



**PURSUE A PEACEFUL AND INNOVATIVE PATH TO END POVERTY!
TAG THE PRESENT BILL AS URGENT!**

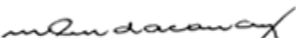
It has been almost a decade since we set up our Coalition to lobby for the enactment of the Poverty Reduction through Social Entrepreneurship (PRESENT) Bill. We convey our appreciation for the support that some members of the Senate and its Committee on Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship have given. It is of utmost importance that a Bill to recognize, support and enable social enterprises as critical partners of government to end poverty is tagged as urgent and passed now.

As social mission-driven businesses that have demonstrated their role in transforming the lives of the rural and urban poor, and the women of these marginalized sectors, social enterprises have grown by leaps and bounds despite no systematic government support. In 2017, they numbered over 160,000, representing about 18% of all enterprises in the country. With the COVID-19 pandemic, social enterprises have had to grapple with recovery even as they continue to pursue their social mission. Ninety six percent (96%) of social enterprises we have surveyed have either experienced moderate to severe downturn, with the more vulnerable stopping operations. But those that have survived have adopted measures to respond to a drastically changed situation and are rebuilding and pursuing innovations to recover. In this regard, we propose strengthening the PRESENT Bill's provisions supportive to building the resilience and recovery of social enterprises in times of pandemics and disasters. With the recognition and support for social enterprises embodied in the PRESENT Bill, not only will this important sector and the poor they serve effectively recover, such will pave a peaceful and innovative pathway to end poverty.

I couldn't agree more with DND Secretary Lorenzana when he called the recent red-tagging of former UP student leaders an "unpardonable gaffe". Because I was irresponsibly included in that list, it was not only my family and I, but also the organizations I lead, including the PRESENT Coalition where I am Convener, who have been unduly put at risk. Over and above my indignation, I would like to respond to the DND Secretary's appeal for everyone to work towards ending the age-old communist insurgency in our country. As a development manager and social innovation thought leader, I believe that the best way to end the insurgency is to address its root causes. Poverty and inequality are the root causes of the insurgency and are the very social problems that the Poverty Reduction through Social Entrepreneurship (PRESENT) Bill addresses.

Towards building back fairer, the PRESENT Coalition has embarked on various platforms to assist social enterprises recover in pursuit of food security, health and decent work for all, women's economic empowerment and resilient and sustainable communities. In this ambitious effort, we are striving to innovate with all stakeholders. But to end poverty, social enterprises need the enabling environment and support programs that government can and should provide, as embodied in the PRESENT Bill.

Towards Ambisyon 2040, NEDA has already identified enabling legislation for social enterprises to be a priority measure in the Philippine Medium Term Development Plan. **WE APPEAL TO THE CABINET CLUSTERS FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION as well as ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, government agencies that we have been in dialogue with since 2012, to be CHAMPIONS IN SOCIAL INNOVATION BY HELPING US PUSH THE PRESENT BILL NOW! WE CALL ON BOTH HOUSES OF CONGRESS TO SPEED UP THE PUBLIC HEARINGS AND EXPEDITE THE WORK OF THEIR RESPECTIVE TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS. WE CALL ON PRESIDENT RODRIGO DUTERTE TO PURSUE AN INNOVATIVE AND PEACEFUL PATH TO END POVERTY BY TAGGING THE PRESENT BILL AS URGENT!**


Marie Lisa Dacanay, PhD

Convener, Poverty Reduction through Social Entrepreneurship (PRESENT) Coalition

Poverty Reduction through Social Entrepreneurship Coalition
c/o ISEA, Rm 407 John Gokongwei School of Management
Ateneo de Manila University, Katipunan Ave, Quezon City
presentcoalition@gmail.com; (0917) 546 9660