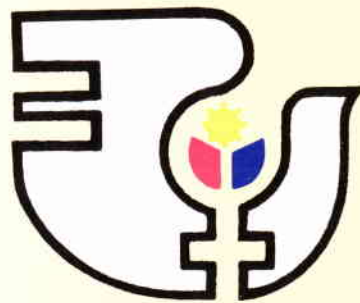


MIDTERM
REPORT
1992•1995



Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE ROLE OF FILIPINO WOMEN

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The National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women is a government agency under the Office of the President. As the national machinery for the advancement of women, it advises the President and the Cabinet on matters regarding issues and concerns affecting Filipino women and in formulating policies and implementing programs for their full integration and mobilization in national development. It undertakes a regular review and evaluation of the extent to which women are integrated in all sectors of social, economic, political and cultural life at all levels on a basis of equality with men. The Commission also takes measures to ensure the enjoyment by women and men of full equality before the law.

The Commission's policies are set by its Board of Commissioners, the members of which come from women's groups and nongovernment organizations. Its Executive Director administers the Commission's day-to-day operations.

The Commission was created by Presidential Decree 633 in 6 January 1975, in time for the International Year of Women and the Decade of Women, 1975-85.



MESSAGE



*A*t the midpoint of the term of President Fidel V. Ramos and in preparation for the 1995 United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing, the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) finds it fitting to pause and look at what we have done these past three years: to look within to assess our resources, capabilities and potentials; and to look into the future and plan for better and greater things for our constituents: the Filipino women.

These past three years were used by us to accelerate and institutionalize the process started during the term of President Ramos' predecessor, President Corazon C. Aquino: the mainstreaming of gender concerns in the planning, monitoring and implementation of program of the government.



Among other things, this meant the inclusion of the Provision on Gender-Responsive Projects (Section 27) in the 1995 General Appropriations Act. To highlight this provision, NCRFW and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) have come out with what we now call, "1995-1996 Women's Budget Statement," describing women-specific program, projects, and activities of all government line agencies with their respective amounts and status.

Learning from lessons gathered eight years ago in the making of the landmark document, Philippine Development Plan for Women, the Commission has embarked on a longer-term but more focused blueprint for gender and development (GAD), the Philippine Perspective Plan for Gender-Responsive Development, 1995-2025. This document has been designed to prevail, hopefully, over political and economic changes in the next thirty years.

Armed with the mandate of the Women in Development and Nation Building Act (Republic Act 7192) enacted in 1992, NCRFW together with the National Economic and Development Authority has instituted a GAD Mainstreaming and Institutionalization Monitoring System, a framework of procedures and guidelines for monitoring and assessing agency success in integrating GAD in their work plan and activities. With the use of this mechanism, we look forward to the annual presentation of the agencies' implementation of the law before the President and his entire cabinet.

We have all felt the critical part played by gender sensitivity training in government agencies. NCRFW, therefore, recommended to President Ramos that



government training institutes be enjoined to incorporate GAD in their training program. This Presidential directive has a multiplier and accelerating effect for gender sensitivity training throughout the bureaucracy and at the same time taps existing budgets and modules.

Given all the things that NCRFW has done for the past decade, knowing the expectations raised by us throughout government, and feeling the growing demands for our service from all sides, more and more we realize the need to work for organizational strengthening — structurally, financially and staff-wise. This we have done initially through a Presidential Executive Order but eventually by legislation.

As we move to year 2000, we set our sights both internally and externally. Networking with non-governmental organizations, both national and international, remain the best source of synergy and complementation between the public and private sectors. Media can either be friend or foe in relation to our desire to bring to public consciousness women's concerns and issues. But effort must be made to reach out to them or we shall lose by default the battle for the hearts and minds especially of the future generation. Legislation, too, has much to offer in terms of a national forum and mechanism to advance the status of Filipino women. Again, greater effort must be exerted to influence our lawmakers for more gender-sensitive laws.

