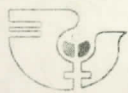




**HIGHLIGHTS
OF THE PHILIPPINE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION
1995-1999**

Towards Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century



NATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE ROLE OF FILIPINO WOMEN

The National Machinery for the Advancement of Women

"The goals of eradicating poverty and of achieving gender equality are distinct but interrelated. Both, however, are fundamental concerns that should be addressed in aiming for sustainable development.

The Philippine government's thrust on poverty alleviation, food security, and other crucial issues are pursued together with the recognition of the importance of addressing gender inequalities.

Beyond the work of gender responsiveness of policies, programs and services is the need for a new perspective to realize the potential roles of women in economic, political, social and cultural development.

The multi-faceted roles of women have to be promoted with new institutions and initiatives, as globalization and technological advances continue to disregard their differential impacts on women and men.

The struggle to achieve empowerment, sustainable development and equitable growth for the whole nation goes on."

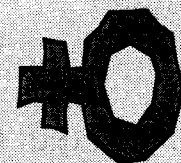
*— His Excellency, President Joseph Ejercito Estrada
President of the Republic of the Philippines*



**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION:
The Philippine Experience**

The Beijing Platform for Action, the main document that came out of the Fourth World Conference on Women, is being steadily implemented in the Philippines. Government adopted the Philippine Plan for Gender Responsive Development, 1995-2025, to be the main vehicle for implementing it. Various actions have been carried out to respond to its 12 areas of concern. These actions are policies, institutional mechanisms, and programs and projects that are meant to respond to the strategic objectives of each area of concern. In the process of initiating these actions, there are also corresponding gaps and commitments that need to be addressed by government and other concerned institutions and groups if the strategic objectives are to be met and benefit women's lives.

Executive Summary



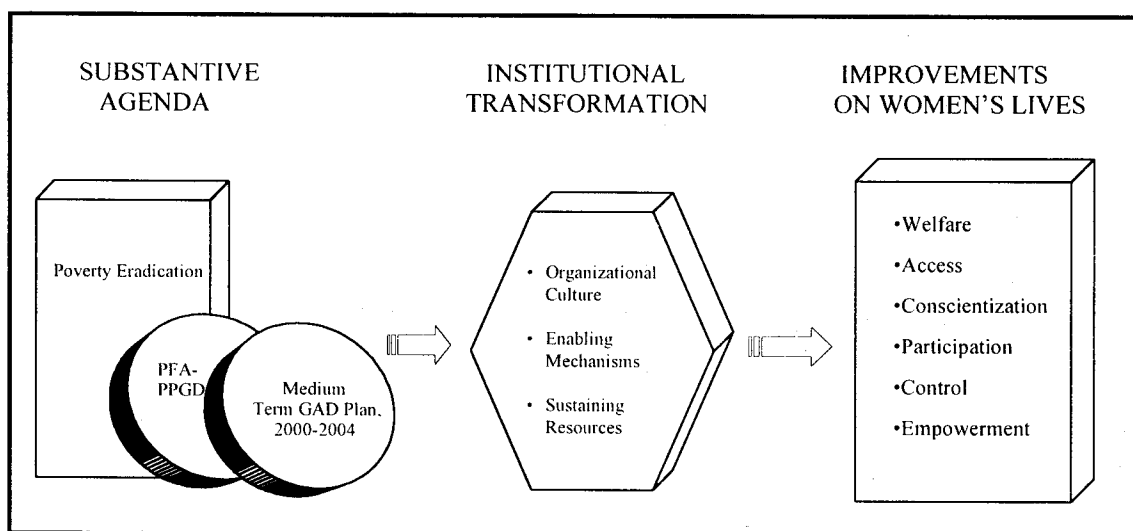
Beyond Beijing Plus Five, a result-oriented framework

This framework operationalizes the poverty reduction program of the Estrada administration by similarly reducing inequalities between women and men and promoting access to resources, technology, information, and markets.

Clearly, five years are not enough to attain the goals of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PFA) in the Philippines. Its own implementing vehicle, the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development (PPGD), carries a 30-year time perspective.

But time is not the only issue. The continuing efforts beyond Beijing Plus Five is matched with this framework that does not only call for action, but holds concerned institutions and officials accountable for results. Action, without meaningful results, is worse than the lack of it.

For the next four years, therefore, the current administration envisions the adoption of a GAD Plan. Derived from the PPGD, the Plan shall operationalize the administration's poverty eradication agenda as it relates to women. This means that the Philippine commitments under the 12 PFA areas of concern shall continue to be pursued, but this time, with an explicit class perspective.



Considering that substantial policies and legislations have been laid down by previous administrations, the framework of the Plan shall have a bias for concrete actions. These actions shall address both the practical and strategic gender needs of women and shall be laid out on the basis of specific desired results in two areas: (a) transformation in government institutions towards gender responsiveness, and (b) positive changes on the lives of women.

On one hand, the desired transformation in government institutions consists of changes in behaviours and attitudes in the workplace, installation of mechanisms and structures that expand or support women's access and participation, and institutionalization of sustaining resources for all GAD-related concerns. On the other hand, the desired transformation on women's lives are grouped into six areas, each of which serves as a building block to another. Inspired by the women's empowerment and equality framework (WEEF) of Sara Longwe, the desired changes consist of improvements on women's welfare, access, conscientization, participation, control, and eventual empowerment.

The end of the plan period, year 2004, envisions a substantial reduction of hardships experienced by Filipino women and better control of situations affecting their lives. Welfare and other economic services are expected to be more accessible to poor women — the girl child, VAW victims and survivors, overseas Filipino women, unpaid workers, among others — along with improved self-esteem, and meaningful participation in social, economic and political life

On the part of government institutions, the end of the Plan period hopes to see policies, institutional mechanisms, and programs and projects expanding and multiplying in support of gender equality. Officials and staff are expected to acquire a broader understanding of the significance of gender in their work and thus manifest behaviours and attitudes that promote respect for women's rights and empowerment. Organizational units, systems and technical tools and processes are envisioned to become more responsive to the flourishing of GAD responsive culture in government. Finally, budgets, staff, personnel, space and facilities for GAD shall increase and serve as true enablers of GAD mainstreaming.



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The National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW): From Organizing to GAD Mainstreaming



The National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) was created in 1975 in response to nearly a decade of advocacy by women NGOs and the United Nation's declaration of the International Women's Year. Celebrating its silver jubilee in January 7, 2000, the NCRFW has been largely instrumental in weaving the threads of advocacy that now bind the government, NGOs and civil society partners in a continuing quest for gender equality.

