WB Backs Anti-Poverty Program for SZOPAD

The World Bank and the Government of the Philippines have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that will support the Integrated Framework Plan and Priority Investment Program for the Special Zone for Peace and Development (SZOPAD).

The MOU includes a $10-million proposed loan for the Government's Social Fund Project for SZOPAD, which will provide grants to small-scale projects to meet the basic and social needs of the poor in the region. To help the Government prepare the Social Fund Project, the Bank has already mobilized grants of about $450,000. The Social Fund is expected to become operational before the end of the year with seed money from the Government. The World Bank loan proceeds will be available in early 1998.

While the Social Fund is being prepared, the Bank and the Government have also agreed to fast-track existing Bank-assisted projects with activities in the region. Identified were nine projects in sectors such as education, agrarian reform, rural electrification, water supply and irrigation, and women's health in SZOPAD. Around $20 million will be disbursed in the next 12 months for these projects.

Investment Program

The Bank will also assist the Government in mobilizing official development assistance (ODA) for SZOPAD's Priority Investment Program.

The Priority Investment Program from 1997 to 1999 will require at least P30.3 billion. It consists of 85 projects in six areas—transport, infrastructure, rural infrastructure, agro-industrial production, information technology, and tourism. The Bank has made a commitment to contribute $3.6 billion in the form of direct loans to support the programs in SZOPAD.

Editor's Note

Renewal... We, at RMP, have taken this seriously. We have not only hired new people to better serve our clients, we have also come up with a new layout, our message, however, remains the same. We continue to strive to be in touch with our partners—the Government, NGOs, media, academe, business community and other members of civil society.

We hope you'll enjoy reading this issue and the next... as we keep you abreast of the latest news about the Bank and its activities in the Philippines.
centers, environment, education, and capacity building.

The program was presented last August in General Santos City to donor countries and five multilateral financial institutions, including the World Bank. The meeting was chaired by Finance Secretary Roberto de Ocampo and WB Country Director for the Philippines Vinay Bhargava. Other officials were Socio-Economic Planning Secretary Cielito Habito; Chairman Nur Misuari of the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development; Mr. Paul Dominguez, Presidential Assistant for Mindanao; Mr. Manuel Yan, Presidential Adviser on Peace Process; and representatives from donor countries and multilateral financial institutions.

**Social Fund**

The Social Fund Project aims to provide poor communities with basic socio-economic services and enhance the involvement of local groups in identifying and managing small-scale projects.

It will provide grants, through local government units, non-government organizations and community groups, to finance small-scale projects such as rural access roads, rural water supply and sanitation, small-scale irrigation schemes, communal clinics and schools.

The Bank and the Government are discussing the details of the scope of activities and community projects to be financed and the mechanics of the Social Fund Project.

**Donors’ Support**

To mobilize donors’ support for SZOPAD, the World Bank will use its global network to facilitate contacts between the Government and the donors.

For instance, Mr. Ghassan El-Rifai, World Bank’s principal advisor to the Middle East and North Africa Region, attended the donors’ meeting to explore the possibility of assisting the Government in mobilizing support of Arab financial institutions for SZOPAD.

The Bank has also prioritized donors’ support for SZOPAD. The Consultative Group, which the Bank co-chairs with the Government, will meet again in December in Paris. Further, pledging for SZOPAD is expected in Paris. The Consultative Group is composed of donor countries and multilateral financial institutions. Last December in Tokyo, donors pledged about $400 million to the development of SZOPAD. The World Bank pledged $50 million.

Further, the Bank will continually review the Priority Investment Program to identify investments suitable for World Bank financing beyond the Social Fund.

**Q&A with Mr. Bhargava**

**After the donors’ meeting, what’s next?**

**Bhargava:** The challenge now for the donors is to respond quickly and effectively to the government’s call for assistance to SZOPAD. The funding requirements are large. That’s why the Philippine government is seeking official development funding and private investments to supplement its resources. An encouraging start has been made in donor support.

**What do you think are the significant issues that the Priority Investment Program should consider?**

**Bhargava:** These issues are attracting investment, coordination of donor support, effective implementation arrangements for the projects, and capacity-building.

**How important is capacity-building to the overall development of SZOPAD?**

**Bhargava:** Capacity-building is one sector that cuts across borders. It is crucial to the successful implementation of capital projects. Many donors who attended the meeting have long been involved in capacity-building while others like the World Bank have focused on medium and long-term projects.

