

PROJECTS □ Alma Diputado

Reaching back to our roots



"Kapitbahayan, . . . a total community that will reflect the spirit of the Filipino people with dignity, beauty and respect. It is a reaffirmation of a Filipino tradition."

—Mrs. Imelda Romualdez Marcos

KAPITBAHAYAN'S beginnings can be traced back to 1940 when the national government decided to reclaim the foreshore of Tondo to provide a site for an inter-island port complex. This land was basically unfit for human settlement, but it has attracted nonetheless a total of 27,000 families or 180,000 people over the last four decades. With a net density of over 2,000 persons per hectare, this community has become sprouting ground of crimes, violence, filth and disease—representing the worst in urban blight and socio-economic deprivation.

Its miserable condition has led the First Lady, Mrs. Imelda Romualdez Marcos to make Tondo Foreshore the recipient of a pilot urban development program—the biggest project of its kind ever to be launched by the government.

The ultimate objective of the project, which is the responsibility of the National Housing Authority through the Tondo Foreshore Development Authority and Dagat-dagatan team, is to upgrade the quality of life of the people. "When we speak of human settlements, we give our emphasis on human beings in relation to his settlements, on man rather than just land. For in the end man is, and should be, the main focus of our concern and attention. The idea of this total community is not only to include the survival of our marginal people on marginal land but also to provide them with the necessary tools for their advancement," the First Lady explained during the community's inauguration last May 17.

The physical plan for Tondo Foreshore was tailored to the following goals: the resolution of land issue, the development of a self-sustaining resettlement site for prospective relocatees, the establishment of a planned commercial-industrial estate which will provide economic opportunities for the people, and the creation of an implementing body. These objectives are based on six guiding principles: maximum community participation in the planning and implementation, total community development, provision of economic opportunities, maximum retention of structures and families, provision of site and services and maximum recognition of land rights.

Project implementation started Fiscal Year 1975-1976 with an accelerated program of upgrading sites and services in the Tondo Foreshore. By the end of this fiscal year, it is estimated that 56 percent of the upgrading program of the whole Tondo Foreshore shall have been completed with emphasis on installation of surface water drainage system, water distribution and sewer systems, and im-

provement of roads.

Experimental areas are being developed both in Tondo Foreshore and Dagat-dagatan. The objective is to demonstrate the Authority's concept of upgrading sites and services as a means of improving environmental conditions, its schemes for rehabilitating dwellings, housing within the means of the people, provision of social-economic infrastructures that go with a total community. The Authority intends to evolve standards which may be replicated in the succeeding phases of the project and in other depressed areas. Completion of these experimental areas is estimated within the current fiscal year.

Together with the experimental area in Dagat-dagatan, the Authority will develop for the First Lady a community complete with all services and facilities necessary for healthful living for 520 families.

The 520 families that will be the initial beneficiaries of the model community planned from a total man-and-environment approach were chosen according to the following criteria: (1) bonafide residents of Tondo foreshore; (2) he should be receiving a salary of not less than five times nor more than ten times the amount of rent; (3) should be twenty one years of age; (4) the place of work should be within the ten-kilometer radius; (5) the size of the family, six to seven members (first priority), four to five members (second priority), and two to three members (third priority); (6) should not be a land owner; and (7) should belong to the International Port Zone namely the Luzviminda Village, Bonifacio Village and Dulo Puting Bato.

Kapitbahayan is made up of 72 clusters—each cluster composed of seven to eight units making a total of 526 units; 520 to be leased out on a 25-year contract renewable for the next 25 years, six units intended for the management and staff. There are 64 three-storey units, 410 two-storey units and 52 one-storey units. The one-storey units have a livable floor area of 64 square meters. The two-storey units have an area of 48 sq. m.; the three-storey units have a floor area of 64 square meters. There are 139 units reserved for the fishermen. A deep-well water tank with a capacity of 60,000 gallons provides the whole community with water. Occupants will be paying between P70.00 and P100.00 a month.

Kapitbahayan is envisioned to firm up and make more whole such positive human interaction through a community carefully planned and executed along the pattern of our people's way of life and reinforcing the positive aspects of our lifestyles. It is a good beginning. As the First Lady has said: "We hope Kapitbahayan will serve to point out that the Filipino is capable of reaching back to his roots, and in so doing, affirm his present and shape his future." □

CONVERSATION □ Sec. Gerardo P. Sicat

'Land speculation is not fair'

Q Does the expropriation of private lands for public use have a strong Constitutional basis?

