



*Two years
after Beijing*

PHILIPPINES

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Two years after Beijing

**Actions on priority areas
of concern under the
Platform for Action of the
Fourth World Conference
on Women**

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National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women
Philippines 1997

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Acronyms

Agencies, Institutions and Organizations

ACADED	- Anti-Child Abuse, Discrimination and Exploitation Division	LGU	- Local Government Unit
BAS	- Bureau of Agricultural Statistics	NBI	- National Bureau of Investigation
CFO	- Commission on Filipinos Overseas	NCRFW	- National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women
CHR	- Commission on Human Rights	NSO	- National Statistics Office
CIDA	- Canadian International Development Agency	NEDA	- National Economic and Development Authority
CSC	- Civil Service Commission	NRO	- NEDA Regional Office
DA	- Department of Agriculture	NYC	- National Youth Commission
DENR	- Department of Environment and Natural Resources	ONCC	- Office for Northern Cultural Communities
DILG	- Department of Interior and Local Government	PIA	- Philippine Judges Association
DOH	- Department of Health	PNP	- Philippine National Police
DOLE	- Department of Labor and Employment	POPCOM	- Population Commission
DPCR	- Directorate for Police Community Relations	SRC	- Social Reform Council
DSWD	- Department of Social Welfare and Development	UCWS	- University Center for Women's Studies
DTI	- Department of Trade and Industry	UN-CEDAW	- United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
GSIS	- Government Service Insurance System	UNIFEM	- United Nations Fund for Women

Other Terms

APEC	- Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation	MC	- Memorandum Circular
CAR	- Cordillera Autonomous Region	PFA	- Platform for Action
DIC	- Decorum and Investigation Committee	PPGD	- Philippine Plan for Gender Responsive Development
EO	- Executive Order	RA	- Republic Act
FY	- Fiscal Year	SRA	- Social Reform Agenda
GAD	- Gender and Development	VAW	- Violence Against Women
IJA	- Institute of Judicial Administration	VAWC	- Violence Against Women and Children
IST	- Industrial Science and Technology	WCD	- Women and Children's Desk
MAIN	- Migrants Advisory and Information Network	WEDC	- Women in Especially Difficult Circumstances

Introduction

Two years since the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW), the Philippine government is still at it: pursuing its commitments, quietly but surely, to the Beijing Platform for Action (PFA). This was the framework adopted during the conference that firmly established the women's agenda for equality, development and peace. It integrated the gender perspectives in policies and programs of government and civil society and set concrete measures to address the critical areas of concern confronting women worldwide.

At the same time that the women's conference was being held, President Fidel V. Ramos issued Executive Order 273 that approved the Philippine Plan for Gender Responsive Development (PPGD), 1995-2025. This long-term blueprint for women's advancement is the main mechanism to implement the PFA in the Philippines.

These two documents, the PFA and the PPGD, guide agencies in developing their respective plans on gender and development (GAD), one of the government's priority thrusts. The agency GAD plan spells out the programs, projects and activities an agency would undertake in a specified period to respond to the gender issues and concerns of its clientele. To ensure that these programs, projects and activities are carried out, funding sources are allocated to them through the GAD budget. The GAD budget pertains to a mandate, under the General Appropriations Act (GAA), that all government agencies must allocate at least 5 percent of their total agency budget for programs and projects on gender and development. In 1997, 71 agencies formulated their GAD budget with 26 of them meeting or exceeding the minimum

level of five percent. The amount allocated by agencies to GAD rose from P1.5 billion in 1996 to P2.9 billion in 1997.

These initiatives at the executive level of government are complemented by measures instituted by the legislature. Congress passed legislations during the year, a number of which are considered as landmark laws for women. Among these were a new rape law that is more reflective of the realities of its victims and survivors, and a law that created family courts that would try domestic and family cases, a greater number of which involved women and children.

In the judiciary, sensitization of judges and key staff of the court were done to ensure that the gender perspective of the law are truly understood in the administration of justice. It is recognized, however, that these efforts need to be intensified. The number of gender advocates in the ranks of judges, court prosecutors and trial attorneys are still few and should be an area of advocacy in the years ahead.

All these actions of the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the government aim to address the 12 areas of concern of the PFA, critical in improving women's lives and in removing all obstacles to their full and equal participation in all spheres of life. The next pages share the specific measures taken in 1997 by the government in collaboration with women NGOs and individual partners in the civil society covering seven priority areas of concern of the PFA. It also identifies the remaining challenges and gaps that advocates and policy makers need to address to sustain the gains generated by years of hard work of government and non-government champions of women's rights. It is hoped that this document would help inspire and aid them in their continuing struggle to attain the vision of a gender responsive society, where women and men truly contribute and benefit from development on equal terms.

*Actions on
Priority Areas of
Concern*

A. Women and poverty

Liberating the poorest Filipinos from the ratchet of poverty was a vision that the Philippine government tries to address through its Social Reform Agenda (SRA). A flagship program of the government, the SRA recognizes that women are among the poorest in the marginalized sectors of society and that they are carrying much of the burdens of economic deprivation.

The presence of a sectoral representative for women and the representation of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) in the Social Reform Council ensures the monitoring of actions by concerned government agencies on a set of minimum agenda for women in conditions of extreme poverty. This agenda includes measures to address violence against women, representation of women in positions of power and decision-making and access of women to economic resources such as capital, information, training, technology and marketing assistance.

In 1997, four major laws strengthened the policy framework of the national anti-poverty campaign. A monumental legislation, the Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act (RA 8425) institutionalizes the social reform and poverty alleviation program of the government, a measure that would ensure the continuity of the efforts started in the present administration. This law also creates the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) which will serve as the coordinating and advocacy body for the implementation of the SRA. It recognizes the importance of integrating women and gender concerns and specifically states that the SRA shall pursue a gender responsive approach to fight poverty. Women was also mentioned as one of the representatives to the Board of the

NAPC. The creation of a special credit window for the basic sectors, including women in the countryside is also provided in the law.

The Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (RA 8371) was also passed, which recognizes, protects and promotes the rights of indigenous communities/peoples and creates the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples. It provides for the representation of indigenous women in decision-making and the recognition of their important roles in the development of society. Another statute, the new Assistance to Small and Medium Enterprises Act (RA 8289) strengthens the promotion and development of and assistance to small and medium scale enterprises. The law would be beneficial to the poor, including women, as it would provide a range of opportunities in setting-up and managing their own business.

The Revised GSIS Act of 1997 (RA 8291) expanded and increased the coverage of the Government Service Insurance System, and instituted reforms therein. The law includes a wider range of benefits to members. Women are half of the total government workforce. Since women generally outlive men, the women members and the members' widow and their family members are inclined to benefit more from it.

Within the framework of the SRA, government agencies converge under the Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services towards ensuring a holistic approach to the needs of women in the poorest communities. The Department of Agriculture (DA) launched the Gintong Ani (golden harvest) Program for Marginal and Poverty Stricken Areas which aims to provide livelihood and stabilize food production in poverty stricken areas of 20 priority provinces. Entrepreneurial development and training on food processing, packaging and marketing were conducted for 2,356 rural women and youth. Projects under the Livelihood Enhancement for Agricultural Development 2000 Program were also financed, benefiting 2,096 rural families. For coconut farmers, financial incentives for economic livelihood development were granted to 42 projects of 12,480 coconut farmers.

The DA Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and QUEDANCOR launched this year the Integrated Livelihood Program for the Fisherfolk (ILPF). Capital loan assistance amounting to a total of P905,000 were released under the ILPF to finance alternative projects for fishers and their families such as seaweed production, fish vending/wholesaling and crab fattening, among others.

An on-going program of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is the Tulong sa Tao Para sa Kababaihan (assistance to people for the women). It has reportedly assisted some 124,129 microenterprises and generated 125,837 employment nationwide as of December 1997. The same department provided training which served a total of 12,881 trainees as of June 1997. Of these, 72 percent were women. These training were designed to develop the economic capabilities of women in cottage based industries. The center also developed training programs for women in non-traditional trades such as furniture and bricks making.

Women in the informal sector were targeted by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) through its Women Workers Employment and Entrepreneurship Development Program. In 1997, the program provided entrepreneurial skills training and facilitated the approval of 3,007 income generating projects for 3,902 women informal sector workers.

Under the Day Care Service Law (RA 6972) day care centers are expected to be set up in every barangay. This measure provides care and social learning opportunities to pre-school children while their parents engage in economic activities. As of December 1997, DSWD reported a total of 33,665 established barangay day care centers nationwide, constituting some 71 percent of the total targeted centers.

The landmark laws and program measures being pushed by the government represent substantial gains in the country's quest for lasting solutions to the problem of poverty. Yet, it may require considerable time before its impacts could be felt by their intended beneficiaries.

In the meantime, Filipinos have to contend with greater difficulties as a result of the currency crisis that plague the Philippines and the rest of the Southeast Asian countries. The cuts in budget for social services, the laying off of overseas Filipino workers, the rise in the cost of basic necessities -- all these are bound to affect women more, they being primarily responsible in handling the household economy.

Safety nets and cost-cutting measures should therefore be more sensitive to the effects of the present crisis to women. Social services should be exempted from cost-cutting measures to ensure that vulnerable groups like women and children are not denied access to such services. Policies and mechanisms to regulate and monitor increases in tuition fees, housing rentals and basic commodities should be instituted. Finally, the collapse of many businesses that caused the demise of jobs might be a good reason to rethink the macro economic policies towards giving priority to local businesses and protecting them from further decline.

Actions on women and poverty

- **Enacted the Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act (RA 8425), Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (RA 8371), Assistance to Small and Medium Enterprises Act (RA 8289) and Revised GSIS Act (RA 8291)**
- **Launched the Gintong Ani Program for Marginal and Poverty Stricken Areas and the Integrated Livelihood Program for the Fisherfolk**
- **Provided entrepreneurial training and capital loans to poor women, youth, informal sector workers and fishers**
- **Continued the setting up of day care center in every barangay**

B. Violence against women

The issue of violence against women (VAW) continues to gain a space in the national agenda. Although the increasing number of reported VAW cases may look alarming, in some ways, advocates view it as a positive development. On one hand, it indicates that an increasing number of victims are no longer ashamed or afraid to report VAW incidents to authorities. On the other hand, the increasing number of reported cases provides a compelling reason for policy makers and program implementors to elevate VAW in their order of priorities.

The continuing collaboration of concerned government agencies in providing support services, protecting women and penalizing offenders reflects the government's concern to address the problem. Major policy and program initiatives this year showed what could be achieved with concerted action and support from key partners in the civil society.

The passage of the new Anti-Rape Law (RA 8353) may be considered as the biggest accomplishment this year. What was then a crime against chastity is now a crime against person. Forms of sexual assault that were not legally considered rape before, such as the insertion of any instrument into the genital or anal orifice of another person, are now recognized as rape by sexual assault, a form of rape that could be committed against a female or a male victim. The law also implicitly recognizes the concept of marital rape with the inclusion of a clause that extinguishes the crime when rape happens during the marriage and the wife forgives the husband. Presently, information campaigns are being waged by women's groups to promote understanding of its provisions.

Government mechanisms on VAW were strengthened through the enactment of two legislations in 1997: the Act Providing Assistance and Protection to Rape Victims (RA 8505) and the Family Courts Act (RA 8369). The former mandates the establishment of a women's crisis center in every province that will extend services, such as legal aid and counselling, to VAW victims. The latter creates the family courts which will have original jurisdiction over cases of domestic violence and other forms of physical abuse.

