Institutionalizing the Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) in the Philippines

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By

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I. Introduction

Poverty has been a perennial problem in the Philippines. About 24.4 percent or roughly four million families or 24 million people were considered poor in 2003. This is a slight improvement from the poverty incidence of 27.5 percent of families in 2000. However, wide disparities exist among the regions: from the lowest poverty incidence in National Capital Region at 4.5 percent to the highest or poorest at 47.1 percent in CARAGA Region in Southern Philippines. Income inequality, as measured by the Gini coefficient, has slightly improved from 0.4822 in 2000 to 0.4678 in 2003. Regions IX, XII and X, all in Mindanao showed the highest income inequality.

The magnitude of poverty is substantial and in order to significantly reduce this, an honest-to-goodness national effort combating the root causes of poverty should be sustained. In September 2000, the Millennium Declaration which affirmed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was adopted by 147 United Nations--member countries including the Philippines. The MDGs have eight (8) goals and eighteen (18) targets. Goal 1 is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. Target 1 under Goal 1 is to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty between 1990 and 2015. The Philippines will most likely attain this target (baseline data for subsistence incidence for Target 1 is 24.3% (1991) and the latest figure is at 13.5% (2003). However, it should be noted that even with the target of halving extreme poverty attained by 2015, there will still be millions of people that will remain extremely poor. Therefore, it is necessary to continue implementing programs and projects that will reduce poverty and to continuously enhance the poverty monitoring system to track progress.

Anti-poverty programs and projects (including delivery of social services) for the poor and vulnerable are continuously being implemented. At present, the Philippines has focused its pro-poor interventions on reducing hunger through an accelerated hunger mitigation program as well as continuing programs for low-cost medicines, subsidized rice, scholarships for poor but deserving students,

health insurance for indigent families, among others. In the face of scarce resources, however, the need for focused targeting of these pro-poor programs and interventions become very necessary. Government has to have an informed means of answering the questions: Who are the poor?; Where are they located?; and What are their urgent needs?

These perennial questions can only be answered through a systematic poverty monitoring and diagnostic process and tool. The Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) is one such tool. This paper discusses how the CBMS is being institutionalized as the foremost local poverty monitoring tool in tracking the Philippines’ achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The Community Based Monitoring System (CBMS)¹

The CBMS is a monitoring tool developed in the early 1990s under the Micro Impacts of Macroeconomic Adjustment Policies (MIMAP) Project in the Philippines. It was developed with the goal of providing policymakers and program implementers with a good information base for tracking the impacts of macroeconomic reforms and various policy shocks.

The CBMS work in the Philippines evolved after it was observed that there was no disaggregated data for planning, program formulation, policy impact and poverty monitoring at the local level. There was also a need for support mechanisms for the implementation of the decentralization policy pursuant to the Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991. The CBMS is envisioned to serve as a tool for local governance and complement the national poverty monitoring system. The CBMS can likewise facilitate the implementation of targeted poverty reduction programs with its household and individual level data as well as the monitoring and evaluation of these poverty reduction programs.

Today, the CBMS has been adopted by national government agencies (NGAs) in the Philippines, particularly the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) and the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) as the local poverty monitoring system and a tool for localizing the MDGs. Efforts are underway with the help of NGAs, local government units (LGUs), non-government organizations (NGOs) and donor agencies to scale up the implementation of CBMS.

The CBMS and the MDGs

In September 1990, 147 nations including the Philippines, adopted the MDGs. It is hoped that by the year 2015, the MDGs’ eight (8) goals and eighteen

¹ CBMS Network Brochure
(18) targets shall be achieved. Realizing that these goals and targets can be achieved faster if national plans are linked with local plans and objectives, the advocacy and implementation of the MDGs need to be localized. However, the MDGs with their corresponding targets have accelerated the demand for data and have highlighted data limitations at the local levels. This is where the CBMS comes in as the most systematic, practical, and cost-effective solution, to data unavailability at these levels.

By continuous consultation workshops and advocacy efforts with national agencies and local governments, fourteen (14) core indicators were established and finalized for national and local monitoring purposes. With the inclusion of the indicator on maternal deaths, the CBMS core indicators were adopted as the set of core indicators for the MDG localization in the Philippines.

