

# GMA launches own Green Revolution

President Arroyo is borrowing a page from former First Lady Imelda Marcos and launching her own "Green Revolution" - a popular program during the Marcos regime that was primarily geared toward rice sufficiency.

Mrs. Arroyo has issued an executive order rolling out backyard food

By PAOLO ROMERO

production programs in urban areas to strengthen the country's food security and generate livelihood and employment for the poor.

Mrs. Arroyo issued Executive Order No. 776 on Jan. 16. She said the EO would boost backyard food production as part of her administration's

Comprehensive Livelihood and Emergency Employment Program (CLEEP) that includes the Gulayan ng Masa and the Integrated Services for Livelihood Advancement (ISLA) for subsistence fisherfolk.

In May 1973, the Green Revolution was launched by former President

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Marcos and his wife, Imelda, under the name of *Masagana* (bountiful) 99, which aimed to produce 99 sacks of rice (almost five tons) per hectare that was necessary to make the country self-sufficient in terms of rice supply.

Under the program, high-yield varieties of

seeds were introduced, irrigation systems were built, and fertilizers, pesticides and agricultural credits which were 85 percent guaranteed by the government were provided.

Productivity doubled and by 1977, the Philippines was self-sufficient in rice for the

first time in its modern history. Similar government support made the country self-sufficient in corn, and one of the world's leading coconut oil producers.

Under President Arroyo's EO, the *Gulayang Masa* and ISLA will be rolled out as part of a massive government food production program in urban areas with the active participation of the Department of Agriculture, local governments, and the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor).

The rollout will include setting up of urban vegetable gardens and backyard fisheries in vacant lots and unused government lands, among other places.

Mrs. Arroyo said two-thirds of

the world is in recession but the Philippines is sustaining its economic growth.

She also said the government has committed P300 billion for pump-priming programs that include CLEEF.

"It is not business as usual, government agencies should hit the ground running," Mrs. Arroyo said. "The government should take advantage of the window of opportunity that is, declining inflation and interest rates and good weather."

All governors and mayors are enjoined to set aside funding for the *Gulayang Masa* and ISLA in urban areas and designate project supervisors in their respective areas.

The University of the Philippines-Los Baños and other state universities and colleges will lend their expertise in agriculture and aquaculture to the program.