

**Sustaining the Momentum  
for Women's Empowerment  
and Gender Equality**

**A TERM REPORT**



National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women  
Philippine Machinery for the Advancement of Women

**2001 - 2004**

Published by the



**National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women**  
*The Philippine Machinery for the Advancement of Women*

Copyright 2004

Any part of this book may be used and reproduced  
provided proper acknowledgement be made

**ISBN 971870105-1**

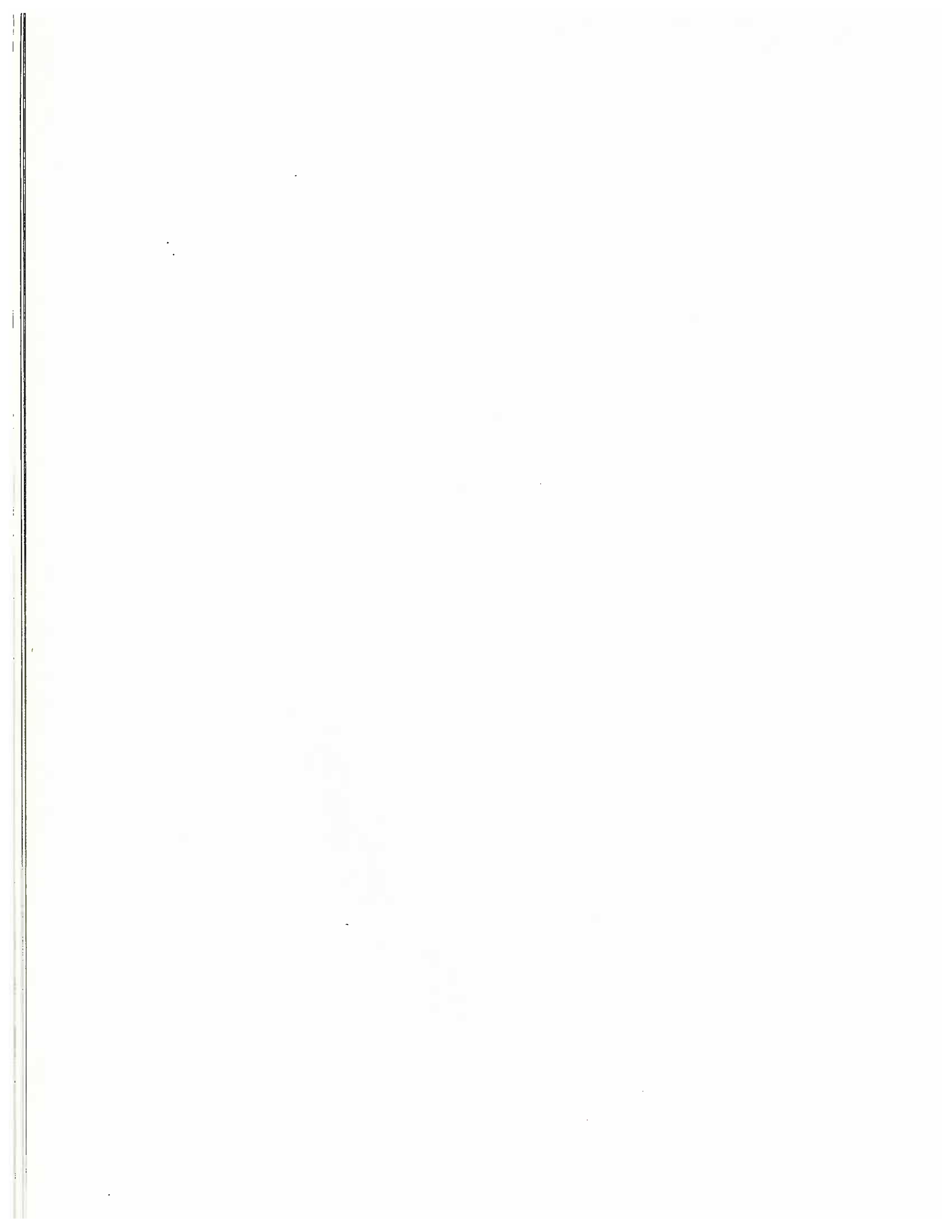
**Sustaining the Momentum  
for Women's Empowerment  
and Gender Equality**

**A TERM REPORT**



**National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women**  
**Philippine Machinery for the Advancement of Women**

**2001 - 2004**



# Contents

**5**

Message from the Chairperson

**7**

**The NCRFW at a Glance:  
Vision, Mission and Agenda for the Term**

**8**

Framework Plan for Women, 2001-2004

**10**

**How Women Fared in the Last Three Years**

**10**

Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment

**12**

Upholding Women's Human Rights

**20**

Strengthening and Promoting Gender-Responsive Governance

**32**

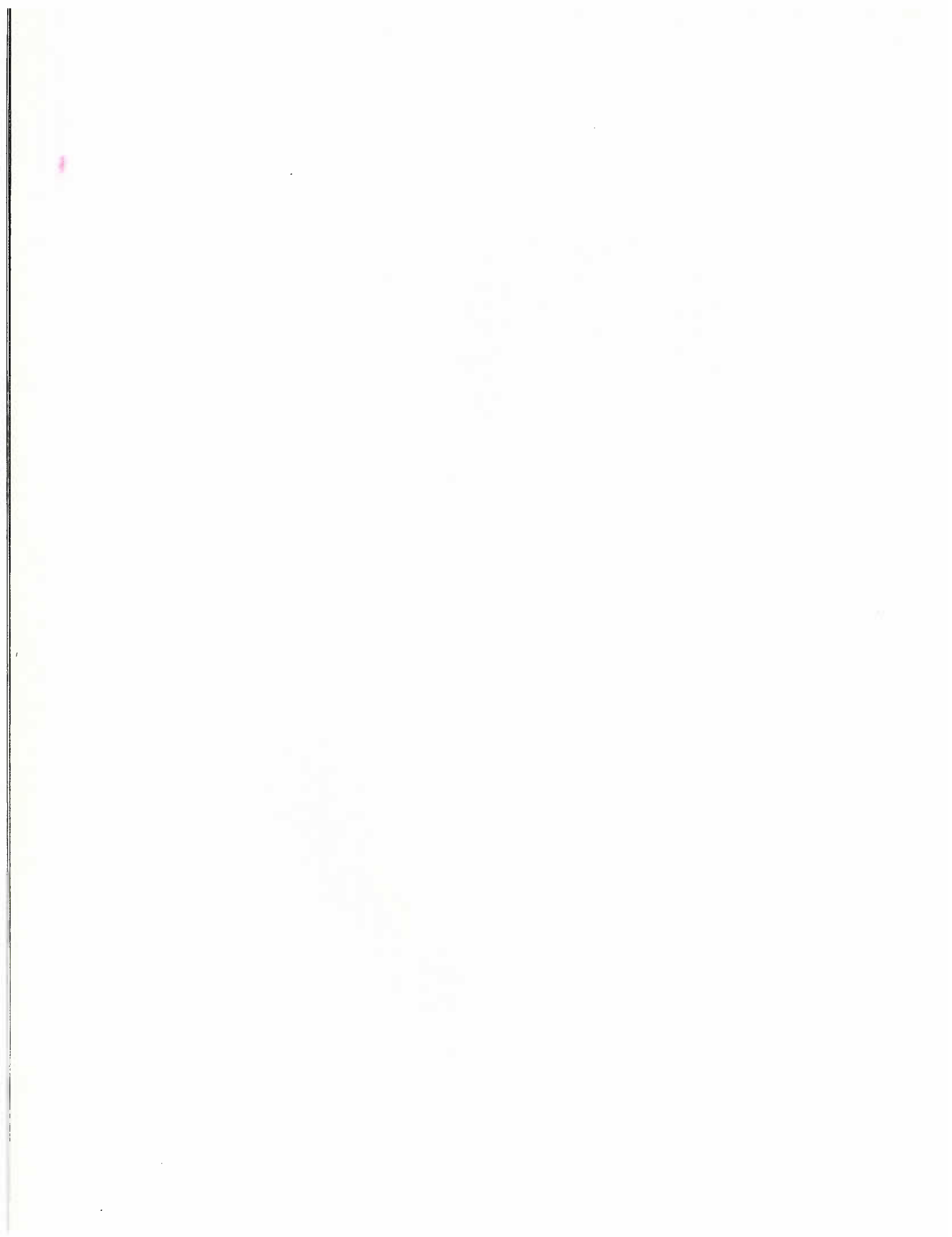
A Leader in the International Women's Movement

**33**

Fulfilling International Commitments

**34**

**Issues and Challenges: Agenda for the Future**



## Message



**Aurora Javate de Dios**  
*Chairperson*

The last three years have been eventful years for the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women. This period saw some milestone changes in the life of the organization building on the already solid experiences and accomplishments of the past Chairpersons. Guided by the clearly articulated priorities of the Macapagal Arroyo administration, the Commission set out to identify its own set of priorities within the framework of the Philippine Plan for Gender Responsive Development, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination. As in previous planning processes of the NCRFW, the Framework Plan for Women which is a three-year plan for women by the administration evolved a coherent, focused short term plan with three areas of concentration women's economic empowerment, women's human rights and gender-responsive governance.

