

GMA offers emergency job creation programs

President Arroyo ordered yesterday the Cabinet to implement emergency work programs for the poor and livelihood projects for the middle class to help them cope with the global financial crisis.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said Mrs. Arroyo issued the directive shortly before flying to China to attend the Asia-Europe Summit and hold bilateral meetings with heads of state.

"In response to the global credit crunch, President Arroyo has ordered the Cabinet to implement pro-poor programs in the regions," he said.

"These programs, designed to generate jobs and provide livelihood opportunities, are envisioned to help the poor cope with, and coast through, the adverse repercussions of the said credit crunch."

Ermita said Cabinet members would draw up well-conceptualized emergency work programs and livelihood programs for the poor, the middle class and the lower middle class.

"In terms of intent and content, these programs will bear a striking resemblance to the socio-economic interventions championed by US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the early '30s and by Philippine President Diosdado Macapagal, President Arroyo's late father, in the early '60s," he said.

Ermita said the Cabinet secretaries would be working closely with local executives and non-government organizations.

The programs will be implemented regionally, "with each region falling under the stewardship of a member of the Cabinet to ensure effective monitoring and service delivery," he added.

Ermita said Mrs. Arroyo gave the Cabinet until next week to submit specific details of the program when she arrives from China in five days.

"These programs will be on top of her agenda in the Cabinet meeting that she will be convening upon her return with a view of ensuring their speedy review and

immediate implementation," he said.

His office and Presidential Management Staff chief Secretary Cerge Re-

monde will farm out the regional assignments for Cabinet officials, Ermita said.

- Paolo Romero