The National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women has been in the cutting edge of the women's movement. A lot of our initiatives have been



acknowledged as innovative, ground-breaking and precedence-setting. More and more, we are asked to share our experience and expertise with the rest of the world.

For all these, we owe to unwavering Presidential support, the professionalism and skills of our staff, the dedication and commitment of our Board, the growing gender-sensitivity of the bureaucracy, the invaluable assistance of our international partners like CIDA, UNIFEM, UNDP, ESCAP, and the critical collaboration of our friends in the nongovernmental organizations.

We, therefore, face the future with high hopes as we work for a fairer and more humane world.



IMELDA M. NICOLAS
Chairperson



MESSAGE



*I*f the vision of Philippines 2000 foresees a nation and people empowered to face the challenges of the new century, then the Filipina must take an active role in it. She should not stay behind the scenes. Rather, she must stand beside the man as a partner in development, as an empowered citizen ready to contribute her share to build a country.

Women Empowerment is not about women taking over but women and men together fulfilling their full potentials, neither superior nor inferior, but as partners—gender equality at work. We at the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women has made this our mission: to make government work for gender equality. This means a Commission that will be the national machinery for the advancement of Filipino women. And a government able to adopt policies, programs and projects that would have critical and invaluable impact on their lives.

The Commission embarked on its journey of working for a gender-responsive development, and discovering the perspective of women and men regarding issues and concerns about development. It is able to build its own skills on development planning, implementation and monitoring, and to share this expertise with other government agencies. It forms alliances with these government offices as well as with women's groups,



nongovernment organizations, the academe and the rest of the private sector. Together with them, the Commission explores this new field of gender and development, and sets out new directions and goals for a more equal society where the contributions and participation of both women and men are equally recognized and valued.

As the country faces the many challenges of Philippines 2000, we at the Commission have taken it upon ourselves to ensure that the link between women and development is not overlooked in this national effort. The problems of poverty and underdevelopment are not separate from the problems of women's low status and participation in society. Improving the lives of every Filipino means addressing the burdens that women shoulder as they struggle to secure a decent life for themselves and their families. This is what our journey is all about.

This midterm report chronicles our journey. It is our response to challenges that have confronted us, and our claim to the gains that we have achieved so far. It also affirms our commitment to the women's cause, despite the many failures and obstacles that frustrate us as we fulfill our mandate and work toward our goal. In these pages, we share with you how the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women has been working to place women in the mainstream of development, and to make gender equality a priority program of government.



TERESITA SAMSON-CASTILLO
Executive Director



THE MISSION

The decade of the '90s is a defining moment for the Philippines. The country is preparing itself to confront the new century with its vision for development. A vision of a newly industrializing country by the end of the century, of sustained social and economic growth, and an improved quality of life for every Filipino. This vision is Philippines 2000.

The goal of Philippines 2000 is human development. This means majority of Filipinos who are well nourished and free from avoidable diseases, adequately sheltered and clothed, educated, enjoying peace and order, with sufficient resources to provide for the needs of the next generation, politically empowered to deal with their social circumstances, and with enough choices in life to realize their full potentials as human beings. A Social Reform Agenda has been formulated to uplift the conditions of sectors who are in the margins of society, including disadvantaged women.



The vision thus places each and every Filipino at the center of all development plans and endeavors. For development to succeed, however, half of the country's population, the Filipino women, must articulate their concerns and aspirations. This is the role of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW). It ensures that women's active participation in and contribution to development are acknowledged and integrated in all efforts to attain growth and progress. Filipino women must be recognized as equal partners of men in nation building.

Philippines 2000 foresees a country of empowered, productive Filipinos able to compete in the world arena. The local economy would then have to be restructured to attain this aspiration, causing serious impact on women's lives. NCRFW's concern is to draw up an adequate and dynamic response to this challenge so that as the country moves forward toward sustained development, the status of its women would be simultaneously advanced as well.



GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE NATIONAL AGENDA



For the medium-term, 1992 to 1998, NCRFW's mission is to make government work for gender equality. To realize this, it has adopted the gender and development (GAD) framework to underpin its strategies and efforts so Filipino women can claim their place in the development process.

GAD examines the social, cultural, political and economic realities in society and how they assign different roles, responsibilities and expectations to women and men. Because of these disparities, women and men have different needs and interests. Thus, programs and projects for development affect them differently as well. These differences have to be considered when sectors draft their plans, allocate resources for them, implement their programs and projects, and monitor and evaluate their impact. The outcome of this gender-responsive planning is for women and men to contribute equally to development, and benefit equally from it.



NCRFW focuses on five areas to ensure that gender concerns are included in the national agenda: integration of gender in the development process; institutional strengthening of GAD focal points; policy and research studies; data-base for women; and media and legislative advocacy.

By concentrating on these areas, NCRFW makes use of a strategic opportunity to demonstrate the importance of addressing gender dimensions in development.

❁ *Putting women in development: Integration of gender in the development process*



NCRFW helps government offices strengthen their capability to incorporate gender concerns in their work plans and activities. As a result of its continuing advocacy, especially with the National Economic and Development Authority, government's central planning agency, policy statements on GAD have been included in the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) for 1992-98, the country's socioeconomic blueprint to attain Philippines 2000. All government offices also have their focal points on women in development/gender and development (WID/GAD) who push for gender concerns within their respective offices.





In 1989 NCRFW adopted the Philippine Development Plan for Women (PDPW) for 1989-92. The Plan, a companion document of the MTPDP, integrated gender considerations into government's development thrusts. With the change in administration in 1992, NCRFW began preparing for a Perspective Plan for Gender-Responsive Development (PPGD), a 30-year plan that identifies gender concerns that government must address in the long-term. Its chapters focus on the following sectors: human development; economic and industrial development; infrastructure and technology; and special concerns dealing on migration, prostitution, violence against women, the family, indigenous people, peace, and politics and governance. With the PPGD, and the PDPW before it, gender issues have been recognized and accepted as a legitimate concern in development planning.



To translate the vision of total human development, government together with society's various sectors drew up a Social Reform Agenda. As the agenda are formulated into concrete strategies, NCRFW helped draw up a program that would grant comprehensive social services to disadvantaged women. The program provides mechanisms to protect, organize, counsel and train these women for self-reliance and self-improvement, together with services that would help them meet their basic needs. These strategies would be implemented by concerned departments for disadvantaged women in their sectors.

In 1992 then President Corazon Aquino signed into law Republic Act 7192 or the Women in Development and Nation Building Law. The law mandates government agencies to ensure that women participate directly in their programs and projects and benefit equally from them. They must also allocate portions of official development assistance they receive from foreign donors for programs and projects that would benefit women.



NCRFW has been tasked to monitor how government offices have been implementing this law through a GAD Mainstreaming and Institutionalization Monitoring System. This is a framework of procedures and guidelines for monitoring and assessing agency efforts in integrating GAD in their work plan and activities. At the same time, it identifies problem areas where NCRFW interventions are needed to improve the capabilities of agencies in mainstreaming GAD in their programs and projects.



A major NCRFW intervention is the conduct of gender sensitivity seminars and training on gender responsive planning for policy makers and technical staff in government. Through these sessions, tools are developed for gender analysis, and sectoral gender specialists emerged, technical staff in government trained to include gender concerns in planning, implementing and monitoring policies and programs of their departments. These sessions have also resulted in a critical mass of GAD advocates who are able to adopt gender-responsive programs and projects and trainers who can design GAD training modules that are specific to the needs of their offices. In the Philippine National Police, for example, policewomen went through a gender sensitivity training to prepare them to manage the Women's Desk. This desk is being set up in all precincts in cities and urbanized municipalities nationwide to handle cases involving women, especially violence against women.