Through the assistance and support of partner agencies and NGOs the Framework Plan set out the vision as well as the doable and

results-oriented workplan of the Commission. This required a stronger and more coordinated working relationship between the Board of Commissioners, the Secretariat and staff, partner agencies, civil society and NGO partners as well as the international funding institutions. It has been a steady process that in time, bore dramatic results. With the identification of priority areas, Commissioners and staff were able to focus on their areas of expertise and several strategic goals and objectives. These included lobbying for key legislative measures such as the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act and the Anti-Violence Against Women (VAW) and their Children Act; working for the establishment of the Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee to assist in the effective implementation of laws on VAW.

In the area of economic empowerment, studies have been conducted to assess the experiences in micro-credit lending practices as a basis for more and better credit lending schemes for women especially women workers and urban poor women. GAD

Planning and Budgeting has been effectively utilized by NGOs and partner agencies in promoting gender responsive governance at the local level. Best practices in the utilization of the GAD budget continue to guide and inspire local government units and government agencies in responding to the needs of women. The National Summit of Local Chief Executives provided the forum within which women in governance can support each other and articulate their needs and issues. The resulting Manila Declaration is today one of the most important document reflecting the unity among women local executives.

The NCRFW sustained its leadership role in the international field through its active participation in the APEC Gender Focal Point, UN Commission on the Status of Women, the ASEAN Women's Committee, among others. Through the Chairperson, the NCRFW provided critical inputs to Philippine positions on a range of issues notably trafficking of women and children, violence against women, migrant workers, and many others. Through the assistance of CIDA and a number of

international funding institutions, the NCRFW conducted consultations among its partner institutions and NGOs; produced useful and much needed modules, training materials and information packs and supported GAD-related projects of other agencies.

Much has been achieved but much more needs to be done. The building blocks of a coherent, focused strategic plan have been laid down. No less than the passionate commitment, dedication and vision of all gender advocates are needed to keep NCRFW moving forward.

  
**Aurora Javate de Dios**  
Chairperson



## Message



**Emmeline L. Verzosa**  
*Executive Director*

**T**he end of term is always a time for reflection. This is when we at the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women take stock of where and how far the decisions we made have taken us. We claim the gains we achieved, learn from our shortcomings and recommit to confront the concerns we failed to address. We take note of how we are evolving as an organization and how we are contributing in transforming the lives of Filipino women.

The NCRFW began its journey 30 years ago. It has its share of setbacks and frustrations as well as triumphs and successes. Through it all, we at the NCRFW are guided by our faith in the rightness of our mission to make government work for gender equality and women's empowerment. We have maintained an attitude of openness to change since we are in the business of transforming lives. To make this happen, we are guided by the virtues of flexibility in translating our strategies into actions, patience and determination in meeting challenges, and cooperation with our partners. We recognize that there are times when we may differ with our partners in our perspectives and strategies but our respect for

them is greater so that we are always ready to dialogue and work things out with them. After all, we are fellow travelers in the same journey, aiming for just one destination.

Indeed, the NCRFW will forever be grateful to our partners – the gender advocates and champions in government, women's groups and non-government organizations, the academe, international donor agencies, especially the United Nations agencies and the Canadian International Development Agency, and the women, as well as men, in communities all over the country. Your critical cooperation with us and unquestionable support for us have resulted in collective actions that promote women's economic empowerment, respect and protect their human rights, and promote and strengthen gender-responsive governance. You have kept the faith with us.

**Emmeline L. Verzosa**  
*Executive Director*



# The NCRFW at a Glance: Vision, Mission and Agenda for the Term

The last three years were eventful and fruitful years for the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women. As the policies and programs on gender and development were already well-established, the challenges lay in ensuring that the gains achieved during the past decades to better women's lives were reinforced, sustained and expanded. The NCRFW saw its agenda as helping to transform government:

- ❑ To be truly responsive to the different needs of women and men, particularly the poor and marginalized;
- ❑ To perform its role as duty-bearers that respect, promote, protect and fulfill the rights of women claimholders; and
- ❑ To develop effective and efficient policies, programs and projects that address gender gaps and disparities.

The term started amid a time of turmoil in January 2002. The then President, elected to a six-year term in 1998, vacated his office in the wake of a political scandal and an ensuing people power against his leadership. This paved the way for the Vice-President, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, to take over, becoming the country's second woman president.

Despite the change in administration, the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, the policymaking body advising the President and the Cabinet on women's concerns, remained focused in its mission: to make government work for women's empowerment and gender equality. In fulfilling its mission, the NCRFW is guided by gender and development (GAD), the development framework it has been championing since the mid-'80s, long before other countries adopted it. It influences government to "think and act" gender through its gender mainstreaming strategy. Through this strategy, concerns and experiences of women and men become a major factor when government

designs, implements, budgets for, monitors and evaluates development policies, programs and projects.

In 1995 the NCRFW, together with other government agencies and GAD advocates in NGOs and the academe, formulated the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development (PPGD), 1995-2025 in time for the Fourth World Conference of Women held in Beijing. This 30-year plan recognized that it would take at least a generation "to wear down resistance, redefine policies and carve out a culture where gender issues become mainstream issues (NCRFW 1998)."

The PPGD translates the Beijing Platform for Action, the women agenda that came out of the international women's conference, into policies, strategies, programs and projects for Filipino women. However since it was a strategic plan, the PPGD needed to be translated into more operational, short term plan. Thus in her first public appearance as President before women's groups on March 8, 2001 International Woman's Day, President Macapagal Arroyo directed the NCRFW to develop a new framework plan for women focused on economic empowerment and women's human rights.

The NCRFW held regional consultations with government agencies and NGOs where they provided inputs that the NCRFW fleshed out as specifics of the framework plan as well as sharpened the strategic interconnectedness of its existing GAD programs with it. At the same time, the NCRFW, as an organization, reconfigured its priorities and established a tighter coordination and working relation among its Board of Commissioners, the Secretariat, and the various stakeholders that constitute its support base – government agencies, NGOs, the academe, and the private sector.



### **Framework Plan for Women, 2001-2004**

The Plan envisions development as “equitable, sustainable, free from violence, respectful of human rights, supportive of self-determination and the actualization of human potentials, and participatory and empowering (NCRFW 1998).” It focuses on three areas of concern: (1) women’s economic empowerment; (2) women’s human rights; and (3) gender-responsive governance.

To address them, the Plan lays down more specific, doable and results-focused programs and projects that agencies can adopt for their own GAD plans. It also provides mechanisms to fulfill the country’s commitments to such international agreements as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action, and the Beijing +5 Outcome Document.

The Plan calls for a “holistic and comprehensive response to reduce the gender gap” and address the “systemic and structural causes of gender inequality.” It defines objectives and priorities under each area of concern so the NCRFW can effectively identify gender gaps and monitor progress and remaining challenges as it works to empower women and achieve gender equality.

The Plan has the following objectives to achieve women’s economic empowerment:

- ❑ Enhance sustainable access of women to capital, market, information technology and technical assistance;

- ❑ Enhance the employment and livelihood skills of women, particularly in high-value adding industries and agricultural activities;
- ❑ Establish an enabling environment that will ensure the effective implementation of policies for the protection of women workers and the improvement of their working conditions in the Philippines as well as abroad in the case of overseas Filipino women workers;
- ❑ Increase awareness of women of their economic rights and opportunities; and
- ❑ Strengthen women's participation in economic decision-making bodies.

To uphold women's rights, the Plan presents the following objectives:

- ❑ Enhance access to and utilization of basic social services;
- ❑ Promote gender-responsive delivery of justice to survivors of violence against women;
- ❑ Formulate and implement legislative measures that will eliminate gender bias; and
- ❑ Promote and advance the human rights of women and girl children.

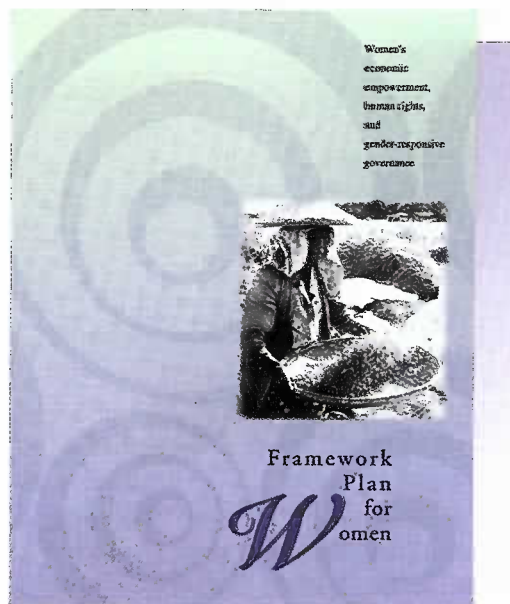
The Plan also surfaces the following objectives to promote and strengthen gender-responsive governance:

- ❑ Mainstream GAD in the bureaucracy, especially the effective implementation of GAD programs and the GAD budget;
- ❑ Enhance women's leadership roles and participation in decision-making;
- ❑ Strengthen women's roles in promoting gender-responsive governance; and

- ❑ Strengthen partnership with media and other private stakeholders in promoting women's empowerment.

