

The cover features a decorative border on the left and right sides. It consists of a repeating pattern of stylized women's faces with long, wavy hair, rendered in shades of purple and blue. The faces are set against a background of red and yellow. Below each face is a symbol that combines the female symbol (a circle with a vertical line) and the male symbol (a circle with an arrow).

TRANSFORMING WOMEN'S LIVES

The Philippine Experience

COUNTRY REPORT
JUNE 2000

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About The Cover :

The design depicts women's enormous roles in nation building to attain genuine development and progress. The body symbolizes the woman as nurturer and life giver. Its form represents flexibility and adaptability that characterize women's leadership style. The hair flowing in different directions signifies fluidity, exemplified by her welcoming of new paradigms as she challenges rigid and traditional values.

The interlocking gender symbols reflect partnership between women and men in pursuit of equality.

Illustrator:

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TRANSFORMING WOMEN'S LIVES

**The
Philippine
Experience**





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Introduction

ive years ago, during the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, the global community renewed its commitment and determination to advance the goals of equality, development and peace for all women everywhere. A Platform for Action (PFA) was crafted to guide efforts of governments, international organizations, NGOs, and civil society in transforming these goals to reality.

For the Philippines, the Beijing conference was a milestone. Unlike other international summits, it went beyond political and economic issues, but dared to deal with social, cultural and family matters, issues once considered private and were not brought out into the open, issues that were close to hearts and hearths. It connected what were previously regarded as women's issues with other pressing concerns raised in other international conferences on the environment, human rights, population, habitat and social development. At the same time, it provided new perspectives of looking at old problems, and broke new grounds by focusing global awareness and action toward the advancement of women. Through the Platform for Action, nations, despite their diversities in culture, aspirations, politics and national priorities, were able to forge consensus among themselves, affirm the principles that would govern future actions and strategies for women, and firmly set in place an agenda for empowering women well into the next millennium.

The Preparations

overnment, in adopting the Beijing Platform for Action, commits itself to carry out measures addressing its 12 areas of concern. From these 12 concerns, 14 specific commitments relating to urgent national issues were further identified for priority actions. Government's main mechanism to implement the Platform for Action is the Philippine Plan for Gender Responsive Development (PPGD), 1995-2025, adopted while the Women's Conference was being held in Beijing. The National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW), the national machinery for the advancement of women, is the prime advocate and leader that guides government in this effort.

Five years after Beijing, it is now time to take stock of how government is able to translate these commitments into concrete initiatives and measures for women. The NCRFW and the Philippine Beijing Score Board (PBSB) convened a National Organizing Committee (NOC) for the Assessment of the Beijing Platform for Action and the PPGD. The NOC launched an assessment process to review how these two documents were implemented, the accomplishments in the 12 areas of concern and their impact on women's lives, the areas not addressed, the major obstacles to implementation, and recommendations for action.

The first stage of the process had government organizations (GOs) forming technical working groups and subcommittees to review their various accomplishments vis-a-vis the concerns of the Platform for Action. The subcommittees then invited nongovernment organizations, specialists, experts, researchers and GAD focal points to help them in the assessment. The NGOs, in turn, through the PBSB, a group of women NGO networks, conducted parallel consultations and conferences nationwide. The results of these reviews were consolidated by the NCRFW into a country report. A national consultation was convened to validate this initial draft. Government agencies, NGOs, the academe and media groups took part in the validation. The NCRFW then finalized the report based on the agreements arrived at during the consultation. This publication represents an overview of the report. A technical comprehensive report is available at NCRFW upon request.

Government recognized that gender discrimination is deeply rooted in society. It would actually take a generation to transform the prevalent notion of women's secondary status. A long term plan is needed to provide directions for this effort. The government came up with the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development (PPGD), 1995-2025. This 30-year blueprint outlined the policies and strategies, and programs and projects that government must implement to fight gender discrimination.

Parallel to the effort of formulating the PPGD, a GAD Budget mechanism in the national appropriations was put in place. This was first introduced to agencies during the 1995 budget call, and was included as one of the sections of the General Appropriations Act (GAA) of 1996. The GAA directed all government agencies to set aside at least 5 per cent of their annual budget to fund programs, projects and activities for women.