The President has directed government training institutions, including state colleges and universities, to incorporate GAD in their training programs. These training institutions are the Agricultural Training Institute, Foreign Service Institute, Local Government Academy, Office of the Human Resource Development, Development Academy of the Philippines, Philippine Public Safety College, National Labor Institute, Philippine Military Academy, Philippine National Police Academy, and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority. A special training module on GAD issues has also been designed specifically to sensitize male government supervisors, who still dominate the higher positions in the bureaucracy.



Resources have been earmarked for gender concerns. The 1995 national budget directs government offices to set aside an amount out of their appropriation for projects addressing gender issues. For the 1996 budget call, GAD is among the priority programs of government that agencies have to include in their work plans and programs. A Women's Budget Statement is being prepared to indicate how resources are being allocated for women specific programs, projects and activities.





One of the most pressing issues confronting Philippine society, which is also a critical concern for NCRFW, is the feminization of migration. A great number of migrant women are overseas contract workers who are employed mostly as domestic helpers and entertainers, or mail-order brides married to foreigners. They are especially vulnerable to abuses and exploitation.

The government does not pursue labor export as a long-term policy, but it continues to be a reality for millions of Filipinos. The Philippine government is constantly urging receiving countries to recognize the rights of Filipino migrants. A Presidential Fact Finding and Policy Advisory Commission on the Protection of Overseas Filipinos was formed to recommend measures to protect them, especially migrant workers. NCRFW has been appointed to this seven-member commission and has proposed the following recommendations, among others: the phasing out of women migrant workers in occupations that expose them to exploitation and abuse, and selective overseas employment to countries whose requirement for female workers are in nonvulnerable occupations; and intensified information campaign and consciousness-raising activities on interracial marriages and provision of support services to Filipino brides of foreign nationals.



It has also contributed inputs for the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995, focusing on initiatives that would safeguard the rights of women migrant workers.

While government is incorporating gender concerns in its processes and activities, it addresses at the same time the peculiar situation of women workers in the bureaucracy. Women in Government Service (WINGS) was organized and a Career Advancement Program for Women in Government Service (CAPWINGS) was drafted. The President approved a resolution submitted by WINGS to adopt an affirmative action program for women workers in government through measures that would provide time, support and opportunities for career advancement.

CAPWINGS aims to enhance the capability of women civil servants to break the glass ceiling and advance to decision making positions. Training on assertiveness, psychology of excellence, mentoring, and gender sensitivity directed at the family will be a component of the program. Policies and practices discriminatory to women would be revised, particularly in terms of hiring, training, promotion and retirement. The adoption of flexible work arrangements such as flexi-time, flexi-place and four-day work week, would be explored, especially for working mothers. Services like women-friendly facilities and child care centers and organizing women in government for mutual support would be provided.



❁ *Ensuring a responsive bureaucracy for women in development: Institutional strengthening of GAD focal points*



Development planning occurs within an institutional context. This is the basis for setting up GAD focal points in government agencies. Focal points are highly motivated and GAD-skilled officials and staff whose main task is to catalyze, facilitate, coordinate, monitor and provide technical assistance to various units of agencies to mainstream gender concerns into their areas of work.

The GAD focal points work for an environment that is conducive to gender sensitive ideals within their respective agencies. They conduct gender awareness projects, advocate for allocation of resources to gender activities, and influence the data systems and training programs of agencies regarding gender issues. A strategic plan is formulated to help them carry out their functions effectively. This plan should include the following:

- a. a review of the agency's mandate, its objectives, key result areas, and implementing policies, programs and projects;





- b. a capability building program for key staff tasked to execute and implement the mandated responsibilities of the agency;
- c. a gender sensitivity training for top officials of the agency;
- d. a regular reporting meeting and dialogue with the highest official;
- e. a monitoring scheme to keep track of the developments on GAD within the agency; and
- f. a capability building program of its own as focal point and internal GAD catalyst.

NCRFW provides technical assistance and support to the focal points as they implement their various activities. Together with the United Nations Fund for Women, it published the sourcebook *Gender and Development: Making the Bureaucracy Gender-Responsive* for advocates, planners and implementors in government.