The setting up of women and children's desks (WCDs) in all police precincts continues to be a priority of the Philippine National Police (PNP). The desks handle cases of women-related offenses and are staffed by police officers who were trained in the proper handling of such cases. Likewise, the Institute of Judicial Administration (IJA) of the University of the Philippines (UP) is training newly appointed and executive judges on VAW. Recognizing that VAW is also a health issue, the government is implementing a project that will, among others, develop a model for crisis centers in government hospitals. It reviews services and protocols for the handling of VAW cases of frontline government agencies to see where these may be improved so that they may be more responsive to the needs of victims and survivors.

In the absence of a law on domestic violence, the President issued a directive to all heads of agencies in government to take action on the issue. Government agencies responded by setting up VAW desks or focal points in the workplace, conducting awareness raising, and introducing innovative approaches to existing frontline services, such as the fast lane and one-interview-system.

VAW victims receive services from concerned government agencies. The DSWD reported a total of 41,667 cases of women in especially difficult circumstances from 1991 to 1997. Cases of battered women constitute the biggest percentage (59.8%) of these. The rest were: victims of illegal recruitment (7.6%), rape (7%), victims of involuntary prostitution (7.1%), victims of armed conflict (3.6%), incest (1.6%), women in detention (.73%)

and others (12.12%). Compared to the reported figures in the second quarter of 1996, cases of battered wife and victims of involuntary prostitution increased while the rest of the cases declined. The department maintains 9 substitute homes, 16 crisis intervention centers, and community-based support mechanisms to women and children in especially difficult circumstances which served a total of 9,595 cases this year.

Implementation of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law (RA 7877) continues in government and private establishments. The DOLE conducted training on the disposition of sexual harassment cases for members of Decorum and Investigation Committees (DICs) and para counsellors of private companies and educational institutions. Based on reports and GAD plans submitted to NCRFW, nine agencies had adopted implementing rules and regulations for the law and 27 are in the process of developing it. Twenty five of the agencies have initiated the setting up of DICs and 13 have plans to conduct training for their staff.

Preparations for a survey on violence against women and children at the national level is on-going. The survey aims to review concepts, definitions, issues and problems on the generation of statistics on Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC).

The year recorded very encouraging developments. Yet, so much more remains to be done to eradicate VAW in the Philippines. Laws penalizing domestic violence, strengthening the rights of daughters in incestuous rape, suppressing the trafficking of Filipino women and amending Article 341 of the Revised Penal Code (on the white slave trade) are among the priority measures that have to be passed. More effective data gathering and a unified documentation system across agencies have to be established. This will help in tracking the levels and magnitude of incidence and forms of VAW and services required for quick and effective response.

Actions taken on violence against women

- **Enacted the Anti-Rape Law (RA 8353), Act Providing Assistance and Protection to Rape Victims (RA 8505), and Family Courts Act (RA 8369)**
- **Continued the setting up and operation of women's desks in all police precincts nationwide**
- **Conducted training for judges, VAW service providers, VAW focal points, members of DIC, and para counsellors**
- **Launched a model for VAW crisis centers in government hospitals and reviewed protocols for handling of VAW cases**
- **Improved frontline services and continued the provision of services to VAW victims**
- **Initiated preparation for the conduct of a survey on violence against women and children to review VAW concepts, definitions, issues and problems and generate statistics on VAWC**

C. Women and armed conflict

The government's effort to arrest the root causes of armed conflict immensely contributed to the cessation of hostilities in many affected localities. However, there are a few areas in the southern Philippine island of Mindanao that still experience occasional outbreaks of armed conflict, particularly between government forces and Muslim rebels. Tribal Filipinos, known as Lumads, are caught in the crossfire. Since most of the Lumads live in the forests and mountains of Mindanao, they are also waging their own struggle against forces that infringe on or seek to gain control of their ancestral lands. Most often, their struggle results in violence.

Recognizing that women are natural promoters of peace, the government had tapped Christian, Muslim and Lumad women to play an active role in moving the peace process forward. A series of dialogues, briefing and training workshops were conducted among them to strengthen their participation in the peace process. Muslim women held a Basic Orientation on Women and the Culture of Peace while Lumad women had a Pre-basic Orientation Seminar for the Lumad Local Community Leaders. Relatedly, government provided technical and financial assistance to the Bangsamoro women for the Muslim Women's Peace Conference. The conference identified strategies to harness women's perspectives in the settlement of hostilities in communities caught in armed conflict.

Service mechanisms are in place to help civilians caught in armed hostilities. The DSWD, which serves as the lead agency in providing services to individuals in crisis situations, maintains a program for women in especially

difficult circumstances. This year, it served a total of 1,412 women victims of armed conflict by providing them with counselling, livelihood assistance and temporary shelter, among others.

The attainment of lasting solutions to armed conflict would be hastened if officials and staff of the government's peace negotiating panels would view the problem from the perspectives of its victims, particularly the women. Peace panel members should therefore be gender sensitized. This will make them more responsive to the special needs of women and children caught in violent encounters between opposing forces. It will also make them more receptive to the views of the women members of the negotiating panel. A study on the conditions of women and children living in areas with armed conflict should be undertaken to help peace panel members understand its physical, psychological and social impacts to women and children and guide them in developing policies and programs to effectively manage its consequences.

Actions on women and armed conflict

- **Promoted the participation of women in the attainment of peace**
- **Conducted consultations to strengthen the roles of women in the peace process**
- **Maintained service mechanisms in support of civilians caught in armed hostilities**

D. Women in power and decision-making

Recent statistics have been helpful in correcting the misconception that Filipino women had attained full equality with men in positions of power and decision-making. They showed that elective and appointive public posts are still largely held by men. In the Tenth Congress, for instance, women comprised only around 10 percent of legislators in the House of Representatives and 16 percent in the Senate. The 22-member Executive Cabinet had only 4 women, most of whom were heads of departments/agencies that were traditionally led by women officials. Moreover, while women constituted 54.32 percent of the 1.32 million civil servants in 1996, 72.14 percent of them occupied middle rank positions. Only 34.01 percent of them were at the highest career level.