In 1999, 133 agencies drafted their respective GAD Plans, almost 40 per cent of all government agencies. The corresponding GAD Budget allocated to fund them totaled P3.42 billion, up by 27.2 per cent from the 1998 level. All the programs, projects and activities funded by the GAD Budget addressed the 12 areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action.

1999 GAD BUDGET ALLOCATION

PROGRAMS/ PROJECTS/ ACTIVITIES	BUDGET (Pesos)	AGENCIES	12 AREAS OF CONCERN															
			POVERTY	EDUCATION AND TRAINING	HEALTH	VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN	ARMED CONFLICT	ECONOMY	POWER AND DECISION-MAKING	INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN	HUMAN RIGHTS	MEDIA	ENVIRONMENT	GIRL CHILD				
A. PROGRAMS/PROJECTS/ SERVICES FOR WOMEN IN THE COMMUNITY																		
1. Day Care center establish- ment, operation, support and main-tenance	1,282,000	DSWD	✓															
2. Livelihood development	160,289,727	NPC, DILG, PSCA, DSWD, DA, WVSU, PIT, RMTU, LNU, ASI, DOLE	✓	✓					✓									
3. Entrepreneurial development, management and productivity training	13,998,100	DILG, DOLE, DTI	✓	✓					✓									
4. Programs and services for rural women/women farmers	10,990,250	DA, CDA, DILG	✓						✓								✓	
5. Programs and services for victims of VAW	2,772,808	DOLE, DSWD, DOH	✓		✓	✓							✓					
6. Protective services for women and girl-children in especially difficult circumstances	3,365,761	DSWD	✓		✓	✓							✓					✓
7. Public education, information dissemination on women's rights	427,995	LNU, QSC, NPC, DILG, DA		✓									✓	✓				
8. Port facilities for women travelers	21,550,000	DPWH, PPA, ATO	✓															
9. Services for women detainees	1,509,400	BJMP															✓	
10. Disaster preparedness	345,000	PAGASA, DILG, PHIVOLCS	✓	✓	✓													
11. Development of appropriate technology for women	502,498	ITDI	✓	✓					✓									✓
12. Consumer education and information for women	1,400,000	DTI	✓	✓	✓				✓									
13. Credit assistance to women	360,000	DTI	✓						✓									
14. Training in non-traditional trade	5,820,000	DOLE, MMDA, TESDA	✓	✓					✓	✓								
15. Health programs/services for women	43,796,400	DOH, DOLE	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓									

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B. PROGRAMS/PROJECTS/ SERVICES FOR WOMEN IN BUREAUCRACY														
1. Occupational safety and health programs for women workers	1,800,000	DOLE		✓	✓									
2. Day Care center establishment, operation, support and maintenance	40,324,648	LNU, TSU, RMTU, CLSU, PIA, MMDA, BIR, NEDA, NMRIA, DENR, DOE, PAGASA, LTO, DPWH, DOTC, PPA, ATO, NPC, DND, DILG, DA, PPSC, MIRDC	✓					✓	✓					
3. Management/Leadership Training for women	4,346,950	DOF, DILG, PCARRD, PSHS		✓				✓						
4. Establishment of Anti-Sexual Harassment desks	561,000	DILG, CHR, BJMP			✓	✓		✓						
C. CAPABILITY BUILDING FOR WOMEN IN INSTITUTIONS														
1. Gender sensitivity training/ advocacy	99,521,882	PSU, WVSU, LNU, CLSU, DOT, RMTU, DTI, CSC, DBM, DOE, MMDA, DOH, NEDA, MMSU, PMMA, PUP, TCA, ASI, DOLE, FPRDI, PCASTRD, SEI, STII, TAPI, LTO, PPA, TELOF, ATO, LRTA, NPC, CHR, DND, POPCOM, OTC, DILG, BJMP, NPC, DOF, PPSC, ERB, DA, DENR, DOTC, PCIERD, NSCB		✓					✓					
2. Databanking	15,027,075	DILG, ASI, WVC, MMSU, TCA, NSCB, DOLE, DBM, DOT, CFO, NEDA, PIA, PCHRD, FNRI, SEI, DOTC, PRC, DILG, NAPOLCOM, PPSC, DA							✓					