Toward the end of 1993, NCRFW, with the support of the German and Canadian governments, launched an 18-month project that pilot tested processes and mechanisms to promote gender responsive development at the subnational levels. The project involved technical assistance to the three regional offices of the NEDA and all the regional offices of the Department of Agriculture.

This project has gone a long way. One of its outputs is the development of a sourcebook on GAD mainstreaming at the subnational level, slated to be launched by the end of the third quarter of 1995. With the sourcebook and the documented experiences of the offices that initially tested gender mainstreaming at the regional level, other departments now have guidelines on how to go about their own mainstreaming efforts. The project is about to be replicated in four other regions.

To date, there are already 29 government agencies and three regions out of the 16 that have organized their focal points.



Focal point in action: GAD mainstreaming in the Department of Agriculture

The Department of Agriculture is one government agency that has gone a long way in considering gender as a dimension to development planning and efforts. This has been attained through the following strategies:

❑ **Training and advocacy** A series of GAD training and advocacy activities were conducted for various DA staff, particularly its planning officers, in the national and regional offices. These activities resulted in the preparation of action plans at the professional and institutional levels by the participants. At the professional level, the action plans concentrated on further enhancement of knowledge, attitudes and skills on GAD. The institutional level focused on designing and conducting echo seminars in the regions. The participants also pledged their commitment to be effective GAD trainers for the agriculture sector.

The echo seminars in the regions were done during the latter half of 1994. Among the participants in these echo seminars were planning officers, information officers, training officers, provincial agriculturists, municipal agriculture officers, municipal planning and development officers, and agricultural technologists from local government units and representatives from Rural Improvement Clubs. The training had sessions on gender awareness, gender sensitivity, and gender responsive planning.

❑ **Gender responsive planning and implementation** A Technical Working Group for Gender Responsive Planning was organized within DA. It tested the guidelines proposed by NCRFW and NEDA on gender mainstreaming and reviewed how the gender dimension figured in its Grains Production Enhancement Program

and the Medium-Term Livestock Development Program, two of the four major programs of the department for the medium-term.

Several workshops were held to come up with a revised guideline on GAD mainstreaming that would be particular to DA's experience and needs. A Special Order would be issued within the year that directs all units of the department to adopt the guidelines as one of their planning tools.

❑ **Gender-based information and statistical system** Another Technical Working Group formulated a plan that would develop a gender-based information and statistical system within DA. The members of the group were selected because of their efforts in integrating gender concerns in collecting, recording and maintaining gender-related data and information. One of its initial activities was to conduct an in-house assessment to review and assess existing data and information systems as well as identify data gaps and how these gaps were being addressed.

❑ **Coordination and networking** DA organized GAD focal points within its bureaus, attached agencies and regional offices. The focal points ensure that DA would be responsive to the provisions of the Women in Development and Nation Building Act, and its institutional capabilities for effective gender mainstreaming would be strengthened. The focal points also coordinate with each other regarding the implementation of their respective initiatives and activities on GAD mainstreaming and plan common strategies for it within the department. A significant commitment to GAD is the integration of gender concerns in the DA's plans and programs, making GAD one of the key result areas of the Secretary of Agriculture's 1995 Performance Contract to the President. In concrete actions, this means conducting gender awareness sessions for DA's top officials and the adoption of the "Guidelines for Integrating Gender Concerns in the DA Planning System."

☉ *Analyzing and exploring options for women in development: Policy and research studies*

Any measure aimed to uplift women's status has to be carefully thought of and studied if it is to serve its purpose effectively. NCRFW conducts researches and studies that would be translated to concrete policies and legislations on gender issues. At the same time, they also form the knowledge base that enriches NCRFW's learnings and expertise in responding to the needs and expectations of its clients.



Project Haven: From study groups to concrete interventions for women

Shared vision, partnership and collaborative initiatives. These are what the project groups formed in 1992 by NCRFW, with funding support from the German government, is all about. They each tackled timely issues confronting Filipino women: prostitution, violence against women, media, arts and culture, family, ecology, and peace.

