

'GMA committed vs corruption'

By MARVIN SY

Malacañang reiterated yesterday that President Arroyo is committed to eliminating corruption in government as a matter of policy.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, responding to Chief Justice Reynato Puno's call for the creation of a moral force to fight cor-

ruption in government, said this type of action could be taken by any person regardless of stature, as it is the right thing to do.

Puno named yesterday the members of an advisory council that would push for his moral force movement.

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"It doesn't have to come from anybody. We even have a former leader of Congress who is also calling for moral reform, etc.," Ermita said.

He said Mrs. Arroyo has "always tried to put programs and measures in order to put things straight," and emphasized that this has been the call of every leader in every administration so there is nothing new with Puno's movement.

"Of course no leader would tolerate corruption," Ermita said. "What is important is that we take action as we all know that corruption in government is unacceptable."

The President has instituted several measures to eliminate corruption in government, including issuing an administrative order directing all Cabinet members and other officials to lead a moral renewal campaign in their respective agencies and offices.

Lifestyle checks on government officials and employees are continuing in order to put tabs on possible corrupt practices.

'Highly respected names'

Supreme Court spokesman lawyer Jose Midas Marquez announced that the chief justice has chosen and convened eight members of the movement's core group representing key sectors who are perceived as "highly respected" in their fields.

The council is composed of Ambassador Henrietta de Villa, chair of the National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) and Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV); Msgr. Gerry Santos, director of the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines; Ret. Gen. Jaime Echeverria, president and chair of Association of Generals and Flag Officers; Dr. Emerito Nacpil, retired bishop of the United Methodist Church who now serves as director of Wesleyan College of Manila.

Dr. Milwida Guevarra, former undersecretary of Department of Finance and now director of Synergia Foundation; Andy Bautista, dean of Far Eastern University

Institute of Law; Marixi Prieto, chair of *Philippine Daily Inquirer*; and Noorain Sabdulla, an outstanding student awardee who became student council president of a Catholic school in Cabanatuan City.

"These are highly respected people. He (Puno) was very selective in the membership of the council because he wanted it to be non-partisan," said Marquez.

He also revealed that the head of the country's judiciary first chose three members of the core group, who then recommended the other five.

They had their first meeting three weeks ago.

Marquez said he also met with businessman Manuel Pangillinan, who opted not to join the core group and just expressed his intention to support them.

According to Marquez, the group already met twice with Puno and agreed to focus on the national elections next year.

"The council, in essence, decided to focus on the 2010 elections and define what a transformational leader is," the SC official said, explaining that the moral force movement will not endorse candidates but will only lay down standards in choosing the right leaders.

Transformational leaders, as defined by Puno in his earlier speech, are those who induce followers to transcend their self-interest for the sake of the organization or the greater whole and activate their higher order needs and appeals to their moral values to mobilize their energy and resources to reform institutions. Transactional leaders, in contrast, motivate their followers by appealing to their self-interest.

A transformational leader inspires, develops and empowers followers.

According to Marquez, the members of the council unanimously agreed that there is a need to elect transformational leaders as key to alleviate poverty and address problems including corruption. - With Edu Punay, Delon Porcalla, Marvin Sy