



NCRFW

*National Commission
on the
Role of Filipino Women*

**COMPLETE
REPORT**

R E P O R T

ON THE STATE

OF FILIPINO

W O M E N

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Message

The Report on the State of Filipino Women 2001-2003 depicts the plight of our women, 26 years after the declaration of the International Women's Year in 1975 by the United Nations. It highlights progress made on key areas affecting the lives of Filipino women, at the same time that it calls attention to the remaining issues and concerns that will be addressed in the next three years by the present administration.

In the past two decades, we have achieved modest gains in the areas of health and education. More women have become aware of the social, economic and political conditions of our country and have begun to participate in the development processes. And although poverty remains the biggest problem confronting the women, the government continues to sustain efforts to address it through the implementation of the Framework Plan for Women 2001-2004. The Plan complements the administration's development agenda by promoting women's economic empowerment, protecting and fulfilling women's human rights and promoting gender-responsive governance.

As the national machinery for women's advancement, the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW), is firmly committed to continuously push for measures to uplift the status of women in our country, in partnership with other government agencies and instrumentalities, non-government organizations and women's groups, the academe, and other stakeholders in society.

We, therefore encourage everyone in the government and the rest of the civil society to join us in our struggle to improve the lives of Filipino women, and help them overcome the burdens that limit their potentials to become full contributors and partners in the country's development.

Let us all make the government work for women's empowerment and gender equality!



AURORA JAVATE DE DIOS
Chairperson



Preface

Using the Framework Plan for Women (FPW) as guide, this “Report on the State of Filipino Women” (RSFW) reviews and analyzes the progress that was made between 2001 and 2003. By focusing on the three areas of concern, namely, women’s economic empowerment, women and girl’s human rights, and gender-responsive governance, the Report takes into account changes in the situation of women, comparing different groups of women and comparing women with men; actions and achievements by government, nongovernment organizations (NGOs), civil society, and academe; and challenges and issues arising from organizational norms and practices and tenacious gender biases at various levels that hinder the fulfillment of women and girls’ human rights, including access to and control of productive resources that underlie economic empowerment.

While the RSFW is informed by the FPW, the Report is not an assessment of the FPW, as it did not set out to attribute changes in the lives of Filipino women to FPW interventions. Instead, the analysis of changes, good and bad, has been loosely organized around the three foci and their respective objectives, without necessarily linking it to specific desired outcomes.

Where applicable, the RSFW drew heavily on the Philippine Fifth and Sixth Country Report on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Because the reference document of the RSFW was the FPW, not CEDAW, the data had to be reorganized and discussions limited to the period 2001 to 2003, rather than the mid-1990s to 2002 coverage of the CEDAW Report. Nonetheless, time series analysis made use of data that date back to the 1990s, when needed.

The RSFW relied on published government statistics and unpublished performance and program reports, academic research findings, NGO reports, and information from various websites. Updates were provided by agencies, organizations, and individuals who attended the 17 February 2004 RSFW Validation Workshop (See Annex). The final version of the Report has incorporated as much inputs that were provided during the workshop and the following weeks.

Although a number of individuals and agencies contributed to the finalization of the Report, there is one person who went through the data and documents, and crafted the Report, Jeanne Frances I. Illo, who coordinates the Women’s Studies Program of the Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University. The Report profited from the valuable inputs and insights of the NCRFW Board, chaired by Commissioner Aurora Javate-de Dios; and the NCRFW Secretariat, headed by Emmeline L. Verzosa. The NCRFW Information and Resource Division, under Ma. Ferly Enriquez, provided technical support, while at the Institute of Philippine Culture, Frances Chariza I. de los Trino served as research assistant, and Maria Donna Clemente-Aran, technical editor, and Engracia Seña-Santos helped produce the final copy of the Report.