Through the years, the NCRFW has evolved from a lone handmaiden in government to a "nagging conscience" whose views have been sought in the development of national legislations, policies, budget and programs. During the entire Decade of Women (1975-85), it rallied NGOs and local government units around a movement called *Balikatan sa Kaunlaran* (*shoulder-to-shoulder for progress*), bringing women and resources together to address women's practical gender needs through projects along the Women Decade's sub-themes of education, health and employment.

Insights of the Women's Decade brought to fore a fresh analysis of the underlying roots of women's difficulties: unequal gender relations. This, and the election in 1986 of its first woman President, Corazon Aquino, propelled NCRFW into new heights, leaving *Balikatan sa Kaunlaran* on its own as a private foundation, and pushing a strategy to make the entire government work for gender equality.

For over 13 years, Gender and Development (GAD) mainstreaming had been a key thrust of government. It is founded upon a vision of a future where women and men equally contribute to and benefit from development. This dream is supported by a mission called GAD mainstreaming, a strategy to make GAD a second reflex in the work of the government. NCRFW continues to advise the President and his cabinet on policies affecting women, and its role as oversight body on GAD has been widely recognized.

The term of President Corazon Aquino (1986-1992) put in place strong policy mandates supporting women, a development planning system for women, institutional mechanisms for GAD coordination and implementation, and a critical mass of advocates in government. Her successor, President Fidel Ramos (1992-98), ensured that the GAD thrust shall survive political turn-overs. He instituted the Philippine Plan for Gender Responsive Development, a 30-year perspective plan that serves as the main mechanism to implement the Beijing Platform for Action in the Philippines as well as the GAD budget. He also appointed more women in top government positions. In all these, NCRFW was the invisible architect, moving institutions and their people to set in place the skills, systems and technologies that support gender equality.

The NCRFW

The current administration of President Joseph Ejercito Estrada (1998-2004) commits to build upon the gains of the past. His thrust of poverty eradication recognizes that poverty has a woman's face and that corresponding measures must assume a bias for women and the other basic sectors (like youth, indigenous people, elderly, etc), whose members are also fifty percent women. The current administration is set to adopt a four-year GAD action plan that draws from the 30-year perspective plan of its predecessor. As the plan is biased largely for anti-poverty measures, it will address the root causes of poverty which are interrelated with social, economic and political factors, and its effects particularly to women which are multi-dimensional.

In concrete terms, this means that the Philippines will continue to pursue its commitments under the Beijing Platform for Action, but this time, with a stronger class perspective and greater focus at improving welfare, access, conscientization, participation, control and empowerment of women. This will be sustained by a twin focus at transforming traditional bureaucratic beliefs and practices, re-engineering structures, processes, creating tools, and devising a new pattern of resource allocation that will attain gender equality.



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The Situation

- Poverty is the single biggest factor that limits the opportunities of most Filipinos to attain a better life. The National Statistical Coordinating Board (NSCB) indicates an overall incidence of poor families at 32.1 percent. Data to measure women's poverty is absent;
- More often, poverty has a woman's face and affects rural women the most. They are the ones who risk migrating to urban areas and foreign lands for jobs. Because of their limited education and skills, most of them are employed as service workers such as entertainers and domestic helpers. The very nature of these jobs make them vulnerable to abuses and exploitation.
- The economic crisis that hit the region in 1997 did not spare Filipino women. Their concerns are one of those addressed by a national anti-poverty agenda formulated to help Filipinos cope with the crisis.
- Various laws were implemented to address some of the urgent concerns of poor women. These were aimed to:
 - ♦ prohibit discrimination against women with respect to terms and conditions of employment, promotion and training opportunities;
 - ♦ set up a day care center in every *barangay* (village) to give care and social learning opportunities to preschool children while their parents are out earning a living;
 - ♦ allow women to borrow and obtain credits, loans and nonmaterial resources, be given equal treatment in agrarian reform and land resettlement, and be eligible for insurance coverage, particularly for those women who manage full time their household and family affairs;
 - ♦ provide training assistance to women engage in micro and cottage enterprises;
 - ♦ revise the Government Service Insurance System and expand the insurance of government workers, half of whom are women as well as benefit the widows and wives of male civil servants;
 - ♦ give importance to the contributions and call attention to the needs of rural women by declaring the 15th of October as National Rural Women's Day; and

The policies and institutional developments

- In 1993, a Social Reform Agenda was put in place as government's main program to reduce poverty and lessen its crippling impact on poor Filipinos. In 1998, the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) recognized women as among the poorest in society who are in need of urgent assistance. This recognition led government to adopt a gender-responsive approach in its campaign against poverty and to integrate the concerns of the Beijing Platform for Action in the SRA. A comprehensive and integrated delivery of social services was instituted to address the need of the poorest communities, including women of these communities. Assistance included entrepreneurial development and training and livelihood credit support.

- ◆ implement the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law and the Urban Development Housing Act that benefit the poor, including the women among them.

The programs and projects

- Adjustment measures for agricultural workers, including women peasants and fisherfolk, to cushion the adverse impact of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade;
- A credit program for women in micro and cottage business enterprises;
- Training designed to improve women's skills for livelihood through home-based enterprises such as weaving and making slippers, soap, candles and hand paper;
- A rolling store program that sells cheap commodities to the urban poor;
- A livestock and food production program to stabilize food supply; and
- Income-generating and nutrition projects for mothers.

The obstacles

- The continuing economic crisis and its adverse effects ¾ budget cuts in social services, worker layoff, rising cost of basic necessities ¾ that burden women since they are the ones primarily responsible for managing household finances;
- The need for the SRA to translate its gender policy into specific actions that would actually respond to women's needs. An urgent challenge is to develop and provide practical guides and approaches that would help field personnel operationalize any anti-poverty programs and projects with a gender perspective; and
- The absence of data on the poverty of women.

The commitments

- Exempt funds for social services and economic programs that are directed at vulnerable groups, including poor women, from budget cuts;
- Put in place policies and mechanisms to regulate and monitor increases in tuition fees, housing rentals and basic commodities; and
- Rethink current macroeconomic policies and possible granting of priority assistance to local businesses to protect them from collapse or further weakening. ☹



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The Situation

- Education is one area in Philippine society where women and men have almost equal status. Likewise, literacy rate in the country (93.8%) is relatively higher compared to other countries in the region;
- As of 1994, women's literacy rate was slightly higher at 94 percent compared with 93.7 percent for the men. More women are functionally literate than men, 85.9 percent as against 81.7 percent, respectively. Women in urban areas have higher functional literacy rates compared with their rural counterparts, 89.9 percent as against 81.6 percent; and
- In terms of school enrolment, slightly more women have never gone to school, roughly the same number of women and men have attained elementary and high school education, and more women than men completed college education. Women outnumber men in such courses as education and health sciences, but there are fewer of them in engineering and law.
- The Philippine Military Academy now accepts female cadets and has instituted several changes to make the organization more gender-responsive, including conducting gender sensitivity seminars for the faculty, supervisors, staff and fellow male cadets and training on how to handle sexual harassment cases;
- The law against sexual harassment penalizes this particular act particularly if it happens in schools and training institutions; and
- Topics related to gender and development, especially violence against women, have been integrated into the curriculum of one of the country's major medical school. Efforts are underway to convince the commission on higher education to include a course on the handling of VAW cases in all medical schools.

