

# GMA: Don't lose hope in gov't, democracy

President Arroyo rallied Filipinos yesterday to remain steadfast in supporting Philippine democracy and her administration amid socio-economic problems which she said are being seriously addressed by government officials.

In an extemporaneous address during the launching of RiteMed Philippines by the Watson's drugstore chain held yesterday at SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City, Mrs. Arroyo said Filipinos have been "sharply divided, almost in the mid-

dle."

She noted that the situation is further clouded by media's misperceptions and misreporting about government affairs.

Mrs. Arroyo specifically mentioned the results of the latest Social Weather Stations (SWS) survey that showed about 19 percent of Filipinos are becoming hopeless, intend to migrate overseas and disillusioned with the country's free-wheeling democracy.

Mrs. Arroyo told her audience that perhaps one out

of five among them wants to go abroad because of their disenchantment with the country.

The President said she wants to remind Filipinos "not to lose hope because what your government says, it does."

Mrs. Arroyo enumerated commitments and targets that she had made in her maiden State of the Nation Address in Congress last year which she is trying to accomplish before the one-year deadline, or until she delivers her next SONA on

July 22.

One of the "key result areas" of these promises was to reduce by half the prices of basic medicines used by low-income people, which is jointly implemented by the Department of Health and the Department of Trade and Industry.

Also yesterday, the President thanked companies like United Laboratories Inc., Watson's drugstore chain and the SM chain of malls for helping in her campaign to lower the cost of medicines and make

them accessible to the poor.

The President admitted that the peace and order situation and high power rates were the problems which her administration has failed to meet, and promised to pay more attention to them.

In the case of peace and order, she said Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr., new chief of the Philippine National Police, is tackling the most pressing problem of kidnap-for-ransom.

Mrs. Arroyo said the

Turn to Page 2

# GMA

From Page 1

combined effort of the police and military to address kidnapping will hopefully solve it, especially now that the military is on its way to eradicating the Abu Sayyaf rebels.

On the high cost of electricity, she said her earlier order to the National Power Corp. to cut by 40 centavos its power purchase adjustments is positively being felt by consumers.

The President said she was satisfied in the progress of her Cabinet members in ensuring that her SONA targets are met.

— Marichu Villanueva