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3. Researches/publication/ information dissemination	33,259,354	CHED, PIT, LNU, TSU, CLSU, PUP, DOLE, CFO, DOT, PSU, TCA, CSC, MPSPC, NEDA, NSCB, FNRI, PCARRD, PCHRD, DOE, POPCOM, NAPOLCOM, DILG, BJMP, DA	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
4. Laws/Policies/Seminars on rights	69,991.623	ASI, DOT, DENR, DOLE, MMDA, DOE, FPRDI, PCIERD, NSCB, DILG, BJMP, DA, PPSC, PIT, NEDA, NSCB				✓				✓	✓			
5. Celebration of the Women's Month and other women- related activities	663,619,672	DILG, CLSU, MMSU, DA, CHED, DND, POPCOM, DSWD	✓					✓				✓		
6. Establishment of Mechanisms/ Networking/Linkages	27,470,079	DA, PUP, DOLE, DENR, FPRDI, DOTC, POPCOM, DILG, NEDA								✓				

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5. Celebration of the Women's Month and other women- related activities	663,619,672	DILG, CLSU, MMSU, DA, CHED, DND, POPCOM, DSWD	✓					✓				✓		
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Achievements in the Implementation of the 12 Areas of Concern

ational initiatives to address the Platform for Action's 12 areas of concern highlight its commitment to secure equality, development and peace for Filipino women.

While what was once mere promises in 1995 are now becoming a reality, government and NGOs have not lost sight of the fact that a lot has still to be done.

omen and poverty

In 1998 the National Anti-Poverty Commission recognized women as among the poorest in society who are in need of urgent assistance. To help them, some measures were put in place that aim to:

- prohibit discrimination with respect to terms and conditions of employment, promotion and training opportunities;

- give access to credits, loan and nonmaterial resources for economic activities,
- promote equal treatment in agrarian reform and land resettlement, make them eligible for insurance coverage, especially those who manage full time their household and family affairs;

- provide training to women engaged in micro and cottage enterprises;

Making a Difference

Flowers could lead to power, that is, economic empowerment that enables one to manage her own business and provide gainful employment to others. This is the story of Sonia Siason who started Flowers and Crafts by Genevieve a decade ago for P10,000 and now owns a business worth millions.

Siason, who was also a barangay captain in Laoag City, opened a flower shop offering fresh flowers rather than the traditional arrangement made of crepe, foils and colored papers. So popular was her shop that, in no time, she was buying her supply of fresh flowers from Baguio City and Davao. For this, she got a loan of P10,000 from the Tulong sa Tao program of the Department of Trade and Industry. She also decided to diversify her products by creating dried flower arrangements, decors and souvenir items. Because of her tie-up with the DTI, she was able to participate in various trade fairs and exhibits

recognize the contribution of rural women and call attention to their needs; and implement the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law and the Urban Development Housing Act that benefit the poor, including poor women.

Laws and directives were also enacted to provide credit, training and employment opportunities for women. Foremost of these are Republic Act 7882, 7192, 8289 and 6725. In order to specifically address women's needs, programs and projects such as the Women Workers Employment and Entrepreneurship Development, Promotion of Rural Employment through Self-Employment and Entrepreneurship Development, and Grameen Bank Replication Program were implemented. To alleviate the multiple burden of women, RA 6972 was enacted mandating the setting up of day care centers for every village nationwide.

both here and abroad. Her foreign exposure was instrumental in getting her clients from Germany, Japan and Switzerland. Another TST loan of P50,000 helped her in sourcing the raw materials for her crafts. Her business now employs 27 regular workers and 35 indirect workers, mostly out-of-school youth, housewives and inmates from the provincial jail.

As a village official, Siason linked up with the Department of Education, Culture and Sports and through its nonformal education program, carried out skills training on flower and decor making for the out-of-school youth of her village. This gave them the opportunity to simultaneously learn new skills and trade and engage in livelihood activities.

For her efforts, she had earned various recognition and awards. But this is secondary to the knowledge that because of a thriving business she has nurtured since its inception, she is able to make a difference in the lives of ordinary people.

ducation and training

Government continues to provide free public education to elementary and high school students. Gender concepts continue to be included in the curricula of the public school education system to promote responsible and shared parenthood and non-stereotyping of women's roles. Women can join a technology-based education and training program that gives them equal opportunities to enroll in industrial and vocational courses traditionally dominated by males.