Table of Contents

Message	iii
Preface	iv
List of Tables and Boxes	viii
Acronyms	x
Executive Summary	xv
Chapter 1. The Context of the Report	1
The Framework Plan for Women	2
Conceptual Framework	2
Gender Mainstreaming Strategy	3
The Political and Economic Context	4
Politics and Governance	4
Peace and Order Condition	5
Economic Policies and Instabilities	7
Debt and Deficit	11
Poverty and Inequalities	12
Social and Human Conditions	14
Health and Nutrition	14
Education	14
Basic Services	15
Gender and Social Exclusion	15
Communication and Connectedness	16
Chapter 2. Promoting Women’s Economic Empowerment	18
Employment and Livelihood	19
Participation in the Labor Force	20
Employment and Unemployment	21
Youth Unemployment	24
Occupations and Sectors	25
Gender Biases and Efforts to Broaden Livelihood Options	28
Employment Terms and Work Conditions	29
Overseas Employment	30
Access to Productive Resources	32
Organizational Support for Small and Medium Enterprises	32
Training, Information, and Linkages	33
Credit for Women Small and Medium Entrepreneurs	34
Livelihood Assistance to Women Living in Poverty	35

Women in Economic Decision-Making	38
Management	38
Labor Organizations	38
Protection of Women Workers	39
Work Conditions of Wage Workers	40
Workers' Benefits and Social Protection	41
Support Services	41
Security in the Workplace	42
Occupational Safety and Health	42
Issues and Measures for Specific Workers' Groups	43
Summary of Issues and Challenges	54
Chapter 3. Upholding Women's Human Rights	56
Access to Education and Training	57
Basic Education	58
Higher Education	61
Technical and Vocational Education and Training	64
Access to Health	66
Health Services	66
General Nutritional and Health Condition	68
Reproductive Health	70
Policy Developments	72
Programs to Address Gender and Health Issues	74
Access to and Utilization of Basic Services	78
Minimum Basic Needs	78
Efforts to Reduce Poverty	78
Other Social Welfare Programs	80
Support and Justice for VAW Survivors	81
Reported Domestic Violence, Rape, and Other VAW Crimes	82
Key Government VAW-related Actions	83
Trafficking in Women and Girls	92
Prostitution	96
Women in Areas of Armed Conflict	97
Women and Children in Detention	98
Summary of Issues and Challenges	98
Chapter 4. Strengthening and Promoting Gender-Responsive Governance	100
Participation in Politics and Decision-Making Bodies	101
Women's Involvement in Electoral Politics	101
Women among Justices and Judges	102
Appointments of Women to Government Positions	103

Women's Presence in Foreign Affairs	104
Efforts to Broaden Women's Participation	105
Partnership with the Media	108
Mainstreaming GAD in the Bureaucracy	110
Structures and Budgets	110
Support for Mainstreaming Efforts	111
Outputs and Results	112
Summary of Accomplishments and Issues	114
Chapter 5. Issues and Challenges	116
Gains and Gaps	117
Economic Empowerment	117
Women and Girl Children's Rights	118
Gender-Responsive Governance	119
Continuing Challenges	120
Protection from the Adverse Effects of Globalization and Economic Liberalization	121
Improvement of Work Conditions and Social Protection	121
Support for the Self-Employed and Informal Sector Workers	122
Assistance to Rural Women	123
Improving Access to Basic Social Services	124
Freedom from Violence	126
Making the Laws Work for Women	127
Creating an Autonomous Women's Voice in Government	128
Strengthening the Role of the Media in Promoting Women's Issues	129
Sustainability of GAD Efforts and Results	129
References Cited	131
Annex	140

List of Tables and Boxes

Table

1.1	Growth rates (in percent per year) of real GDP and per capita GDP of selected countries in Southeast Asia, 1996-2002	8
1.2	Growth rates of gross domestic product, gross national product, and major sectors (in constant prices), 1990-2003	9
1.3	Percentage distribution of GDP and employment, by sector, 1998-2003	9
1.4	Selected labor force and employment indicators, 1998-2003 (October survey rounds)	9
1.5	Selected labor migration data, 1996-2002	11
1.6	Selected budget and debt information	12
1.7	Income-poverty-related estimates of families living in poverty (in percent)	13
2.1	Labor force participation rates (in percent) and size of the labor force (in million) in urban and rural areas, by sex of workers (October survey rounds)	20
2.2	Labor force participation rates (in percent), by age and sex of workers (October survey rounds)	21
2.3	Regions with the narrowest and largest LFPR gender gaps, 2001-2003 (April survey rounds)	21
2.4	Employed population (in million) and employment rates (in percent) in urban and rural areas, by sex of workers (October survey rounds)	22
2.5	Regions with the most favorable and least favorable relative employment for women, measured in terms of sex ratio of unemployment rates, 2001 and 2003 (April survey rounds)	23
2.6	Number of persons assessed and certified, 2001-2003	24
2.7	Percent of female workers to total employed workers, by class of worker (October survey rounds)	24
2.8	Proportion of female workers to potential workforce (population 15 years or over), labor force (LF), and unemployed population (UEP), by age group, 2000-2003 (October survey rounds)	25
2.9	Selected information on the information communications and technology industry	27
2.10	Own-account and unpaid family workers (in thousand), by sex	27
2.11	Selected statistics on part-time workers	29
2.12	Beneficiaries of the trade and industry department's training and nontraining services for SMEs, as of December 2003	33
2.13	Sample government lending, programs for SMEs	34
2.14	Selected information on loans extended to women by DBP and LBP, 1998-2001	35
2.15	Selected information on the PCFC operations at end of selected years	36
2.16	Percentage of female and male employed population in management, administrative, and professional occupations (October survey rounds)	38
2.17	Distribution of beneficiaries of natural resource distribution programs of the environment and natural resources department	49
2.18	Distribution of ARBs in agrarian reform communities, 2001/2003	51
2.19	Sample programs of the agriculture department	52
3.1	Selected school participation statistics for female and male children, by level of education	59