The Plan is being implemented through a GAD mainstreaming strategy that entails the comprehensive integration of gender principles and concepts in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs. Its key elements include:

- ❑ The use of sex-disaggregated data and statistics;
- ❑ Gender analysis;
- ❑ Effective monitoring and evaluation of systems and tools;
- ❑ National, sub-national and local structures supportive of gender mainstreaming;
- ❑ Effective communication, network and linkages;
- ❑ Skilled human resource base ;
- ❑ Civil society participation; and
- ❑ Effective utilization of the GAD budget.



## How Women Fared in the Last Three Years

### **Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment**

Government achieved modest gains in promoting women's economic empowerment during the term. Women workers were helped in improving their competencies and in finding employment. Credit programs were made available. There were efforts to protect

and promote the welfare and interests of women workers, including addressing gender issues such as sexual harassment and the enforcement of labor standards in the workplace. Support systems and interventions to improve the working conditions of Filipino workers overseas were initiated. Concerns of women in small and medium enterprises were addressed because of their critical role in a growing and global economy.

### **Two Sides to Women's Economic Empowerment**

- ❑ Increase in net employment involved 1.46 women, but growth of jobs was slower than the influx of women to the labor market. About two-thirds of new workers were in the informal sector.
- ❑ Day care centers are reportedly found in over 80 per cent of the country's barangays. There were efforts to provide childcare support to women workers on night shifts but they had to be stopped due to lack of funds.
- ❑ There were women and men in government who have benefited from schemes to harmonize family and work responsibilities, flexible time or part-time employment, and the setting up of day care centers in the workplace. These programs, however, need to be monitored so they can be better designed and implemented for effective impact.
- ❑ At least 62,000 rural women received production loans from programs of the agriculture program. But these and other programs could reach no more than five per cent of female rural workers. There was also no evidence that these loans supported sustainable livelihoods.
- ❑ Various lending programs benefited many poor women as well as women microentrepreneurs. From July 2001 to December 2003, the People's Credit and Finance Corporation served 864,965 clients, 98 per cent of whom were women. This constituted about 85 per cent of the total served by all microfinance programs for the period. By January 2004, total microfinance beneficiaries reportedly numbered 1.03 million. Generally, however, these programs are rarely monitored nor evaluated for results and impacts beyond repayment and credit risk.
- ❑ At least 31,000 women in SMEs and an undetermined number of women microentrepreneurs received training and nontraining support from programs to provide new skills or upgrade skills, share information about markets, technologies and product design, and facilitate market linkages. Very limited women, however, were reached by these programs, especially those in microenterprises.

The NCRFW, under its **Task Force on Economic Empowerment**, tackled issues and concerns of women workers, particularly those working in economic zones and the garments industry.

A policy dialogue on housing for women workers in economic zones was initiated by the NCRFW. It made it possible for these women workers to meet with legislators and representatives from the National Anti-Poverty Commission, the local government units where the economic zones were located, and the Philippine Economic Zone Authority. The NCRFW, together with the National Statistics Office, conducted a follow-up survey to gather baseline information on the sociodemographic and living conditions of women workers at the Cavite Economic Zone. Results of the



have a devastating impact on local garment factories which employ mainly women workers. Already, tens of thousands of women workers have been laid off and were displaced. In response, the NCRFW held tripartite consultations with women workers, employers and concerned government agencies on safety nets for women workers in the garments industry. Some of the recommendations that came out of the consultations addressed the following:

- the need to look into the effects of subcontracting on employees in the industry;
- stricter implementation of occupational safety and labor laws;
- policies and programs to provide safety nets for women workers; and
- corporate social responsibility among companies to increase their viability and ensure protection for their workers.



survey are to serve as inputs in designing interventions to meet their housing needs.

Recent developments in the world market have wide ranging effects on the local garments industry where women are majority of the workers. The eventual phaseout of the Multi-Fiber agreement among garments-exporting countries will

Results of the consultations were given to the Garments and Textile Export Board (GETB) as inputs to a transformation package it was formulating for the industry. The NCRFW was also included as a member of the tripartite group convened by the GTEB directed to help enhance and finalize the transformation plan for the garments industry and its workers.



With funding support from the Canadian International Development Agency, the NCRFW facilitated the conduct of a research to identify elements that would make microfinance programs fully responsive to the needs of women and maximize their benefits for them. The study was “**Microfinance toward financial sustainability, poverty reduction, and women’s empowerment.**” Results of the study were presented to microfinance institutions and government financial institutions to guide them in implementing a credit program for poor women and enlist their support in undertaking the policy and program reforms identified by the study to make microfinance initiatives more gender-responsive. They also provided inputs in tackling structural issues to resolve the long-term problem of women and poverty.

The NCRFW proposed a project with the Department of Trade and Industry that would initiate a **women’s small business incubator program** to provide one-stop-shop assistance to women small entrepreneurs. Incubators will

provide capital and credit, technical assistance and training, marketing, and product and business development.

### **Upholding Women’s Human Rights**

Women’s empowerment and gender equality is about securing the rights of women to live a healthy life, to be educated, to move freely, and to be safe and free from violence. However, there are specific rights that women are entitled to but do not yet fully enjoy. For example, long years of struggle to recognize women’s reproductive rights, dating back to the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, have not resulted in government fully acknowledging these rights. In the process, women have limited access to information, education and the means to enable them to exercise their reproductive rights.



Still, concrete gains have been achieved to uphold women's human rights during the term. Many are results of long years of advocacy of the women's movement and other NCRFW partners in and out of government. There have

been considerable improvements in their condition, especially in the areas of education and training, health and nutrition, access to basic services, and protection against violence against women.

## Two Sides to Women's Human Rights

- ❑ In terms of education and training, school participation rate of girls at lower levels has been increasing beginning academic year 1999-2000, but their dropout rate at the secondary level has been falling more slowly than that for boys. Women outnumber men at tertiary level, but they are performing more poorly in government board and licensure examinations. Gender stereotyping in the choice of courses or skills areas continues, although not as much as before.
- ❑ Improvements in life expectancy and health condition are more evident among women than men. However, relative nutritional levels of girls and women from puberty to adulthood have been slower than those of boys and men.
- ❑ Fertility rate has been falling, although it continues to be high. The slow decline may be traced to lack of access to contraceptive-related information and materials, consistently low but increasing prevalence of contraceptive use, and drying up of resources for family planning and reproductive health.
- ❑ In terms of minimum basic needs, gains have been noted in access to jobs, education for children, and electricity, but not in access to drinking water and physical security.



The most impressive achievement of the NCRFW in this area has been the passage of two milestone laws on anti-trafficking in persons and domestic violence and institutionalization of systems and processes for a more effective delivery of justice to victims of violence.

The NCRFW, together with women's and human rights activists, was at the forefront of the effort that resulted in the passage of two ground-breaking laws penalizing acts of violence against women: **Republic Act 9208 or the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 and Republic Act 9262 or the Anti-Violence against Women and Their Children Act of 2004.**

It took more than 10 years from the time both measures were first filed in Congress before they were enacted into laws. Through that time, women NGOs and gender advocates did not lose hope. They kept the issue alive in public by organizing debates and forums that put forward information on it and clarified misconceptions

about it. They worked among themselves and with like-minded legislators to finetune the bills. They saw to it that the bills would be filed each time a new Congress opened. They attended committee hearings and formed task forces to lobby other legislators for their passage. When the time came for legislators to vote on the bills, a critical mass of women from various sectors and political leanings were there on the floor of Congress, giving their legislators notice that here was half of their constituents who were expecting them to vote in favor of an issue that was central to their lives.

In 2002, the President directed the Department of Foreign Affairs to convene a senior government working group (SGWG) composed of member agencies, one of which was the NCRFW, to prepare a national plan on human trafficking and people smuggling. The draft national strategy developed by the SGWG was adopted through the signing of a covenant a year later. A few weeks after, the President signed RA 9208 into law.

### Main Features of the Anti-Trafficking Law of 2003

- ❑ Defines as criminal the acts of trafficking in persons and acts to promote trafficking in persons. Trafficking covers a wide range of activities that are carried out for the purpose of prostitution, pornography, sexual exploitation, forced labor, slavery, involuntary servitude or debt bondage, and removal or sale of organs regardless whether any of these happened in the country or abroad or whether the victims are Filipino nationals or foreigners trafficked to the Philippines.
- ❑ Redefines prostitution from a crime committed by women only to “any act, transaction, scheme or design involving the use of a person by another for sexual intercourse or lascivious conduct in exchange for money, profit or any other consideration, with the original liability assigned to those who promote it through trafficking in persons.
- ❑ Sets penalties for various types of offenses related to trafficking. The stiffest sanctions – life imprisonment and a fine of up to P5 million – are reserved for any person found guilty if the trafficked person is a child, or the person trafficked died from or incurred HIV/AIDS, or the offender is related to the victim or a member of law enforcement units of government. Fines are to be placed in a trust fund that will cover the cost of implementing mandatory programs under the law and other measures to prevent

trafficking in persons and to rehabilitate and reintegrate victims to society's mainstream.