Programs and projects

- A female functional literacy program based on the cultural norms and practices of indigenous communities;
- An alternative nonformal education system for indigenous communities such as *Magbasa Kita* (Let Us Read) that teaches women and girls and parents of working children to read, and school-based child minding centers where older children, mostly school-aged girls, can look after younger siblings and attend classes at the same time. Rural women, young women, women in indigenous communities and women with disabilities comprise the priority group of government's educational

The policies and institutional developments

- The Philippine Constitution provides a system of free public education at the elementary and high school levels;
- A technology-based education and training program for women gives them an equal opportunity to enrol in industrial and vocational courses traditionally dominated by men;
- Qualified female and male students can avail of scholarships on science and technology courses;


programs. The components of the programs include gender sensitization for rural women, scholarships for those aged 16 to 22 from all indigenous communities, education, training and employment for women with disabilities, deployment of village nutrition scholars and leadership training for women;

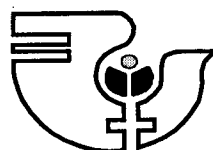
- A review of textbooks, instructional materials and school curricula to correct sexist bias and stereotypes; and
- The increasing number of universities and colleges offering women's studies and initial efforts to establish a gender studies and resources center.

The obstacles

- Gender tracking in the choice of courses;
- Disproportionate representation of women in decision making in the education sector; and
- Multiple burden of the girl child.

The commitments

- Spend more resources and expand its programs, especially for indigenous communities;
- Make education less sexist and able to inculcate women-friendly ideas such as joint parenting, reproductive rights and nonviolent means of handling conflicts;
- Transform the mindset and consciousness of teachers, academic mentors and even parents to accept the principle of gender equality; and
- Address the issue of gender tracking where certain fields of study have more women or men students. 



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The Situation

- Women's mortality rate has been decreasing and is generally lower than that of men, 4.2 deaths per 10,000 women population compared with six deaths per 10,000 men population. Their life expectancy at birth is 71 years;
- Women are most prone to death from cancer of the breast, lungs and uterus. About five to six women die of pregnancy-related causes everyday. Maternal mortality rate is 172 deaths per 1000 live births in 1998;
- Most deliveries, 41.3 per cent, are assisted by traditional birth attendants, 25.5 per cent by midwives, and 30.9 per cent received medical assistance. Most women, particularly those in rural areas and from indigenous communities, are seldom reached by medical services;
- While there has been a steady increase in the number of married couples who use various forms of contraceptives, their proportion is just 28.2 per cent. Most couples use ineffective methods, discontinue the use of effective methods, or do not use any method at all;
- Males with disabilities outnumber females at 51.1 percent;
- More women suffer from anemia, iodine deficiency and malnutrition than men, especially pregnant women and lactating mothers;
- There are more men who are HIV-positive and who are afflicted with AIDS than women. Men account for 57.8 per cent of all patients with full-blown AIDS; and

- Drug and substance abuse is less common among women. Only about seven per cent of them are users, but their numbers are increasing faster than male users.

The policies and institutional developments

- The Philippine Constitution declares health as a basic human right;
- Some 30 per cent of the P25.2 billion public investment package for the health sector has been set aside for women's health;
- Gender equality and women empowerment have been included as components of the population program. The family planning program adopted the following policies: rejection of abortion as a family planning method; improvement of family welfare, with focus on motherhood and child survival; freedom of choice in what family planning method to use; and promotion of family solidarity and responsible parenthood;
- The enactment of the Paternity Law allowed married male employees to take seven days off from work with pay for the first four deliveries of their legitimate spouses;
- Under the SRA, *barangay* health workers, most of whom are women, are given benefits and incentives;
- The implementation of the law directing the use of iodized salt nationwide to eliminate iodine deficiency; and

- The Office of Special Concerns in the Department of Health was created to coordinate all programs and projects related to women's health and institutionalize the integrated approach to women's health service delivery.

The programs and projects


- The women's health and safe motherhood program that addresses women's poor access to health care and services;
- A five-year project involving the local government units that implement comprehensive population, family planning and child survival programs;
- A women's health and development program that is focused on gender awareness and the development of gender-sensitive health care services;
- The family planning program is enhanced by adopting a reproductive health care approach;
- A reproductive health program with the following components:
 - ◆ family planning;
 - ◆ maternal health care;
 - ◆ prevention of abortion and management of its complications;
 - ◆ prevention and treatment of reproductive tract infections including sexually transmitted diseases, HIV and AIDS;
 - ◆ prevention and appropriate treatment of infertility and sexual disorders;
 - ◆ prevention and treatment of cancer of the breast and the reproductive systems and other adverse gynecological conditions;
 - ◆ counseling and education on sexuality and sexual health;
 - ◆ adolescent reproductive health;
 - ◆ male reproductive health; and
 - ◆ prevention and management of cases of violence against women.
- Family health packages addressing specific health needs of local communities;
- A breast and cervical cancer control program to detect these diseases early and manage treatment for those afflicted;
- Mother- and baby-friendly hospitals to encourage mothers to breastfeed their babies from zero to six months;
- A national program addressing the health of elderly women;
- A program providing vitamin A, iodine and iron to pregnant women and lactating mothers and promoting the addition of micronutrients to processed food consumed by Filipinos;
- A nutrition education and program to address malnutrition among preschool children, pregnant women and lactating mothers;
- A food production program promoting the setting up of vegetable gardens in homes, communities and schools and animal dispersal;
- A national AIDS/STD prevention and control program;
- Social welfare programs integrating a component on personal and child care skills development that deal with self-care of women from puberty, menstruation, pregnancy, and child birth, breastfeeding, weaning, detection of breast cancer, common disorders of women and use of herbal medicine;
- A country program for children implemented by the government and the United Nations Children's Fund that provide, among others, nutrition education, micronutrient projects, family food production and food security, and nutrition advocacy among decision makers; and

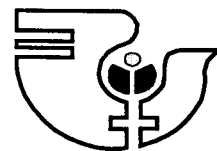
- Researches focusing on various health concerns such as development of a gender-responsive population policies and programs on women's health, and the involvement of men in women's health programs.