3.2	Tertiary enrolment, by sex, selected years	61
3.3	Concentration of female and male students in selected tertiary-level courses	62
3.4	Percentage of female enrollees and graduates of TVET school-based and non-school-based programs, 2003-2004	65
3.5	Selected information on the Philippine health care system	67
3.6	Prevalence (in percent) of malnutrition, by sex	68
3.7	Selected health status indicators, by sex	69
3.8	Percent distribution of currently married women, by selected contraceptive currently used	71
3.9	Selected indicators of access to minimum basic needs (in percent of families)	79
3.10	Distribution of VAW cases reported to the police (in percent)	82
3.11	Women in especially difficult circumstances assisted by community-based and center-based programs of the social welfare department, by clientele type	89
4.1	Number and proportion of women elected officials to total, 1998 and 2001	102
4.2	Percentage of female incumbent judges in Philippine trial courts, 2002	103
4.3	Participation of women (in percent of total membership) in protected areas management boards	105
Box		
1.1	Conceptual Framework of the FPW	2
1.2	Objectives of Plans in Support of the Framework Plan for Women	3
3.1	Main Features of the Anti-Trafficking Act of 2003	84
3.2	Main Features of the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004	85
3.3	Excerpts from the Supreme Court Ruling on the Genosa Case	87
3.4	The Bantay Banay Story	93
4.1	The PKKKB Story	107

Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFMA	Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act
AIDS	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ALDA	ARC level of development assessment
AO	Administrative Order
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
APIS	Annual Poverty Indicators Survey
ARB	agrarian reform beneficiary
ARC	agrarian reform community
ARIAT	Asian Region Initiative Against Trafficking in Persons, Particularly in Women and Children
ARMM	Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASHI	Ahon sa Hirap
AWCDF	Asian Women in Cooperative Development Forum
BDT	Bureau of Domestic Trade
BETP	Bureau of Export Trade Promotion
BHS	barangay health station
BID	Bureau of Immigration and Deportation
BLES	Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics
BMBE	barangay micro business enterprise
BMI	body mass index
BNFE	Bureau of Non-Formal Education
BSMED	Bureau of Small and Medium Enterprises Development
BTRCP	Bureau of Trade and Regulation and Consumer Protection
BWS	battered woman syndrome
CAPWINGS	Career Advancement Program for Women in Government Service
CAPWIP	Center for Asia-Pacific Women in Politics
CAR	Cordillera Autonomous Region
CARP	Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program
CASAGAL	Court-Appointed Special Advocates/Guardian <i>Ad Litem</i>
CATWAP	Coalition Against Trafficking in Women in Asia Pacific
CBA	collective bargaining agreement
CBFM	Community-Based Forest Management
CBTED	Community-Based Training for Enterprise Development
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEO	chief executive officer
CES	Career Executive Service
CFO	Commission on Filipinos Overseas
CGRJ	Committee for a Gender-Responsive Judiciary
CHED	Commission on Higher Education
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIDSS	comprehensive and integrated delivery of social services
CITC	Cottage Industry Training Center
CITEM	Center for International Trade Exposition and Missions
CLASP	Community Livelihood Assistance Special Program
CLOA	certificate of land ownership award
CMDF	Construction and Manpower Development Foundation
CODI	Committee on Decorum and Investigation