A slight increase in the number of women was noted during the year in the judiciary. The 1996 data showed some 15 percent representation or 254 women among the 1,652 judges and justices in the country. This went up to 17.77 percent in 1997, with women comprising 301 of the positions 1,694 filled-up. The same gain, however, was not attained in the 14-member Supreme Court, which continued to have only one (1) woman justice from 1993 to 1997. Similarly, the Shari'a Court which used to have a woman before 1997 is now an all-men body.

The under representation of women in politics and governance was the main target of policies and programs during the year. With the impending national election in 1998, information campaign on the Party List System Act (RA 7941) was pushed. This law promotes the proportional representation in the House of Representatives by enabling Filipinos who belong to marginalized and under-

represented sectors to become members of the House of Representatives. The law provides that women is one of the sectors qualified to organize a political party and run in the 1998 election. In partnership with NGOs, concerned government agencies developed information materials and conducted seminars and fora to encourage women to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by the law.

Representation of women in key decision-making bodies was also promoted during the year. The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997 (RA 8371) guarantees the enjoyment of equal rights and opportunities by indigenous women. Section 26 of this law specifically provides that the representation of indigenous women in the decision-making processes at all levels, as well as in the development of the society, must be ensured.

The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) also formulated an administrative order to encourage a minimum of 30 percent representation of women in barangay assemblies and in mandatory consultations with local government units and national government agencies. The representation to provincial and regional development councils of women working in the informal sector was also pushed by the DOLE through a memorandum directing its regional offices to establish coordinative linkages with such bodies.

In the bureaucracy, the Civil Service Commission (CSC) and NCRFW formulated a policy framework on gender equity in line with a proposed executive order giving women equal representation in third level positions in government. It intends to fasttrack the attainment of the targeted 40 percent representation of women in the said level by 1998. Strategies to strengthen the capacity for decision making of women executives were identified and a primer on the implementation of the Career Advancement Program for Women in Government Service (CAPWINGS) was prepared. A mentoring program for women in government was conducted for selected agencies.

The above measures helped women move up to positions of decision-making. However, numerical gains need to be complemented with awareness and technical support systems to ensure that those who hold the power will have the perspective and capability to champion the agenda of women.

Fundamental reorientation has to be aggressively pursued right in the home and during the earliest academic stages in the schools. Career counselling, actual exposure to political processes and examination of structural constraints to women as decision-makers have to be addressed. Affirmative action should be taken in the form of mandatory inclusion of women in the training and apprenticeship programs of political organizations.

Actions on women in power and decision-making

- **Pushed for the active participation of women in the 1998 elections, particularly in line with the Party List System Act (RA 7941)**
- **Passed the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (RA 8371) which directs that indigenous women must be represented in the decision-making processes at all levels**
- **Encouraged a minimum of 30 percent representation of women in barangay assemblies and in the mandatory consultations with local government units and national government offices**
- **Formulated a policy framework on gender equity for a proposed executive order fasttracking the attainment of 40 percent representation of women in third level positions in the bureaucracy by 1998**
- **Identified strategies to strengthen the capacity for decision-making of women executives**
- **Launched the mentoring program for women in government to prepare women occupying second level positions for promotion**

E. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

The Philippine government has been implementing activities to strengthen institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women since it adopted the first national development plan for women in 1989.

A five-year strategy (1996-2001) to strengthen the NCRFW and its key partner agencies in government was drawn up and is being implemented through the second phase of its Institutional Strengthening Project, which is supported by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The project, among others, will enhance NCRFW's strategic capabilities to influence how government legislation, policies and programs are developed and carried out for greater impact on women. It will assist the national planning body, the departments of budget and management, trade and industry, agriculture, environment and natural resources and labor and employment, the civil service commission, key administrative regions and pilot local government units to contribute to the effective implementation of gender equality measures.

This year, technical assistance and training on GAD were provided to NCRFW partner agencies. GAD information centers in 15 regional offices of the DILG were initiated. Focal Points were assisted in coming up with their GAD budget. To ensure efficient use of resources for GAD, 52 government agencies were also provided with tools and technical assistance to formulate their GAD plans.

Gender sensitivity training were conducted for key staff of the legislature to integrate gender perspective in public policies. A guidebook was developed

to serve as tool for policy-makers in developing gender responsive laws and policies. The NCRFW also organized the first Women Leaders Network Forum for the preparation of policy papers that included women's concerns in the discussions of leaders during the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation summit. Legislative proposals were reviewed to integrate gender concerns in the bills on poverty alleviation, amendment of the family code, anti-wife beating, anti-trafficking, solo parents, paedophilia, equal opportunity, retail trade business and women empowerment.

GAD data are being enhanced through initiatives like the development of methodology to generate statistics on violence against women and children, refinement of existing GAD indicator system, conduct of a pilot time-use survey towards the development of a framework for measuring women's contributions to the economy, formulation of a training program on the use of statistics for gender responsive local development planning and publication of statistical documents.

Researches in support of policy and program formulation were also conducted by various government agencies. These included studies on Gender and Perception of Influence in Policy Making Related to Upland Ecosystem (DENR), Gender Roles in Agricultural and Aquacultural Productivity in Western Visayas (NRO VI), Gender and Development toward Empowerment and Gender Equity and Equality (POPCOM), and Piloting Strategies for Gender Integration in Local Development Processes (POPCOM).

Disaggregation of data were also undertaken in DA, DENR, NEDA. Gender responsive indicators were included in the agricultural labor force survey (BAS), and the committed and pipelined programs and projects for official development assistance (NEDA). NEDA also generated data on GAD related programs and projects in the Philippines. At the regional level, Region V produced a handbook on Bicol women and men, a list of gender responsive programs and projects in the region for the years 1996-1998, and a handbook on GAD concerns. Region VI integrated women's concerns in implementing and monitoring its Regional Poverty Alleviation Action Plan, while monitoring of GAD

activities were undertaken by regions I, IV, XI and the Cordillera Autonomous Region (CAR).