- ❑ Commits the State to provide mandatory services to trafficked persons such as emergency shelter, counseling, free legal services, medical or psychological services, livelihood and skills training, and educational assistance.
- ❑ Provides legal protection for trafficked persons, recognizing them as victims of trafficking and, as such, shall not be penalized for crimes directly related to acts of trafficking enumerated in the Act or in obedience to an order made by the trafficker.
- ❑ Creates the Inter-Agency Council against Trafficking composed of heads of concerned government agencies and representatives from NGOs. The council is directed to oversee the strict implementation and monitoring of the law.



The anti-trafficking law was cited as a best practice in enacting a trafficking law at the Asia-Europe Meeting on Enhancing Support and Cooperation for Strengthening Policies to Assist Trafficked Women and Children held in 2003 in Bangkok, Thailand. It remains one of the most comprehensive and progressive legislation on trafficking yet enacted in any country following the spirit and intent of the UN Optional Protocol on Trafficking of Persons Especially Women and Girls.

The NCRFW also did intensive lobbying with the Senate for it to ratify two important international treaties: the **UN Optional Protocol on Trafficking of Persons Especially Women and Girls** and the **UN**

**Optional Protocol on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.** Through its international representation and participation, the NCRFW played a key role in formulating these two protocols.

The CEDAW's optional protocol is a mechanism that offers an international forum for victims of human rights violation to seek redress of their grievances. Real remedy is possible in two ways. One way allows individual women and women's groups to file a complaint of violation of her or their rights to the United Nations' Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The other is through an inquiry procedure that enables the

*Signing of the  
Anti-Violence Against  
and Their Children Act  
March 8, 2004  
RA 9262*



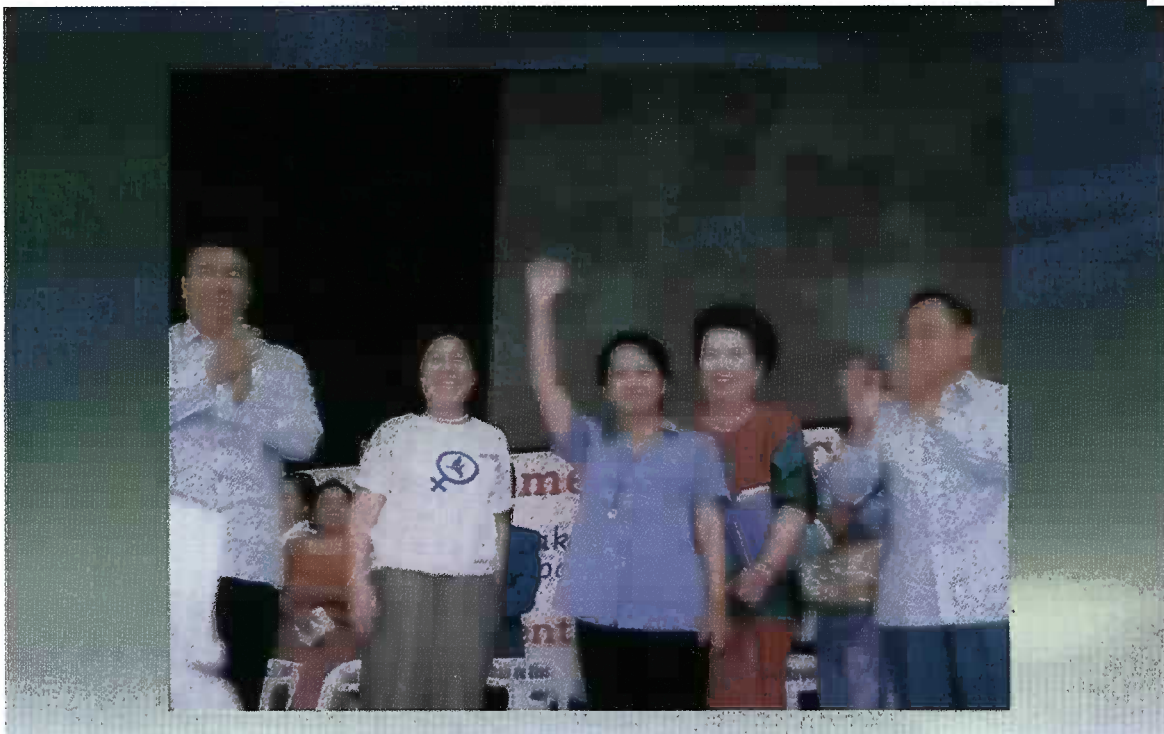
committee to initiate direct inquiries and seek information to verify complaints of violation of the CEDAW in a country that is a state party to it and the optional protocol. The Philippines, a state party to the CEDAW and the optional protocol, thus recognizes the competence of the CEDAW to receive and consider complaints from individuals or groups within its jurisdiction.

To ensure the effective coordination of government efforts to implement the laws on violence against women, the NCRFW leads the **Violence against Women Coordinating Committee** composed of 15 member agencies. The VAWCC drafted a National Action Plan to Eliminate VAW that contains a set of common outcomes and corresponding performance indicators that would direct government efforts at the national and local levels.

### Main Features of the Anti-Violence against Women and Their Children Act of 2004

- ❑ Criminalizes VAWC and protects women and their children in the context of a marital, dating or common-law relationships. As a public crime, perpetrators will be meted from six months to 12 years' imprisonment and a penalty of up to P100,000.00.
- ❑ Recognizes the “battered woman syndrome” as a justifying circumstance and, therefore, a legal defense for women who have suffered cumulative abuse from their spouses or partners and have been driven to defend themselves.
- ❑ Provides a wide range of assistance, including issuing protection orders to stop the violence and prevent the recurrence of future violence.
- ❑ Recognizes VAW as a public health issue. Under the law, women who suffered violence may claim emergency paid leave from their employers.
- ❑ Directs concerned agencies to provide mandatory services such as counseling, shelter, and medical and legal assistance to victims and survivors.
- ❑ Entitles women survivors the custody of their children.
- ❑ Protects the privacy of victims and survivors.
- ❑ Creates the Inter-Agency Council on VAWC.





The NCRFW's active and visible leadership role in the promotion of women's human rights has placed the NCRFW at the center of institutional responses to combat VAW. For instance, RA 9208 established the **Inter-Agency Council against Trafficking** that included the NCRFW and other member agencies and three NGOs representing women, children and migrant workers. Its mandate is to oversee the strict implementation and monitoring of the anti-

trafficking law and its implementing rules and regulations.

RA 9262 set up the **Inter-Agency Council on VAWC**, with the NCRFW and other relevant agencies as members, to formulate programs and projects to eliminate VAWC, develop capability programs for service providers giving frontline assistance to become more sensitive to the needs of victims and survivors, and monitor VAWC-