The groups were composed of individual experts and service delivery practitioners who met regularly for 10 months. During this time, they shared ideas, conducted in-depth discussions, collectively arrived at recommendations and conclusions, and addressed shared women concerns. With administrative and funding support and the freedom to decide on how to address the issues, they were able to come up with creative and well-thought out outputs and identified initiatives for priority action.

One of the more concrete outputs that resulted from these study groups is the setting up of Project Haven, a hospital-based crisis center for women victims of violence. It is managed by the Women's Crisis Center, an NGO that helps battered women by providing them with medical services, counseling and temporary shelter.

Women victims of violence usually go to hospitals for immediate treatment. However, they do not present themselves as such. Maybe out of fear or out of shame, most victims do not present the true circumstances of their injuries when they seek medical help, thus effectively veiling the problem and denying its existence.

Project Haven seeks to present violence against women for what it is- a violation of women's human rights and a health problem that threatens their well-being. By being based in a hospital setting, victims are provided with

adequate medical, psychological and health services in an environment that is gender-friendly and woman-sensitive. The project trains medical personnel on how to handle women victims. It also allows the victims to be priority patients in the emergency room.

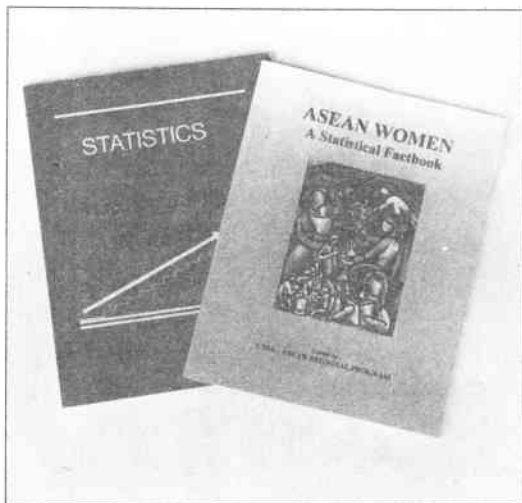
A significant feature of the project is that it is a holistic and integrated collaboration between government and NGOs. The NCRFW acts as the liaison between the Women's Crisis Center and other government agencies that are involved in the project. Foremost of these agencies is the Department of Health that provides emergency health and medical care to women victims since the project is based at the East Avenue Medical Center, a government hospital. Other government offices will be tapped to assist the Women's Crisis Center respond to this problem: the Philippine National Police for crisis intervention; the Department of Justice for legal assistance; and the Department of Social Welfare and Development for rehabilitation and other referral services such as helping survivors look for new homes.

In early 1995 the President issued a directive instructing all government hospitals to set up their own crisis centers. Project Haven then serves as a model for other health care facilities on how to implement this. It also paves for the eventual institutionalization of crisis centers in the country's health care delivery system.

The previously hidden problem of violence against women is thus recognized and acknowledged, and initiatives are being put in place to respond to it.



❁ Making women visible in development: Data-base for women



Figures and numbers tell a story. Unfortunately, there are not enough figures and numbers to tell the women's story. There is then a great need to improve current data, particularly statistics, on women. As the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) noted, "as long as women remain statistically invisible, their work, their lives, and their disadvantages will remain invisible to policy makers and leaders."

Data base on women is an essential foundation for monitoring, assessing and updating development plans for women and in measuring whether government policies, programs and strategies as well as laws and regulations have in fact responded to gender concerns and have corrected existing gender inequalities.

NCRFW has taken significant steps to fill in this gap in data-base for women. It maintains close links with statistical agencies of government so it can influence the present system of data collection and generation. This is one way to make sex-based data and information available for users. In 1992 NCRFW and the National Statistics Office published the *Statistics on Filipino Women*. It depicted the current situation of Filipino



women in society and compared their status with Filipino men as a basis in monitoring and assessing the implementation of the PDPW. In 1995, together with other government offices dealing on the advancement of women of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, NCRFW came out with the *ASEAN Women Statistics Factbook*. It was the result of a workshop on Indicators and Statistics on Women held in Jakarta in 1993. In this activity indicators were identified that would serve as parameters in regularly evaluating how member countries implement the ASEAN Declaration on the Advancement of Women.