COMBAT-VAW	Community-Based Approach to Violence Against Women
CPP-NPA	Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSC	Civil Service Commission
CSO	civil society organization
CWTS	Civil Welfare Training Service
DA	Department of Agriculture
DAR	Department of Agrarian Reform
DAW	Disadvantaged Women
DAWN	Development through Active Women Networking
DBM	Department of Budget and Management
DBP	Development Bank of the Philippines
DepEd	Department of Education
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
DEVAW	Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs
DILG	Department of the Interior and Local Government
DOH	Department of Health
DOJ	Department of Justice
DOLE	Department of Labor and Employment
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
ECCD	early childhood care and development
ECDP	Early Childhood Development Project
ECPAT	End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes
EDSA	Epifanio de los Santos Avenue
EO	Executive Order
EP	emancipation patent
FIL-CHI	Filipino-Chinese Federation of Business Women and Professionals
FLEMMS	Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey
FPW	Framework Plan for Women
FRT	fertility regulating technology
GAA	General Appropriations Act
GAD	gender and development
GDP	gross domestic product
GFI	government financial institution
GNP	gross national product
GO	government organization
GOP	Government of the Philippines
GSIS	Government Service Insurance System
HASIK	Harnessing Self-Reliant Initiatives and Knowledge
HB	House Bill
HDI	human development index
HDR	Human Development Report
HEAP	Home Economics Extension Association of the Philippines
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
IACAT	Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking
IAC-VAW	Inter-Agency Committee on Violence Against Women
IDD	iodine deficiency disorder
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILS	Institute for Labor Studies
IOM	International Organization on Migration
IRR	implementing rules and regulations

IT	information technology
IUD	intrauterine device
KALAHI	Kapit Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan
KALAKASAN	Kababaihan Laban sa Karahasan
KPK	Konsehong Pambayan para sa Kababaihan
LBP	Land Bank of the Philippines
LFPR	labor force participation rate
LGSP	Local Government Support Program
LTS	Literacy Training Service
MBN	minimum basic needs
MFI	microfinance institution
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
MODE	Management and Organization for Development and Empowerment
MSNAT	Multi-Sectoral Network Against Trafficking
MTPDP	Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan
NAP-EVAW	National Action Plan to Eliminate VAW
NAPC	National Anti-Poverty Commission
NAPOLCOM	National Police Commission
NBI	National Bureau of Investigation
NCR	National Capital Region
NCRFW	National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women
NCWDP	National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons
NEAT	National Elementary Achievement Test
NEDA	National Economic and Development Authority
NGO	nongovernment organization
NHIP	National Health Insurance Program
NLRC	National Labor Relations Commission
NLSF	National Livelihood Support Fund
NPACL	National Program of Action Against Child Labor
NSAT	National Secondary Achievement Test
NSCB	National Statistical Coordination Board
NSO	National Statistics Office
OFW	overseas Filipino worker
OPA	overseas performing artist
OPAPP	Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process
OSH	occupational safety and health
OSHC	Occupational Safety and Health Center
OUMWA	Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers' Affairs
OWWA	Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration
OYSTER	Out-of-School Youth Serving towards Economic Recovery
PAMB	protected areas management board
PATAMABA	Pambansang Tagapag-ugnay ng mga Manggagawa sa Bahay
PCARRD	Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development
PCFC	People's Credit and Finance Corporation
PCHR	Philippine Commission on Human Rights
PCIJ	Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism
PCTC	Philippine Center on Translational Crime
PDDCP	Product Design and Development Center of the Philippines
PDOS	pre-departure orientation seminars
PDPW	Philippine Development Plan for Women
PESO	Public Employment Services Office
PETA	Philippine Educational Theater Association

