

**Aide Memoire  
on**

**“Shepherding Reforms in Access to Justice and Participation  
of the Disadvantaged Sectors”**

**24 November 2006  
12:30-5:00 pm, Assembly Hall, UP NCPAG**

**A. Introduction**

Access to justice is one of the major determinants and components of a good and functioning justice system. A justice system that is accessible to all particularly the poor, marginalized, and disadvantaged sectors is the idealized system. Furthermore, an accessible justice system truly embodies its constitutional mandate of providing equality, regardless of cultural, economic and social status before the law.

To improve people's access to justice, countless reforms and programs have been implemented. These reforms may be categorized as institutional or procedural. These reforms may include the provision of legal aid or assistance and advice for the poor and marginalized, strengthening of the system of alternative dispute resolutions, and other forms of court reforms.

These actions not only by the primary actor, the judiciary, but also by law groups and other civil society organizations may have helped make justice more accessible to all. However, a question still remains. Are these reforms and efforts sufficient to make our justice system more accessible?

**B. Objectives**

To explore responses to this basic policy question and to another equally important collateral concern, e.g., shepherding reforms in access to participation of the disadvantaged sectors, the 17<sup>th</sup> Diliman Governance Forum (DGF) is planned to be conducted on 24 November 2006. It generally aims to provide a venue for the continuing discourse, dialogue, and dissemination of ideas, interactions and consultations with relevant publics on policy issues, reform initiatives, and recommendations of the Fostering Democratic Governance (FDG) Programme. Specifically, it aims to:

- ❖ Discuss recent policy and reforms and other in access to justice and participation of vulnerable sectors; the problems and challenges in shepherding and institutionalizing these reforms; and

- ❖ Explore ways to better promote and advance these reforms in our policy systems.

### C. Intended Outputs

At the end of the day, the forum hopes to have helped raise the level of understanding of the relevant publics on the problems, challenges, issues, and complications in shepherding reforms in access to justice and participation of the basic sectors. The lessons learned from this Forum will be used as a basis and framework for future policy reforms in making justice more accessible, and the disadvantaged sectors more participative in policy making and governance.

### D. Programme

TIME	ACTIVITIES
12:30–1:00 p.m.	Registration
1:00-1:30 p.m.	<p>Opening Ceremonies National Anthem Welcome Remarks</p> <p><b>Dr. Sergio S. Cao</b> Chancellor, UP Diliman</p> <p>Overview of the Forum and Introduction of Resource Speakers <b>Dr. Alex B. Brillantes Jr.</b> Dean, UP NCPAG Head IP, FDG Programme</p>
1:30-2:00 p.m.	<p><b>“The Problems and Challenges in Shepherding and Institutionalizing Reforms in the Justice System”</b></p> <p><b>Hon. Portia A. Hormachuelos</b> Justice, Court of Appeals</p>
2:00-2:30 p.m.	<p><b>“The Alternative Reforms in Enhancing Access to Justice of the Basic Sectors”</b></p> <p><b>Atty. Marlon Manuel</b> Project Director, Alternative Law Group</p>
2:30- 3:00	<p><b>“Policy Reforms and Other Initiatives on Enhancing Access to Participation of Vulnerable Sectors”</b></p> <p><b>Dr. Ledivina V. Cariño</b> University Professor, UP NCPAG</p>

3:00-3:15 p.m.	Working Break
3:15-4:15 p.m.	Open Forum <b>Dr. Ebinezer R. Florano</b> Forum Officer, PGF
4:15-4:30 p.m.	Synthesis and Closing Remarks <b>Dr. Ma. Fe V. Mendoza</b> Project Director, PGF

## E. Participants

Some 200 participants/stakeholders from the business sector, civil society organizations, government, law groups, FDG partners, academe, donor community, media, and other sectors were invited to seriously commit themselves to help enhance the access to justice and participation of the poor, marginalized, and disadvantaged sectors.