Scholarship programs are also available for qualified female and male students, so are

Fulfilling Women's Potentials through Training

The Women's Center of the Technological Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), set up by the Japanese and Philippine governments, conducts skills training for women. But interwoven in its regular training programs are sessions on how women can use their other potentials so they can be effective members of their community.

The Center provides free training for low income women. The training are in the areas of agro-processing, garments, hotel and restaurant management, ceramics, jewelry and crafts, gifts and housewares, and the nontraditional courses of electronics, welding, and

literacy programs and livelihood training for rural women, women in indigenous communities, and women with disabilities. In order to provide equal opportunities for women to avail of training and scholarships, both here and abroad, stringent requirements like marital status and presence of young children were removed.

Likewise, more programs servicing women's literacy in the rural areas through the Non-Formal Education Program and Reading Education Training Program and Women's Literacy Class and Values Program were implemented.

automotive. Combined with these skills training are empowerment skills training on entrepreneurship, gender sensitivity, leadership, work ethics and values formation, and cooperative management.

The Center also has a Women in Business program for micro and small entrepreneurs. The program conducts training and fora, research studies on entrepreneurship development, and market link-ups. It provides its women clients access to capital or credit, better promotion and marketing of products, and information on how to start a business or maintain an existing one, among others.

It is not only Filipino women who benefit from the Center's programs. It has recently conducted training and conferences where the participants were women entrepreneurs from the Asia-Pacific region.

omen and health

Delivery of services in the areas of Safe Motherhood, Screening for Breast and Cervical Cancer, Family Planning, and Domestic Violence was intensified. Women's and Children's Protection Units were set up in almost all government hospitals in order to properly address the concerns of women victims of violence. Interventions by these units include the training of hospital personnel on the proper treatment of cases of VAW, integration of VAW issues into the

medical and nursing curricula, and coordination with police and counseling networks.

The health department created an Office of Special Concerns to coordinate all programs and projects related to women's health, including their reproductive health concerns, and

Technology and a Village

Hinunangan is an island community in Southern Leyte, one of the country's poorest provinces. Everyday, women and children from the island take a 30-minute travel to the mainland to get their supply of potable water. Soon, all this — and more — may change, thanks to solar technology.

Like other remote, rural areas in the country, Hinunangan had no electricity and very limited access to basic services, such as health services and water. This condition was enough for the Department of Interior and Local Government to include Hinunangan in its Municipal Solar Infrastructure project that is supported by the Australian Agency for International Development. An Australian firm, the BP Solar Australia Pty Limited, would manufacture and install the photovoltaic systems in the island.

institutionalize an integrated approach to service delivery. Some 30 per cent of the P25.2 billion public investment package for the health sector have been set aside for women's health. The Women's Health and Development Program was created where participatory strategies that enable women to take control of their health are integrated. A Reproductive Health Care approach to the Family Planning program was adopted to focus

As components of the solar infrastructure project, the people of Hinunangan were provided with supplies and facilities for basic health services, a water supply system, and lighting for communal areas, such as markets and wharves. The island's rural health center can now better deliver health care and services and people need not go to the district hospital in the mainland for emergencies.

This project has specifically benefitted women of Hinunangan primarily because of the improved access to safe water source. It also enabled the women to be acquainted with technology and to learn how to manage it. With the introduction of solar technology in their island, they hope that brighter and better days are ahead of them.

not only on contraception, but to include other health areas such as maternal health care, prevention of abortions, management of STDs, adolescent reproductive health, prevention and treatment of VAW and treatment of infertility. Hospitals were also encouraged to be mother-and-baby friendly to improve nutrition and bonding.

violence against women

Laws penalizing acts of violence against women, such as rape and sexual harassment, have been enacted as well as the laws creating crisis centers nationwide and family courts, and the rape victims assistance and protection act of 1997.

Bills are filed in Congress that address domestic violence, violence against women in intimate relationships, and incest, trafficking of Filipino women and their matching for marriage to foreigners. Women and child protection desks have been set up in police precincts and family courts have been created to try cases of domestic violence and other forms of

Fighting Violence against Women

It started as a pilot project in 1993, an undertaking to test the effectiveness of a possible intervention to respond to cases of violence against women. At that time, except for rape, this issue was generally considered a domestic problem, something that should be settled in the privacy of the home. But women, because of their experiences of violence, knew and felt differently. They were convinced that threats and acts of violence were simply not done in a civilized society, especially if the reason for this was a person's sex.