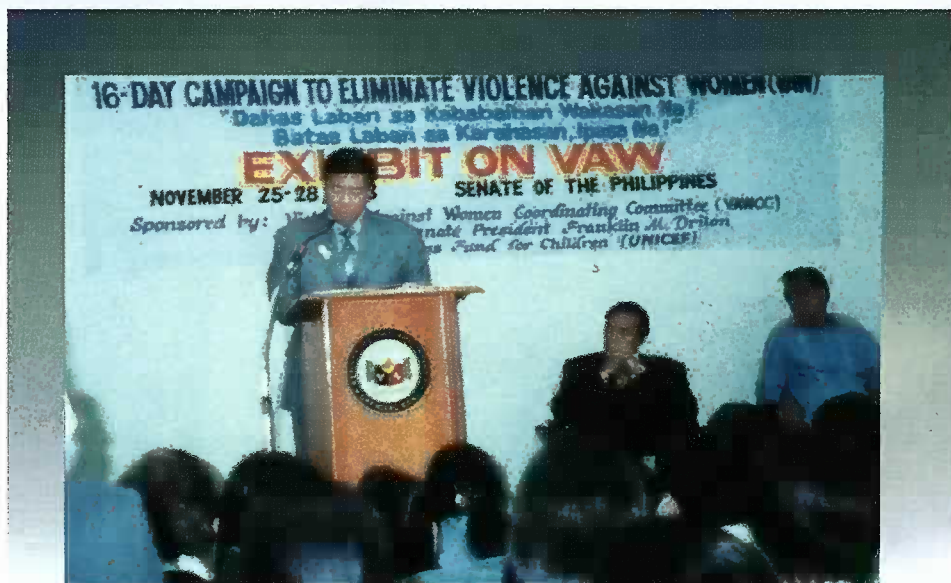


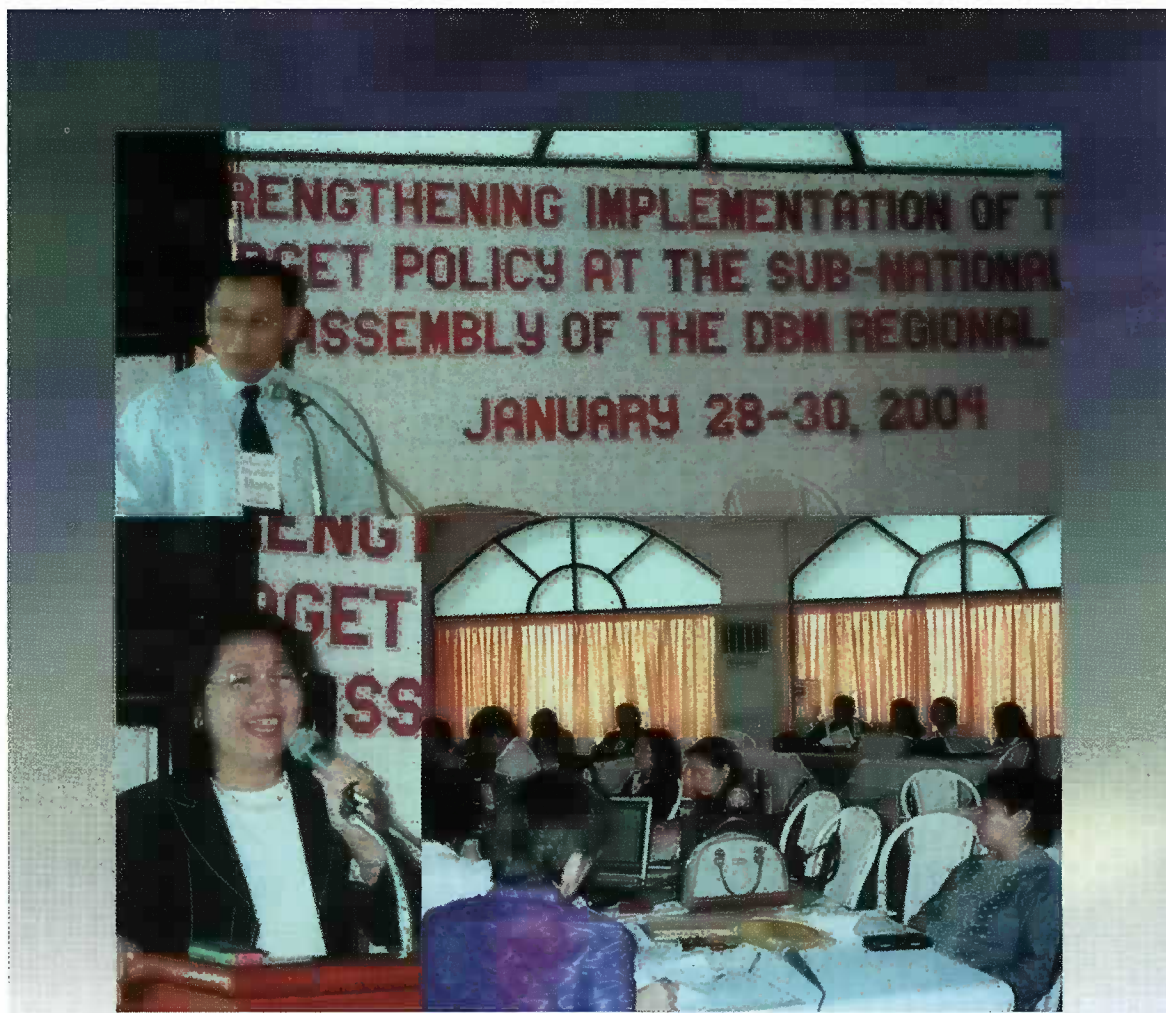
related activities. To ensure that these two laws are implemented effectively, measures are initiated to build the capability of the Department of Justice and the Supreme Court to handle trafficking and VAWC cases.

The NCRFW has started a project to standardize core messages of frontline agencies directly addressing all forms of VAW cases and to see to it that these messages are reflected in their protocols. A documentation system of VAW cases is also being developed.

## Programs for VAW Victims and Survivors

- ❑ The social welfare department rehabilitates women in extremely difficult circumstances, operates 23 Havens, or crisis centers, nationwide, and operates a crisis intervention unit in each region;
- ❑ The health department has a women and child protection program;
- ❑ The justice department has a task force on child protection;
- ❑ The interior and local government department develops the capacity of its personnel to manage VAWC cases;
- ❑ Local governments have programs to fight VAW in the community;
- ❑ NGOs manage programs, several of them predating government action, ranging from service delivery, such as shelter and counseling in crisis centers, legal services, community-based actions against VAW, and advocacy campaigns and services for prostituted women and abused children;
- ❑ The NCRFW, in exercising its oversight function, seeks to strengthen collective response of government to VAW by assisting in the capability building programs of agencies on VAW.





## ***Strengthening and Promoting Gender-Responsive Governance***

The NCRFW has a track record of almost two decades of gender mainstreaming, a development approach that is aimed at achieving good and effective governance. With the adoption of GAD as a national policy, gender-responsive initiatives, processes and mechanisms have been institutionalized. Gender mainstreaming is being done from the national down to the local levels and in all

branches of government. The NCRFW sees to it that it is at the center of all these efforts, ready to provide technical assistance and support, clear about its role in advancing gender mainstreaming, and determined to sustain gender-responsive governance.

A major entry point of the NCRFW in its gender mainstreaming work is its regular representation at the cabinet level-NAPC En Banc meetings with the President. It is here where the NCRFW gets to coordinate closely with the representatives of women NGOs and line agencies concerned with the



implementation of priority anti-poverty programs. This recent mechanism keeps the NCRFW in step and into the mainstream of the President's strategic 10 point agenda for the next six years. This venue also provides us with the visibility and presence to work more effectively with the leadership of all the line agencies.

In 2003, the NCRFW and the Department of Social Welfare and Development led in preparing the women's agenda of the NAPC Women Sectoral Council presented to the NAPC en Banc meeting with the President. The NAPC-WSC and the NCRFW actively pushed for government actions on specific women's issues related to micro-finance, trafficking, reproductive health, and the GAD budget.

The NCRFW now has a closer and stronger partnership with oversight agencies like the **National Economic and Development Authority, the Department of Budget and Management, and the Department of**

**Interior and Local Government**, especially when it comes to GAD planning and budgeting. The NEDA included GAD concerns among the planning guidelines of the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan that it is currently formulating. It held an assembly among its regional offices (NROs) where the NEDA central office issued a policy directing its NROs to mainstream GAD in regional development planning. The DBM had a similar assembly where the role of its regional offices in GAD planning and budgeting was defined, paving the way for more and better-quality GAD plans to be submitted. The DILG also conducted its own assembly for its regional and provincial offices that aimed to sharpen their knowledge and skills on GAD planning and budgeting by local government units (LGUs).

GAD planning and budgeting by agencies was strengthened in 2001. A **joint circular** was issued by the DBM, NEDA and the NCRFW on guidelines to implement gender mainstreaming and institutionalize it in the agency's programs, activities and projects. A parallel joint circular





## Two Sides to Gender-Responsive Governance

- ❑ Structures and mechanisms are strengthened to sustain gender mainstreaming in government such as the Framework Plan for Women, GAD planning and budgeting processes, and a stronger NCRFW as the authority on matters concerning women. However, there is a need for a systematic evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the use of the GAD budget. To effectively oversee gender mainstreaming, the NCRFW must have a stronger and broader mandate, with a corresponding increase in budget.
- ❑ Gender mainstreaming efforts are now done in all branches of government. It is important that processes and structures be established so that these efforts are sustained when there is a change in leadership since new leaders tend to start anew and rarely continue what others before them have begun.
- ❑ Gender mainstreaming is now being done at the local level, thanks to the advocacy and support of local GAD advocates and women's movement activists, LGUs, national agencies, and the NCRFW. This has resulted in GAD codes and GAD budgets being adopted, local GAD ordinances passed, local women's council created, and GAD programs and projects implemented. Local gender mainstreaming, however, is periodically threatened as local elections held every three years often mean another set of officials who need to be made aware of gender issues and convinced that gender-responsive governance is an essential part of good governance.

- ❑ More and easily accessible IEC materials, tools and guides on gender mainstreaming, including materials on addressing VAWC, are produced and disseminated. These are designed to outlive administrations but GAD advocates still need to ensure that they are widely distributed and used.
- ❑ Women elected or appointed to decision-making positions in government are increasing, albeit at a slow rate. There is still the issue of how these women in power promote and support efforts on gender equality and women's empowerment. The performance of women and men in power must be examined to gain a sharper focus on the campaign to secure a better gender balance in key political institutions.
- ❑ Partnership with media has resulted in the slow but increasing airing of women's issues and gender concerns in national and local media and the production of materials in support of GAD campaigns for print and broadcast media. The NCRFW and the Philippine Information Agency, NGOs and the private sector have linked up with media practitioners so that they can be more aware of gender issues and produce more gender-sensitive materials. Despite these efforts, media continue to portray sexist images and gender stereotypes of women.

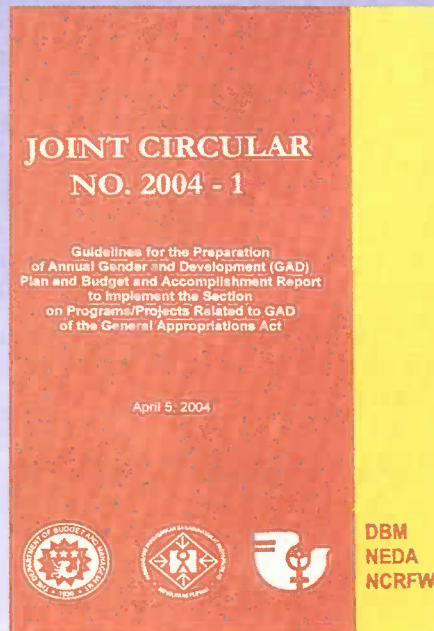
was issued by the DBM, the Department of Interior and Local Government and the NCRFW to integrate GAD in the planning and budgeting system of LGUs.

