

## ADDRESS THE FINANCIAL CRISIS: NO TO CHACHA

*5 December 2008*

A serious review of the Constitution is important, so important that it deserves our full and careful attention. This is not the time to do so when the financial crisis that is engulfing the world has reached a depth and breadth unprecedented in our lifetime and we are all grappling with what to do to keep our families, our companies, and our country afloat. It is also not the time to test the constitutionality of doing so via a Constituent Assembly.

Any changes should not be rushed but should be studied with great care, discussed with due deliberation, and then submitted to the people for their ratification. Charter Change at this time is an explosive and divisive issue that can spark discontent and nationwide outrage and can only worsen the possible effects of the global crisis on our people if it is pushed through a Constituent Assembly.

The Constitution is the most important document of our nation. It is the foundation of our government and the anchor of our people. If changes in the Constitution are needed, and we believe some are needed in the economic provisions, then they should be done by an elected Constitutional Convention after the elections in 2010. The elections will bring about the necessary sense of political stability. The crisis may have passed by then, or at least been mitigated. Then we as a people can give careful attention to the critical task of examining each provision in our Constitution, study each suggested change, do adequate research, debate and deliberate with all due diligence to craft a Constitution that can be the foundation of a brighter future for all Filipinos .

Congress must focus instead on passing bills to strengthen and grow the economy. The Executive Branch must focus on ways of sheltering our country and our people from the worst effects of the global crisis. It would be a foolish complacency to believe that the Philippines is sheltered from this crisis, it is not.

The urgency with which the Administration-controlled Congress is rushing Charter Change, even to the extent of bypassing the Senate, can only be interpreted as a move to amend the Constitution in order to allow Mrs. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to remain in power as president or as prime minister under a parliamentary form of government.

We appeal to our national and local government officials, senators and congressmen, to set aside their personal and partisan ambitions to focus on the job at hand - to pass bills and implement executive actions that will create jobs, strengthen our economy, protect our workers, support our families, and address the financial crisis.

ANG MAMAMAYAN MUNA!



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