

Philippines: Laban ng Masa's Declaration and Platform for the 2022 Elections

Wednesday 31 March 2021, by [BELLO Walden](#), [DE GUZMAN Leody](#), [Laban ng Masa](#), [NACPIL Lidy](#) (Date first published: 31 March 2021).

Is this the future you gave your life for?

If you were Gabriela Silang, Jose Rizal, or Andres Bonifacio and by some miracle you woke up and found yourself in today's Philippines, would you say that this is the future you fought and shed your blood for?

With over 712,000 infections and over 13,000 deaths, catastrophic is the only way to describe Duterte's Covid 19 policy. But then, how can you expect a regime that specializes in taking lives prioritize saving them?

Gabriela, Rizal, and Bonifacio surveying the bleak landscape would tell us that a major part of the problem is President Rodrigo Duterte and that under no conditions can his terroristic regime be allowed to continue under members of his dynasty or his cronies.

But they will also tell you that Duterte is only a symptom of a bigger problem, a systemic one that perverts governance from serving the many to advancing the interests of just a few. Duterte is simply the latest of a succession of elected leaders since the 1986 EDSA People's Power Uprising that overthrew the hated dictator Marcos that promised to serve the people only to betray them. From Cory Aquino to Fidel Ramos to Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to Joseph Estrada to Aquino Recycled to Duterte, politics has been the art of sacrificing the interests of the 99 per cent of the people to those of the one per cent.

Who are these one per cent that feed on the sweat and blood of the 99 per cent? These families can easily be identified by scrolling the names of the members of the House of Representatives, where they are well represented in order to promote their dynastic interests rather than those of the people who voted them to office. They own or control most of the country's privately owned land. The richest and most powerful of them, like the Villars, Gokongweis, Zobel, and Lopezes, are dollar billionaires.

"Democracy" is the name of the game they play, but greed, corruption, bribery, and violence are the rules of their game.

Were they alive today, Kas Gabriela, Jose, and Andres would tell you that our elite act in the selfish way they do because they are implicated in a system of global capitalism that, vampire-like, systematically sucks the labor and blood of the peoples of the world and translates these into profits for transnational corporations and the transnational billionaire class, leaving the vast majority poor, broken, and marginalized.

Profits before people's lives—that is the motto of global capital and its local lieutenants.

If Kas Gabriela Silang, Jose Rizal, and Andres Bonifacio were with us today, they would tell you that the solution to such local and global inequalities would be a system where most of the means of production are owned by the people collectively so that income and wealth differences among Filipinos are small and there is shared prosperity.

Whether you called it social democracy, democratic socialism, or plain socialism, our greatest heroes would not fear to advocate such a system since they would know that at this time in world history, this is only system that would serve the interest of our long-suffering people.

Gabriela was executed at 32, Rizal at 35, and Bonifacio at 33. If our youthful heroes were alive today, we know one thing: they would not hesitate to be in the forefront of Laban ng Masa's effort to transform our society into the land of justice, equality, and democracy for which they shed their precious blood. Their call to action would be: Filipinos, take your country back from your oppressors.

Laban ng Masa's 25 Point Program for the 2022 Elections

When the insurrection of the electorate brings the common opposition candidate for president to victory in 2022, Laban ng Masa will push for the immediate formation of a National Council of Progressive Filipinos to coordinate executive, legislative, and mass movement efforts to bring about and implement the following priority measures that would begin the transition to a democratic socialist system:

1. Disband the useless Inter-Agency Task Force on Covid 19 (IATF) and form a new cohesive body that is led by proven medical professionals who will actively solicit popular participation in the formulation of pandemic plan to provide free, rapid, and comprehensive testing, vaccination, and medical treatment for all.
2. Reallocate all Presidential Intelligence Funds, all funds for National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC), and one half of the DND and DILG budgets to a Covid 19 Pandemic Fund and a Covid 19 Economic Fund, in addition to congressional allocations.
3. Decree a combined income and wealth tax on the taxable financial wealth of the richest 250-300 Filipinos amounting to PhP31.66 trillion ranging from one percent per annum (to generate PhP316 billion), 2 percent per annum (to generate PhP633 billion), and 3 percent (to generate almost one trillion pesos).
4. Cancel debt repayments (principal, interest, and charges) for five years, repeal the automatic debt appropriation law, independently review and audit all existing debts, debt payment and borrowing policies with a view towards cancellation of all illegitimate, onerous and unsustainable debt, and institute democratic, accountable, responsible fiscal policies. For 2021 alone, debt cancellation will save the country at least P1.8 trillion that can be channeled to the pandemic and economic support funds
5. From the proceeds of the wealth tax and the debt cancellation, increase funds for vaccine purchases, institute a universal basic income of 1500 a day for each family, fund a universal health care program delivering quality, preventive care for free, finance a quality program of universal education at all levels, and fund a universal housing program to deliver durable apartment units to 15 million families.
6. Enforce strict price ceilings on basic commodities and reallocate 3/4ths of the Department of Agriculture's budgeted funds to a Production and Marketing Support Fund for our local smallholder agricultural producers.
7. Decree a minimum wage of P1500 a day, adjustable for inflation in succeeding years and automatically raised after adjustment by 2.5 per cent annually.
8. Ban contractualization and regularize all workers and employees.
9. Immediately repeal the so-called Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020.