The obstacles

- Inadequate capability of local governments to implement health programs that used to be the function of the national government;
- Lack of resources to provide or improve health programs, especially in areas where they are still not implemented;
- Need to improve programs and services so that they could adequately respond to the needs of women and girls all throughout their life cycle, and not be focused on the needs of women as mothers, wives and carers of children;
- Need to involve men in making decisions with regard to reproductive choices;
- Need for service providers and implementors to adopt a reproductive health approach rather than a population control approach in carrying out the family planning program;
- Difficulty in implementing, monitoring and evaluating initiatives for advancing women's status;
- Gaps in data collection systems; and
- Lack of understanding of the concepts relating to gender issues among policy makers, health practitioners and service providers.

The commitments

- Strengthen gender mainstreaming at the local government unit level;
- Orient and train LGU workers, planners and policy makers on gender sensitivity and comprehensive women's health service delivery;
- Enhance skills on gender- and reproductive health-responsive planning;
- Gather sex-disaggregated data and relevant information;
- Prioritize health services for women in the national budget for health; and
- Implement initiatives that respond better to women's total health and not just to their maternal and reproductive health. 



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The Situation

- Filipino women suffer from these forms of violence: wife abuse or domestic violence, rape, including marital rape, incest, sexual harassment, sex discrimination, forced prostitution and international trafficking, pornography and abuse of women portrayed by media, and custodial abuse when the woman is a patient, a ward or a detainee;
- The number of reported cases of violence against women is increasing. It indicates that victims are no longer afraid and ashamed to report it to authorities. It also compels policy makers and program implementors to consider violence against women as a priority concern for action; and
- The social welfare department reported that as of September 1998, there were 36.2 percent battered women, 13.2 percent rape victims, and 9.5 percent incest victims staying in its substitute homes and crisis intervention centers.
- A new law against rape that redefined it as a crime against person, expanded its coverage, and recognized the concept of marital rape; another law provides assistance and protection to rape victims and survivors, including setting up a women's crisis center in every province to provide them with legal aid and counseling;
- Family courts have been created which will have jurisdiction over cases of domestic violence and other forms of physical abuse within the family;
- A law penalizing sexual harassment in workplaces, and education and training institutions;
- The comprehensive integrated delivery of social services, a program of the Social Reform Agenda, expands services for women in especially difficult circumstances and directs the setting up of substitute homes for women in crisis;

The policies and institutional developments

- The Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development, 1995-2025, sets the main policy for addressing the issue of violence against women and identifies the following initiatives that government must put in place to address it:
 - ◆ prevention and elimination of violence against women;
 - ◆ provision of services to victims and survivors; and
 - ◆ punishment and rehabilitation of offenders.
- Pending legislative measures seeking to strengthen the law that declares unlawful the matching of Filipino women for marriage to foreigners and suppress the trafficking of Filipino women as well as bills against violence on women in intimate relationships, domestic violence and incest;
- A quick reaction team is organized to extend appropriate and immediate legal, psychological and group support to women and children victims and survivors;

- A decorum and investigation committee created by the Philippine Military Academy to address instances of sexual harassment and abuse involving female cadets;
- A task force on the protection of women against abuse, exploitation and discrimination has been created by the justice department to handle the investigation and prosecution of violations of the laws penalizing rape, sexual harassment, trafficking, white slavery trade, forced abduction and other related crimes of violence against women;
- A directive issued by the President to government agencies to address violence against women;
- The setting up of women's and children's desk in police precincts staffed by officers specifically trained to handle women- and children-related offenses; and
- A pilot testing of *barangay* (village) family council composed of members from the *barangay*, health center, police and nongovernment organizations, all of them trained to handle cases of violence against women.
- Establishment of substitute homes, crisis intervention centers and community-based support mechanisms that extend protection and social services to victims and survivors;
- Training and seminar workshops for judges and prosecutors on how to handle cases of violence against women;
- The setting up of Equality Advocates in the bureaucracy to attend to complaints of gender discrimination and sexual harassment in government offices;
- Protective predeployment measures to prevent exploitation and abuse of Filipino overseas workers;
- Stringent administrative measures in selecting destination countries and employers for women workers, especially those in vulnerable occupations;
- Development of methodologies to generate statistics on violence against women;
- Review of services and protocols of frontline agencies handling cases of violence against women to determine how these can be improved to become more responsive to the needs of victims and survivors; and


The programs and projects

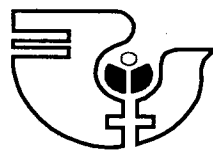
- Awareness campaigns to increase public information and consciousness about the issue;
- Pilot testing of a hospital-based crisis intervention center managed by an NGO that provides temporary shelter, medical treatment, legal assistance, counseling and psychiatric support, financial assistance and other social services to victims and survivors. This hospital-based crisis center serves as a model for other government hospitals in setting up their own crisis centers;
- A project to address trafficking carried out by government, the civil society and the Belgian government with the following components: training for frontline agencies and NGOs handling trafficking cases; review of existing government systems and procedures on assisting victims and survivors; and dialogues with concerned agencies on how to improve these systems and procedures.

The obstacles

- Legislative measures addressing domestic violence, strengthening of rights of daughters in incestuous rape, trafficking of Filipino women, and amendments on the law against white slavery trade have still to be enacted by Congress;
- Need for greater gender sensitivity on the part of people involved in assisting victims and survivors, including medical practitioners, law enforcers, prosecutors and judges;
- Court facilities that does not provide adequate protection and security for victims and witnesses; and
- Lack of an effective data gathering and a unified documentation system among concerned agencies that can track the levels and magnitude of violence against women and the services required for quick and effective response.

The commitments

- Enact stronger laws and adopt policies and procedures to support and protect victims and survivors;
- Redefine existing laws and change established policies to reflect the experience of survivors and victims and assess and update the responsiveness of the existing legal system to various forms of violence against women; and
- Include programs directed at perpetrators and family members to stop the cycle of domestic violence. 

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The Situation

- Majority of the victims of armed conflict have been women and children. They are adversely affected by the economic dislocation, increase in the incidence of violence against women and the dispersal of women's organization brought about by the hostilities;
- However, women, especially those at the grassroots or belonging to indigenous communities, have been active in peace building efforts and peace making initiatives at the national and local levels.

