

Improving the map for 2000 A.D.

A 25-YEAR Physical Perspective Plan for the Philippines, prepared by the Planning and Projects Development Office (PPDO) of the Department of Public Works, Transportation and Communications (DPWTC), is currently reviewed for implementation by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), the central planning agency.

According to Pete Prado, PPDO manager, the plan was formulated to meet the need for expressing national development planning in spatial and locational terms. The plan was prepared by the DPWTC in response to Letter of Instructions No. 363 which directed all government agencies/investors in development planning to submit 5-10 respective 5-year (medium term) and 25-year (long term) plans to NEDA for coordination and integration of all development efforts. LOI 363, issued January 12 this year, stated:

"In line with the present policy to centralize the planning functions of the government and to integrate, coordinate and consolidate all development plans of all departments, offices and agencies of the government, all heads of departments, offices and agencies are hereby directed to prepare their respective development plans, namely: (1) a medium-term plan covering a period of ten years and (2) a long-term or perspective plan up to the year 2000."

The PPDO is one of the two government agencies directly involved in the country's physical planning, the other being the Human Settlements Commission. The Commission has not yet completed its draft report. The PPDO has already accomplished its report which is in fact one of the earliest to be submitted within the deadline set by LOI 363 (originally March 15 and now extended to June 30).

The PPDO report constitutes the first phase (physical planning) of a comprehensive national development plan integrating land use, settlement network, transportation and communications, water resources, power development as well as planning and implementation machinery. The other phases of the comprehensive national plan cover the economic (being prepared by such departments as finance and trade) and social (by such departments as social welfare and education) aspects. It is the PPDO planners' belief that physical planning should be the basis of the other phases of national development because location and space are permanent features of development.

The plan recognizes the fact that the Philippine society responds to space age technology and other developments, and the plan therefore allows for revisions every five years. In formulating the plan, the PPDO planners propose to:

1. Determine national goals and objectives—maximum feasible growth, higher standards of living, equitable distribution of wealth, resources and facilities, efficient, comfortable and safe environment, maximum utilization of natural resources, national integration, and adoption of new and strong moral and social values.

2. Analyze existing and past conditions which led to the deterioration of our physical facilities, economic and social well-being, and based on these, set higher, more acceptable and realistic standards. Cross-checking and adjustments were made such that plans are compatible with the nature and character of our projected rate of resource development. The practical experience of other countries were also observed.

3. Prepare a schedule of plan implementation, accompanied by a budget proposal.

The goal of the plan is to develop the nation's resources and create a national environment which will promote

the general well-being, dignity, unity and quality of life for the greatest number of Filipinos by the year 2000. The objective is to optimize the spatial organization of social and economic activities. On the assumptions that the present conditions of political stability will prevail and that the economic and social perspective plans of other departments are adopted, the planners believe the goal is achieved when there is:

- Acceleration of industrial development;
- Increase in agricultural production;
- Promotion of social development;
- Expansion of employment opportunities;
- Environmental protection; and
- Physical integration.

Assuming also that projections made by PPDO planners do not vary significantly from those of other departments, the planners believe the objective is achieved when there is:

- An optimal pattern of land use developed according to objectives, climate, capability, climate, etc.;
- Hierarchical pattern of settle-

ment and such venues for social mobility as higher income, better education and increased employment.

The following issues and problems were taken into consideration by the planners of the PPDO report: population growth and distribution, food production, income distribution and living standards, employment, infrastructure requirements, environmental balance, and physical integration.

For as long as the country is over-populated (2.8 percent a year, one of the highest in the world) not even the most sophisticated physical planning can solve the country's ills. Therefore, the PPDO report urges that the measures to control population growth should continue and improve. Centers include the dispersion of certain populations to planned settlements and centers. This means that certain areas of the country have to be urbanized and others industrialized, and still others agriculturalized. The food production campaign will then have to continue to veer toward the nutritional and medical needs of the population. Food production programs should entail the development of food supply areas through infrastructure, marketing and

retention, and the inevitable encroachment of industrial age technology on the natural environment will greatly affect the ecological balance. Thus, the plan strongly reiterates the conservation of forests, rivers, seas, and other natural formations. Pollution and other atmospheric and climatic disturbances are included among the elements to be combated.

The plan also details its development concepts in four key areas: growth center scheme which calls for distribution of urban centers in Mindanao and the Visayas; comprehensive utilities through the allocation of transportation, communications and power in key areas in Luzon, Visayas and outside Metropolitan Manila; integrated water resources, stressing the need of the major river basin areas of the country (Cagayan, Agno, Pangasinan, Bicol, Panay, Iloilo, Dagupan, Agusan, and Cotabato rivers); and harmonious organization of the infrastructure with the natural surrounding. This means that roads should be constructed without destroying valuable forests or that tourist areas be preserved whenever possible by discouraging construction of discordant structures like towering hotels.

