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PREFACE

Sometime in 1998, Gov. Justo O. Orros, Jr. thought of linking together, in the context of an inter-LGU development cooperation, the coordinated planning of the City of San Fernando with the adjoining towns of Bauang, San Juan and also including the upland town of San Gabriel – the supplier of water for these areas. By then, the City of San Fernando was experiencing its share of traffic congestion arising from the steady flow of people and goods from around the area to the city. Two critical utilities, namely, water administered by the Ca Union Water District and electricity, administered by the CUECO as franchise holder, already service the city and adjoining LGUs.

Realizing that expanding these services to other concerns and addressing the traffic problem beyond the confines of the city may bring about more beneficial impacts to a much wider area, Gov. Orros requested the NEDA Region I Office to draft a framework for a meaningful cluster planning involving initially these areas.

In a consultation meeting where this idea of joint planning was discussed with representatives of the LGUs concerned, the group recommended (and this was later on accepted) to include the town of Bacnotan, the designated site of the Regional Agro-Industrial Center. Likewise, the town of Bagulin which adjoins the City of San Fernando to the east was included mainly for equity reasons. But since Bagulin connects with the rest of the areas through the municipality of Naguilian, this too was included. Hence, the final aggrupation includes four lowland and three upland municipalities.

Almost simultaneously, the City of San Fernando was chosen by the World Bank as one of the pilot cities for the preparation of a City Development Strategy (CDS), where one significant element is the City's linkage with adjoining LGUs to put in its proper context the city strategy within a wider area of interrelationship. The NEDA Region I office also came into the picture providing technical assistance to the city.

Meantime, the LGU aggrupation underwent the formal steps of joint planning involving stakeholders from the seven LGUs, the PGCU and selected line agencies. At one point, the city and municipal officials decided that the joint planning exercise would now take a formal structure, hence the local legislative council of each of the 6 towns and 1 city authorized their respective local chief executive to enter into a Covenant of Agreement formally setting up the Central La Union Metro Planning Area or CECUMÉPA, creating its Secretariat and a TWG, and defining the roles of the LGUs – the municipalities, city and the province.

Through a series of technical consultations, the TWG came out with a CECUMÉPA indicative plan as well as prioritized programs/projects where joint planning and coordination can be undertaken. It was at this point that the DPWH's IUNPRO came into the picture (later renamed as CIDP), whose main interest is to follow through the CDS initiative but involving a larger area, and putting urban and metro infrastructures in the context of a broader framework of social, economic and physical development. Moreover, DPWH's entry with its IUNPRO/CIDP is intended to address on a pro-active basis the urban challenge on infrastructure support the financing and implementation of which is still beyond the capability and wherewithal of LGUs. Zeroing in on this vital support and focusing on urban/metro areas as growth centers in the regional and even national landscape strongly suggests the critical role of the DPWH and other line agencies of the national government in local development planning.

This Integrated Physical Development Framework Plan – one of the four components of the IUNPRO/CIDP – is intended to allow urban and emerging metropolis to take advantage of forward planning as well as the economies and advantages derived in joint planning activities. As a pilot attempt by the DPWH, it is expected that the planning exercise can provide “leads” and “leverages” for similar undertakings in the country.