The policies and institutional developments

- The Commission on Human Rights developed a tool to gauge the effectiveness of the community interventions and services to children in armed conflict situations. A baseline survey of the services rendered has been conducted in priority areas;
- A reaffirmation by the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police to adhere to international humanitarian laws and human rights agreements in the conduct of military and police operations; and
- The creation of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process to coordinate peace negotiations with rebel groups and its appointment of two women members to the peace panel for talks with the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

The programs and projects

- The setting up of the internal refugee center for victims of armed conflict that provides assistance to women caught in armed conflict or in especially difficult circumstances;
- Women's representation in decision making and conflict resolution;
- Participation of Christian, Muslim and indigenous women in the peace process, including involving them in dialogues, briefings and workshops to integrate their perspectives in settling hostilities in their communities;
- Protection, assistance and training to refugees and displaced women, including providing them with counseling, livelihood assistance and temporary shelter;
- Launching of a chain letter for peace to track people's support to the peace campaign and generate suggestions on how to attain lasting peace in Muslim Mindanao;
- Development assistance to six of the nine Peace Zones and an indigenous community under the Social Reform Agenda; and
- Projects of the AFP on livelihood programs and seminars to help alleviate the plight of women and children who are in the midst of armed conflict; and
- Assistance to local government units (LGUs) affected by armed conflict such as food, clothing and others including psycho-social debriefing.

The obstacles

- Need to strengthen the participation of women in the peace process;
- Need for more gender sensitivity seminars for members of the peace panel:
- Lack of resources for development of affected areas: and
- Need to address evolving concerns such as increase in the incidence of female-headed households, proliferation of unlicensed weapons, recruitment of women and children as support combatants and degradation of environment.

The commitments

- Appoint more women in the peace process so that nonviolent options may be given space in the negotiations;
- Study the conditions of women and children living in areas of armed conflict to help peace panel members understand its physical, psychological and social impacts on women and children;
- Provide support services to women and children caught in armed conflict;
- Undertake studies on alternative nonviolent means to address armed conflict; and
- Mobilize education and training institutions to develop research on peace and implement education programs on conflict resolution. ♀



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The Situation

- The country has not been able to escape the economic crisis that hit the region. Filipino women, as economic players, are among those adversely affected.

The policies and institutional developments

- Major policies responding to the concern of women and the economy are the same as those addressing women and poverty. Some of them are directed at the following:

- ♦ Prohibiting discrimination against women with respect to terms and conditions of employment, promotion and training opportunities;

- ♦ Providing credit assistance, training and skills development to women engaged in their own businesses;

- ♦ Providing a substantial portion of official development assistance to support programs and activities for women; and

- ♦ Establishing replacement and monitoring centers to develop livelihood programs and job opportunities for returning migrant workers.

- Administrative issuances have been adopted to support these policies:

- ♦ The setting up of a network of welfare centers catering to overseas performing artists to rationalize the conditions, requirements and procedures for their deployment;

- ♦ Provision of guidelines ensuring gender equality between spouses in the granting of emancipation patents and certificates of land ownership to qualified agrarian reform beneficiaries; and

- ♦ Equal opportunity to avail of training in industrial courses traditionally dominated by men.

The programs and projects

- The Social Reform Agenda and its provisions for employment opportunities and access to credit and resources to women, the conduct of general labor inspection among establishments employing women, development of inspection guidelines on women workers' concerns, and the strengthening of the national policy for homeworkers;

- The creation of a Women's Business Council composed of top women executives and owners of enterprises to tackle issues of women in business;

- The hosting of the Women Senior Leaders' Network as a parallel conference to the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation summit that came up with recommendations on integrating gender concerns into APEC's agenda;

- A program on microenterprises for women agrarian reform beneficiaries;

- Lending schemes, such as the Grameen Bank replication program, for rural women;

- Programs for women entrepreneurs, career guidance counseling, labor market information, livelihood skills training, employment assistance for persons with disabilities, among others;
- Studies in developing procedures and standards for evaluating unremunerated work done by women and men and a wage survey of nonagricultural workers to address the under remuneration and under valuation of women's work;
- A women's center conducting researches directed at increasing women's participation in economic development;
- Initiatives to eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination which include:
 - ◆ training, advocacy and support to women's concerns in trade and labor unions;
 - ◆ studies on migrant women workers;
 - ◆ counseling of female domestic helper applicants under the anti-illegal recruitment program; and
 - ◆ issuance of implementing rules and regulations on job contracting to prevent abuse of this practice by entrepreneurs; and
- Research on best practices on how to harmonize work and family responsibilities between women and men.

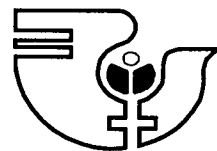
The obstacles

- Need to address the issues of displacement of peasant families and threats to food security as a result of indiscriminate conversion of agricultural lands into urban and industrial zones;
- Lack of respect for ancestral rights;
- Persistent tendency to grant credit to male farmers only;
- Low participation of women in planning and decision making;
- Insufficient loans granted to women entrepreneurs; and
- Need to conduct gender assessment of the economic programs to determine their responsiveness, adequacy and areas of improvement

The commitments

- Value and recognize the nonmonetized economic contributions of women;
- Increase representation of rural women in formal structures of development planning and decision making;
- Provide more information on rural women's participation in nontraditional community activities;
- Fast track the implementation of government's economic programs and projects;
- Adopt policies and program interventions for women's equal access to resources, credit, employment, markets and trade;

- Assess government policies and programs to determine their gender responsiveness, adequacy and areas for improvement;
- Put in place safety net and cost cutting measures that are more sensitive to the impact of the present economic crisis on women; and
- Rethink current macroeconomic policies and the possible granting of priority assistance to local businesses to protect them from weakening and ultimate collapse. ☹



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The Situation

- There are less women than men involved in politics and decision making;
- Few women run as candidates in elections and fewer still win. In the 1998 general elections, women won two of the 25 seats for senator and 25 out of the 207 congressional seats. A women's party captured one of the slots for sectoral representatives in the House of Representatives. A woman representative sits as one of the deputy speakers of the House, a history for this chamber;
- More than half, or 53.8 percent, of government workers are women but more men occupy the top positions in government offices;
- There are two women out of the 22 members of Cabinet and two women out of 15 justices in the Supreme Court; and
- The Philippines is setting the pace for gender equity in the region. The 1998 Human Development Report of the United Nations gave it the highest score, together with Malaysia, in its gender empowerment measure for the whole of southeast Asia. It ranks 46th among the 174 member countries of the UN.

Policies and institutional developments

- The Philippine Constitution recognizes the role of women in nation building and the fundamental equality of women and men before the law;
- The Women in Development and Nation Building Law guarantees equality for women in government policies and programs, legal capacity to act, and admission to clubs and military schools and mandates government agencies to integrate women's concerns in national development;
- A law directing indigenous women to be represented in decision making processes at all levels;
- A law providing for the election of party list representatives of particular sectors to Congress, one of which is the women sector;
- Administrative policies operationalizing equality for women's participation in public and political life, some of which are the following:
 - ◆ Presidential memorandum mandating the Civil Service Commission to develop and implement programs providing women with adequate time and opportunities for career advancement;
 - ◆ The Comprehensive Integrated Delivery of Social Services component of the Social Reform Agenda that promotes the election of local sectoral representatives, including women, and to increase their representation in decision making bodies at the national and local levels to at least 30 percent;

- ◆ Executive Order appointing the national machinery on women as one of the members of the Social Reform Council to act as adviser in ensuring that women's concerns are integrated in the SRA; and
- ◆ Memorandum on equal representation of women and men in third level positions in the bureaucracy.
- A women empowerment bill, included as a priority agenda of the current Congress, aiming for the equitable distribution of power and decision making at all levels of government and an enabling law on women's representation in local councils.