The core indicators are categorized under the eight (8) major dimensions of poverty such as: 1) health; 2) nutrition; 3) shelter; 4) water and sanitation; 5) basic education; 6) income; 7) employment; and 8) peace and order. This set of poverty measurements comprises the survival, security and enabling needs of our people. LGUs may add other indicators or use proxy indicators to monitor area-specific concerns.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Basic Needs</th>
<th>Core Indicators</th>
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| A. Health           | 1. Proportion of child deaths aged 0-5 years  
                        2. Proportion of women deaths due to pregnancy related causes  |
| B. Nutrition        | 3. Proportion of malnourished children aged 0-5  |
| C. Shelter          | 4. Proportion of households living in makeshift housing  
                        5. Proportion of households who are squatters  |
| D. Water and Sanitation | 6. Proportion of households with no access to safe water supply  
                         7. Proportion of households with no access to sanitary toilet facilities  |
| E. Basic Education  | 8. Proportion of children 6-12 years old not in elementary schools  
                         9. Proportion of children 13-16 years old not in secondary school  |
| F. Income           | 10. Proportion of households with income below poverty threshold  
                         11. Proportion of households with income below subsistence threshold  
                         12. Proportion of households who experienced food shortage  |
| G. Employment       | 13. Proportion of persons who are unemployed  |
| H. Peace and Order  | 14. Proportion of persons who were victims of crime  |

2 CBMS Network
Status of CBMS Implementation

As of May 31, 2007, CBMS is currently implemented in twenty (29) provinces, (15 of which is province-wide), 347 municipalities, 24 cities, covering 9,116 barangays. The CBMS Network and the Working Group on MDGs and Social Progress of the Philippine Development Forum both envision that the entire Philippines will be covered by CBMS by 2010. Given this ambitious target, an intensified advocacy campaign combined with affirmative actions are in order at the national and local levels if CBMS is to be successfully institutionalized in all the 84 provinces, 117 cities, 1,500 municipalities, and 41,975 barangays.

Continuous training in CBMS will be handled by the NAPC and the DILG. Moreover, the CBMS Development Program, in collaboration with UNDP and the Peace and Equity Foundation (PEF), among others, is expected to continue the replication of CBMS in other LGUs.

To help facilitate data sharing across national government agencies (NGAs), local government units, the private sector, donor agencies, and other stakeholders, a national repository for CBMS data will be pursued.

II. Policy Environment and Framework for CBMS Adoption and Advocacy

The present policy environment and framework remain supportive of CBMS promotion, adoption and advocacy at the highest level. The national development agenda has identified poverty monitoring and the core local poverty indicators monitoring system as vital to addressing the needs of the poor and vulnerable. Likewise, various policy issuances have been cascaded by concerned national government agencies to move forward the CBMS agenda. The following shows the major policies and strategies in the national development plan.

National Policy

A. MTPDP/ Strategy Planning Matrix

The Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP), 2004-2010, the country’s socioeconomic development blueprint for the medium-term, has spelled out a strategy under the Chapter on Responding to the Basic Needs of the Poor “promoting the nationwide adoption and implementation of the enhanced Core Local Poverty Indicators Monitoring System (CLPIMS) and consequently the Local Poverty Reduction Action Planning process by LGUs (from the barangay to the provincial level) to enable them to implement, monitor and evaluate programs, diagnose and monitor poverty, craft appropriate interventions for their
The Strategy Planning Matrix (SPM) – the companion document of the MTPDP that flesh out the priority activities, targets and responsible agencies—has identified the following activity to be coordinated by Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), NAPC, DILG and LGUs:

“Promote the nationwide adoption and implementation of the enhanced CLPIMS and consequently the Local Poverty Reduction Action Planning Process by LGUs.”

Moreover, the MTPDP-SPM has likewise set as the measurable output/target the “nationwide implementation of the CLPIMS by 2010.”

III. Government Efforts to Institutionalize CBMS

Complementing the national policy/strategy are government efforts to institutionalize the CBMS. These include agency memorandum circulars, MDG localization efforts, advocacy to donors, and other initiatives that reinforce the need and urgency for nationwide CBMS implementation.

