

## Campaign Time Again

Politicians are everywhere once more. They're on television, radio, billboards, the Internet and on the streets going around the country promoting their team and themselves. Their staff are busy printing out and distributing leaflets, calendars and posters to be pasted on designated spots. The scenario is what else but politicians including non-politicians vying for a government post campaigning for the upcoming May 2007 elections in the Philippines. With less than three months to go before the May 14 general elections, the country is abuzz. Political candidates wanting to retain or have a seat in the Senate, House of Representatives and the local government units are all over town airing out their planned agenda should they win. The candidates range from the seniors to the younger ones, from the celebrities to the ordinary people. They are classified into three categories: the genuine opposition, the team unity (pro-administration) and the independents. The Philippines, perhaps, is one country that has many celebrities serving in the government. Although this has been frowned upon over the years, the actors and actresses eyeing to get into politics remain undaunted. Campaign and election time is just like celebrating a festival. Candidates come up with their respective events like concerts and gatherings that involve celebrities to attract a greater number of spectators. It is also at this time when these people from showbiz from the actors, singers and dancers reap more income as they join political sorties in the cities and rural areas either with the opposition group or pro-administration or even both. Some of them also get to star in the radio and TV commercials of candidates. All is not smooth-sailing for these political bets as they are also barraged with protests from various sectors. For instance, supporters of electoral reform have started a campaign to monitor the role of money in the coming polls. The Money and Politics Working Group is bent on tracking the expenses of candidates for all their activities around the country. The group says transparency in campaign finance is a big step in promoting trust in the electoral system. Elections in the Philippines is said to be among the most expensive with expenditures on each vote 14 times greater than those spent in the United States, according to an IFES study. All political bets are required by law to file a full, true and itemized statement of campaign contributions and expenditures with the Commission on Elections (Comelec) within a month after the elections. Sponsors also need to provide Comelec with a detailed account of their contributions. Meanwhile, an environmental group Ecowaste Coalition is calling for the use of recycled paper for campaign materials to save trees and protect the watersheds, forests and ecosystems. The group revealed that one ton of recycled paper can already save 17 trees, 380 gallons of oil and seven thousand gallons of water. To achieve this, the coalition calls on candidates not to use buntings, balloons, confetti, tarpaulin, Styrofoam and other plastics as they are harmful to the environment. The group likewise pushes for a waste free elections to prevent the piling up of campaign trash all over the country. Amid all this, the ordinary citizens hope for one thing -- that those running for the elections will make true their promises for the good of the majority and not for personal gain if they become victorious this May.

## About the Author

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