The project started from the initiatives of women nongovernment organizations. They proposed to the leaders of the Philippine National Police that gender awareness training be given to police officers. The aim was to enable them to handle cases of violence against women with

physical abuse within the family. Social services have been expanded to include the setting up of shelters and substitute homes for women in crisis as well as the delivery of legal, psychological and group support to women and children victims and survivors.

A total of 51 Women and Children Protection Units in government hospitals nationwide were established to service victims of violence. In every police station, a women and children's desk was set up to handle cases on VAW. Police officers were given training for the proper treatment of victims.

sensitivity and an understanding of their peculiar demands not present in the usual police cases.

A follow-up action to the training was the setting up of a women's desk in one of the precincts in Quezon City. It dealt exclusively with cases involving women victims, specifically cases of violence against them. By the middle of the '90s, the country's President directed the PNP to establish women's desks in all city precincts nationwide. The PNP Reorganization Act of 1998 went further and directed that the desks, now called the women and children's desks, be set up in all police stations to handle cases of gender-based crimes, particularly abuse and violence committed against women and children. To date 92 per cent of police stations have complied with this directive. They are managed mostly by women police officers who function, according to a fellow officer, as part investigator, part social worker, part psychologist, part philanthropist, part counsel, and part therapist.

omen and armed conflict

Women, especially those at the grassroots or members of indigenous communities, were active in peace building efforts and peace building initiatives at the national and local levels. A major initiative undertaken was the conduct of Muslim Women's Peace Conference. The Women and Culture of Peace Program was likewise established to foster dialogue among Christians, Muslims and Lumads.

Government sought women's participation in the peace process, involving them in dialogues and workshops to integrate their experiences and perspectives in settling hostilities in their communities. To date, there are two women in the government peace panel currently negotiating with rebel forces. For women and children displaced by hostilities, evacuation centers that offer temporary refuge and the most basic of social services have been set up.

women in power and decision-making

The Philippine Constitution affirms the role of women in nation-building and the fundamental equality before the law of women and men.

This is operationalized by measures that promote women's representation in decision-making bodies at the local and national levels as well as their participation in public and political life. For instance, laws that mandate all government agencies to integrate women's concerns in national development such as the "Women in Development and Nation-Building Act" were enacted. A Memorandum Circular on Equal Representation of women and men in third level positions was likewise passed in 1999. The Career Advancement Program for Women in Government Service (CAPWINGS) was also adopted to stream women up to positions of power and influence by enhancing support mechanisms, policy strengthening and development, capability building and advocacy, training and other enabling mechanisms. A directory of qualified women for third level positions in government was developed to aid appointing authorities in identifying qualified women nominees.

omen and the economy

There were gender-related developments that paved the way for better employment conditions and income-generating opportunities for women. Government initiated programs on microenterprises for women agrarian reform beneficiaries, lending schemes for rural women, employment assistance to women with disabilities, livelihood opportunities for returning migrant workers, researches directed at increasing women's participation in the economy, and implemented measures designed to eliminate segregation and all forms of employment

Women Unite for Mutual Gains

For a group of women in San Miguel, Bulacan, earning extra income starts with coming together and organizing themselves into an association. They formed the Kababaihan sa Kaunlaran ng Barangay Batasan in 1998, and embarked on projects that would improve their lives.

In 1994, the group was granted a loan of P20,000 through the Women Workers' Employment Entrepreneurship Development program of the Department of Labor and Employment. By 1999, it reported a capital build-up fund of P320,000. Through the years, it was also able to receive grants from such development organizations as the Japan International

discrimination. Among the laws passed to support these programs are RA 6725, RA 7882, RA 7192, RA 8289, RA 8291, and RA 8402. Specific policy reforms were adopted to expand women's economic opportunities, as follows: consent of both spouses in all land-related transactions, making gender-responsiveness one of the elements of a viable Agrarian Reform Community, determination of impact of projects on women as one of the criteria for the issuance of Environmental Impact Certificates, and participation of women in community-based management of resources.