In general, donors provide ODA on different terms. Some provide grants while others offer loans. The Philippine government prefers grants for capacity-building, but grants are extremely limited.

That’s why, another important issue to consider is how the donors with grants and the donors with loans can work together to finance capacity-building efforts and the medium and long-term investment programs in a single project for maximum development impact.
The Club of 29, whose members are project managers from government agencies involved in World Bank-assisted projects, has another testimony to its existence: a logo. But it was not an instant logo. Club members competed in the logo design contest. The winner: the logo designed by Mr. Edgardo Bangit of the National Electrification Administration (NEA).

Mr. Bangit, project manager of the Rural Electrification Revitalization Project, said the logo was a product of several people at NEA. “I had an artist who executed my concept on paper,” he told InTouch. “It was a result of teamwork.” How Mr. Bangit did it reflects the spirit of the Club: partnership. This same spirit is embodied in the winning logo.

Other criteria: the design must be simple, must reflect the spirit of the Club such as partnership, development and camaraderie, and must be easily executed in one color. The winner was announced and awarded a plaque bearing the new Club of 29 logo during the inauguration of the new office.

Mr. Bangit describes the logo as simple. It is easily identified with Club 29 because the word “club” and the number 29 are literally on the logo. In Mr. Bangit’s words: “29 represents the initial number of World Bank-assisted projects in the Philippines at the time it was organized. The number is written in such a way that it can be read as 99.” Why 99?

He continues: “It (the number 99) exemplifies growth, implying the increased participation of the Bank in the country’s economic development.”

Further, the two digits bearing the World Bank’s logo and that of the Philippines 2000 are drawn carefully touching the edge lines to indicate partnership in development. He says, “This underscores the important role of the Bank in the achievement of the national vision of an industrialized Philippines.”

Formed in January last year, the Club has become both a social club and a forum. All project managers have always been eager to meet at a designated place to share their experiences, views and insights on managing WB-assisted projects, as well as to drink, dine and be merry.

The Club aims to foster a more meaningful yet informal interaction among project managers and the World Bank staff. Discussions are done in an unstructured way. “We often share our experiences. They get to know my problems, I get to know theirs,” said Mr. Bangit. “With the Club, we feel that the World Bank has been doing its best to reach out to us, to strengthen our partnership.”

Editor’s Note: Starting with this issue, InTouch will feature a regular corner, which will be permanent and prominent, for the Club of 29, its members and activities. We are inviting all members to share their views and experiences with us through this newsletter.

Winner. NEA’s Edgardo Bangit (extreme right) receives a plaque for winning the Club 29 logo design contest from NEDA Deputy Director General Dante Ordoñez. Looking on are (from left) BP’s Senior Operating Officer Adviser Ordeñez and BAP’s Vice President Deane Michel Severino.

World Bank’s Young Professionals Program

Offers an exciting beginning to a career in the World Bank Group for people under 32 years and who have strong background in economics, finance or related field. Deadline for applications: October 31, 1997.

Robert S. McNamara Fellowships Program

Awards fellowships to innovative and imaginative post-graduate, non-degree research in economic development. Proposals for the 1998 cycle should be on one of these topics:

1. The dynamics of achieving positive political and economic development through mediation and consensus building at the level of multiple nation states, nation state or the region.
2. Ways to handle the construction of the state at all levels in ethnically, regionally and racially diverse environments, with emphasis on the exploration of effective approaches such as fiscal and administrative decentralization to create support for the overall development of the nation.

Applications must be received on or before November 20, 1997.

Joint Japan-World Bank Graduate Scholarship Program

Accepts applicants for the Second Cohort of the Program in Public Policy and Taxation at Yokohama National University. This two-year program leads to a Master’s degree and includes practical work in taxation organized by the National Tax Administration, a part of Japan’s Ministry of Finance. Applications should be received not later than October 31, 1997.

Margaret McNamara Memorial Fund

Provides financial assistance to women from developing countries during their studies in the US. Application forms are available starting September this year until January 15, 1998. Deadline of applications is February 2, 1998.

For more information and copies of application forms, please contact:
Chat Cabaling, The World Bank, 23/F The Taipan Place, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City Tel. 637-68-55 to 64
The future of the World Bank is now. Today, as it approaches the new millennium, the Bank is striving to become a partner of all people yearning for a better life. It has embarked on a Renewal Program that aims to make the Bank more effective in realizing its mission: to help its 180 member-countries reduce poverty and improve the quality of life through sustainable development and investment in people.