A. Memorandum Circulars and Policy Issuances

1. National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) En Banc Resolution No. 7

The NAPC, as the highest policymaking and coordinating body on poverty reduction chaired by the President of the Republic of the Philippines, passed En Banc Resolution No. 7 in March 2003. NAPC En Banc Resolution No. 7 directs local government units (LGUs) to adopt the then 13 core local poverty indicators (CLPIs) (which later became 14 indicators with the addition of Maternal Mortality Ratio) as the minimum set of community-based information for poverty diagnosis and planning at the local levels.

The 14 CLPIs became the first module of indicators under the CBMS. The CBMS serves as the data gathering and data processing tool and system with a computer software to generate 14 CLPIs.

2. DILG Memorandum Circular 2003-92

Consistent with its relentless efforts to promote the establishment of core local poverty indicators databases, the DILG issued in April 2003 DILG
Memorandum Circular 2003-92 which sets policy guidelines for the adoption of the 13 core local poverty indicators for planning.

In support of this initiative, and with UNDP funding assistance through the Strengthening Institutional Mechanisms for the Convergence of Poverty Alleviation Efforts (SIMCPAE) Project Phase 2, the NEDA, NAPC, and DILG jointly published and disseminated a five-volume Guidebook on Local Poverty Diagnosis and Monitoring. The Guidebook continues to serve as a useful resource material and manual for national and local policy makers and program implementers in operationalizing Core Local Poverty Indicators (CLPIs) towards the formulation of local poverty diagnostics and situationers and eventually the Local Poverty Reduction Action Plan (LPRAP).

3. DILG Memorandum Circular 2004-152

In November 2004, DILG issued Memo Circular 2004-152 which encourages LGUs to intensify efforts in implementing programs, projects and activities towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Moreover, the same issuance further encourages LGUs to conduct monitoring systems such as the Minimum Basic Needs-Community-Based Information System (MBN-CBIS), CBMS, Integrated Rural Accessibility Program (IRAP), among others, to monitor and diagnose the nature and extent of poverty.

4. National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) Resolution No. 6

Issued on January 24, 2006, NSCB Resolution No. 6 recognizes and enjoins support to the CBMS as a tool to strengthen the statistical system at the local level. Likewise, the issuance resolved further that the NSCB Technical Staff initiate and coordinate an advocacy program for the adoption of the CBMS by the LGUs, through the Regional Statistical Coordination Councils (RSCCs). The RSCCs serve as the technical arm of the NSCB Executive board in the regions.

NSCB Resolution No. 6 likewise attested to the statistical and technical soundness of the CBMS as a local poverty monitoring tool.

5. NEDA Board - Social Development Committee Resolution No. 3, Series of 2006

The inter-agency Social Development Committee (SDC) of the NEDA Board, the country’s highest policy coordination body on social development concerns passed Resolution No. 3 last July 19, 2006 adopting the CBMS as the prescribed monitoring tool for the generation of the core local poverty indicator database. Through the same resolution, the SDC recommended the adoption
and use of the CBMS as the principal monitoring tool and system for the CLPI and enjoined the NAPC, DILG, other government agencies and LGUs to coordinate with the CBMS Network Team towards the fast-tracking and full implementation of the CBMS.

The SDC Resolution reaffirmed the potential of the CBMS as the systematic and cost-effective tool to be applied in the gathering, processing, and reporting of the local poverty indicators nationwide. The SDC also confirmed the usefulness of the CBMS as the objective basis for the programming and targeting of government interventions in poverty reduction, health, education, nutrition, social welfare, housing, among others.

B. Millennium Development Goals Localization

The localization of the Millennium Development Goals has also paved the way for the institutionalization of CBMS. Anchored on the framework for the localization of the MDGs which includes a local MDG monitoring system, the CBMS has emerged as the foremost choice for adoption to serve as the local MDG monitoring system. At the national level, the MDG localization framework (See Figure 1) calls for and includes four major interventions, namely:

1) development of advocacy plans and programs;
2) formulation of enabling policies;
3) development of tools and instruments for LGUs; and
4) documentation of best practices.