Programs and projects

- The Career Advancement Program for Women in Government Service to place women in positions of power and influence through support mechanisms, policy strengthening and development, capability building and advocacy, and training;
- Advocacy on equal opportunity in the workplace;
- Promotion of woman's role as decision makers;
- Gender sensitivity workshops for men;
- Multilevel gender orientations;
- Trainers' training on local legislation and self-empowerment;
- Women leadership training;
- Social communication skills development for women in decision making;


- Mentoring program for second and third level women in government; and
- Conduct of strategic planning activity.

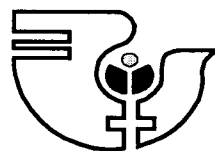
The obstacles

- Perception, attributed to culture, that regards politics as dirty and a man's domain;
- Lack of political education for women and persistence of gender discrimination;
- Stereotyped notions about gender roles and weak political maturity;
- Few opportunities for women to develop their political skills and capabilities; and
- Inadequate coordinating and networking mechanisms to monitor and provide support for women interested or involved in politics.

The commitments

- Provide career counseling and actual exposures to political processes and examine structural constraints to women's participation in politics and decision making;
- Implement affirmative actions such as mandatory inclusion of women in training and apprenticeship programs of political organizations;
- Pursue interim quotas, lobbying, monitoring, training and mentoring;
- Discard cultural biases that relegate women in the background;
- Educate women on how to determine which political party or candidates to support based on their clear agenda for gender and development;

- Train women to discriminate between candidates who are sincerely working for women's concerns and their empowerment and those who just want the votes;
- Intensify actions for women to break the glass ceiling in the bureaucracy; and
- Strengthen initiatives to enable women to handle key positions in the bureaucracy through training on leadership, communication, negotiation and assertiveness, among others. 



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The Situation

- The national machinery for the advancement of women was created at the start of the Decade of Women in 1975;
- During its first decade, it organized women into a nationwide movement, conducted policy studies and researches, lobbied for executive and legislative measures to benefit women, maintained a clearing house and information center, and monitored the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- The change of government in 1986 paved the way for the national women's machinery to aim toward mainstreaming women's concerns in policy making, planning, programming, and monitoring and evaluation processes of government. It tried to promote women's advancement by influencing government to work for gender equality and mainstreaming; and
- At present, it coordinates and catalyzes setting up of institutional mechanisms in government to sustain earlier efforts on gender mainstreaming at the national and local levels.
- The Women in Development and Nation Building Law provides the mandate for agencies to fully implement gender mainstreaming by ensuring that women benefit equally and participate directly in development programs and projects of government, and directing agencies to review and revise all their regulations and procedures to remove gender bias;
- Section 28 of the General Appropriations Act directs all government offices to set aside at least five per cent of their annual budget, otherwise known as the GAD budget, for implementing gender-related programs and projects. A parallel measure spells out the guidelines for the allocation of at least five per cent of the appropriations of local government units for programs, projects and activities to address gender issues in their communities;
- Women in development/ Gender and development has been classified in the 1996 to 2000 national budget calls as among the priority programs of government. This means that agencies must formulate a GAD plan detailing programs and projects that address gender issues; and

Policies and institutional developments

- Focal points for gender and development are organized in government offices to ensure that their plans, programs, projects and processes respond to gender concerns of their sectors;
- Compliance reports of GAD programs and projects by agencies for the fiscal years 1995 to 1998 to assess the directions and nature of the implementation of their GAD plans and the magnitude of the GAD budget allocated during the period;

- A multisectoral committee is created to coordinate and monitor the international human development commitments of the country, including its commitments to the Fourth World Conference on Women;
- The social development committee under the board of the national planning agency provides the venue for discussing policy issues on GAD;
- Direct links by the national machinery on women with local women NGOs, women advocates in the academe and the private sector, and regional and international institutions to work for the advancement of women;
- The framework of the population policy operations project has been reviewed to integrate GAD;
- GAD inputs have been included in preparing the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan for 1999-2004;
- The national anti-poverty framework of the Social Reform Agenda recognized gender as a crosscutting factor in implementing and monitoring its strategies and interventions; and
- The Women in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation ministerial meeting recommended how women's concerns could be integrated into APEC's processes and agenda.
- Researches to support policy and program formulation on gender and various sectoral concerns have been conducted by agencies;
- Orientation and training sessions on gender-responsive policy making and legislation for the technical staff of the House of Representatives and the Senate;
- Direct linkage and continued partnership with national women's machineries of other countries and participation to different international conferences on women's concerns;
- Development of database and information system to aid policy formulation and program administration and information gathering on gender issues and other sex-disaggregated data;
- Dissemination of information and data on various gender concerns;
- Documentation of "Herstories" as embodiment of women's contribution in various fields of nation-building;
- Published "Women and Men in the Philippines: Herstories in Gender Mainstreaming"; and
- Incorporation of Herstories as a tool in the gender and development framework.


The programs and projects

- A five-year strategy, 1996 -2001, to strengthen the national women's machinery and its key partner agencies is being implemented with the support of the Canadian International Development Agency;
- A project on policy development and advocacy on women's health, population and development has been implemented in partnership with the UN Population Fund;
- Need to work with more allies at the local and legislative levels to monitor how agencies implement the gender equity policies of government and the mainstreaming efforts;
- Lack of clear accountability in addressing GAD concerns among statistical and data collection units of concerned agencies and local government units;

The obstacles

- Inadequate technical support in implementing the GAD plans of agencies;
- Need to have an effective monitoring and evaluation system to track the direction and impact of gender mainstreaming and the effort to attain gender equality and equity; and
- Present structure of the national women's machinery that limits its effectiveness in playing its catalytic role in gender mainstreaming.

The commitments

- Push for the establishment of a Philippine Development Authority for Women to strengthen the national women's machinery and enable it to respond to the emerging demands for promoting gender equality and women's advancement. Related to this, a foundation attached to the national women's machinery is being envisioned to help it carry out its GAD mainstreaming mission through setting up networks, providing training and monitoring services, support development, publication and distribution of information materials and implement pioneering projects, among others;
- Strengthen further the national women's machinery and other government bodies to enable them to reach women in the communities;
- Undertake activities on legal reform in the areas of family, condition of employment, social security and income tax, among others;
- Encourage and promote the active involvement of the public, private and voluntary sectors to work for gender equality and increase women's participation as agents and beneficiaries of development; and
- Generate sex-disaggregated data at the national and subnational levels. 