What President Wolfensohn envisions, through the Renewal Program, is a flexible and cost-effective institution that works through partnership, employs a technically excellent staff who are recognized as experts in their fields and serves as a catalyst for the entire development community. "Above all, it is a vision of an institution that delivers results in reducing poverty," he emphasizes.

Wolfensohn explains that the Bank has to "redesign itself for the future" because it now exists in a global economy quite different from that in the past 50 years.

**Strategic Compact**

The Bank's Renewal Program is popularly called the Strategic Compact. It is a new compact between donors, investors and recipients to ensure resources are sufficient to meet the needs of the world’s poorest people and resources are used efficiently and transparently.

The Compact has the following objectives:

- **First**, to increase the development impact of the Bank’s activities.
- **Second**, to improve the clients’ responsiveness.
- **Third**, to build stronger partnerships with people and institutions.
- **Fourth**, to strengthen the capacity of its staff to achieve the Bank’s mission.

To make the Bank’s operations leaner and more cost-effective, it has started eliminating cumbersome and inefficient processes. It is also strengthening the information management system to collect, synthesize and disseminate the best in development thinking. Reforms in the Bank’s human resources system are also underway such as revitalizing the management cadre and increasing staff development training.

The Bank has been forging stronger partnerships with non-government organizations, civic organizations and foundations, the private sector and other development agencies. It invites these groups for dialogues by seeking their involvement as members of task teams for WB-assisted lending and non-lending services. It also promotes private-public sector partnerships.

With all these changes, Wolfensohn stresses the importance of the Strategic Compact to the future of the Bank in the 21st century: “It is not just an internal reorganization. Rather, it is a comprehensive plan rooted in the Bank’s business strategy and is focused on the external delivery of higher quality products and services to clients. The Compact is not about shifting organizational boxes; it is about fundamental renewal-changing the way the Bank does business. It is the outcome of extensive consultation throughout the organization and reflects feedback from clients and shareholders.”
The World Bank's Resident Mission in the Philippines (RMP) is now a Country Unit (CU) headed by a field-based Country Director. Consequently, the position of the Resident Representative to the Philippines has been upgraded to Country Director, who now reports directly to the Vice President of the East Asia and the Pacific (EAP) Regional Office.

This is part of the reorganization of EAP, which aims to make its operations more client-oriented, field-centered and capable of quick response. The change is consistent with the Bank's Renewal Program, which will implement changes in the next 30 months. (See related story on page 4).

Since July 1, 1997, RMP has been led by Country Director Vinay K. Bhargava, an Indian national, who has served as the Resident Representative to the Philippines since January 1996. As Resident Representative then, Mr. Bhargava reported to a headquarters-based Country Director, who, in turn, reported to the Vice President of EAP.

As Country Director, Mr. Bhargava is now empowered to formulate the Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) in consultation with major stakeholders, implement the CAS, develop strong ties with clients and other stakeholders and oversee the Bank's overall portfolio in the Philippines.

As part of the reorganized EAP, sector managers or specialists based in the headquarters and equipped with global expertise and knowledge will complement the work of the Country Director to ensure the quality of technical services and advice to clients. Mr. Bhargava said the new set-up has decentralized EAP. "This means that decision-making and responsibility have been transferred to the field," he explained. It allows us to apply our global knowledge and expertise to the field and bring us closer to our clients, thereby serving them better.

Mr. Bhargava is among the five country directors now based in the field. Other field-based Country Directors are those assigned to China, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Thailand.

The new sector units are poverty reduction and economic management; education; health; nutrition and population; finance and private sector development; transport and urban development; rural development and natural resources; and social development.

Aside from the nine sector managers, the new EAP will have two central service managers, one for operations and another for administration; three regional managers for strategy and partnerships, operations and knowledge and business innovation; two Country Directors based in the headquarters in Washington D.C.; and five field-based Country Directors.

Based on the business plan for the Philippine CU, the expanded RMP has been organized into five teams, namely, poverty reduction and economic management, infrastructure, human resources development, rural development, and core operational services; a finance and administration unit; and the Country Director's front office.

Each sector team will include a field-based HQ sector officer and locally recruited sector and procurement operations officers and participation specialists will be shared across teams. The finance and administration unit will be expanded to handle the expected increase in transactions resulting from a larger office. Total staff of RMP now is 29.

For FY 1998, RMP will have two HQ sector officers who will be based in the field. Ms. Jayshree Balachander and Mr. Bernard Funck recently joined the RMP as Human Development Sector Officer and Senior Economist for PREM, respectively.
Aloysis Ordu, the Resident Mission’s senior operations officer, said: “The dynamic internal labor market in the Bank gives you an excellent opportunity to work in different sectors and in different countries and regions of the world. It exposes you to people from different cultural backgrounds—an enriching experience indeed.”

