tape. It's there to provide policies that would look into the whole volunteer sector in a holistic way so that we don't see any stone unturned when we issue policy. Now if you see any red tape that you experience, well you just tell us and we will do something about it sister, thank you.

**Dir. Salentes:** Thank you Asec Willy. For the second issue very quickly, Cora, can you respond to the need to align some PPAs in the roadmap with the MDGs?

**Exec. Director of PNVSCA, Dir. Lito de Vera.** Also to partly respond to the first issue so I will not burden my new Chair since I was the presiding officer of the MSAB. I think the problem with VIDES is really on the registration. And may be I would further explain that when the application for re-registration came in, that was the time that we were crafting the IRR.

Also just to further elaborate, in the previous EO, the clearing power even on local volunteers rest with PNVSCA. But when we issue the new law, we removed that because it was the clamor of the domestic, especially coming from the non-government sector why even government is clearing even local volunteering. So in that particular case we now removed that power and authority from the agency even local volunteer and local volunteering in the Philippine context. Now we are just clearing the international volunteering, that means only foreigners, foreign volunteers coming into the Philippines are being cleared. But for local volunteering as noted by Asec Oca, the law is very flexible and its allowing empowerment to non government sector to police and even to oversee their own local volunteer programs. May be we're a little bit slow in terms of formulating the guidelines, but I thing the essence is that for local volunteering it is now the non government sector and the public sector does not have to clear or put an imprimatur of whether you would want. What we are looking at is laying down the framework and the enabling environment, like for example protection, incentives that's something we have to discuss with MSAB. But for the rest, in terms of clearing, that's no longer a function of PNVSCA, that is deleted from the previous EO which granted PNVSCA that particular authority and power.

On the second issue on the alignment of PPAs with the MDGs. We have to treat it in two different ways. One is really looking at very specific programs that each NGO or a particular organization is implementing. If you're working with street children, it is consistent with MDGs. The other would be on the nature of providing an enabling environment, and that's something like putting a database, a recognition. These are trying to empower and recognize the non government or the voluntary sector. The other is more on the substantive. It's really looking at your development programs. Are you working with street children, maybe not. Are you working with the environment, what aspect in the environment? The other is also looking at what would be the environment by which a particular non government organization could fit and may be that's something we could also align. And maybe that's a little bit challenging. Because even looking at where the NGO, the voluntary sector is going into would require a lot of analysis and even database. That's something we are looking forward in the future and may be determining

where would be the particular need or expertise of a particular sector. Like the academe, what be their expertise? Is it really in providing extension? Is it something like what Cong. Francisco said, what the agency should look at or maybe it is something that the community itself should visit and address?

**Dir. Salentes:** Thank you Dir. Lito. I see three hands, so we have time for three more questions before we listen to the reactors. Yes sir.

7. **Col. Desamito:** Good morning, salamat. Binabasa ko nga yung binigay nyo sa amin pero mukhang masyadong advance. You have to be in a hurry. Sabi nga kanina ni Asec, he was talking about advocacy on the part of the legislative. Hindi lang kayo, this should be the advocacy of the whole country, the entire Philippines because we have to fight for a cause. This country must have massive nation building now. And we have to come out with a model so that all other countries will follow. So we have to focus on the country first, unahin muna natin ang ating country. When you talk of strategy, you talk of PPAs and then action plan, medyo mabigat. With programs, napaka advance natin. The legislative body came out with a policy, that is only a supportive policy. The major policy should come out from the executive branch and all our leaders of this country. Before you do so, before everything will come out with a dream, pangarap ba ng Pilipinas, pangarap natin, will have a dream. Ano ba ang direction natin? Yun and importante. With all the PPAs and roadmap sinasabi natin, walang kwenta yan. Kasi if we cannot accomplish that and we are not working together as a whole. If we will not participate as a people, working towards a dream, walang mangyari sa mga papel na yan. So therefore, this pangarap Dr. Salentes hindi puede na tayo ang gagawa niyan. This calls for a general constituency, from every sector of the country. Tanongin, ano ba ang gusto natin upto the year 2030. Kung ganoon, if I'm an ordinary farmer, ordinary citizen, I will know my role, I will find out my role. That's my entry point, hindi lang kayo. Hindi puede yan. It has to be a common goal, everybody. Because I am a Filipino citizen, I am proud to be a Filipino. Lalaban tayo sa mundong ito. Kanina lamang nahilo kayo sa planning process. Yan pangarap na yan magagawa lamang kung ang mga leaders natin sa bansa ay modelo. Everybody here should set example. Kasi the paradigm of my development ay nandyan and tao, nandun and leader, nandun kayo, ang volunteer, kasama tayo in partner of government. On our part as the bureaucracy, tayo, we can pursue capacity building, institutional building, ok tayo, capable. Pero the greater majority ng tao na target natin, they have to participate, ay dapat din ma educate. Pero pano, you cannot educate this with... and important dun, as far as values is concern, alam mo marami ang sasabihin ko dito, knowledge, values, skills... bira-bira ng knowledge, skills, wala naman ang values. Ano ang nangyari? Ako from the barangay in Koronadal, South Cotabato kami na lang bahala dun, din a kami susunod sa inyo, ma apektuhan pa kami ng ginagawa nyo sa itaas. In other words, let us do our share. Yung mga leaders natin, sabi sa education, na you cannot teach values, puede mo band sabihin na be honest, be transparent, hindi. Yung apo ko, susunod lamang kung nakikita nya na ang lolo nya very present, pinapakain ko, pinaliligo ko. I share with them my dream and aspirations, darating ang panahon, that would be my legacy. They will always remember me that Col. Desamito na lolo ko yan, tinuruan ako. In other words, leaders nating mauna muna para ma inspire ako, na yan leader nay an, he must be enjoying the fruits of the Holy