In 2004 the NEDA, DBM and the NCRFW released another joint circular that revised the previous one. This current circular contained guidelines for preparing the agencies' annual GAD plans, budgets and accomplishment reports and refined formats and procedures

for their submissions. It also clarified the roles of the oversight agencies in the preparation and submission of GAD plans and accomplishment reports by agencies. The guidelines helped in increasing agency submission per year: 113 in 2001, 131 in 2002, 101 in 2003, and 160 in 2004. The DBM required agencies to include the forms for GAD plans and budgets in the budget proposals they submitted for the 2004 Budget Call.



## General Guidelines on GAD Planning and Budgeting



- ❑ Agencies formulate their annual GAD plans and budgets within the context of their mandate and overall plans and programs. The annual GAD plans and budgets are geared toward the achievement of the desired outcomes and goals identified in the Framework Plan for Women. The PPGD, the Beijing Platform for Action and the CEDAW serve as key documents to guide the preparation of the agency's annual GAD plan and budget.
- ❑ The development of agency GAD activities proceeds from a review of sex-disaggregated data, the conduct of a gender analysis of major programs, and the conduct of consultations with women's groups or groups concerning GAD.
- ❑ The conduct of massive information, education and communication campaigns on gender issues being addressed by the agency and on corresponding programs, activities and projects are given priority in terms of budget allocation.
- ❑ GAD planning and budgeting are done annually and incorporated in all programming and budgeting exercises of agencies. The activities in the GAD plan and budget must be included in the budget proposal of agencies in accordance with the budget call. Agencies must ensure that the cost of implementing the GAD activities is part of their approved budget.
- ❑ At least five per cent of the total agency budget appropriations authorized under the General Appropriations Act must correspond to activities supporting GAD.
- ❑ Agencies can reformulate existing P/A/Ps to address gender issues that they are unable to address. Agencies must ensure that these reformulated P/A/Ps are budgeted for and implemented.
- ❑ The implementation of the agency GAD plan and budget and GAD activities are integrated into the existing monitoring and evaluation system of the agency that has been adjusted for gender-responsiveness.
- ❑ Agencies must develop GAD performance indicators that are consistent with the Organizational Performance/Indicator Framework of the DBM and the NEDA.
- ❑ Agencies must prepare their annual GAD accomplishment reports for the previous year that contain actual accomplishments vis-à-vis targets as well as the amounts utilized for achieving them.

– Excerpted from Joint Circular 2004-1 issued by the DBM, NEDA and the NCRFW

Agency submissions of GAD plans and accomplishment reports improved in 2003. Seventy-nine per cent, or 37 out of 47 sample agencies, demonstrated skills in GAD planning, particularly in aligning their programs, projects and activities to achieve GAD objectives. Sixty-eight per cent, or 30 out of 44 agencies, identified activities that can integrate GAD values in their organizational culture and processes.

In its effort to professionalize GAD practice in the country, the NCRFW, under the Institutional Strengthening Project II it is

implementing with the CIDA, convened the **Second General Assembly of the GAD Resource Network**. The NCRFW initiated the creation of the GRN to serve as a pool of gender advocates and experts from the academe and civil society. It is expected to support the NCRFW in delivering technical assistance and other services to clients that are in various stages of gender mainstreaming. During the assembly, the structure of the GRN was finalized and its code of ethics articulated. Its vision, mission, goals and functions were also defined.

## Claiming Progress

Capacity-building efforts initiated by ISP II resulted in the following practical innovations for the NCRFW:

- Setting up and strengthening of an enabling environment that makes it possible to design and implement gender-responsive laws, plans, budgets and directives, among others;
- Development of focal and advocacy points and technical working groups in selected agencies;
- Replication of GAD resource centers in different regions;
- Building partnerships among government agencies, NGOs, and the private sector;
- Use of various management tools, such as organizational development diagnostic tools and strategic planning, to enhance its internal capability and its work with partners;
- Use of participatory methods in the NCRFW's work and its work with partners;
- Increased confidence and competency among the NCRFW and partner agencies in gender mainstreaming;
- Development of a relatively flat management structure, significant staff participation, and high level of commitment that clearly distinguish the NCRFW from other government agencies; and
- Considerable demand from other countries to understand, learn from, and adapt the NCRFW's approaches and specific examples on gender mainstreaming.

– *From the ISP II's End of Project/Forward Looking Review Report*



Another mechanism set up under ISP II was the **GAD Resource Center**. The NCRFW contracted the Center for Women's Studies of the University of the Philippines to lead the setting up of GRCs in state universities in the regions to provide training and technical services and facilitate exchange of information on GAD planning and policy advocacy. There are currently eight GRCs present in seven regions. At the very least, GRCs have the potential to contribute to gender mainstreaming at the subnational level and can provide assistance that is usually extended by the NCRFW. Because they are still in their initial stage of implementation, they need to be supported further as an important and innovative mechanism in promoting gender mainstreaming in the regions.

The NCRFW and its partners, under ISP II, was also able to produce the following tools to be used by partner agencies:

- ❑ How to be a gender-responsive legislator;
- ❑ Skilling and tooling for gender-responsive legislation: A Guide for Trainers;

- ❑ *Barangay to the Rescue: Handbook for Handling Cases of Domestic Violence in the Barangay*;
- ❑ *Gender-Responsive Local Planning and Budgeting: a Guidebook for Beginners*; and
- ❑ *Q&A on Local GAD Budgeting*.

In 2003 the NCRFW, through ISP II, launched its Gender Mainstreaming Resource Kit, a collection of guidebooks, source books and manuals to guide government agencies and GAD advocates in making their organizations gender-responsive. It contains the following:

- ❑ *Manual for Mainstreaming GAD in Development Planning: Framework and Guidelines*;
- ❑ *Ways to Gender-Responsive Organizations: Tools and Guide for Sowing Gender-Responsiveness in Government Organizations*;
- ❑ *A Guidebook on Gender Mainstreaming: How Far Have We Gone*;
- ❑ *Guidebook in Using Statistics for Gender-Responsive Local Development Planning*; and

❑ Transforming Government to Think and Act GAD.

Another significant accomplishment of ISP II was to generate **gender-responsive statistics** and indicators by partner statistical agencies by adopting policy instruments to institutionalize the generation and dissemination of select statistics on gender issues. The National Statistical Coordination Board, in particular, approved resolutions in 2002 pertaining to a statistical framework on GAD, another on the protection of women and children, and creation of an inter-agency committee on gender statistics (IAC-GS).

The IAC-GS aims to sustain efforts and influence the rest of the Philippine Statistical System to improve the generation of gender statistics. It is chaired by the NSCB and co-chaired by the NCRFW and the National Statistics Office. Its members include data-producing line departments and agencies and an NGO, representing other users of gender statistics.

Also in 2002, the Task Force on Data Assessment, chaired by the NCRFW, was created to review data support for the statistical frameworks on refining GAD indicators and the protection of women and children as well as the data requirements of the Framework Plan for Women. The TFDA would recommend action and advocacy plans to concerned agencies so they could address data gaps surfaced by the assessment.

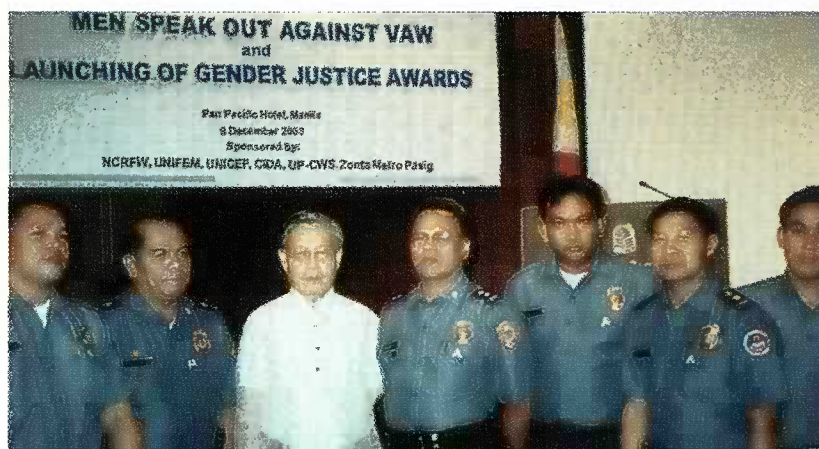
It was also during the term that gender mainstreaming went beyond the executive and legislative branches to include the judiciary. For

the first time in the history of gender mainstreaming in the country, the Philippine judicial system openly recognized gender-responsiveness as a crucial factor in bringing about much desired judicial reforms. The NCRFW helped the Supreme Court integrate gender concerns in its **Action Program for Judicial Reform** and formulate a GAD plan aimed at ensuring the fundamental equality before the law of women and men. Interventions identified in the GAD plan focused on the following:

- ❑ capacity building of justices, court personnel, judges, lawyers and litigants on addressing gender concerns;
- ❑ development of gender-responsive rules, procedures, systems and facilities, including database;
- ❑ partnership and networking with stakeholders; and
- ❑ facilitating women's access to the judicial system.

