

Development that Violates the Constitution

There have been many discussions on which development model will best work for the Philippines. There are those who look to the successful experiences of Singapore and Malaysia. There are also those who prefer that we instead craft an economic policy that is rooted in the internal configuration of the country. Perhaps, only a few know that our Constitution has an economic program. Article XII Section 1 of the 1987 Constitution states:

"The State shall promote industrialization and full employment based on sound agricultural development and agrarian reform, through industries that make full and efficient use of human and natural resources, and which are competitive in both domestic and foreign markets."

This is the development model that the Constitution prescribes for our country. But from the time of Mrs. Aquino to Mr. Ramos, to Mr. Estrada to GMA, this is not the development model that the government has been following. Whenever the MTPDP (Medium Term Philippine Development Plan) is drafted every 5-6 years, our leaders have neglected and violated this constitutional principle.

Agriculture and agrarian reform should have been the basis of industrialization, but over the years the agricultural sector has been grossly neglected.

How about industrialization itself? Industrialization produces jobs. When there are many factories and plants, there is a thriving job market. Well, almost half of the factories which were put up in the 60s and 70s are closed now. We replaced our industries with the services sector. Our country now is a service economy; moreover it is one that services not our national need, but the needs of other countries.

One look around Metro Manila will show anyone what we have a lot of: shopping malls. What are the jobs here? In selling or retail. With all our excess labor, we have been compelled to export jobs abroad: We are now selling our skills. All we do is sell. Meanwhile, we produce less and less. We have a country that can provide enough food for our people; we even have the resources to *export* food.

There is a need to develop an economic system based on the geography and terrain of the land. The Apostle Paul said in Acts 17 that "God made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth,

having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place..." May we be wise in the stewardship of this dwelling place that God has sovereignly assigned to us.

This editorial was adapted from Mr. Ric Reyes' speech at the 8th ISACC Fellows' Gathering.

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