Spirit. St Paul, kind, humble pero kung napakayabang, I will not obey that. Kung magastos yan, ayaw ko yan. Kung marami, kurantong ay di puede yan.

In other words, let's have models first then we'll come out with vision. Action plan palang yan, wala pa kayong organizational structure sa different regions. In other words, gagawin nyo muna in piecemeal, let's have series of workshops pero let's put in process yun sinasabi ko kanina na ang pangarap manggaling sa atin, na ang mga leaders natin should be models. Kasi pag hindi kayo models, walang mangyayari, nakita ko na. Kaya sa local government naming, tinitignan ko ang mga mayor at governor naming, kung sobra corrupt yang mayor na yan, napaka yabang, walang ginagawa, drug addict, maraming babae, ay din a ko susunod. All our activities should be Christ centered.

**Dir. Salentes:** Noted na po, thank you very much. So we will have lunch in our place but we will continue with the discussions. Yes sir.

8. **Mr. Gapas of Mag-uugmad.** Apparently the senior citizens are more exited because when we were younger we saw a dream and what was possible and the guidance was not good enough. I was wondering weather the MSAB would be willing or capable to help us volunteers and organizations actually working in the field on the matter of conflict of policies or decision at the national level. One example is, you know we are working with upland farmers mostly living in timberland or protected areas. Under the law, the NIPAS law, only tenured migrants should be allowed to remain within the protected area, that is very clear in the law and I know this because I was one who help formulate the policy on that. And that focus on the policy was like the land reform within the timberland and protected areas, only those who have been there for at least 5 years on the proclamation of the timberland would be allowed which is very very clear in the law.

And, in 2007 the DENR issued a department order allowing what they call SAPA (Specific Agreement within Protected Area) allowing non-tenured migrant to access in this protected area and make special development, so it's very very clear in violation of the NIPAS law.

Our problem is right now we raise decision because many of our poor participants are living in those areas and now those areas are now taken over by rich people. Some of them buy the rights and so this tenured migrant get the money and go else where and DENR who is in charge of this allow it, and this of course destroys the ultimate objective of the NIPAS law, would the MSAB can help us on this area.

**Director Salentes:** Thank you sir. Cong Teves would like to respond to the query.

**Cong Teves:** Yes I also worked with protected areas in my district Apo Island. Somewhere, somehow that SAPA worked in my specific area because our protected area is a marine area wherein tourism and marine conservation co-exist with each other. Maybe in adjusting or making changes to that SAPA it should be clear wherein we want to develop tourism together with ecological or conservation of our natural resources, baka pati yong timberlands natin sinama nila, I think there should be a clear distinction on where the SAPA should apply. But in our case, it

worked. The volunteer organizations, the international community which is mostly composed of divers who are expert in marine conservation are the ones leading and they are members of the protected area management board. And the other investors coming in as tourist resource operators are also coming in already employ a lot of people and even get their supply the food, chicken, vegetables from the people around us and it works well. Apo Island now works well, in fact our protected area gets about 700,000 a month in diving fish alone, and this money and other benefits we get are trickled down to the other places, maybe as a best management practice example that others can copy it. But you are right, the SAPA should be specific only for places where tourism and marine or nature conservation can co-exist with each other, siguro yong mga watershed areas hindi pwedeng pasukan yun dahil hindi talaga pwedeng may tao sa loob ng watershed areas dahil macocontaminate naman siguro yong tubig natin. That's a good point sir, I will work with you if you want later to make amendment to that law, sir. Thank you.

**Mr. Gapas:** actually what they are using now is just a department order which is in violation of the NIPAS law.

**Cong. Teves:** if it's just a mere dept order, then, it should not hold, sir, that's true. Thank you.

**Dir. Salentes:** Thank you Congressman for that enlightening intervention.