The above accomplishments show an encouraging picture. To strengthen and sustain these gains, there is a need to continue increasing allies at the local and legislative fronts. The bill seeking to strengthen the NCRFW should be re-filed in the next Congress and a stronger advocacy should be waged to ensure its enactment. Technical support in implementing GAD plans of agencies should be instituted through a GAD resource referral system. Accountabilities in addressing GAD concerns among statistical and data collection units of concerned line departments and LGUs should be defined. Gender mainstreaming in the regions need to be appraised and an effective monitoring and evaluation system to track the effects of implementation should be set up.

Actions on institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

- **Provided training to partner agencies, initiated the launching of GAD information centers in 15 regional offices of DILG, oriented GAD focal points on GAD budgeting and assisted 52 line agencies in developing a GAD implementation plan**
- **Sensitized key staff of Congress, developed GAD mainstreaming guidebook for policy-makers and legislators, and reviewed legislative proposals to integrate GAD**
- **Developed methodology to generate statistics on VAWC, refined a GAD indicator system, piloted time-use survey towards the development of a framework for measuring women's contributions to the economy, developed training on the use of statistics for gender responsive local development planning, and published statistical documents**
- **Conducted GAD researches in support of policy and program formulation, improved data base and systems toward gender responsiveness, produced regional tools for GAD planning and integrated GAD concerns in monitoring**

F. Human rights of women

All women's rights are human rights. The full recognition of this principle underlies the national campaign to advance women's status at all fronts.

Over the years, a strong body of legal and administrative measures have been adopted to fulfill the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (UN-CEDAW) and the country's Constitutional policies on women. The Women in Development and Nation Building Act, Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act, Mail Order Bride Act, Anti-Sexual Harassment Act, and the Family Courts Act are only a few of these laws.

The translation of these policies and laws into concrete programs and projects is a challenge that government agencies pursue through national, sectoral and agency plans. The national development plan and its accompanying sectoral plans such as the Philippine Human Rights Plan, the Ten Year Investment Plan for Health, and the Philippine Population Management Plan reflect the concerns of women .

The Philippines is also active in promoting the integration of the human rights of women in the United Nations system. It actively supported relevant UN resolutions on women's rights and participated in pertinent conferences of international bodies.

Presently, the country had ratified 20 human rights instruments, including the Women's Convention. To promote the effective monitoring of its obligations

under these instruments, the President created an Inter-agency Coordinating Committee on Human Rights through Administrative Order 370, dated 10 December 1997. The Committee, composed of top officials from 16 government agencies, was mandated to respond to requests for information on human rights violations perpetrated upon individuals or groups in the country and to prepare the Philippine reports to UN human rights bodies.

This year, actions at the program level focused at the needs of women migrants, public information on newly-enacted laws on women, and strengthening of institutional mechanisms for human rights implementation at the local level.

The Migrants Advisory and Information Network continued to raise the consciousness of the public on the realities of migration and provide information and counselling services to prospective migrants. Information campaigns were held at regional, provincial, municipal and barangay levels and education modules were developed for inclusion in social studies and values education in the schools. Information materials, which included a guidebook on the rights of women migrant workers, were developed and disseminated.

Through the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), a sex-disaggregated data system on Filipino fiancées or spouses of foreign nationals is being maintained for easy tracking. The Shared Government Information System is being mobilized to facilitate data sharing among agencies concerned with the movement of Filipino overseas. The Sponsors' Watchlist Information System is also activated year-round to identify foreign fiancées who may have petitioned more than one partners.

Services provided to Filipino migrants include counselling to help couples cope with the difficulties of intercultural marriages, feedback and exchange of personal letters with Filipinos married to foreign nationals, peer counselling for emigrants within the age bracket of 13-19, and predeparture and post arrival orientation. The orientation included women workers' rights to help

them protect themselves against abuse or violence. Likewise, more stringent restrictions were implemented at air and sea ports to prevent the proliferation of illegal recruiters that provide escort services to arriving migrants. Strict administrative measures were instituted in the selection of destination countries and employment for migrant women workers to minimize the risk of getting them into countries and occupations with highly exploitative terms.

The gender responsiveness of institutional mechanisms for human rights was also enhanced. A GAD Focal Point was strengthened at the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) and a GAD implementation plan was adopted this year. Regular gender sensitivity training were conducted and a pool of trainers on gender and human rights was set up. Human rights investigators and lawyers were also trained on women's human rights. A stage presentation on sexual harassment and the rights of women under the Anti-Sexual Harassment law was also produced. At the field level, the CHR conducted organizational development trainings for the district and club presidents of Barangay Human Rights Action Centers.

On the whole, initiatives to promote and protect women's rights are increasing. Nevertheless, initial implementation surfaced a number of infirmities in the content of some laws that should be immediately addressed. For example, technological advancements had outgrown the medium covered by the present law on mail order bride because nowadays, Filipina brides are no longer matched by mail but advertised via the internet. The anti-sexual harassment law is also weak in addressing sexual harassment done in public places, in instances where moral ascendancy is absent, and in other work environments such as in the movie and entertainment industry, among others.

The overall administrative mechanism for implementation and monitoring of laws and policies on women's rights have to be assessed to clarify the responsibilities of agencies concerned. Bills that seek the mandatory training on human rights of all government officials and employees, institutionalize human rights in the system of education and set up human rights desks in LGUs should also be revived in the next Congress.

Actions on human rights of women

- **Created an Inter-agency Coordinating Committee on Human Rights mandated to respond to information requests on human rights violations and prepare Philippine reports to UN human rights bodies**
- **Conducted gender trainings for human rights staff, lawyers and investigators and set up a pool of trainers on gender and human rights**
- **Raised public awareness on migration realities, issues and concerns and provided information and counselling to prospective migrants through the Migrants Advisory and Information Network**
- **Maintained sex-disaggregated data system on Filipino fiancées/spouses of foreign nationals; mobilized the Shared Government Information System to track movement of Filipinos overseas; and activated the Sponsors' Watchlist Information System to identify unscrupulous fiancées**
- **Provided various services to Filipino migrants and adopted more stringent policies to protect and reduce the vulnerabilities of overseas Filipino women workers**
- **Strengthened the institutional mechanisms for human rights in the national and field levels**

G. The girl child

Actions on this area of concern were directed at intensifying government response to the problems of violence against girl children and child labor.