With a keen interest in economic development, Aloysius joined the Bank in 1988 through the Young Professionals Program. Later he served as economist in the East Africa Operations Department, then later administrator in the Young Professionals Program Personnel Department and much later senior economist in East Asia, working mostly on the Philippines and Cambodia.

Aloysius has a BA in law and economics, a Master’s in quantitative economics and a Ph.D. in economics. His interests and hobbies are soccer, squash, swimming, music, theater and acting. He also enjoys spending time with his family. He said his greatest ambition is to learn ballroom dancing.

Jayshree Balachander, the human development sector officer for the Resident Mission, said she enjoys the intellectual stimulation and access to international experience in the Bank. She joined the Bank in 1992 as a nutrition specialist in the Africa Region and was later promoted as a senior human resources development specialist.

Selected to the Indian Administrative Service, an elite corps of young and bright civil servants, he finally joined the Bank full-time because “it (the Bank) provides opportunities to undertake significant development work.”

Lito finished AB Economics at the Ateneo de Manila University and obtained an MA in environmental planning from the University of the Philippines. He also attended a course on metropolitan planning and management from University College of London’s Bartlett School of Architecture and Planning Development Planning Unit.

Lito is a homebody who loves to spend his time with the family, as well as cook and learn about international cuisine. He also plays tennis and finds great satisfaction in community work.

The latest addition to RMP is Bernard Funck, senior economist for the poverty reduction and economic management (PREM) unit.

He came to the Bank 10 years ago as part of the Young Professionals Program. He later joined the South East Asia Department, first as a country economist for LAO PDR, then as a country economist for Cambodia.

In 1993, he moved to the Former Soviet Union Department also as a country economist, then as senior country economist for Kazakstan.

Bernard said working at the Bank gives everyone an opportunity “to make a difference, to think hard about a development issue, engage development partners and actually see ideas become reality.”

Bernard obtained a Master’s degree in economics and philosophy from the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium. His hobbies and interests: music, books, movies, travel, biking, gardening, and “hopefully soon”, diving.

Noel Sta. Ines also joined the Bank last January as operations officer.
for procurement. He said given the chance, anybody would want to be a part of the World Bank family because the Bank is a prestigious organization.

“Field visits enable me to realize how the Bank-assisted projects help improve the livelihood and living conditions of people,” he said. Noel’s expertise: procurement, project/contract management and administration. He finished BS Civil Engineering at the Mapua Institute of Technology and is a candidate for a Master’s in engineering management at the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila.

Married with two kids, Noel prefers to stay at home with the family. He also devotes himself to church work as a lay eucharistic minister.

If you happen to visit the Public Information Reading room, the lady who will greet you is Chat Cabalang, the Bank’s information assistant. She is also the person you’ll look for to seek help about World Bank documents or publications. An expert on information management, Chat said she is happy when she is able to help people on their research or queries about the Bank.

Before joining the Bank in December 1996, Chat had worked as an information management specialist for some of the country’s leading newspapers for six years and for an international research organization for two years. She is currently pursuing an MA in library science at the University of the Philippines. Her hobbies and interest include bowling, listening to music, reading and watching movies.

Tere Quiñones, operations officer said she joined the Bank for professional growth. She finds her work challenging and demanding. “Challenging because I have been exposed to bigger and more complex projects and demanding because I need to devote extra hours and sometimes days to attend to my tasks.”

A BS Human Ecology graduate from UP Los Banos, Tere has been involved in community development for 15 years, specifically on people’s participation and poverty alleviation. Before joining the Bank, she worked for eight and a half years at AusAID as a senior program officer. Her hobbies are table tennis and camping. Her special interest: “chocolates, chocolates, chocolates.”

Monette Caidic, one of the staff assistants, joined the Bank last February because “it offers better job security and career development.” What makes her stint at the Bank meaningful is that “the opportunities, quality of working life and employment conditions they provide to their staff is of the highest standard.” She added that working with the Bank also gives her “a chance to work for her countrymen” by giving her best support to the staff.

Although she’s an experienced secretary, having worked with several UN agencies, Monette said she continues to learn new things and improve her skills to reach her full potential.

A mother with a five-year old daughter, Monette always finds time for her family, career and hobbies without neglecting her spiritual obligations. Quoting Philippians 4:13, she said: “I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength.”

