



Aquino: Integrity sparks growth, competitiveness

BY **RAPPLER.COM**

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TANGIBLE RESULTS. President Aquino says integrity-based governance produced higher growth and increased competitiveness for the Philippines. Photo by Malacañang Photo Bureau

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MANILA, Philippines – What kind of leadership produces long-term results?

For President Benigno Aquino III, it can be compared to how a leader deals with a can.

“I am faced with a choice. I can just kick a can down the road and let the next set of leaders deal with this problem. After all, the politically prudent thing to do will be to not rattle the cage, to not make any noise [but] I prefer to pick up the can rather than kick it down the road,” Aquino said.

Aquino hailed his administration’s campaign for good governance at the [2nd Integrity Summit](#) held at the Hotel Intercontinental in Makati on Tuesday, September 18. Aquino delivered the keynote address for the second year in a row.

The President addressed a crowd of business leaders, government officials, and other members of the Integrity Initiative, a private-sector led campaign promoting ethical practices and good corporate governance.

“[Your] plans can be derailed when rules change and when decisions are based on whims, sometimes to serve the interest of but a few. This is what we have tried to change since we took over office. This is the rationale behind our agenda of integrity-based governance,” Aquino said.

Aquino said reestablishing a culture of integrity in government resulted in “real, tangible” economic results:

- “We have garnered so far [8 positive credit ratings actions](#) and two of the 3 major credit ratings agencies ranked us one notch away from investment grade.”
- “Out of 144 economies, we are now [ranked 65th in the World Economic Forum’s Global Competitiveness Report](#). This is the first time we broke into the upper half of ranking since being included in the report in 1994.”
- “The [GDP growth for the 2nd quarter of this year pegged at 5.9%](#) is well above the average market forecast of 5.3% and brings us near the upper boundaries of our own projection of 5 to 6% for the entire year.”

“And in case NEDA made a mistake of pegging it at 6, I will not be displeased if they made an error in that direction,” Aquino said, drawing laughs from the audience.

How to sustain growth?

Aquino stressed the importance of sustaining growth.

“We have been channeling the budget into investments in our people, in education, health, poverty alleviation and infrastructure because we recognize that sustaining our economic momentum requires a citizenry that can compete in the global arena.”

The President said the following reflect this goal:

- Social services – P698.8 billion out of the P2 trillion budget for 2013 is allocated for social services. This is 13.9% higher than this year’s P613.4 billion.
- Infrastructure – The release of 73.66% of the infrastructure program for 2012 as early as June. This is P151.6 billion out of the P205.8 billion allotted for the year.

“I hope whoever stands in this podium in the future will be a person of foresight – someone who will definitely not kick the can down the road, someone who will solve problems, someone who will fortify the culture of integrity that we are building now.”

The Integrity Summit is an annual event organized by the Integrity Initiative. It gathers public and private sector groups signing the Integrity Pledge, a commitment to a culture of integrity and to fight corruption.

The Integrity Initiative is implemented by the Makati Business Club, and the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, in partnership with the Management Association of the Philippines, American Chamber of Commerce, and the Asian Institute of Management – Hills Governance Center.

Rappler is a partner in the Integrity Summit and a signatory to the Integrity Pledge. – **Rappler.com**

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