The campaign against violence and abuse of girl children, continue to draw adherents in view of recent data that confirmed the seriousness of the problem in the Philippines. A 1996 study of the University of the Philippines Center for Women's Studies, for instance, revealed that almost all (96.5%) of victims of child abuse were young girls, majority (58.3%) of whom were aged 11 to 17. More than half of the cases involved some form of sexual abuse with incest accounting for more than 3 out of 10 cases. The Bantay Bata (child watch) hotline of the DSWD also reported that of the 8,355 child abuse cases reported from 1991 to 1996, rape was the most prevalent with 2,650 cases.

Moreover, the Directorate for Police Community Relations (DPCR) of the PNP reported that in 1997, a total of 3,687 cases of abused women and children were filed with women and children's desks nationwide. A huge percentage of these were crimes against girl children. A recent Supreme Court data also reflects that death penalty had been upheld against 534 convicts, majority of whom were rapists of children aged 12 years old and below.

To address these, fresh legislative and program measures were adopted in 1997. The Anti-Rape Law (RA 8353), which expands the definition and reclassifies rape as a crime against person, imposes the penalty of death to the offender when the offended party is under 12 years of age or is demented. Death is also the penalty when the victim is under the age of 18 and the offender

is a parent, ascendant, step-parent, guardian, relative by consanguinity or affinity within the third civil degree, or the common-law spouse of the victim's parent. The Support to Rape Victims Act (RA 8505) ensures protection and crisis assistance to victims of violence against women and children. This reinforces the programs of the DSWD for women and children in especially difficult circumstances.

The Family Courts Act of 1997 (RA 8369) was also enacted this year. It establishes the family courts and grants them exclusive original jurisdiction over child and family cases. Under this law, the dignity and worth of individuals involved, especially women and children victims, were protected by assuring secrecy and confidentiality in all stages of the proceedings.

Seminars on issues of children in especially difficult circumstances were conducted for law enforcers in line with the on-going campaign to improve the delivery of services to VAW victims.

Police mechanisms on women and children were also enhanced with the merging of women's desks and child and youth relations sections. As of December 1997, a total of 1,035 women and children's desks have been set up and managed by 1,281 trained police officers, 74 percent of whom are women. A division for women and children was also created under the PNP-DPCR to handle the monitoring, research, evaluation, training and liaisoning on offenses related to women and children. A memorandum establishing sections on women and children in all police community relations offices in the regions was also issued.

A case monitoring system was set in place featuring a data bank of all cases on women and children filed with the police. A manual of operations for women and children's desks was also developed as a tool for police officers of WCDs nationwide. In addition, an Anti-Child Abuse, Discrimination and Exploitation Division (ACADED) was set up by the NBI to respond to the growing incidence of child abuse in the country. It conducts criminal investigation and gathers

legally admissible evidence to establish probable cause and proof of the suspects' guilt. Agents and special investigators were provided with gender sensitivity training to enable them to handle the investigation of sex and child-related offenses.

The economic downtrend that hit the country this year may result in worsening conditions among sectors employing child workers, including girl child workers. Although the number of female working children is lower than their male counterpart, the figure is reportedly rising. Female child workers have also been recognized as more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. A 1995 survey of the NSO cited that around 64.4 percent of the estimated 409,849 children who live away from home were females. Majority of them (78.7%) work in other households as domestic helpers and were mostly aged 15-17, factors that reinforced their vulnerability to abuse and sexual exploitation.

Efforts to intensify the implementation of programs for child workers were spearheaded by the DOLE. This department coordinates the implementation of the Child Labor Program which features the Sagip Manggagawa (save the worker) project. During the year, the department conducted three batches of training for inter-agency members of the action teams implementing the project. These resulted in the drafting of operational procedures for enforcing the child labor laws. Tie-up with the Philippine Judges Association (PJA) was also strengthened to efficiently prosecute employers who exploit and abuse child workers.

Child labor cases were actively pursued in various municipal and regional trial courts. Successful rescue operations were likewise conducted in six regions involving working children who received custodial services for eventual reintegration with their family. For 1993 to 1997, the restitution to victims amounted to P1.6M, benefiting 149 rescued child laborers. Policy and technical guidelines classifying hazardous and nonhazardous establishments as well as guidelines and procedures on the inspection of homework and child labor conditions were also promoted.

Another law adopted was the Youth in Nation Building Act (RA 8044) which created the National Youth Commission (NYC). This body was tasked, among others, to plan, implement and oversee a national integrated youth promotion and development program. One component of this program is the formulation and implementation of the Medium-Term Youth Development Plan that complements the national development plan. The formulation of this plan is in progress and advocacies to ensure its gender responsiveness continues. The Chairperson of the NYC, a woman, is a member of the NCRFW Board of Commissioners.

Poverty continues to be the biggest stumbling block to the survival and growth of the girl child. Female children of poor families, who normally shoulder the burdens of reproductive maintenance, will remain to be the most subjected to the discomforts of subhuman living conditions. Their premature consignment to reproductive and economic responsibilities will continue to block their opportunities to education, leisure, and services for personal growth. Malnutrition, which is more prevalent among female Filipino children, will likely exact a serious toll on their physical and social well-being.

Addressing these concerns and focusing on girl children from ultra poor families shall, therefore, remain as a critical challenge to the government, NGO partners and to the circle of child, youth and women advocates. The safety nets, costcutting and long-term anti-poverty measures of the government will have to be carefully designed to ensure that sectors like children, women and youth would not be disadvantaged further. Advocacies for concerns of girl children should be strengthened as well as their representation in critical areas of decision-making. Social services for children, youth and women should be assessed as to their effectiveness and capability to address the special concerns of girl children.