Cooperation Agency, the Canadian International Development Agency, and the United Nations Fund for Women.

The group developed among themselves a system of inter-profit sharing for its members. It carries out four income generating activities, a subcontract sewing project, rice trading, farm equipment rental, and a hog-raising project.

But the women did not limit themselves to just these economic activities. It has recently been commended as the most active organization among San Miguel's 49 barangays. It also won the most distinguished women's organization award for its greening project for the town.

nstitutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

With gender mainstreaming as the overarching strategy, the government created various institutional mechanisms to achieve its mission of gender equality.

The national women's machinery was transformed into a more proactive institution by virtue of Executive Order 208. Its functions were reformulated to: (1) institute the gender responsiveness of national development plans and coordinate the preparation, assessment and updating of the National Plan for women; (2) ensure the implementation of the National Plan and monitor the performance of government agencies in the implementation of the Plan at all levels; (3) undertake continuing advocacy to promote economic, social and political empowerment of women and provide technical assistance in the setting-up and strengthening of mechanisms on gender mainstreaming; and (4) ensure that the gains achieved by Filipino women due to the Philippine culture and tradition shall be preserved and enhanced in the process of modernization.

A five-year institutional strengthening project (1996-2001) being supported by CIDA is presently being implemented by the national machinery. Key agencies at the national and subnational levels are included as the national machinery's partners in this project. Among these partners are the oversight agencies responsible for development planning, national budgeting, local governments, and managing the bureaucracy. The project aims to enhance the capability of the national machinery and its partners to direct the processes of gender mainstreaming by developing systems,

skills and tools for gender-responsive planning and policy making. The partnership between the national machinery and the agencies underlines the fact that gender mainstreaming is not only the concern of the Commission, but of every agency of government, especially those who have oversight functions.

Another component of the project is the setting up of GAD Resource Centers based in state universities at the subnational level. Current efforts in gender mainstreaming are generally undertaken at the national level. The GAD Resource Center taps the network of GAD advocates, trainers, researchers and service providers in the regions to carry out programs on GAD training, information exchange, technical assistance, and research and development. The aim is for gender mainstreaming to make significant inroads in the regions, provinces, cities and towns outside the country's capital region.

GAD Focal Point System

Focal persons on GAD were designated by agencies with no less than an Undersecretary as head. To date, there are focal points in 56 government agencies at the national level and 10 at the subnational level. The designation of persons to lead GAD in their respective agencies has been keyed up through the introduction of a system approach. Their activities have been providing the national women's machinery means to gather information that feed into its work in terms of policy review and development.

Several bodies were organized to put together the country's response to various international commitments. One of these is the Multi-sectoral Committee on International Development Commitments. It is tasked to coordinate and monitor the International Human Development commitments of the country including its commitments to the 4th World Conference on Women. A higher-level group wherein MC-IHDC feed its recommendations is the Technical Board of the NEDA Social Development Committee. This committee is also concerned with the country's compliance to other international commitments which are the International Conference on Population and Development, World Summit on Social Development, Istanbul Conference on Shelter and Human Settlements or the Habitat II. The SDC, being the highest social development policy-making body under the Board of the national planning body, spearheaded the discussions on various gender concerns. Some of these are ensuring equal representation of women in the third level positions of the government, prostitution in the Philippines, and the anti-domestic violence act.

The national women's machinery has also instituted an inter-agency mechanism to address the issue of VAW which include private organizations and NGOs working in this sector. The purpose of this is to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated campaign towards the eradication of VAW in the country.

A total of 1,442 Women and Children's Desk in police precincts all over the country were established to ensure that women and children victims are treated and handled properly.

uman rights of women

A separate chapter for the concerns of women and priority programs addressing them was included in the Philippine Human Rights Plan drafted in 1995. The Philippine Human Rights Commission formed an inter-agency coordinating committee that provided information on the human rights situation in the country, including information on the needs of women migrants, newly enacted laws on women, and institutional mechanisms to promote human rights at the local level. The Migrants Advisory and Information Network/System (MAIN/MAIS) were established to disseminate migration concerns and information to the public. The creation of Barangay Human Rights Action Centers enabled complainants to save time, effort and monetary expenses in filing their complaints. In the international arena, the Philippines was an active participant in the drafting of the optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) that gives women a forum for articulating violations of the CEDAW.