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The Situation

- The Philippines, as a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, recognizes that all women's rights are human rights. Laws have been enacted to protect women's rights; and
- It supports and has ratified relevant resolutions on women's rights and participates in relevant conferences addressing this concern.

The policies and institutional developments

- The Philippine Constitution affirms that the State values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect of human rights;
- The Philippine Human Rights Plan developed in 1995 considered gender as a crosscutting concern and has a separate chapter for women;
- The national women's machinery and the Philippine Commission on Human Rights forged a partnership to ensure the full implementation of the human rights plan for women and the following priority programs:
 - ◆ advocacy and consciousness raising for gender and human rights advocates;
 - ◆ setting up of institutional mechanisms to include support services such as agency focal points for women, women's desks, pool of GAD specialists, trainers and advisers, and resource mobilization;
 - ◆ legislative agenda for women;
 - ◆ research and database
- An inter-agency coordinating committee on human rights that is mandated to respond to requests for information on human rights violation in the country and prepare the Philippine reports to the UN's human rights bodies. Its recent actions focused on the needs of women migrants, public information on newly enacted laws on women, and strengthening institutional mechanisms to promote human rights at the local level;
- The CHR appointed a GAD focal point, formulated a GAD plan, formed a committee on decorum to handle sexual harassment cases within the agency, and created a women's sectoral working group to investigate cases of sexual abuse and violations of women's rights;
- The *barangay* human rights actions centers are organized to promote human rights protection and advocacy at the grassroots level;
- The Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 sets a higher standard of protection and promotion of the welfare of migrant workers and overseas Filipinos and their families by providing for more stringent penalties on illegal recruitment, travel advisory information dissemination campaigns and shared information systems by government offices, among others;
- The law protecting the rights of indigenous people on their ancestral domain and ensuring the participation of indigenous women in decision making at all levels;

- The 15th of October designated as National Rural Women's Day to highlight the largely unrecognized contributions of rural women to food security and the development of the rural areas; and
- The government actively took part in the final drafting of the optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women that gives women an international forum to articulate violations of the CEDAW and seek remedy from the UN committee on the elimination of discrimination against women.

The programs and projects


- The Migrants Advisory and Information Network aimed at ensuring effective dissemination of information related to migration to help prospective migrants make informed decisions about migrating or working overseas;
- A shared government information system which allows the free flow of data exchanges and sharing among agencies concerned in the movement of Filipinos overseas and generates information that can be used as basis for developing measures to promote the wellbeing of Filipinos overseas;
- A sponsors' watchlist information system that monitors foreigners who have sponsored spouses or fiancés more than once and those with reported cases of violence and abuse; and
- Services such as orientation on women workers' rights, counseling to help couples cope with the difficulties of intermarriages, feedback and exchange of letters with Filipinos married to foreigners, and predeparture and postarrival orientations.

The obstacles

- Need to amend the law on anti-mail order brides as matching is no longer done through mail but through the Internet which is not covered by the present law;
- Need to revise the law penalizing sexual harassment to include other conditions not covered by the present law;
- Inadequate protection of women's rights to equal treatment before the law, as in the case of long and humiliating investigation process of sex -related crimes, lack of protection from offenders' reprisals, abuses against women, rape and sexual assault against women detainees, militarization resulting in harassment, detention, unlawful arrest, rape, torture and murder;
- Sex-based discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace;
- Nonrecognition of reproductive rights as human rights and poor state of women's health; and
- Gender tracking in educational opportunities, stereotyping and sexism.

The commitments

- Assess the overall administrative mechanism for the implementation and monitoring of laws and policies on women's rights to clarify the responsibilities of concerned agencies;
- Revive the bills that seek the mandatory training on human rights of all government officials and employees, institutionalize human rights in the educational system, and set up human rights desks in local government units;

- Continue implementing the Philippine Human Rights Plan, a 30-year plan that calls for national action to advance a multisectoral human rights agenda;
- Amend the Migrant Workers Act to include provisions addressing the matching of Filipino brides with foreigners through the Internet; and
- Strengthen institutional mechanisms for human rights at the national and field levels, including implementing and monitoring the UN CEDAW. 



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The Situation

- Philippine media can be a very powerful ally of women in their quest for a gender fair and equal society. However, issues on women continue to be downplayed in media although there are already a number of gender advocates among columnists, opinion makers and producers who regularly discuss or feature them;
- Most of the time, media continue to portray women in sexist and stereotyped roles in media. Media practitioners are also not aware that gender-differentiated language can significantly affect the way readers, viewers and listeners perceive women; and
- It is safe to assume that there is an equal number of women and men media practitioners and news beats traditionally dominated by male reporters such as politics, business and the military now have women journalists covering them.
- The first Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Conference on Women hosted by the Philippines was extensively covered by local and foreign media, providing a mind shift from the traditional and stereotypical image of women in media; and
- Massive campaign against smut magazines.

The obstacles


- Absence of a lead government agency for policy making and monitoring the concerns of women and media;
- Need to create a positive media environment to reorient and sensitize women media practitioners on their role to articulate women's issues;
- Limited perception of media on women's concerns and the tendency to deal with sensationalist issues such as rape and incest and the activities of militant women's groups; and
- Inadequate policies to address the issues of women and the media such as pornography.

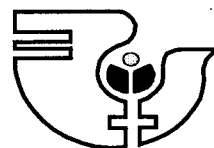
The programs and projects

- The Philippine Information Agency coordinates the production and dissemination of information, education and communication materials on various women's issues and has developed a briefing module on women's rights used in its training programs to promote a balanced and nonstereotyped portrayal of women in media;
- Media highlighted the heroism of Filipino women and their active involvement in the writing of the country's history over the past 100 years during the centennial celebration;

The commitments

- Exert effort by government to continuously address the identified strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action on women and the media, particularly the promotion of a balanced and nonstereotyped portrayal of women;

- Increase women's participation in decision making and access to free expression;
- Pursue the following:
 - ◆ Identify a lead agency to take on the concerns of women and media;
 - ◆ Promote the effective participation of women in formulating and implementing media policies that will rid the industry of gender biases and discrimination in dealing with both its workers and audience; and
 - ◆ Sensitize media practitioners and advertisers to make them aware of the harmful messages that stereotyped images of women and men transmit to viewers, readers and listeners. 