Actions on the girl child

- Enacted the Youth in Nation Building Act, Family Courts Act, and the Anti-Rape Law
- Strengthened the implementation of the Sagip Manggagawa project through training of inter-agency action teams, adoption of operational guidelines for improved project implementation, tie-up with PJA, prosecution of child labor exploiters, and rescue of working children
- Set-up the Anti-Child Abuse, Discrimination and Exploitation Division (ACADED) at the NBI
- Issued policy and technical guidelines and procedures on the classification of hazardous and nonhazardous work establishments and child labor
- Conducted a children's training workshop on girl children, and the National Child Laborers' Consultative Workshop attended by child laborers representing sectoral/occupation groups such as commercial plantation, deep-sea fishing, mining, quarrying, home-based/sub-contracting work, and pyrotechnics
- Celebrated the fourth week of March as the Week for the Protection and Gender Fair Treatment of the Girl Child
- Conducted a study on Child Domestic Helper to build baseline data on domestic helpers and identify problems associated with children in domestic service for policy and program action, and a policy and action research on girl children in especially difficult circumstances
- Prepared an inventory of existing programs and projects benefiting the girl child, established an Integrated Prevention and Protection Program for Child in Tourism Entertainment and Hotel Industry in Region I, and organized information and advocacy campaigns including the production of information kit on the issues affecting girl children, musical presentation, photo exhibit, and audio visual presentations
- Piloted the organization and strengthening of Local Council for the Protection of Children in five municipalities and seven cities

Challenges and Recommendations

Two years after the Fourth World Conference on Women, the spirit of Beijing remains alive in the Philippines. The vital institutional mechanisms immediately instituted by the government in partnership with NGOs and individuals in the civil society have kept the women's agenda moving steadily forward.

Having a critical mass of gender champions and advocates, a rich body of policy and administrative measures, and institutional machineries dedicated to advance women's concerns in strategic fronts may guarantee that the women's agenda would survive the impending political transition in the country. However, the years of hard work by a huge number of individuals and institutions in promoting women's concerns deserves better than that. The challenge that have to be posed to the new administration is to equal, if not surpass, the achievements of the previous governments. With the necessary foundations in place, there is a great potential for the new leadership to accelerate the attainment of the national vision for gender equality. The task of the women's movement therefore is how to influence and support the new leadership in meeting this formidable challenge.

Positioning GAD at the core of the new government's agenda requires that a substantial number of GAD champions are elected or appointed to high positions of policy and decision-making. There is also a need for the new President to issue a clear policy statement committing to sustain the implementation of the numerous laws, policies, plans and programs initiated in the past. GAD Focal Points must ensure that the GAD implementation plans they

formulated to implement the Philippine Plan for Gender Responsive Development would be integrated into the new framework of priorities by their new heads. The allocation of GAD budget should be more actively pursued, not only among the national line agencies but their regional offices and the local government units, as well. The GAD monitoring mechanism for the executive agencies must be enhanced and parallel mechanisms for the legislative and judiciary must be identified.

The bills filed in the Tenth Congress, including those on domestic battering, prostitution, women's empowerment, and strengthening of the national women's machinery, must be pursued in the Eleventh Congress. A more concerted form of advocacy should be mounted, highlighting, among others, the participation of women in the LGU levels.

Technical resource bases for GAD, such as training pool, information centers, and referral networks, must be expanded to support the implementation of GAD plans in the regional and LGU levels. Gender mainstreaming models, tools, frameworks and expertise must also be harnessed for application at the sectoral and field levels.

In the meantime that GAD budgeting is not yet fully operationalized at the local government units, donor agencies may consider directing their assistance to the development of GAD strategies for local areas, particularly those that are covered by the Social Reform Agenda. Exchange of experiences in mainstreaming of GAD should be promoted among regional and subnational bodies and more support to women's participation in the processes of local governance should be promoted.

The implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action is taking root and gaining grounds, yet, so much more remains to be done. Keeping the fire of advocacy burning and sustaining the gains promises that the future implementation of the PFA will stand on firmer grounds.

Appendices

APPENDIX A

WOMEN-RELATED LAWS AND POLICIES OF 1997

Republic Act 8044 (The Youth in Nation Building Act)

An Act creating the National Youth Commission, a body tasked to plan, oversee and implement a national integrated youth plan, a component of which is the development of the Medium-Term Youth Development Plan, a companion to the national development plan.

Republic Act 8250 (The General Appropriations Act)

Section 28 of this Act directs all government agencies to allocate a minimum of 5% of their total budget for gender responsive programs.

Republic Act 8289 (The Magna Carta for Small Enterprises)

An Act to strengthen the promotion and development of, and assistance to small and medium scale enterprises. An amendment to RA 6977 or the Magna Carta for small enterprises.

Republic Act 8291 (The Revised GSIS Act)

An Act amending PD 1146 as amended, expanding and increasing the coverage and benefits of the GSIS, instituting reforms therein and for other purposes.

Republic Act 8353 (The Anti-Rape Law)

An Act expanding the definition of the crime of rape, reclassifying the same as a crime against persons, amending for the purpose RA 3185 as amended, otherwise known as the Revised Penal Code and for other purposes.

Republic Act 8369 (The Family Courts Act)

An Act establishing family courts, granting them exclusive original jurisdiction over child and family cases, amending BP 192 as amended, otherwise known as the Judiciary Reorganization Act of 1980, appropriating funds therefor.

Republic Act 8371 (The Indigenous Peoples Rights Act)

An Act to recognize, protect and promote the rights of indigenous cultural communities/indigenous peoples, creating a national commission on indigenous peoples, establishing the implementing mechanisms, appropriating funds therefor, and for other purposes.

Republic Act 8425 (The Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act)

An Act institutionalizing the social reform and poverty alleviation program, creating for the purpose the National Anti-Poverty Commission, defining its powers and functions, and for other purposes.

Republic Act 8505 (Support to Rape Victims Act)

An Act directing the creation of women's crisis center in every province that will provide crisis assistance to victims and survivors of rape.

