



LAKAS
KAMPI
CMD

PRESS RELEASE

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PUNO: PRO-POOR PLATFORM, INFO DRIVE ON SUSTAINED GROWTH SHOULD BE LAKAS-KAMPI-CMD'S PRIORITIES

The first order of business for the unified political powerhouse Lakas-Kampi-CMD following its formal merger is the crafting of a platform of government that would economically empower the people and continue the reform agenda of President Arroyo that has allowed the country to experience nonstop growth even amidst a global recession, Interior and Local Government Secretary Ronnie Puno said.

Puno, who is planning to seek the nomination of Lakas-Kampi-CMD as its vice-presidential bet in the 2010 elections, said the party would also have to mount a massive information drive to inform the people of the proper, albeit tough, reforms put in place by President Arroyo that are responsible for the sustained growth of the domestic economy's, which is now shielding Filipinos from the worst effects of the global financial crisis.

'Our work in this new merged party is to prove to the people that the reform programs implemented by the government under President Arroyo are correct and are now helping insulate us from the global recession,' Puno has said in several television and radio interviews.

At the ceremonies Thursday officially sealing the merger of Lakas CMD and Kampi, among the joint resolutions unanimously adopted by the unified party was one commending President Arroyo for "successfully steering the country towards economic recovery and resiliency amid the global economic crisis and expressing strong support for her continuing efforts to achieve sustained economic empowerment and national development."

At the same time, Puno said he would work to ensure that the party sticks to a "politically mature, high-level campaign" during the 2010 elections.

"I pledge to carry out a high level campaign, which means that we won't be throwing personal attacks or insults at anybody but would rather stick to the issues that need to be discussed," Puno said. "I will compete vigorously (for the nomination) but will accept the results gracefully."

Puno said that with the Philippine electoral system about to enter the era of computerization, "new regimes will have to be set in place" to pave the way for the age of "transformational politics" that would spell the political maturity of the entire nation.

He noted that one big advantage of Lakas Kampi CMD over the opposition is it has a "singularity of purpose" which is to agree on the continuity of, and support for, the economic programs that have been set in place by its leaders.

Moreover, Puno said that although popularity cannot be discounted as a factor in winning elections, the formidable machinery that the combined forces of Lakas and Kampi would offer to support its selected candidates for national positions, especially for the presidency, is a big factor that would decide the outcome of the 2010 polls.

The Lakas Kampi's political strength includes the support of 66.7% of the members of the House of Representatives; 7.2.2% of the country's governors; 71.8% of city mayors; and 73.8% of municipal mayors nationwide.

Puno noted that former President Ramos, who was the chairman emeritus of the former Lakas CMD, and President Arroyo, who was the chairperson emeritus of the former Kampi, adhered to the same basic principles and policies espoused by their parties—which was to uplift the lives of the people and provide all citizens with equal opportunities for economic advancement.

President Ramos' primary goal, Puno said was to “level the playing field” in business, which led to the rebirth of the entrepreneurial spirit of Filipinos, an agenda that President Arroyo was able to channel into different and specific areas.

President Arroyo's objective, for her part, was able to focus on, among others, pulling down the budget deficit to free more funds for social and economic empowerment programs, Puno said.

But even with these different thrusts as demanded by the times, Puno said “both presidents stuck to the same principles of ensuring economic growth, creating more jobs and modernizing the country's institutions.”

The Constitution and bylaws ratified by the Lakas Kampi CMD include among its basic principles and policies the following: good governance, globalization, people empowerment, sustainable development, social justice, subsidiarity and solidarity.

The party's goal and objectives include launching “economic empowerment through total economic mobilization centered on cooperativism and solidarity with, and for the benefit of, marginalized sectors and micro and smallscale entrepreneurs.”