The formulation of enabling policies would involve the collaboration of NEDA, DILG, NAPC, Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and Congress. At the LGU level, the interventions take the form of:

1) advocacy;
2) orientation and advocacy campaigns;
3) capacity development and trainings; and
4) technical assistance for replication of best practices.

The framework seeks to attain the following desired outcomes at the LGU level:

1) local plans and budgets incorporating clear MDG-related targets and whose programs, activities and projects have corresponding budget allocation;

2) local policies towards MDG achievement;

3) local MDG monitoring system; and
4) improved delivery of services through replication of good practices.

Figure 1. MDG Localization Framework

![Diagram of MDG Localization Framework]

Based on the framework, CBMS may be the local MDG monitoring system. DILG Memorandum Circular 2004-152 has been issued to all its Regional Directors to adopt the CBMS as the local MDG monitoring and benchmarking tool.

The outstanding challenge, however, is convincing the local chief executives on the efficacy of the CBMS so that the LGUs will invest resources and effort towards institutionalizing CBMS in their locality. At present about Php 30.00 is needed per household or about Php 1 million per province to install CBMS. These costs include the whole range of training, data collection, data processing and report preparation.

C. Advocacy to Donors

1. KALAHI-CIDSS Project

The KALAHI-CIDSS or the Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan (Linking Arms Against Poverty Program) - Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services Project is a $100 million World Bank-financed project
targeted to the 42 poorest provinces or 183 poorest municipalities. The project supports the implementation of basic community infrastructure projects at the barangay (village) level using a community-driven development approach.

It has been observed, however, that the KALAHI-CIDSS did not use CBMS in the past as basis for local poverty situational analysis, sub-project prioritization and selection primarily due to lack of CBMS data at the beneficiary LGUs. As a result of the government’s advocacy efforts, during the 2006 Project Supervision Mission, it was decided that KALAHI-CIDSS, beginning 2007, will use CBMS data, whenever available, for sub-project identification and prioritization and selection process. This way, barangay sub-project proponents are enjoined to use CBMS data for an indicator-based sub-project selection process in lieu of the poll survey method among barangay officials in the choice of sub-projects for funding.

This development serves to encourage other LGUs interested in participating in the KALAHI-CIDSS Project to invest in CBMS and to use the same in their project development and project selection processes.

2. **Philippine Development Forum (PDF)**

The Philippine Development Forum (PDF) which is the annual consultation between the Government of the Philippines (GOP) and the donor community, affirmed the CBMS as the much needed poverty monitoring tool to fast-track the MDGs and social development initiatives. As presented by DSWD Secretary Esperanza Cabral, to the PDF Working Group on the MDGs and Social Progress, one of the identified key issues and directions for 2007 is that:

“The Philippines needs a common, accurate, comprehensive and consolidated system to target the poor. The following are considered:

- CBMS;
- Local Government Performance Management System (LGPMS);
- A system that provides disaggregated demographic data (e.g., gender) and MDGs to assist national and local governments in the implementation of programs to achieve the MDGs.”

During the plenary presentation of the Working Group on the MDGs and Social Progress, the following were the proposed key actions over the short-to-medium term:

- Improving targeting and reducing leakages in poverty programs;
• Developing a common harmonized targeting, monitoring and evaluation tool for basic education, health, and social protection; and

• Improving data collection and data management at the local levels.

The above recommendations of the PDF-WG point to the CBMS as the recommended poverty monitoring and targeting tool and system that should be pursued and sustained by the country.

3. World Bank Development Policy Lending (DPL) Program

Under the Government of the Philippines (GOP)--World Bank Development Policy Lending Program (DPL) agreed upon this year, CBMS has taken center stage in the thematic thrust on social inclusion: building a well-managed public sector that delivers quality services efficiently, effectively and equitably to intended beneficiaries. More specifically, under the strategy on poverty targeting of social programs and expenditures, the Development Agenda for 2007 includes the “continued advocacy of the CBMS at the local level including adoption and use of CBMS in 15 provinces (in 2007).” The Expected Result is the “increased coverage and use of the CBMS by 50% of the LGUs from 4,000 barangays in 2006”.

