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COSCA Calls for Unity in the Search for Truth

Our Present Situation

President Arroyo may have survived an impeachment attempt but her governance would not be far from political and economic crisis. The opposition and the Filipino masses still perceive her to be part of the nation's major problem, and debates about the junked impeachment complaints persist. **The impeachment process is viewed as a legal process to know the truth behind the Gloriagate and jueteng scandals, including the real turnout of the 2004 national elections.** The House has 60 days to decide whether to impeach PGMA, but it took only 14 days for 158 lawmakers to vote "yes" in favor of the Justice Committee's decision to dismiss all 3 complaints to impeach PGMA.

Yet the junking of the impeachment complaint will not extinguish the desire of the Filipino people to know the truth. Protesters from broad coalitions grow in numbers everyday as they march on the streets demanding PGMA's resignation. They still believe Mrs. Arroyo used all means, including public funds, to secure the votes she needed. Her power to appoint officials for key government posts (the reward for political patronage) and the Iglesia Ni Cristo factor tipped the Congress' balance of power in favor of PGMA.

The influential Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) will retain its position regarding Mrs. Arroyo. However, Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, the incoming president of the 85-member CBCP stressed the need to unravel the truth. *"Did the President cheat or not? Was the 2004 election rigged in her favor or not?"* Apparently, only President Arroyo and missing COMELEC Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano can answer all questions concerning the Gloriagate scandal.

Meanwhile, the Unity Statement of the **Bukluran Para sa Katotohanan** is calling everyone to unite for the truth and not to be divided in these critical times. The organizers of the Bukluran ng Katotohanan in unison say, **Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo must go for the sake of our nation's future.** And for the preservation of hope as a motive force in our national life, she must go.

The **Bukluran Para sa Katotohanan** is a multi-sectoral coalition coming from all walks of life, from different political, cultural and economic persuasions and views but in diversity, find a cause for unity in search for truth and social justice.

Call to Action

The Center for Social Concern and Action (COSCA) joins civil society groups and other sectors in inviting everyone with a genuine concern for the country to do the following:

1. Unite and work actively in search for the truth under the **Bukluran Para sa Katotohanan**;
2. Engage in three modes of advocacy, namely:
 - a. (*Short term*): (1) Support the Signature Campaign for Truth, (2) Organize Inter-Faith prayer rallies and candle lighting in various schools, and (3) Organize the youth and the student sector for mass mobilizations in collaboration with like-minded persons and/or organizations;
 - b. (*Mid term*): Provide venues for dialogue in solidarity with the poor to demand transparency and accountability in the government that will put an end to graft and corruption; and
 - c. (*Long term*): advocate for a truly nationalist development agenda that will address the perennial problems of poverty and unemployment, poor governance and environmental destruction.

In pursuit of the above objectives, we believe that it is imperative to address not only the current political crisis in leadership but more importantly, **formulate a blueprint for national development** in light of the impending oil crisis and the adverse impact of globalization. **We believe that the current political and economic crisis can be resolved in a peaceful and democratic manner.** If we want peace, then we should work for truth and social justice. Honesty, integrity and public service continue to be the essence of good governance.

Unite for the Truth.

Demand the Truth.

Defend the Truth.

References:

1. *PDI dated September 7,8 and 9, 2005*
2. *Unity Statement of Bukluran Para sa Katotohanan*