Executive Order 368

This order amends EO 356 which expands the membership of the SRC to include the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women as member.

Presidential Memo dated February 5, 1997 (Call to Action against Domestic Violence)

It directs all government agencies to launch and maintain comprehensive campaign against all forms of domestic violence and instructed DSWD, DOJ-NBI, DILG-PNP, and DOH to review their programs concerned with handling cases of domestic violence.

APPENDIX B

1997 GAD BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

LINE AGENCIES

AGENCIES	GAD BUDGET APPROPRIATION
Dept. of Agriculture	824,610,000.00
Dept. of Budget and Management	56,969,000.00
Dept. of Education, Culture and Sports - Region VIII	150,000.00
Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources	47,019,000.00
Dept. of Foreign Affairs	4,576,000.00
Dept. of Interior and Local Government	172,180,399.00
Dept. of Energy	5,000,000.00
Dept. of Finance	500,000.00
Dept. of Health	779,500,000.00
Dept. of Justice	71,300.00
Dept. of Labor and Employment	144,218,530.80
Dept. of Science & Technology	500,000.00
Dept. of Tourism	22,533,000.00
Dept. of Transportation & Communication	1,538,192.00
Dept. of Public Works & Highways	7,000,000.00
Dept. of Social Welfare & Development	435,724,888.00
Dept. of Trade & Industry	74,800,743.00
SUB-TOTAL	2,576,891,052.80

ATTACHED AGENCIES

AGENCIES	GAD BUDGET APPROPRIATION
Dept. of Agriculture - Fertilizer & Pesticide Authority	1,460,100.00
Dept. of Agriculture - Philippine Carabao Center	1,500,000.00
Dept. of Agriculture - National Nutrition Council	7,730,000.00
Dept. of Agriculture - Agricultural Credit Policy Council	260,000.00
Dept. of Agriculture - Fiber Industry Development Authority	5,316,000.00
Dept. of Agriculture - National Agricultural & Fishery Council	350,000.00
Dept. of Agriculture - National Irrigation Administration	600,000.00
Dept. of Agriculture - National Meat Inspection Commission	4,739,000.00
Dept. of Agriculture - National Stud Farm	484,000.00
Dept. of Agriculture - Bureau of Post Harvest Institute & Research Extension	718,000.00
Dept. of Interior & Local Govt. - Bureau of Jail Management & Penology	89,131,000.00
Dept. of Interior & Local Govt. - Philippine Public Safety College	16,701,850.00
Dept. of Environment & Natural Resources - Mines & Geo-Sciences Bureau	776,000.00
Dept. of National Defense - Philippine Military Academy	22,639,000.00

Dept. of Labor & Employment - Technical Education & Skills Devt. Authority - Region VIII	124,380.00
Dept. of Labor & Employment - Employment Compensation Commission	4,309,000.00
Dept. of Labor & Employment - Institute for Labor Studies	371,000.00
Dept. of Labor & Employment - National Labor Relations Commission	300,000.00
Dept. of Labor & Employment - Overseas Workers Welfare Administration	5,947,387.20
Dept. of Transportation & Communication - Maritime Industry Authority	38,000.00
Dept. of Transportation & Communication - Office of Transportation Cooperatives	30,000.00
Dept. of Transportation & Communication - Civil Aeronautics Board	16,000.00
Dept. of Transportation & Communication - Air Transportation Office	200,000.00
Dept. of Transportation & Communication - Land Transportation Franchising & Regulatory Board	7,560.00
Dept. of Transportation & Communication - Land Transportation Office	1,200,000.00
Dept. of Transportation & Communication - National Telecommunications Commission	677,450.00
National Econ. & Devt. Authority - National Statistical Coordinating Board	2,452,590.00
National Econ. & Devt. Authority - National Statistics Office	195,500.00
Dept. of Social Welfare & Devt. - National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons	542,000.00
SUB-TOTAL	158,815,817.20

OTHER EXECUTIVE OFFICES

AGENCIES	GAD BUDGET APPROPRIATION
Cooperative Devt. Authority	220,000.00
Housing & Urban Devt. Coordinating Council	1,070,370.00
Metropolitan Manila Devt. Authority	44,219,000.00
National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women	17,993,000.00
National Housing Authority	41,700,000.00
Office for Northern Cultural Communities	24,000,500.00
Office for Southern Cultural Communities	920,000.00
Office of the Press Secretary	237,000.00
Philippine Information Agency	1,642,040.00
SUB-TOTAL	132,001,910.00

GOVERNMENT-OWNED AND CONTROLLED CORPORATIONS

AGENCIES	GAD BUDGET APPROPRIATION
Livelihood Corporation @	50,000.00
National Dairy Authority	1,296,000.00
Quedan & Rural Credit Guarantee Corporation	39,928,000.00
Sugar Regulatory Administration	247,000.00
National Food Authority	2,200,000.00
National Tobacco Administration	1,153,000.00
Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation	15,000.00
Philippine Coconut Authority	435,000.00
Philippine Rice Research Institute	835,000.00
Home Insurance & Guarantee Corporation	100,000.00
SUB-TOTAL	46,259,000.00

@ Livelihood Corporation does not get its funds from the general appropriations

CONSTITUTIONAL BODIES

AGENCIES	GAD BUDGET APPROPRIATION
Commission on Human Rights	1,057,050.00
Civil Service Commission	2,632,350.00
SUB-TOTAL	3,689,400.00

STATE COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

AGENCIES	GAD BUDGET APPROPRIATION
Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University	13,267,000.00
Eastern Samar State College	1,978,500.00
Polytechnic State College of Antique	260,000.00
Tomas Oppus Normal College, Leyte	56,000.00
SUB-TOTAL	15,561,500.00
TOTAL	2,933,218,680.00

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1145 J.P. Laurel Street, San Miguel, Manila, Philippines
Tel. Nos.: 735-4955; 735-1864 Fax No.: 735-1655
E-Mail: ncrfw@mnl.sequel.net



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