PEZA	Philippine Economic Zone Authority
PHDR	Philippine Human Development Report
PKKB	Panlalawigang Komisyon para sa Kababaihan ng Bulakan
PNP	Philippine National Police
POEA	Philippine Overseas Employment Administration
POLO	Philippine Overseas Labor Officer
PPGD	Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development
PPI	Philippine Peasant Institute
PSCB	Productivity Skills Capability Building
PSF	President's Social Fund
PTTC	Philippine Trade Training Center
QRT	quick response team
Quedancor	Quedan and Rural Credit Guarantee Corporation
RA	Republic Act
RIC	Rural Improvement Club
ROPWAC	regional office for the protection of women and children
ROTC	Reserved Officers Training Corps
RTI	reproductive tract infection
SALIGAN	Sentro ng Alternatibong Lingap Panlegal
SARS	severe acute respiratory syndrome
SB	Senate Bill
SBGFC	Small Business Guarantee and Finance Corporation
SDA	Special Development Area
SEA-K	Self-Employment Assistance-Kaunlaran
SGWG	Senior Government Working Group
SIBOL	Sama-samang Inisyatiba ng Kababaihan sa Pagbabago ng Batas at Lipunan
SME	small and medium enterprise
SONA	State of the Nation Address
SRTC	Statistical Research and Training Center
SSS	Social Security System
STD	sexually transmitted disease
STUFAP	Student Financial Assistance Programs
SULONG	SME Unified Lending Opportunities for National Growth
SWAP	Swap Work Assistance Program
SZOPAD	Special Zone for Peace and Development
TC	Therapeutic Community
TESDA	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
TUCP	Trade Union Congress of the Philippines
TVET	technical-vocational education and training
UCWS	University of the Philippines Center for Women's Studies
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UP	University of the Philippines
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAW	violence against women
VAWC	violence against women and children
VAWCC	VAW Coordinating Committee
WAGI	Women and Gender Institute
WBCP	Women's Business Council of the Philippines
WCC	Women's Crisis Center
WCPU	Women and Children Protection Unit

WEDC	women in especially difficult circumstances
WEDPRO	Women's Education, Development Productivity and Research Organization
WEED	women workers employment and entrepreneurship development
WFS	Women's Feature Service
WHO	World Health Organization
WISDAM	Women in Service for the Differently Abled of Marilao
WISE	Work Improvement in Small Enterprises
WISH	Work Initiative on Safety and Health
WSAP	Women's Studies Association of the Philippines
WTO	World Trade Organization

Executive Summary

In 1987, the Philippines embarked on mainstreaming gender and development (GAD) long before it became an international norm. It began with influencing the 1987-1992 *Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan* with the incorporation of the phrase that recognizes the imperative of effectively mobilizing women in the overall thrust of harnessing the country's human resources to reduce poverty, generate employment, promote social equity and justice, and attain sustainable economic growth. This became the basis for the *Philippine Development Plan for Women 1989-1992* (PDPW), as a companion plan of the medium-term plan whose preparation was led by the Philippine machinery for women, the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW), and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), the central planning agency, working closely with other government agencies and the women's movement.

To grant the long period that is needed to transform the sociocultural and ecopolitical system, the government adopted the *Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development, 1995-2025* (PPGD), a strategic plan that translated the Beijing Platform for Action into policies, strategies, programs, and projects for Filipino women. As with the PDPW, the formulation of the PPGD involved government agencies and GAD advocates in nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and the academe. While the PPGD provided the government with its long-term road map for its GAD work, shorter-term operational plans are needed to realize the goals of the PPGD. To this end, the government, in collaboration with its partners in NGOs and the academe, crafted in 2001 the *Framework Plan for Women* (FPW).

The Framework Plan for Women

The FPW 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." It incorporates the innovative strategies contained in the PPGD; includes more specific and results-focused programs and projects; and provides standards and mechanisms to fulfill Philippine commitments to international agreements, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, and the Beijing+5 Outcome Document.

The FPW calls for "a holistic and comprehensive response to reduce the gender gap" and address "systemic and structural causes of gender inequality." The response hinges on gender-responsive governance that engages various sectors: government, NGOs and civil society organizations (CSOs), private sector, and the academe. To attain gender equality and women's empowerment, individual and structural causes of gender discrimination must be overcome at five levels, namely: welfare, access, conscientization, participation, and control. As gender disparities are addressed and surmounted at each level, higher degrees of empowerment and development can also be achieved.