At the **Commission on Human Rights**, gender concerns were also incorporated in its planning and programming process. An initial result the Commission has started from this is to establish a center for women's human rights.

**Gender Justice Awards** were launched by the NCRFW, the UP Center for Women's Studies and its Foundation, UNIFEM,





UNICEF, CIDA, Commission on Human Rights, Zonta Club of Metro Pasig, other NGOs and civic organizations, the private sector and the donor community to increase awareness of judges on the need to render gender-sensitive decisions on VAW cases. Six trial judges from all over the country who gave outstanding decisions on VAW cases such as rape, marital rape, sexual harassment, sex trafficking, parricide, and physical injuries, including psychological and emotional abuse as grounds in legal separation and nullity of marriage would be cited. Awarding was done in August 18, 2004.



Gender mainstreaming is also starting to influence local governance. The NCRFW convened two national and one regional events that highlighted the participation of women local leaders in gender-responsive local governance.





**A National Summit of Local Chief Executives** was held where over 200 participants signed and adopted the Manila Declaration that embodied priority issues, principles and affirmative actions related to women in governance, politics and decision making. The Declaration was presented to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The NCRFW, together with the NAPC and the Lady Municipal Mayors' Association of the Philippines, convened the first General

Assembly of the LMMAP. An LMMAP resolution was approved adopting a gender-responsive governance agenda to reduce poverty and sustain development. Participants also discussed projects and activities that addressed economic empowerment, human rights of women and children, and gender-responsive governance.

Crossing barriers brought about by diversity and ethnicity, the NCRFW

partnered with the Federation of United Mindanawan Bangsamoro Women Multipurpose Cooperative and the Center for Asia-Pacific Women in Politics (CAPWIP) and held a workshop with the theme of **"Gender-responsive governance at**



**governance at work: women building peace in transformative Bangsamoro communities.”** One hundred thirty women and men leaders from government, civil society groups, and the academe from all over Mindanao participated in the workshop. It provided a venue for harmonizing existing efforts in Mindanao to promote women’s role and participation in peace building and development. From the workshop, participants were able to develop the following:

- ❑ a validated concept and understanding of building transformative Muslim communities;
- ❑ an action plan for gender-responsive governance;
- ❑ a network of Bangsamoro women groups and organizations; and
- ❑ a joint communique from local Bangsamoro women leaders to implement gender-responsive programs and projects.

A project proposal was later developed to enable a successor generation involving women, youth and media practitioners to build transformative Bangsamoro communities.

An initial step to determine the level of gender mainstreaming and application at the local level was initiated by the NCRFW and the DILG, NEDA, UPCWS, and UNICEF. They facilitated the conduct of a study to generate baseline data on

the status of gender mainstreaming efforts in priority areas included in the UNICEF’s Country Program for Children V. One of the findings of the study was that almost half, or 45 per cent, of the 20 selected LGU respondents achieved significant gains in GAD application. This was manifested through the enactment of GAD policies; the implementation of GAD plans and budgets; resource mobilization for GAD activities; and gender-responsive delivery of services. It recommended that LGUs develop or strengthen their GAD programs, identify areas where collaboration could be established among LGUs and national and subnational agencies, and that CPC V improve its support for GAD.

To inspire local governments to practice gender-responsive governance, the **Galing Pook Foundation** gave a special citation award for gender-responsive local governance during its annual Gawad Galing Pook in 2003. The NCRFW served as one of the judges. This special citation was awarded to Cebu City for its Bantay Banay program that confronts VAW in communities. Because the Gawad Galing Pook is reported widely in media, this recognition given for gender-responsive local governance promotes the achievements of GAD and popularizes the GAD approach to local development.

## The *Bantay Banay* Story

Cebu City is a place where VAW is not just a domestic and private affair. It is also a community struggle. It all began 12 years ago, when a survey conducted by the NGO Lihok-Pilipina showed that six out of 10 women in an urban community in Cebu City were victims of battering and sexual abuse. “This is a skeleton in the closet that government needs to address,” says Mayor Tomas Osmeña.

The situation needed multiple interventions: providing immediate shelter for battered women and their children, food, counseling, legal assistance, medical and medicolegal checkups, and temporary livelihood. Lihok-Pilipina created the *Bantay Banay* program to respond to these concerns. Because Lihok-Pilipina is a small NGO with very limited resources, it linked up with the city government for support. This partnership eventually grew with the participation of the private sector and other NGOs.



*Bantay Banay* organized volunteers in the community and trained them to be gender-sensitive. It also trained them on VAW, basic counseling, family dialogue, and laws and legal processes to address women’s issues. It formed inter-agency bodies to provide services and coordinate with local authorities, the police, NGOs, and private sector groups.

Since 1998, some 13,000 cases had been reported to *Bantay Banay*. Many of them were solved through dialogues, mediations and counseling at the community level. Only about 10 per cent of the cases end up in court. *Bantay Banay* volunteers attend court hearings for moral support to women victims.

*Bantay Banay* brought the issue of VAW into the mainstream. It also earned a lot of “firsts” for Cebu City. The local government passed the first anti-VAW ordinance in the country, long before a national law was enacted. It was also one of the first local governments to set up women’s desks in police stations and to draft a GAD Code that provides the framework for GAD programs in the city. It formed the Cebu City Women and Family Affairs Commission, with the private sector and NGOs as members. A Committee on Decorum and Investigation was created for City Hall to look into cases of sexual harassment and abuse in the workplace.

Beginning in 1998, an annual women’s summit was held to provide a forum for discussing gender issues and concerns. In 1999 the city mayor signed an agreement with *barangay* captains to set aside five per cent of their annual budget for GAD activities.

*Bantay Banay* has yielded some results. Reported incidents of VAW have gone down to only about two out of 10 women in 2002. It is also now being replicated in as many as 65 local governments all over the country.

– From “Cebu City, Cebu: Support for Community Initiatives and Partnerships to Respond to Violence against Women and Other Gender Concerns,” in *Gawad Galing Pook 2003: A Tribute to Innovation and Excellence in Local Governance*

## ***A Leader in the International Women's Movement***

The NCRFW continues to distinguish itself as a leader in gender mainstreaming and a mentor for other national machineries on women. It has been hosting delegates and study tours from other countries who wanted to learn from its insights and experiences in making its GAD policy work. This exchange strengthened ties with other countries, fostered international cooperation to advance the status of women, and boosted the national image. From 2002 to 2004, the NCRFW hosted 18 study tours and orientations for countries from all over Asia and one country from Africa.



With the NCRFW as lead institution, the Philippines in 2003 hosted the second phase of the Women in Management Advanced International Training Programme organized by the International Training Center and Development Centre of the Lulea University of Technology (CENTEK) in Sweden.

The training is conducted in Sweden yearly, while its second phase is held in one of the participating countries. The weeklong seminar in the Philippines focused on study visits to

different organizations and government agencies. Here, participants learned how different organizations and institutions in the country work to advance women's concerns.

Building on the country's gains in moving the process of gender integration in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, the Philippines through the NCRFW, served as lead economy and project overseer for the gender information sessions. Significant recommendations proposed by it were adopted in the Joint Ministerial Statement during APEC's Second Ministerial Meeting on Women held in 2002 in Guadalajara, Mexico. These recommendations included:

- the collection of gender disaggregated data;
- use of gender impact analysis of policy, programs and project proposals as integral components of APEC decisions, processes and activities; and
- encouragement of women's participation in all APEC forums as well as in economic policies and decisions of APEC economies.

In the ministerial meeting, the Philippines, in partnership with New Zealand, authored a substantive paper on the ***Impact of trade liberalization on women***. It also played a major role in establishing the Gender Focal Point Network of APEC economies. To further institutionalize gender concerns in APEC, the Philippines is currently maintaining the APEC website on gender integration. The website has interactive sections on gender analysis, gender information session and online training, collection and use of sex-disaggregated data, gender criteria, and good practices on gender mainstreaming. A database of gender experts in the region is in the offing.

The NCRFW continues to represent the Philippines in United Nations sessions and conferences on women. The Chairperson attended the UN Committee on the Status of

Women in 2001-2004 and delivered statements during sessions on the following:

- ❑ Women's participation in conflict prevention, management, and resolution and in post-conflict peace building;
- ❑ The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality;
- ❑ VAW;
- ❑ The role of media; and
- ❑ Gender mainstreaming strategies, specifically the country's efforts to institutionalize them through the Framework Plan for Women.

## ***Fulfilling International Commitments***

The Philippines, as a state party of the UN, ratified the millennium development goals (MDGs) in 2000 and pledged to achieve them in 2015. One of these goals is to promote gender equality and empower women. The NCRFW submitted to the NEDA its programs, activities and projects (PAPs), gender-sensitive indicators, and a list of legislation and policies on women to help identify core MDG PAPs to be included in the next MTPDP being drafted by the NEDA. This is an initial effort by the NCRFW to ensure that the gender equality and women's empowerment goal in the MDG is integrated in current development priorities of government.

In 2003 the NCRFW completed the country's fifth and 6<sup>th</sup> report in fulfilling its commitment to the CEDAW. This is a commitment to which we put great importance as this is a report that periodically maps the progress made by countries in the attainment of gender equality. Taking almost two years to finish, the CEDAW reporting process requires intensive consultation with both GOs and NGOs.

