

Research Shows Arroyo Administration Failing to Meet Own Targets

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New studies by the University of the Philippines - Center for Labor Justice (UP CLJ) and Focus on the Global South reveal Arroyo's poor performance in achieving her set targets on economic growth, poverty reduction, and job generation with only two years left until the end of her term. As laid out in the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan crafted in 2004, Arroyo promises to generate ten million jobs by 2010, or roughly 1.6 million jobs each year, reduce poverty incidence to below 20%, and accelerate GDP growth to 7-8%.

Contrary to plans, "the job creation performance of the country is dismal and even declining", said Dr. Rene Ofreneo, former undersecretary of the Department of Labor and Employment and professor at the UP School of Labor and Industrial Relations. Ofreneo headed the research by the UP Center for Labor Justice and Fair Trade Alliance detailing the failure of the government to meet its job creation and upgrading targets.

Citing official data, the report states that instead of 1.6 million, only 700,000 new jobs were created in 2005 or less than half (43.7 per cent) of target. In 2006, it went down to 648,000 (40.5 percent of target) and even further down to 599,000 (37.4 percent) in 2007. It is only in the deployment of OFWs that government is on track, meeting the target of one million a year.

The poverty reduction efforts by the government had equally dismal yields. The Focus on the Global South research, Uncovering the State of the Nation: Jobs, Prices, Incomes, Poverty notes the increasing income disparity in the country. The poorest 10% families received only 2.16% of the total growth in family incomes between 2003 to 2006, compared to 34.23% share captured by the richest 10% families.

"The poor get a smaller share of growth in an economy where distribution of assets, resources and access to income opportunities are skewed... worse... these families...feel the harshest blows of the crunch...(I)t is not only the distribution of gains that are unequal, but also the distribution of risks," the report concludes.

The Focus and UP-CLJ/FTA studies form part of the Development Roundtable Series (DRTS), a platform for the discussion of and debate on key development issues in the country. The research papers can be downloaded at www.focusweb.org/drts.

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