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The Situation

- In the Philippines, women are the stewards of the environment. They are the primary collectors and managers of wood fuel, nonwood forest resources and water, and primary users of communal lands and forests. Their participation is crucial in environmental management and in the allocation of resources within the household and the community.
- ◆ Opportunity to articulate gender concerns in the implementation of the community-based forest management program and the industrial forest management program; and
- ◆ Institutionalization of gender parity in preparing the community resources management framework of the CBFM program.

Policies and institutional developments

- A law that recognizes, protects and promotes the rights of indigenous communities to manage their ancestral domain and natural resources and participate in the planning, implementation and monitoring of projects affecting them;
- A Philippine strategy for sustainable development calling on both women and men to protect the environmental and use resources properly as they pursue economic growth.

- Issuance of certificates of stewardship contracts that granted land tenure of 25 years and access to training programs to both spouse beneficiaries;
- Administrative measures to operationalize women's participation in environmental concerns include the following:

- ◆ Designation of women as members of the protected area management board that makes major decisions regarding protected areas;
- ◆ Integration of gender concerns in plans and activities on small- and medium-scale forest plantations;
- ◆ Assessment and determination of the impact of environmental projects on women;

The programs and projects

- The Green Brigade project that organized the youth in every *barangay* to monitor compliance or violation of environmental laws, undertake activities aimed at promoting environmental consciousness among villagers, and develop a national youth environmental action plan to address specific environmental concerns of the *barangay*;
- Environmental education programs such as the following:
 - ◆ An environment center set up at the Philippine Military Academy where environmental and sustainable development courses have been integrated in the academic curriculum to acquaint its graduates with the scientific and technical aspects of managing the environment and its natural resources;

- ◆ Environmental and GAD concepts are integrated in learning materials developed for various programs in literacy and formal and nonformal education; and
- ◆ Researches and studies conducted by state colleges and universities highlighting women's participation for a sustainable development.
- Continuous advocacy to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women through training, orientations and briefings, production of information materials, and development of tools for collecting gender-responsive data;
- A GAD module is integrated in a mandatory course for potential appointees as community environment and natural resources officers; and
- A policy paper developed to strengthen the integration of women's concerns in the environmental impact assessment system.

The obstacles

- Need for women's active involvement in decision making, especially at the grassroots level;
- Need for a continuing research study to validate the impact of environmental projects on women; and
- Absence of mechanisms to assess the impact of development and environmental impact on women, including gender-sensitive database, information and monitoring system and participatory research methodologies and policy analysis.

The commitments

- Strengthen the collaboration among government agencies, the civil society, the private sector and other resource institutions in integrating GAD to environmental concerns;
- Implement fully the strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action for women and the environment; and
- Institutionalize GAD tools to fully mainstream GAD in the environment department's regular activities. ☺



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The Situation

- Reports of child abuse and child labor are increasing;
- A 1996 study reported that 96.5 per cent of victims and survivors of child abuse are young girls;
- Between 1994 and 1997, 534 convicts are given the death penalty, majority of whom raped children aged 12 years and below; and
- In 1995, the estimated number of working children aged five to 14 years old is from five to seven million, 3.9 million of whom live in rural areas.

Policies and institutional developments

- The death penalty is imposed on offenders who raped minors;
- A law provides protection and assistance to rape victims and survivors;
- Family courts have exclusive jurisdiction over cases involving children and family matters, ensuring protection and confidentiality in all stages of the trial;
- A National Youth Commission is created to provide leadership in formulating policies and programs for Filipino youths;
- A call to provide gender-sensitive and quality education, promote, defend and protect the rights and welfare of the girl child to the fullest during the first national summit on the girl child;

- A Philippine Plan of Action for Children intensifying basic services to children, particularly those in especially difficult circumstances, including the girl child, and monitors the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- An advisory prohibiting the employment of persons below 18 years of age as entertainers, guest relation officers and similar occupations declared as hazardous undertakings and the drafting of guidelines classifying hazardous and nonhazardous establishments, workplaces and work processes; and
- The designation of the second week of February as national awareness week for the prevention of child sexual abuse and exploitation and the fourth week of March as the week for the protection and gender fair treatment of the girl child.

Programs and projects

- An inventory form of existing projects benefiting the girl child is sent to all municipal and city governments and nongovernment organizations involved in children and women's welfare to determine the overall situationer of girl children;
- An integrated prevention and protection program for children employed in tourism, entertainment and the hotel industry, including information and advocacy campaigns;


- A child labor program to provide assistance to child workers, including conducting rescue operations to free them from abusive employers;
- An integrated and comprehensive social welfare services for street children;
- An information kit developed for policy makers that contained statistical data and information on the situation of girl children;
- A study describing and analyzing the situation of child laborers in agriculture and its effect on adult employment;
- A case monitoring system that features a data bank of cases involving women and children filed with the police;
- The anti-child abuse, discrimination and exploitation division is formed by the National Bureau of Investigation to provide protective services, counseling, medical examination and assistance, and proper custody to victims and survivors of rape, drug abuse and child molestation; a task force on child protection is set up by the justice department to investigate, prosecute and litigate cases of child abuse and exploitation; and a women's and children's desk is established in all police precincts to handle cases involving women and children;
- The drafting of a strategic plan on adolescent health and reproductive health; and
- Child growth projects implemented in selected provinces to lower incidences of malnutrition.

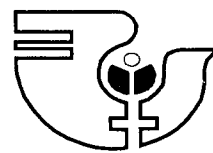
The obstacles

- Weak implementation and enforcement of laws and policies due to the following:
 - ◆ Insufficient institutional support;
 - ◆ Lack of viable statistical systems and monitoring mechanisms at the national and local levels;
 - ◆ Failing involvement of victims to initiate resistance to factors that threaten their social and economic rights;
 - ◆ Lack of coordination among concerned institutions and organizations.
- Less focus given to eliminating negative cultural attitudes and practices against girl children and women, including sensationalized presentations of cases involving them;
- Less priority given to disseminating information on sexual and reproductive health that may result in teen or unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease and HIV infection, among others; and
- Prevalent economic crisis that pushes more children to work.

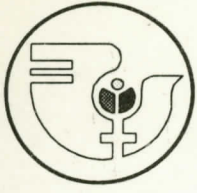
The commitments

- Strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of the girl child and reducing the number of children in especially difficult circumstances;
- Focus on family-assisted programs and projects that use proactive and preventive approaches such as early childhood care and development and family violence prevention campaign;

- Strengthen community-based mechanisms that provide protection for children and implement activities addressing exploitation and abuse;
- Establish and support mechanisms and structures for the increased participation and involvement of the youths in all stages of policy making and program implementation at the national and local levels;
- Laws protecting children must be fully enforced and efforts must be made to forge a united and firm stand to give justice to child victims. 



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National Machinery for the Advancement of Women

President of the Republic of the Philippines
Joseph Ejercito Estrada

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