

Philippines: Akbayan disqualification is hypocritical, says labor party

Monday 8 October 2012, by [MANGGAGAWA Juan](#) (Date first published: 5 October 2012).

The Partido ng Manggagawa (PM) today decried as “hypocritical” the move by Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) and its allied organizations to disqualify Akbayan as a party-list group. “Our political differences with Akbayan do not detract from the fact that they are as genuine a party-list as adobo is an original Pinoy dish,” asserted Renato Magtubo, PM national chair.

“KMU claims that Akbayan is not anymore a party of the marginalized since it is in coalition with the Aquino administration and its leaders are already in government. But the same was the political objective of KMU’s allied party-list groups when it forged an alliance with a different presidential candidate who just so happened lost in the last elections,” Magtubo explained.

Meanwhile PM called on the Comelec to make good on its declaration that it will rid the party-list system of “jokes, fakes and frauds.” “It is high time that the party-list system is cleansed and loopholes are plugged so that it does not become a backdoor entry for trapos who could not compete at the congressional district level. Despite its flaws, the party-list remains an opening for progressive groups to gain a foothold in Congress so as to advance the struggle for social reforms and social change,” Magtubo insisted.

Magtubo is a nominee of the PM Coalition whose petition for accreditation as a party-list organization is pending at the Comelec. PM Coalition is comprised of labor organizations like PM, the Philippine Airlines Employees Association (PALEA), United Cavite Workers Association, Solidarity of Cebu Workers and the Yellow Bus Labor Union in Mindanao.

“We commend KMU for exposing bogus party-list organizations like Mikey Arroyo’s Ang Galing Pinoy. But we cannot support their claim against Akbayan is which simply based on partisan and sectarian politics. Even as KMU and Akbayan are in partnership with rival factions of the ruling class, open or otherwise, their constituencies and programs nonetheless both remain representative of the so-called marginalized sectors,” Magtubo added.

“I remember that Akbayan is one of a few and brave progressive parties that pioneered participation in the party-list elections at a time when others criticized it as reformism and equated revolutionism with waging guerilla war in the mountains. Of course these erstwhile extremist groups later made a 180 degree turn without explanation and then pioneered unprincipled alliances with class enemies,” Magtubo elaborated.

Together with Etta Rosales of Akbayan, Magtubo was one of the original party-list representatives who won in the first party-list elections in 1998. In their first term, Magtubo and Rosales exposed the payola attending the passage of the EPIRA Law that groups now lambast as the root cause of the high electricity costs in the country, which is the most expensive in the world.

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