The framework likewise argues that gender equality can be attained through women's empowerment. From 2001 to 2003, the women's empowerment foci were *economic empowerment* and *women and girls' human rights*, alongside *gender-responsive governance* that would result from mainstreaming GAD in the Philippine government bureaucracy. The objectives of each action to promote each of the areas, which will serve as guide in the analysis of gender gaps, achievements, and remaining challenges, are as follows:

Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment

1. To enhance sustainable access of women to capital, market, information, technology, and technical assistance
2. To enhance the employment and livelihood skills of women, particularly in high-value-adding industries and agricultural activities
3. To establish an enabling environment that will ensure the effective implementation of policies for the protection of women workers, particularly in the areas of any form of discrimination, welfare or working conditions, overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), and other specific women workers' groups
4. To increase awareness of women of their economic rights and opportunities
5. To strengthen women's representation in economic decision-making bodies

Upholding Women's Human Rights

1. To enhance access to and utilization of basic social services
2. To promote gender-responsive delivery of justice to survivors of violence against women
3. To formulate and implement legislative measures that will eliminate gender bias
4. To promote and advance the human rights of women and girl children

Promoting and Strengthening Gender-Responsive Governance

1. To mainstream GAD in the bureaucracy
2. To enhance women's leadership roles and participation in decision making
3. To strengthen women's roles in promoting gender-responsive governance
4. To strengthen partnership with the media in covering various women's issues

Like the PDPW and the PPGD, the FPW is being implemented through a GAD mainstreaming strategy and in accordance with existing guidelines for the preparation of agency-specific agenda and use of the gender budget. This strategy calls for the comprehensive integration of gender principles and concepts in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs. The key elements for a successful implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy include: (i) sex-disaggregated data and statistics; (ii) skills and opportunities to undertake gender analysis; (iii) effective monitoring and evaluation of systems and tools; (iv) national, subnational, and local structures with clearly defined roles for leadership and support for gender mainstreaming; (v) effective communication, networks, and linkages; (vi) a skilled human resource base; (vii) civil society participation; and (viii) GAD budget.

Political, Economic, and Social Contexts

Political and economic contexts

Philippine development has been marked by business cycles that are influenced by global forces as well as domestic events, elections in particular. The uncertainties surrounding national elections, including the forthcoming May 2004 elections, drive away investment, as the economy is considered as too much of a risk. The risk is further enhanced by the continuing peace and order problems. This, despite the noted resilience of the Philippine economy – growing by at least 4.5 percent in 2002 and 2003 – to external shocks, such as the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), a subdued world economy, the Iraq war, and the strife in Mindanao.

Although administrations since 1986 at least have been committed to the broad goals of economic and trade liberalization, poverty reduction, sustainable growth, people's participation, and good governance, the periodic upheavals that attend elections generally mean discontinuity

of policies and programs, as new leaders strive to leave their mark by downplaying what others before them have accomplished.

Any growth or development that economic liberalization has brought to the country continues to be enjoyed by a few, and definitely not by almost half of rural households. Despite efforts to distribute investments and benefits of development, improvements of life conditions and well-being have been noted mainly in a few urban centers.

In spite of the brief resurgence in agriculture, the Philippines continues to be more dependent on the services sector, both for employment and output growth, as the industrial sector has not demonstrated a sustained growth since the crisis in 1997 and 1998. Domestic unemployment rose from 9.8 percent in 2001 to 10.1 percent in 2003, only slightly lower than that in 2000. This rising unemployment in the face of economic growth suggests jobless growth, a problem that a labor-surplus country, like the Philippines, can ill afford. Overseas employment remains an important response not only to unemployment, but also to the need for foreign exchange. By end of 2002, the total deployed OFWs had reached 891,908, with total remittances amounting to \$7.2 billion, or 8.7 percent of the country's gross national product.

The government's budget deficit grew from PhP134.2 billion in 2000 to PhP210.7 billion in 2002. Meanwhile, the share of both economic and social sectors declined, while the size and share of the debt service fund rose significantly. The shrinking share of the economic sector negatively affects the production economy and people's (women and men's) employment and livelihood, while the decline in the social sector's share tends to increase the amount of work women do in the unrecognized care economy, as they strive to provide for services that the government should have been offering.

Social and human conditions

The overall human development achievements of the Philippines have been fair. The country's human development index (HDI) has consistently risen over the past 25 years or so, but the rate of improvement has been slow relative to many countries. Although rated as a "medium human development country," the Philippines consistently ranks low. However, with respect to democratic governance, the country scored 8 out of 10 in protection of civil liberties, political participation, and an "exuberantly free press." In 2001, it attained "near universal primary and secondary enrollment," no small feat, considering the country's paucity of resources.