Under the leadership of the Chairperson who used to sit as member of CEDAW, a 360° approach has been observed in the Philippine reporting to CEDAW. This means that a transparent process will be followed in the preparatory phase, the actual reporting phase and the post reporting phase were results of the CEDAW report will be shared with the public.

The NCRFW is also actively participating in the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women as one of the Beijing conference's key players and where it also had a leadership role. A Beijing + 10 progress report was presented to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Committee on Women (ACW). In the Asia Pacific NGO Forum on the Beijing +10 Review this year, the NCRFW presented the status of gender mainstreaming in government during the session on national machinery and institutional mechanisms, one of the BPA's areas of concern.

Aside from the UN Commission on the Status of Women, the NCRFW continues its regular representation in the ASEAN Committee on Women's and the APEC Gender Focal Point Network. It has been involving itself in a new arena on international advocacy on gender and trade in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

Finally, the NCRFW is a frequent resource speaker or participant in international women conferences and forums. Among the themes and issues it presented were women's entrepreneurship, microenterprise, SME development, trade liberalization and gender equality, responsible corporate governance, women's human rights, international migration, trafficking, violence against women, women's participation in the peace process, women and decision making, and gender mainstreaming.



## Issues and Challenges: Agenda for the Future

Remarkable developments and notable gains have been noted during the term, with the NCRFW continually influencing and pushing government to stay on track in its gender mainstreaming strategy. However, this does not mean that the NCRFW and other GAD advocates in and out of government can now take things easy. The positive results of gender mainstreaming are very vulnerable to changes in administrations where existing policies and programs can be set aside in favor of new priorities of incoming leaders. There is also the concern of sustaining GAD efforts. Government tends to be erratic in its implementation of programs and projects, making non-implementation a possibility in the near future. The NCRFW, more than any GAD advocate, has to be vigilant in ensuring that GAD efforts are implemented and sustained accordingly.

There are also a number of persistent issues and challenges that the NCRFW has to consider as it prepares to lay out its agenda

for the next term. Below are some of the more pressing ones:

- ❑ Protection from adverse effects of globalization and economic liberalization through social protection measures for women workers and safety nets for women in small and medium enterprises;
- ❑ Monitoring of compliance to labor legislation on gender-based discrimination to improve work conditions and social protection;
- ❑ Assistance programs to support the self-employed and informal sector workers;
- ❑ Improved access to basic social services in education and health. Education must be attuned with global trends so women can be employed in jobs matching their skills and knowledge. The implementation of current programs and services, including those addressing women's reproductive health, must be intensified in a holistic manner to adequately respond to their needs across their life cycle.

- ❑ Freedom from violence through the full and effective implementation of the Anti-Trafficking Law of 2003 and the Anti-Violence against Women and Their Children Act of 2004. Policies and laws upholding equal rights and equal access to opportunities and women's participation in peace building and rehabilitation of their communities must be monitored as well;
- ❑ Creation of an effective women's voice in government through more representation and participation of women in power and decision-making positions;
- ❑ Stronger role of media in articulating women's issues through continued vigilance and campaign against negative and stereotyped portrayal of women in media;
- ❑ Sustainability of GAD efforts and results through sustained promotion of gender-responsive governance, effective and efficient use of the GAD budget, and mechanisms for monitoring progress; and
- ❑ Strengthening of the national machinery for women. The NCRFW's mandate and organizational structure have to be strengthened and its budget enhanced for it to be able to respond more effectively and proactively to the increasing demands posed by gender mainstreaming in all branches and at all levels of government, policy advocacy, and monitoring.

The NCRFW will continue to engage Congress through its legislative agenda. Aside from reviewing and adding its inputs to women-related bills, it will lobby for the passage of bills on the following:

- ❑ Strengthening of the NCRFW;
- ❑ Amendment of the Women in Development and Nation Building Act and its implementing rules and regulations;

- ❑ Amendment of the Revised Penal Code provision on adultery and concubinage;
- ❑ Decriminalization of prostitution and amendment of the Revised Penal Code provision on vagrancy;
- ❑ Reproductive health; and
- ❑ Local sectoral representation for women in all councils and bodies of LGUs.

The NCRFW will fulfill its commitments to international agreements as a tireless player in the global women's movement. It is in the thick of preparation for the Beijing +10 session in March 2005 where a review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action will be done 10 years after it was adopted. This is on top of its participation to regular UN CSW sessions and activities, including its scheduled presentation of the country's report to CEDAW. Aside from the UN, the NCRFW will keep up its active participation in APEC and ACW forums and activities.

In 2005 the Philippines will join six other countries from the ASEAN in the CEDAW Southeast Asia Programme aimed at realizing women's human rights in the region using CEDAW as the mechanism for change. The Philippines will model an integrated approach in implementing CEDAW. This is expected to result in two things: (1) a core group of



legislators, government officials and staff, and judges with the expertise to use CEDAW in legislation, implementation and enforcement around selected human rights issues; and (2) a set of civil society organizations with the expertise in using CEDAW and its Optional Protocol for advocacy and monitoring on selected human rights issues. The NCRFW is committed to play a major role in this project.

The term ended on the eve of two milestones in 2005: the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the NCRFW

and the centennial of the feminist movement in the country. The NCRFW has evolved from its beginning three decades ago just as the feminist movement in the country has evolved 100 years ago. They are both guided by the same vision, inspired by the same values, and made stronger by the same struggle. They are also facing emerging issues and challenges that impact greatly on women's lives. For the NCRFW, the term was another opportunity to own its distinct niche in the women's movement and reaffirm its solidarity with it.

### **The NCRFW'S Many Roles**

❑ ***NCRFW as knowledge broker***

As the lead agency for GAD, it develops new thinking in emerging priority areas and provides critical analysis on gender equality and its relationship to development concerns.

❑ ***NCRFW as policy advocate***

It faces the challenge of moving gender mainstreaming from a purely development issue – which is how it is regarded today in government – to a central factor in macroeconomic planning, trade and fiscal policies, judicial reform, and devolution, among others. Because it has a strong relationship with its partners in civil society, it is easy for the NCRFW to collaborate with them for collective action on important gender concerns.

❑ ***NCRFW as facilitator for regional and global interfaces and exchanges***

It plays a pivotal role in facilitating dialogues and consultations that address bilateral and multilateral issues such as migration, capital flows, and trafficking of Filipino workers. As a pioneer in gender mainstreaming, it has been sharing its experience, the lessons it has learned, and the best practices it has initiated with other countries and interested groups as resource consultants in international conferences and through study tours.

❑ ***NCRFW as innovator***

A culture of innovation, in place since the early years of the NCRFW, enables it to tap into personal energies and networks to sustain its creativity and commitment in gender mainstreaming and in developing new ways of responding to emerging priorities and concerns of women and their changing condition.

*From the ISP II's End of Project/Forward Looking Review Report*



# Board of Commissioners

**Aurora Javate-de Dios**  
Chairperson

## Government Agency (GO) Commissioners and their Permanent Alternate Representatives

<b>Ex-Officio Member</b>	<b>Alternate Representative/s</b>
Sec. Manuel M. Dayrit, M.D., Msc, DOH	Assec. Zenaida O. Ludovice
Sec. Patricia A. Sto. Tomas, DOLE	Usec. Danilo P. Cruz
Sec. Edilberto C. de Jesus, DepEd	NEAD-DD Alice A. Pañares
Sec. Emilia T. Boncodin, DBM	Usec. Mario L. Relampagos
DG. Romulo L. Neri, NEDA	ADG Margarita S. Songco
Sec. Cesar Purisima, DTI	Assec. Armin Raquel B. Santos
Sec. Delia Domingo-Albert, DFA	
Sec. Luis P. Lorenzo, Jr., DA	Ms. Jindra Linda L. Demeterio
Sec. Corazon Juliano-Soliman, DSWD	Usec. Lourdes G. Balanon
	Assec. Rhoda F. Yap
Sec. Jose D. Lina, Jr., DILG	Assec. Austere A. Panadero

## Non-Government Organization (NGO) Members

Eulalia H. Lim	Elderly and Disabled
Victoria Tauli-Corpuz	Indigenous People
Germelyn G. Esparrago	Urban Poor
Myrna S. Feliciano	Academe/Education
Jurgette A. Honculada	Labor
Barbara C. Gonzalez	Media and Arts
Isabelita Sy-Palanca	Business and Industry
Encarnacion N. Raralio	Science and Health
Dr. Amelou Benitez-Reyes	Culture
Myrna T. Yao	National Council of Women in the Philippines
Damcelle S. Torres	Youth

**Emmeline L. Verzosa**  
Executive Director

**Lorenza A. Umali**  
Deputy Executive Director



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW)  
National Machinery for the Advancement of Women and  
Policy-making Body of the President and the Cabinet on Women's Concern

1145 J.P. Laurel Street, San Miguel Manila 1005

Telephone: (632) 735-4767; 735-4955

Fax: (632) 736-4449

e-mail: [edo@nerfw.govph](mailto:edo@nerfw.govph)

website: [www.nerfw.gov.ph](http://www.nerfw.gov.ph)