4. GTZ – Philippine Health Insurance Corporation

The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PHIC) or Philhealth, through a board resolution, recently approved the use of the CBMS and other LGU-based poverty monitoring tools and system as the source of data in identifying the poor. With GTZ-assistance, a validation tool is being developed and is expected to be implemented in 2008 after pilot-testing in some provinces. The initiative is aimed at improving the targeting of the Philhealth Sponsored Program for indigent beneficiaries.

III. Donor Assistance to CBMS Institutionalization

A. World Bank—Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)

With the forging of partnership with the CBMS Network Coordinating Team, the DILG has adopted the CBMS as the data collection and processing tool for the CLPIMs. CBMS as a tool for generating the Core Local Poverty Indicators (CLPIs) at the local level would complement the national poverty monitoring systems. CBMS would fill in the void of information at the local level
CBMS has been incorporated in the various projects of the DILG particularly on poverty diagnosis and benchmarking local MDG indicators. Under the project “Strengthening Local Government Capacity for Poverty Assessment, Plan Formulation and Monitoring” of the World Bank-ASEM Technical Assistance for Poverty Monitoring and Analysis, three (3) pilot provinces have been covered, namely:

- Masbate in Luzon;
- Marinduque in the Visayas; and
- Camiguin in Mindanao.

These provinces are in various stages of institutionalizing the CBMS. A total of Php 3.74 million has been released by the World Bank for the three pilot provinces above.

B. **United Nations-Habitat (UN Habitat)**

CBMS is also being advocated for use by 12 pilot cities for localizing the MDGs which effort is being supported by the United Nations-Habitat (UN Habitat). The pilot cities are the following:

- Marikina, Muntinlupa, and Pasay in the National Capital Region (NCR);
- Antipolo, Tagaytay, San Jose Del Monte, Science City of Munoz, and Sorsogon in Luzon;
- Calbayog and Mandaue in the Visayas; and
- Iligan and Samal in Mindanao.

These areas have been chosen because of their potential for success as well as their capacity to influence and trigger multiplier effects in surrounding municipalities. The total funding assistance amount to $162,000.

The DILG is now in the process of scaling up the establishment of CBMS as the instrument to generate the CLPIs for poverty diagnosis and planning and monitoring local progress on MDGs. With the conclusion of the Development Workshop on Monitoring and Evaluation System to Track LGU Responsiveness on MDGs last March 2006, the regional offices are now in full blast advocating the establishment of CBMS at the local levels.
C. **UNDP Programme on Achieving the MDGs and Reducing Human Poverty**

With funding support from the Strengthening Institutional Mechanisms for the Convergence of Poverty Alleviation Efforts, Phase III (SIMCPAE-3) Project of the UNDP, the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC), the government's oversight agency on anti-poverty programs and projects, has collaborated with the CBMS Network Coordinating Team for the integration of the CBMS instruments in the former's training modules on poverty diagnosis and planning.

As part of this agreement, the NAPC will convene technical staffs from its office and other partner government agencies to constitute the CBMS-NAPC Technical Working Group (TWG). The members of the TWG will act as lead trainers and monitors in the conduct of CBMS training workshops in the pilot areas and in other LGUs that may adopt CBMS. A series of capacity-building activities will be conducted by the CBMS Team for the members of the CBMS-NAPC TWG to equip them with the necessary information and skills to further localize CBMS and to provide LGUs with the necessary tools that would facilitate a more evidence-based needs identification, program design and impact monitoring.

For the last semester of 2007, the NAPC with funding support from UNDP will install CBMS in the following provinces: a) Zamboanga del Norte; b) Zamboanga Sibugay c) and Saranggani with a total indicative funding of PhP 4.11 million.

D. **CBMS Development Grant Program**

The CBMS Network Coordinating Team in collaboration with Peace and Equity Foundation and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Philippines has awarded a total of PhP4.0 million, to date, to finance poverty reduction programs which were identified using data gathered through CBMS. The latest beneficiaries received their grant funds during the awarding ceremonies held last 20 February 2006 at the Angelo King International Center. The 10 winning grant applications were chosen from nearly 60 proposals submitted by a wide variety of public and private organizations including LGUs, people’s organizations, non-government organizations, cooperatives, and faith-based organizations.

