

FOREWORD

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This report ‘*Winning the Numbers, Losing the War: The Other MDG Report 2010*’ produced by Social Watch Philippines is the other report on our country’s progress on the *Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)* and the prospects of achieving them by 2015.

In sharp contrast to the ‘Philippines Fourth Progress Report on the Millennium Development Goals 2010’, the most impressive and self-critical government MDG report so far, our shadow report warns that the problem is much more serious than what the government is prepared to admit. Indeed we are urging the government to treat our 2010 MDG baseline as if we have an “MDG crisis” on our hands.

The poverty situation is worse in 2010 than when we started on the MDGs in 2000. Many of the quantitative indicators on key goals (MDG 1 on reducing poverty and hunger, MDG 2 on universal primary education, MDG 5 on maternal mortality, MDG 8 on debt, trade and aid) are still between low and medium probability of achievement when they should all be on the high side going into the last five years.

Behind the numbers, the inequality picture looks even grimmer. As of 2000, the poor and excluded in 2010, live in rural communities far from Manila—in Bicol, the Vizayas, and Mindanao, many of them women, Muslims, Indigenous Peoples and tribal Filipinos. They probably are still the same landless, homeless, jobless, underemployed, uneducated, sick, malnourished, and discriminated Filipinos of ten years ago although some of them may have moved out of poverty and slid back again.

The government has lost the war on poverty in the past decade, not for lack of rhetoric and trying. The policy declarations and national development plans bannered the MDGs. And so did the strategies, programs, activities and projects (PAPs) that were derived from them. An obvious explanation is that the government did not spend enough for the MDGs. But there might be other more basic and less obvious reasons which are rooted in the flaws of the anti-poverty plans and strategies themselves.

Notwithstanding the MDG rhetoric, the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) was an economic growth strategy blueprint which may have reduced poverty at one end only to reproduce it at the other. The outcomes are clear enough. Instead of expansion of job opportunities we saw a growth in the number of jobless and hungry. Instead of universal basic education and health care we find so many left behind. Instead of land reform and asset distribution we got more wealth concentration. Instead of growing out of indebtedness our nation has sunk deeper into debts than before.

The specific strategies and PAPs, the heroic efforts to catch the fallouts and target the poorest among them provided only temporary relief at best. And these could only be sustained at high costs to taxpayers as fiscal deficits widened that had to be financed by more borrowings.

In the end, there would be more and more poor than we are able to catch and save.

The different articles in this alternative report, each in their own way, try to tease out the claimed achievements, dig into the underlying causes of failure to make the sort of progress expected of a middle income country, and suggest ways of catching up and moving beyond the MDGs.

The blueprint and strategies need to be re-examined. We have to understand better why until now we continue to fail to reverse the poverty trend, to reduce high inequality, deep-seated corruption, high population growth, and mounting indebtedness. We need to learn how to deal squarely with the structural causes hindering our efforts towards social justice and sustainable development.

Keeping the minimalist MDG promises by 2015, or sooner, is an essential step before we could even begin to aspire for higher standards of well-being for all Filipinos.