Human Rights Through Radio

Women's rights are human rights. This was affirmed during the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. Ordinary people, however, are still not aware of this. This is why the Cebu Women's Network, an organization of women in government and the private sector, initiated the Women's Kapihan. It was a two-hour panel discussion on women's issues aired monthly over the radio. The panelists were gender advocates from various sectors.

The forum tried to educate their listeners on concerns that confront today's women, especially sexual harassment and job discrimination on account of sex. Along with this, women victims of these issues were able to access legal and psychosocial services. While violence against women was the main concern of the program, it was also able to tackle subjects such as women's consumer rights, child abuse, participation of women in freedom movements, development and feminist lawyering, the family code, rural women workers, gender and development, women and the environment and the role of women in labor.

omen and Media

Philippine media can be a very powerful ally of women in their quest for a gender fair and equal society. However, they continue to downplay issues on women although there are already a number of gender advocates among media practitioners. In particular, a network of local media practitioners was established to ensure combined training, exchange of data, and facilitation of improved coverage and

Communicating the Platform for Action

Filipinos are basically a listening public. They would rather watch TV or listen to the radio than read newspapers and magazines. The Philippine Information Agency took this into account when it sought to promote public awareness of the Platform for Action. Since 1995, it has been producing 30-second public service advertisements on a specific concern of the Platform for Action. These were aired on the six major TV networks and cable channels all over the country. The PIA hoped to raise public consciousness and understanding of women's issues to such a level that people could be mobilized to take positive actions to address them.

reporting of women's issues. Government media, on the other hand, occasionally produced and disseminated information and education materials on various women's concerns, including a briefing module on women's rights that promoted a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in media. The government also adopted a policy on the prohibition of the showing of pornographic or violent films in land and sea transport.

omen and the environment

The country's strategy for sustainable development called on both women and men to protect the environment and use resources properly as they pursue economic growth. Measures were implemented to operationalize women's participation in environmental programs, including designating women members to the Protected Area Management Board, integrating gender concerns in plans and activities of small and medium-scale forest plantations, determining the impact of environmental projects on women, articulating gender concerns in the implementation of the Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) program and the industrial forest management program, and instituting gender

The Value of Gender Analysis

The Coastal Environment Program of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources consciously adopted a gender and development framework when it was implemented in Pangangan Island. The Program aimed to develop and protect coastal communities and help the people use their coastal resources in a sustainable way. It was implemented in Pangangan in 1994 and was able to involve 54 per cent of its population. It initiated projects on mangrove rehabilitation, tree plantation, and fish sanctuary, as well livelihood projects such as mango propagation, hog dispersal, lending investment, backyard gardening, goat dispersal, and consumer store.

In 1998 GAD was integrated in the program by identifying gender concerns and issues affecting project activities. People involved in the projects were given not only technical training but training and workshops on gender sensitivity that focused on gender awareness, legal mandates for GAD, violence against women, and sexual harassment. Gender analysis was also conducted to

parity in preparing the community resources management framework of the CBFM program. Environmental laws, administrative orders, and memorandum circulars are increasingly becoming gender-responsive. One of these major laws is the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA) which includes women as one of the special areas of concerns whose participation in the formulation of agricultural and fisheries modernization plan is promoted. As a matter of policy, a women-impact analysis in Environmental Impact Studies is being required for approval and granting of Environmental Compliance Certificates (ECCs).

establish baseline data on the socioeconomic and demographic profile of the beneficiaries. It was also employed using the Participatory Rural Appraisal on Gender and Environment (PRAGEN) to design, evaluate, and implement environmental projects. The results of the gender analysis were translated into a gender responsive plan for the island's development. Had it not been for gender analysis, the projects would have been concerned only with resource management and development. Instead, they generated data on gender needs, concerns, opportunities and constraints that enhanced the projects' impact.

The women of the island, more than anyone else, benefited greatly from this. They became more motivated to participate in community activities and assumed an active role in environmental protection. They became aware of their rights and realized that they are equal partners of men. Partnership meant, among other things, sharing equally the work at home and in the field, and working together would result in the collective good of their community.