A Yes. I am not a lawyer and I have not studied it but I have asked some people about this and they said that it has some Constitutional basis. Specifically, even for public housing and low cost housing, there is a great possibility along this end. In fact, we feel that for the National Housing Authority to succeed in its effort to provide cheap housing, we will have to resort to expropriation every now and then. Our land system is such that if the government has 20 hectares, to make a community sustained, it has to expand to, let us say, 60 hectares so that contiguous operations of many things can go on.

We are not thinking of housing as housing per se. We want to develop communities using the housing approach. Communities imply availability of industries, availability of power and so on. In fact, our view is that even though in some areas housing would be for the very poor who cannot afford, there ought to be some degree of variation. Let us say, in a given community, it should not only be the very poor that should live there. Or else, we will be establishing ghettos where there will be no interaction or desirable social system. We would like to have a mixture. And here, when you have jobs available, people will have the opportunity of growing with them.



Sec. Sicat: for cooperative housing

So this is one of the concepts that is evolving in the housing program. The National Housing Authority is very busy in the preparation of the master plans and programs. I have specifically emphasized in the Board Meeting that we ought to attend to the industrial estate activities of the housing areas because attending to the industrial estate activities would imply that jobs will be forthcoming for people who are being relocated.

Will housing be primarily left to the private sector?

Not necessarily. But the National Housing Authority will play a role also in having the private sector work. The period of huge investments in low-cost housing, I would think, is going to begin in 1977 and although we have already done some recently, we would like to snowball this in the year 1978, 1979 and so on. I think the program will evolve and generate more activities.

How does the present interest rate policy affect housing?

Well, you know, there have been many problems. Some people say low-interest rates would be necessary for housing; some say that what we need are jobs to generate the income to pay for housing. But the government is mindful of this and in undertaking the public housing program, it would surely have to look into some relatively subsidized interest rates in order to generate a particular type of demand for housing. The area where housing loans can depend on the interest rate market is something for the higher income groups.

This community concept you mentioned, is it more on a sort of communal ownership scheme?

Not necessarily. By community, I mean an area where people who are located in a housing area would also necessarily have a great deal of their livelihood derived from that community.

Self-contained?

Not exactly self-contained, but a majority of people would find livelihood there. Such an area would depend, of course, on trading with other areas because raw materials they buy would be moving in from other regions. But this is the concept that we are trying to build.

Do you think that increasing apartment rentals would help people to construct more houses?

Some people have been making representations that the rent control law should be adjusted. And we are studying this. If we hold a public hearing on it, you would get two sides fighting each other. But we recognize that the supply of apartments depends also on the rental rate. And so we are studying this. In fact, we discussed this recently at the NEDA. We discussed the question of whether some adjustments could be possible which would be relatively tied to the tax declaration for the property. Taxes have been going up for owners of apartments and some of them are crying. I think they have cried themselves out and there are no more tears coming out. Some of them complained that the taxes are soon going to be equal to the rentals that they are collecting. We understand the situation and we are trying to study how this thing can be adjusted.

So there might be adjustments upward because prices are going up?

This is under study. But I am just pointing out that there are representations being made at many ends. This is the reason why some apartments being constructed are now in the P600 category because they want to be far away from the P300 limit, hindi ba? *Nataa-kot sila . . . baka abutan sila.* Supposing the government says, "Freeze at a higher point." But let us not talk about freezing, ha?

You said that the home ownership orientation needs to be adjusted.

I agree with that view. I think home ownership in our programming for the future should be adjusted in terms of ownership of dwelling rather than ownership of a lot with a dwelling. You know, in Poland, for instance—I read a recent article, and I told the NEDA about this—they have changed their public housing policy completely so that only cooperative housing could be undertaken.

Now you talk about cooperatives and the President talked about expropriation. Instead of outright expropriation, could there be a scheme whereby the landowners will exchange his property for shares in a corporate complex? So, you have a corporate development side by side with a cooperative development.

Well, you know, the President's announcement is an offshoot of the tremendous land speculations going on in areas where the government constructs infrastructure. In such activities, the ones who are going to gain are those who happen to be luckily in the path of the public work project. It does not seem fair to the nation because when the government constructs new road facilities, it is to make transport more efficient and to define new areas of settlement. These new areas of settlement might, in fact, be the areas thru which these roads lead to, like the ones in the higher hills near Antipolo and beyond along the road going to Infanta, Quezon. So, there are new communities that can be developed there, and such new communities can only come about if we are able to maintain the price of land at a fairly reasonable level. □