Gender-differentiated indicators in the development process

Comprehensive and timely gender-disaggregated data is a critical support in mainstreaming gender concerns in development. While the Philippine Development Plan for Women, 1989-92 has adequately identified problems and bottlenecks in promoting the participation of women in development, these have not been sufficiently measured and determined because of the lack of processed gender-disaggregated data. Its implementation was not effective enough in promoting the role of women in development for lack of quantitative basis in formulating policies, strategies and targets.

Technical assistance has been granted by the Asian Development Bank to NCRFW to enable it to establish and sustain a gender-disaggregated socioeconomic data base. It is a user-friendly system designed for use in national and regional planning, programming and decision making. It contains gender-disaggregated data which reflect the status of women, the services available to them, their participation in development and the benefits they derived from it, and their special concerns. The statistics contained in the data are mainly generated by government's statistical offices and related to gender-differentiated indicators in various sectors. The data base also cover nonquantitative information such as researches and studies on women, special government policies and programs directed at women, and various types of women NGOs and their activities.



☉ *Articulating concerns and issues of women in development: Media and legislative advocacy*

Media can be an effective partner in bringing issues confronting women at center stage. NCRFW has started to link with some media practitioners who are able to present the situation of women to the general public and articulate their concerns as well. It disseminates information to media through press releases and press statements and produces information materials on current issues affecting women for the general public. Recognizing how pervasive media can be in influencing current thinking, attitudes and behaviors of people, NCRFW also monitors how women are projected in media and brings to their attention those that adversely depict women.



NCRFW realizes that one way to effectively advance women's status is through legislation. Laws must be passed to change existing ones that discriminate against women and institute new ones to ensure their equality with men at all levels in society.



Both houses of Congress have their respective committees that deliberate on bills that would affect women's lives. NCRFW coordinates closely with the members of the committees in studying the proposed measures and contributing their own inputs to make them more responsive to women's interests. Once a particular bill has been enacted into law, NCRFW then links with those who are tasked to enforce it to work on the guidelines for its implementation.

Ripping the shroud of secrecy enveloping sexual harassment

It used not to be called sexual harassment. For a time, it is considered as just one of the hazards of the workplace that women have to live with. Never mind if those who have been subjected to it feel persecuted by the experience.

But the problem has to be named and confronted. And women have to realize that it is time to take a stand against it.

NCRFW published a series of primers on current women's issues, one of which is about sexual harassment. The primers were distributed to women advocates in and out of government, including some media practitioners. Soon after, articles came out on newspapers and magazines and television and radio talk shows featured episodes on sexual harassment, extensively using the primer as their source. The executive department directed its male managers to attend a series of seminars on the prevention of sexual

harassment in the workplace. These were conducted by HASIK, an NGO giving gender sensitivity sessions to men, and sponsored by NCRFW and the Canadian International Development Agency. At about the same time, Congress was deliberating on several bills on anti-sexual harassment, in which NCRFW was asked to contribute substantial inputs.

Eventually, the bill was passed into law as Republic Act 7778. The Philippines then became the first country in Asia to have a law penalizing sexual harassment in the workplace and in learning institutions.

Since then, NCRFW has been coordinating with the Department of Labor and Employment, the Department of Education, Culture and Sports, and the Civil Service Commission to formulate concrete measures on how to implement the law.



SISTERHOOD IN ACTION: LINKING WITH OTHER WOMEN ADVOCATES

NCRFW maintains a strong linkage with other women advocates, in and out of government, locally and internationally.