Maribelle Zonaga, operations officer, said with the Renewal Program, “you have to be versatile, which makes the work interesting as I always work on something new to me.”

Bei, her nickname in RMP, said she joined the Bank because of its reputation for hiring highly professional and topnotch people. She was previously connected with USAID, where she worked as project manager of various infrastructure, energy and environment projects for 13 years. Bei has an MBA from UP. Before USAID, she worked as a management specialist for four years at the Department of Budget and Management. Married with two daughters, Maribelle said that even with the demands of her job, her first priority is still her family. She enjoys swimming and dancing when she’s not “malling with her family.”

Leo Rodaje, operations officer, had served as a consultant to the World Bank and other international organizations before he joined the Resident Mission in January 1997.

He is involved in Bank-assisted projects in transportation, power and energy sectors.

“Working with the Bank is both sweet and sour but professionally enriching and financially rewarding,” he said, adding that he joined the Bank to fulfill his goal of becoming a world-class professional and further improve his skills in project financial analysis, monitoring and supervision.

Leo took up BS Agricultural Economics at the University of Southern Mindanao and obtained an MA in urban and regional planning at UP Diliman. He also attended a diploma course on human settlements planning at the Asian Institute of Technology in Thailand. A sharp shooter, Leo had joined practical shooting competitions using a .45 caliber pistol. He is also into competitive tennis.
Public Information Center: Your Quick Link to the Bank

If you happen to have some queries about the World Bank relevant to your business, research or studies, the wisest thing to do is call or visit our Public Information Center (PIC). From the distance, the PIC looks like a library, where you read and borrow books, but it’s more than a reading room.

If your idea about the Bank is hazy, you can visit the Bank’s website on the Internet (www.worldbank.org) to get first-hand information fast. If you want to know what the Bank is doing in the country, then access the Resident Mission in the Philippines. Yes, in addition to the thousands of volumes of World Bank publications, reports and documents, the PIC has multimedia information kiosks ready to serve your needs.

The PIC is located at the new office of the World Bank Resident Mission in the Philippines, 23rd floor of The Taipan Place on Emerald Avenue at the Ortigas Center. For years, the Bank was holed up in the Bangko Sentral Complex along Roxas Boulevard, Manila.

Open to the Public. At the PIC, anyone who wants to know more about the Bank can browse and research or visit the Bank on the Net.

Leonora A. Gonzales, the Bank’s external relations officer, said the new location is more accessible to the public. “We want to be closer to our clients so that we can serve them better,” she said. The bustling Ortigas Center is home to hundreds of corporations and businesses, the Asian Development Bank, the Philippine Stock Exchange, malls, hotels, restaurants and a university.

The new site is also closer to non-government organizations (NGOs) whose offices are mostly located in Quezon City, as well as to government offices like the NEDA and the Department of Education, Culture and Sports. Moreover, the Bank’s new office can be reached by jeepneys plying from Robinson’s along Ortigas Avenue to Emerald and ADB avenues.

“We hope to have a one-stop shop Public Information Center, where we give information not only on Bank documents but also publications, reports and even multimedia materials. We also want to cater to a wider group of users belonging not only to the government but also to media, NGOs, business and academe, and practically to ordinary Filipinos who are seeking information on the Bank. We’re still striving to be one, but I’m proud to say that we’re off to a good start,” Ms. Gonzales said.

“Our doors are open to the public,” said Chat Cabalang, the PIC assistant. The PIC is open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Mondays to Fridays. So far, the public has found the PIC “user-friendly.” “We are able to provide most of the needs of the general users,” she said. Those who frequently visit the PIC come from business, government and academe. NGOs and the media have also begun to appreciate the wealth of information the PIC offers.

“Businesses want to explore opportunities being offered by the Bank, which usually seek information about its projects in the Philippines,” said Ms. Cabalang. On the other hand, teachers, students and government employees inquire about the Bank’s scholarships, employment opportunities and publications,” she said.

The World Bank
Resident Mission in the Philippines
23/F, The Taipan Place
Emerald Ave., Ortigas Center
Pasig City

InTouch is a quarterly newsletter of the World Bank Resident Mission in the Philippines. All correspondence may be addressed to:

The World Bank
Resident Mission in the Philippines
23/F, The Taipan Place
Emerald Ave., Ortigas Center Pasig City

Editorial Staff: Vinay K. Bhargava, Editorial Adviser; Leonora A. Gonzales, Editor; Charito Cabalang, Production Asst.