The rest of the PPDO plan are charts and maps showing figures and facts with corresponding plans for physical improvement. The plan is optimistic that the new approach to decision-making on the barangay level will provide a faster and more favorable approach to the implementation of the programs for development. Aside from the barangays, the plan sees the CIP (Capital Improvement Program) of the provincial and municipal governments as one major implementing machinery. More significantly, PPDO proposes the creation of a stable institution for comprehensive physical planning. The body, following guidelines by NEDA, will monitor and evaluate plan implementation, conduct a reappraisal, and review and undertake its revisions. The proposed physical planning office can function as a research office on land use and environmental standards.

The plan also proposed the following legal mechanism for controlling development:

- Public spending. In order to effectively implement the plan, priority should be given to the increasing efficiency and coordination in the public spending process. Budgeting could be an effective instrument of planning if it conforms with the requirements of the total plan.

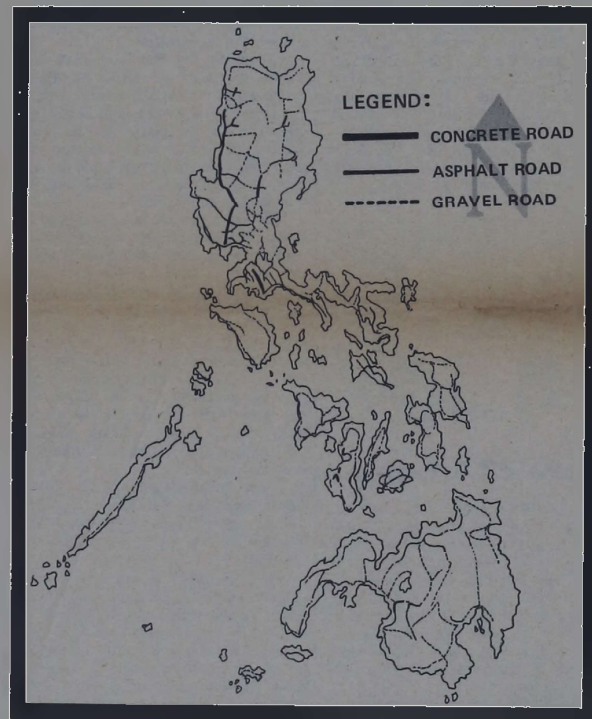
- Taxation. Although taxation is principally a revenue-raising power of government, it may also serve such purpose as redirection of development, production and general land use. Examples of such are special assessments, efficient charges, etc.

- Expropriation. When necessary for the public interest, the state may exercise the power of eminent domain.

- Police power. If public safety and welfare so demand, authorities may intervene to regulate and restructure land use.

Among the tools for development control suggested by the PPDO are zoning (important in directing land use patterns, location of industries, housing), subdivision regulations (to improve quality of subdivisions), official mapping, building regulations, licensing system (supplemental device to regulate land use) and taxes on idle or vacant lands.

As can be seen, some of the proposals have already been implemented even at this stage. The formation of the Metro Manila Commission, for example, is one such clear direction toward the integration of physical facilities of four cities and 18 towns. The "basic prohibition" project and the electrification of many of our rural areas are also moves toward integrated physical planning. □



ments functioning complementarily;

- Comprehensive transportation and communication systems, an integrated water resources and power grid systems established in accordance with the land use scheme and operating in support of approved settlement patterns.

Among the outputs (service rendered or to be rendered) the PPDO outlined are land reform and reforestation programs, irrigation and flood control, transportation, communications, and postal services, river basin development, power expansion (electrification), and planned population.

The working motto of the PPDO plan is "progress without integration does not constitute democratic fulfillment." The planners believe that since the country is divided into hundreds of islands, each with a distinct ethnic and cultural personality, inter-regional mobility and interaction through improved transportation and communications facilities provide the key to national in-

tegration and such venues for social mobility as higher income, better education and increased employment.

The substandard level of health and nutrition and the general living conditions of families, particularly in the rural areas are generally low (in 1970, there were 1.6 million families in the rural areas and 200,000 in the urban areas with incomes less than P1,500 yearly), making them a constant social burden and sometimes a threat to the stability of the social order. The demands of a growing population and an expanding economy for infrastructure support require sustained investment through a progressive infrastructure development program. However, because of the lack of resources and the backlog in the implementation of the existing infrastructure program, there remains a big gap between the requirements and the actual infrastructural support for social, industrial and agricultural plans.

The PPDO plan recognizes that the increasing population, rapid urbaniza-