10. Reduce the size of the AFP and PNP by one half, radically raise recruitment standards, and punish all those who have engaged in extra-judicial killings.
11. Turn over for prosecution to the International Criminal Court President Duterte, Senator Ronaldo de la Rosa, General Antonio Parlade, and all other authors and key enforcers of the war on drugs and the red-tagging campaign, while also prosecuting them and their subordinates in the national judicial system for murder, abuse of authority, and other crimes against the people.
12. Resume, with vigor, all pending cases at the Ombudsman of corruption, dereliction of duty, refusal of command responsibility, and abuse of power against former Presidents Benigno Aquino III, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, and Joseph Estrada and their associates; and reinvigorate the drive to secure all the ill-gotten wealth of the Marcoses.
13. Aggressively uphold the rights of women by passing and enforcing new legislation that increases penalties for crimes against them, including speech that degrades them; strengthens their reproductive rights; and clears away all discriminatory barriers.
14. Restore import quotas and raise tariffs for rice and other selected agricultural and manufacturing products while freezing compliance with all World Trade Organization directives.
15. Implement new strict agrarian reform legislation and punish those who have abused loopholes in previous legislation.
16. Appoint workers and rank and file employees to a majority of positions in corporate boards and institute workers' management in big and medium enterprises.
17. Disband holding companies and convert the units of conglomerates into independent enterprises.
18. Effectively regulate economic activities and investments of multinational corporations and other big businesses and ensuring progressive and strict taxation of corporate profits
19. Create under the Office of the President a Special Overseas Workers' Task Force to promote the welfare of OFW's and aggressively fight for decent contracts in receiving countries.
20. Phase out within two years all coal-fired plants, begin a swift and just transition out of all fossil fuel energy and into democratic, renewable and clean energy systems, and put in place a strict program of taxing carbon emissions.
21. Carry out the Philippines' fair share of urgent climate actions to address the escalating climate crisis, empower people to deal with its impacts, and pursue just solutions.
22. Put in place a program of ecological restoration of land, forests, inland bodies of water, and oceans, and impose life imprisonment for violators of a total logging ban.
23. Initiate a program of reindustrialization using trade and industrial policy with ecologically sustainable production technology geared at turning out essential commodities primarily for domestic consumption that do not contribute to environmental stress.
24. Formulate a truly independent and internationalist foreign policy on the following pillars: ending the Visiting Forces Agreement and the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) with the US, rejecting the expansionist and sphere-of-influence claims of big powers like China and the U.S. in the greater South China Sea, negotiating a mutually-beneficial agreement with neighboring countries for a commons-based development and utilization of natural resources in disputed areas, pushing demilitarization of the region, and strictly enforcing and demanding recognition by all nuclear powers of the 1995 Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapons-Free Treaty.
25. Lead in forming an alliance of governments in the global South to oppose the encroachments of the US, China, and other dominant powers while making use of their competition to widen the political and economic space for maneuver of developing countries.

"It is simply criminal, the incompetence and stupidity that the Duterte regime has displayed in the face of the pandemic. But the problem goes beyond Duterte and his gang of clowns and killers. That

Covid 19's main victims are the poor is not surprising, for the Philippines is a ruthless society that creates wealth for a very few at the expense of the many. If the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that the 21st century has no room for this cruel system."

Dr. Walden Bello

National Chair, Laban ng Masa, former member of House of Representatives

"Tama lamang na puntiryahin ang kriminal na pagpapabaya, grabeng kainutilan, at kapalpakan ng rehimeng Duterte sa pagtugon sa naturang mga krisis. Subalit hindi ito sapat, kailangang payabungin ang pagkakapatiran, inisyatiba, at kolektibong enerhiya ng masa para balangkasin at ipatupad ang mga kagyat at pangmatagalang solusyon sa mga krisis na nagbabanta sa ating mga buhay at kabuhayan."

Leody de Guzman

Chair of BMP Labor Federation

"We are facing horrific, multiple crises—Covid 19, a raging economic crisis, an escalating climate emergency, and a government that is an epic failure in protecting and upholding the rights and welfare of the majority of Filipinos. We need a massive change in governance—for our survival, for justice and the end to tyranny and inequality, for a safe planet, and a better future for our families and children. This is not an impossible dream."

Lidy Nacpil

Chairperson of Sanlakas, Chairperson of Oriang,

a women's organization, campaigner for economic, gender and environmental justice

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