Major improvements have been noted in health, particularly in life expectancy, infant and child mortality, and maternal mortality, although large variations in health status persist across population groups, income classes, and geographic areas. Health efforts are constantly challenged by the rising cost of health services and drugs, low coverage of health insurance, high incidence of diseases, increased prevalence of malnutrition, and a rapidly growing population. The program to help couples achieve their fertility goals and prepare individuals to become responsible parents in the future has failed to bridge the gap between desired and actual family size. The program has been beset by problems, including low contraceptive use, limited male participation in reproductive health, and lack of sustained mechanism for rural health and family planning services.

Improvements in terms of access to education have also been observed with efforts to improve efficiency of the education system, enhance the teaching-learning process and skills for competitiveness, and ensure equity in basic education. The thrust of the present educational program is toward increased accessibility of both formal and nonformal education, particularly tertiary education and vocational-technical education and training, to equip every Filipino with skills to cope with the new economic environment.

The government has likewise been working to improve the delivery of basic services. As a result, there has reportedly been an increase in the percentage of families with access to safe water, sanitary toilet facilities, and electricity. The cost of utilities, however, remains high despite legislation to curb it. In other services, problems continue to abound. Housing shortage, for instance, remains acute. With a considerable portion of the budget allocated for debt servicing, generation of jobs, and preserving peace and order, government investments in social services are reduced.

Gender inequality or discrimination persists, despite illusions of gender parity and anti-discrimination legislation. Unequal gender relations are manifested in violence done against women and girl children, while gender discrimination has been noted in the distribution of and access to resources, and participation in politics and decision making. Among the women themselves, differences in access to opportunities and in life outcomes have been noted along ethnicity, class, age, and locality.

Filipinos have increased their connectedness to the world through technological developments in the field of communications and computer. There has been a growing number of computer schools and an inclusion of computer subjects in various educational levels; an increasing number of Filipino professionals in the field of computer, electronic, and information technology; and changing consumption and lifestyle preferences. The information and communication technology has its underside, however, as it has also been used extensively in aid of pedophilia, trafficking, and prostitution.

Achievements and Continuing Challenges and Issues

How have women in the Philippines fared during the past three years? What gains have they made? How well has the government respected, protected, and fulfilled their rights? Despite the many achievements in promoting women's interests, what challenges remain?

Economic empowerment

There have been several notable gains in the area of women's economic empowerment during the past three years, each of them, however, at most, qualified successes. Among these gains are the following:

- ◊ More women are employed, and more (new or continuing) efforts are being made to improve workers' competencies, aid workers find gainful employment, and assist workers in their childcare responsibilities.
 - Net employment gains involved 1.46 million women, but the growth of jobs was slower than the influx of women to the labor market. Moreover, about two-fifths of the new workers had gone to the informal sector, although there were as well 18,000 new jobs in call centers, many going to young women, and emergency employment created for unemployed youth.
 - The number and percentage of women occupying management, administrative, and technical positions are increasing.
 - Local public employment services continue to help people in their job search, but no more than 5 percent of the unemployed have reportedly tapped the service.
 - Industrial-skill competency assessment and accreditation has improved, but results are reportedly worse among women.

- Day care centers are reportedly found in over 80 percent of the country's barangays. There were efforts to provide childcare support to women workers on night shift, but these had to be stopped owing to lack of funds.
 - An undisclosed number of women and men in government have benefited from schemes to harmonize family and work responsibilities, involving relocation to worksites closer to home, flexible time or part-time employment, and establishment of day care centers in the workplace. These programs, however, need to be monitored, and impact on women and men workers ascertained, in order to better design and implement them.
- ☞ Credit programs have benefited a large number of women.
- At least 62,000 rural women (or 1.1 percent of total rural women workers) had received production loans from programs of the agriculture department, but these and other programs could reach no more than 5 percent of the female rural workers. Moreover, there is no evidence that these loans support *sustainable livelihoods*.
 - Various lending programs have benefited numerous women living in poverty as well as women microentrepreneurs. By January 2004, the total microfinance beneficiaries had reportedly numbered 1.032 million. The NCRFW and the NAPC (National Anti-Poverty Commission) Women Sector are currently undertaking a gender and credit study to ascertain the gender impacts of microfinance. Generally, however, microfinance projects are rarely monitored or evaluated for results and impact on the women beneficiaries, beyond repayment and credit risk.
- ☞ Efforts have been made to protect and promote women workers' welfare and interests, including addressing gender issues in the workplace.
- There is a continuing campaign to root out sexual harassment in the workplace, a campaign that has increasingly been joined by the labor movement, women's movement, some employers' groups, and the government. However, results have not been monitored systematically.
 - Enforcement of labor standards continues, and efforts to address workplace gender issues in labor inspection forms initiated. However, compliance with general labor standards remains low (as low as 40 percent among general labor standards, but about 80 percent related to technical safety), and coverage of labor inspection limited.
 - Establishment of mechanisms to facilitate payment of SSS (Social Security System) premiums by informal sector workers, preparation of the sector country program, which includes capacity development of local governments and local-level informal workers' organizations, and recognition in official statistics. As in the case of other government programs, however, these initiatives need to be monitored for results and impact on women.
- ☞ Participation of women in agricultural development programs has been noted, although women have rarely accounted for more than 40 percent of participants, beneficiaries, or members.
- ☞ There has been some progress in efforts to improve working conditions and support system for the increasing number of Filipino workers overseas:
- The Philippines has concluded labor agreements and social security agreements for migrant Filipino workers with several countries, but these and other existing