The Philippines is fortunate to have a vibrant community of nongovernment organizations, women NGOs included. NCRFW has forged a dynamic partnership with them, resulting in a critical and committed collaboration between government and NGOs in working to secure gender's centrality in development. A GO-NGO Network has been established to underscore the importance attributed to this partnership.

Together with its efforts at the national level, NCRFW also links with other women networks at the international level. In June 1994 it articulated the country's position on critical issues confronting women during the Asia-Pacific Conference on Women and Development in Jakarta, Indonesia.

In December 1994 it hosted a meeting of national machineries for the advancement of women of the different countries within Asia and the Pacific. Sponsored by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, it was held so that countries in the region could explore ways of further strengthening their own national machineries for the advancement of women and glean new insights from each other's experiences. This meeting was especially significant for NCRFW as it recognized the Philippines' pioneering effort to have a





strong institution within government that would mainly address gender concerns.

It is largely because of this that NCRFW continues to host study tours from other countries that would like to learn from the Philippines' experience in mainstreaming gender in development.

NCRFW is about to complete a five-year Institutional Strengthening Project for gender responsive development that is funded by the Canadian International Development Agency. Through this project, NCRFW has been able to reach out to different government offices and help them formulate their respective strategies to integrate gender in their work plans and activities. This has been achieved mostly through training and seminars and technical assistance given to policymakers, planners and technical staff to enable them to recognize gender's role in development and commit to its integration in all aspects of nation building.



Dr. Glenda Simms, president of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, who was on an official mission to the Philippines in early 1995, had this to say about the NCRFW-CIDA five-year collaborative effort: “the training and implementation models developed by the project could be used as a working model that could be adapted to other areas in the region.... In my opinion, the women of the Philippines have made significant strides in their search for social justice and NCRFW is a dynamic organization which could become the model of a government machinery serving women in a very practical way. CIDA has played a vital role in this... and I believe that the Canadian people must continue to be partners with the women of the Philippines.”

NCRFW continues to have bilateral cooperation with other countries and international organizations such as the ASEAN and the United Nations and its agencies like the UN Commission on the Status of Women, UN Development Fund for Women, UN International Labour Organization, UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and the UN Population Fund.

NCRFW is also at the forefront of the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women to be held in Beijing in September, 1995. One of NCRFW's commissioners, Dr. Patricia Licuanan, is chair of the 39th session of the UNCSW that drafted the Program of Action for the advancement of the world's women that will be deliberated in Beijing. During this session, the Philippines sponsored two resolutions on the rights of migrant women and trafficking of women and girls, respectively, that were overwhelmingly approved by the delegates. The latter resolution was also approved by the CEDAW during the same session.



REALIZING THE MISSION: MOVING FORWARD TOWARD GENDER EQUALITY

The way toward gender equality has been arduous, even formidable at times. It is marked by obstacles and intersections that hinder a smooth journey. Still, NCRFW has managed to stay on the road, guided by its mission and commitment to the advancement of Filipino women, sustained by an ever increasing gender-sensitized bureaucracy, and supported by a gender-friendly chief executive, President Fidel V. Ramos.



For the rest of the term, NCRFW will continue to work on its five areas of concern to make government work for gender equality. It will push for an organizational strengthening to enable it to meet the challenge of raising the status of women and the rising demand for its services and assistance in integrating gender in development. It will also bring its interventions down to the subnational, regional, provincial and local levels. Through this, local officials will be influenced to incorporate GAD in their plans, programs and projects. This effort also addresses government's decentralization thrust where local governments are given more autonomy to decide on matters affecting their areas.





The national agenda for women will be further enhanced by ensuring that the Philippines adheres to its commitments to the International Conference on Population and Development held in 1994, the World Summit for Social Development in early 1995, and the Fourth World Conference on Women in late 1995.

In fulfilling its mandate NCRFW will continue to link with other women advocates within government, in NGOs and women's groups in all sectors, with Filipino women themselves. In connecting with them, the work of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women is enriched and becomes meaningful, and a dynamic partnership is forged to make a difference in the lives of Filipino women and men.



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