

GMA vows to create more jobs

By MARVIN SY

President Arroyo reiterated the government's concern about job security for the average Filipino and vowed to continue efforts to create more employment opportunities in the country.

Speaking at the inauguration of the new studio facility of GMA Network last Friday night, the President acknowledged that average Filipinos have real concerns about the impact of the current global financial crisis on their lives and that the government must find ways to help them.

Mrs. Arroyo said the government has taken significant steps to help cushion the impact of the global crisis on poor Filipinos and has managed to keep the economy in a relatively stable position in spite of the external shocks.

"There is a global economic crisis that's responsible for driving up the prices of food, fuel and rice in the Philippines and around the world. Fortunately we're not in a crisis here at home but we are facing strong challenges," the President said.

"During this troubled time, it's the role of government to help insulate the Filipino people from these price shocks and economic pressure," she added.

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) has started preparing for the possibility of mass layoffs in some

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sectors as a result of the slowdown of economies around the world.

According to Labor Secretary Marianito Roque, the DOLE has come up with contingency measures for workers who could be displaced, particularly in sectors affected by the developments overseas such as exports.

The President said the government is aware and concerned about these problems.

"We are aware of the pressures that the average Filipino faces from high prices and high rates of inflation. We know the average Filipino is concerned about job security and the buying power of his or her wages; we are concerned, too," she said.

Mrs. Arroyo said the government is doing everything in its power to put food on the table of ordinary Filipinos and to protect the wages of employees, especially at this time.

The President lauded GMA

Network for its expansion activities, which she said are what the country needs from the private sector to complement what the government is doing.

While the government is working to keep the prices of food, oil and other basic commodities low and stable, the President said the private sector should continue to pour in more investments in order to create more jobs for the people.

"That is why we are working hard to keep down the prices of rice, fuel and food and to increase the number of jobs and the investments that will continue to generate employment opportunities for more of our people," Mrs. Arroyo said.

"That's why I congratulate GMA Network, not only because of the important role of media, but because you will give more jobs and you are investing and that is what we need," she added.