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Challenges

The Beijing Platform for Action is alive and well in the country, although the progress of its implementation has to be accelerated. The entire government has to be accountable for it. Agencies must claim their role in translating the Platform for Action into their respective agenda for women, especially the areas of concern that pertain to their sectors. At the same time, an effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism must be put in place so those agencies can assess and keep track of their efforts.

Lessening negative effects of globalization

A major challenge would be the government's response to trade and liberalization. These twin trends would undoubtedly continue to influence economic decisions and directions of the government. They would produce winners and losers among the country's economic players, including the workers who would be affected favorably or adversely by them. The government must be prepared to put in place safety net measures to assist those who would be adversely affected. Poverty alleviation programs that benefit marginalized women must also be continued.

Promoting access to information technology

Informatics has created a whole new line of work: encoding, programming, software and hardware development and maintenance of information systems and their machines.

While informatics has opened up new work opportunities, the position of Filipino working women and men vis-a-vis the rest of the world may not appear too rosy. Encoding would be at the

lowest end of the production line for information. Software development, which commands higher wages, are likely to occur abroad, or, as happening now, to be done in the country for foreign firms. Encoders are expected to be women, while engineers, who would occupy the higher positions in the hierarchy as programmers and hardware specialists, would likely be men. Hence, the danger is imminent that the information industry will replicate anew a hierarchy of gender differentiated jobs, a stratification that may cut across national boundaries and effect an international division of labor that has begun in the 1980s. Moreover, bringing home data or word processing jobs will just be the latest form of flexibilization, a labor market trend that pushes workers to casual and informal-sector jobs.

Enhancing government's response to VAW

The government, NGOs and the civil society should continue to be firm allies of women victims and survivors of violence. It is now impossible to put back the shroud of silence surrounding VAW. Yet, there are still insufficient laws that would redress these basic violations of women's rights. There must be more stringent legislation to penalize those engage in trafficking of women and children, illegal recruitment, and undocumented migration. The law on prostitution must be amended to shift criminal liability from the prostituted women to the pimps or procurers. Specific measures should also be legislated to address domestic violence. These must protect not only the legal spouses of the batterers but all abused women in intimate relationships. The implementors should learn how to validate new knowledge and learning, and to process realizations experienced during their implementation period. Government must implement interventions that create greater understanding of the root causes of violence against women and strengthen institutional mechanisms that produce adequate data on the various forms of violence. The justice system must effectively enforce laws and improve responses in handling VAW-related cases.

Future Actions

overnment remains resolute in fulfilling the commitments it made in Beijing. For the future, it hopes to focus on the following initiatives:

the pursuit of South-South cooperation among developing countries by establishing a capability-building institute for systematic sharing of learning and development of skills among officials and staff of national women's machineries;

development of a Medium-Term GAD Plan for 2000 to 2004 with a women's agenda for empowerment, gender equality and poverty eradication as its underlying basis;

operationalization of the poverty eradication program within the context of gender mainstreaming;

strengthening of government institutions toward a greater capacity for gender equality while responding to gender issues in poverty eradication through programs and projects. This is expected to generate positive changes in the lives of women in terms of improved welfare, greater access to resources, higher levels of conscientization, meaningful participation in decision making, and better control of their lives.

use of the GAD budget for specific measures for women empowerment, check on accountabilities by oversight and policy agencies of government, and administration of a gender audit scheme by the Commission on Audit;

special attention to specific groups of women such as girl children, women victims of prostitution and trafficking,

and overseas women workers, the pursuit of more relevant programs for rural women, urban poor, and indigenous women, and the strengthening of measures to promote the mental health of vulnerable groups of women;

launching of a P1 billion lending window for women entrepreneurs, with assistance from banks and financial institutions; and

continued campaign for the passage of a bill transforming the present women's commission into a development authority on women with stronger clout, mandate and organizational structure, and setting up a P1 billion perpetual trust fund whose interest earnings will be used in assisting subnational, national, regional and international pursuits to advance gender equality.

With these future actions, and the current ones being implemented at present, it is safe to say that government is still within sight of its goal to secure equality, development and peace for Filipino women. Its work is definitely far from over. But there are still the next five years to look forward to, time to build on the gains, address the gaps, and confront the challenges of the women's agenda.

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