E. **International Development Research Centre (IDRC)--Canada**

Since 1996, IDRC/Micro Impacts of Macroeconomic Adjustment Policies (MIMAP) has supported the design and piloting of community-based monitoring and local development systems in seven Asian countries including the Philippines, and two in West Africa. In the Philippines, the IDRC supports the
CBMS Network in its whole range of activities on CBMS orientation, training, data collection and processing with the LGUs as partners. The CBMS Network through the Angelo King Institute has received a total funding of $ 846,577 as the lead research institute for the “Development of a Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) Network in Asia and Africa.”

F. Proposed ADB-assisted Poverty Mapping Mindanao Using CBMS Project

The DILG recently submitted a project proposal for possible Asian Development Bank (ADB) funding entitled “Poverty Mapping Mindanao Using the CBMS.” The project aims to formulate poverty maps for the entire Mindanao provinces while capacitating LGUs on poverty assessment, monitoring and plan formulation for the attainment of the objectives and targets of the MDGs through the adoption of CBMS. Total project cost is Php 90.6 million of which Php 49.6 million is being requested from the ADB.

The use of CBMS institutionalizes the CLPIs adopted by virtue of NAPC En Banc Resolution No. 7 and DILG Memorandum Circular 92 dated April 2003 which provided for its local adoption and use as the minimum set of community-based indicator for poverty assessment, monitoring and further serve as basis in the preparation of local level poverty reduction action plans and agenda.

Since the national and sub-national agencies have already laid down the enabling policy imminent for MDG localization, this proposed project is expected to improve their capacities to respond to MDG localization requirements particularly in diagnosis and planning.

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper concludes that CBMS institutionalization in the Philippines is taking place, albeit not without issues. One, the national policy framework on the localization of the MDGs and poverty monitoring is very supportive of CBMS expansion. The policies and issuances are not wanting in supporting CBMS. Second, there has been notable donor assistance for CBMS roll-out. Various donors have supported the implementation of programs and projects aimed at institutionalizing CBMS. Third, the CBMS system has been developed and field-tested in 29 provinces with remarkable results. The CBMS methodology has been proven and certified to be statistically sound, cost-effective, valid and reliable given the intended purpose which is to locally diagnose and monitor poverty.

On the other hand, CBMS institutionalization is beset by a few issues that include: resource; institutional; attitudinal or behavioral. One, there seems to be
inadequate resources to implement a massive and rapid CBMS institutionalization program; at a resource requirement of Php 1 million per province neither the national government nor the provincial government is capable at present to finance the effort. Second, institutionally, there remains the issue as to what agency will eventually host or coordinate the establishment of the national repository for the CBMS database. Finally, the preparedness or political will on the part of majority of the LGUs to institutionalize CBMS is still at a nascent stage.

Against this backdrop, the paper advances the following recommendations to address the abovementioned issues:

**Resource mobilization**

- Prioritize the institutionalization of CBMS in investment programming;
- Encourage donors to require CBMS as an LGU eligibility criterion to access grant and loan-assisted ODA programs; and
- Tap local businessmen and private sector to help support the implementation and sustainability of the CBMS in their respective areas.

**Partnerships**

- Establish more partnerships through inter-agency efforts and multi-sectoral collaboration for the expansion of CBMS;
- Approach the CBMS institutionalization through an inter-agency effort but coordinated by an institution with a proven track record for national statistical/data management and technical expertise; and
- Designate the National Statistics Office (NSO) as the CBMS repository at the national level in coordination with the NAPC and DILG.

**Advocacy on the Usefulness of CBMS**

- Intensify advocacy efforts for CBMS at all levels focusing on the usefulness of CBMS and advantages of investing in CBMS, uses of CBMS-generated data for better informed planning, resource allocation, and tracking of the MDGs.
- Ensure widest dissemination possible of international best practices of countries and LGUs with CBMS success stories.
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