

By PAOLO ROMERO

President Arroyo has instructed the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) to strengthen its programs as the Philippines' population is expected to hit more than 90 million this year.

NAPC chief Secretary Domingo Pangniban, in a statement, said the government's ongoing anti-poverty programs were meant to extend the benefits of growing economy to the people, particularly the poorest Filipinos.

He said the Arroyo administration's programs are on the right track and their benefits have trickled down to the poor as reflected by the recent results of the Social Weather Stations (SWS) survey showing that the self-rated poverty incidence in the fourth quarter of 2007 went down to 46 percent from 52 percent in three months.

"The survey results were a significant improvement, but we should double our efforts for the poor to feel the effect of the booming economy," Pangniban said.

He said, "we should accelerate our efforts in food production with the help of local government units to cope with the rising population."

Based on National Statistics Office medium projection for 2008, population is expected to rise to 90,457,000.