agreements need to be constantly monitored and assessed as to how they have benefited the OFWs. Similarly, additional welfare programs, such as those implemented by the social welfare department, and other new initiatives (such as the competency-certification program of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority [TESDA]) need to be monitored for results as well as abuses.

- The numbers of Filipino workers deployed overseas have increased, an achievement in view of the avowed goal of government to export labor. However, many of the female OFWs continue to be in the categories of domestic helpers, caregivers, and entertainers (constituting the large bulk of “professionals”).
- In 2001 and 2002, some 6,700 female OFWs (of 10,000 or so OFWs) were assisted under long-standing programs of the Overseas Workers’ Welfare Administration (OWWA), which has been under fire for mismanaging the OFW fund.

Because of the critical role that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) play in capital formation, employment creation, and growth generation, government has paid attention to women in SMEs. Some of its accomplishments in this connection are:

- The Women’s Business Council of the Philippines continues to operate, which serves as an important forum for women in SMEs. Even after six years, however, it has yet to extend its reach beyond Metro Manila and one or two other cities.
- At least 31,000 women in SMEs and an undetermined number of women micro-entrepreneurs have received training and nontraining support from government programs that aim to provide new skills or upgrade skills; share information regarding markets, technologies, and product design; and facilitate market linkages. While noteworthy, the programs are reaching very limited numbers of women, especially those in microenterprises.
- Some 258,524 microentrepreneurs were granted loans between January and October 2003 under the SULONG program (SME Unified Lending Opportunities for National Growth), while the reinstatement of the loan guarantee policy made possible guarantees for 466 loan accounts valued at Php1.7 billion.

These gains, however, are extremely fragile. The Philippine government needs to constantly monitor and enforce the agreements in order to encourage fulfillment of the conditions by signatory governments. Monitoring is also the key to discouraging sexual harassment, as training in the implementation of the law and creation of structures (such as committees on decorum and investigation) are but the beginning of compliance with the law; and to improving results of other programs, including microfinance. More specific challenges and issues are:

- Improving social protection and access to credit (beyond minimalist microfinance schemes), markets, and information for women in the informal sector.
- Minimizing, if not eliminating altogether, the disadvantages suffered by poor women in rural areas as a result of the concentration of growth and development in a few urban and regional centers.
- Addressing the perennial high unemployment rate of young people, partly because of the rapid growth of the youth labor force, an offshoot of a high population growth rate; and the large number of working children, some in highly hazardous occupations.

- ☞ Reviewing labor standards and other laws concerning women, clarifying responsibilities of agencies for enforcement and monitoring, and closely monitoring enforcement of labor standards and other laws.
- ☞ Minimizing hiring and preemployment biases and improving workers' placement to address gender stereotyping of occupations and industries.
- ☞ Reconsidering government policies and programs on overseas employment, including the deregulation of the industry; gender-sensitizing officials and frontline workers in agencies tasked to assist or protect women workers, including OFWs; and funding and providing more services to OFW survivors of violence against women.
- ☞ Reviewing and reconsidering policies that have discontinued livelihood assistance schemes that probably serve people living in poverty better than the single-focused credit or skills development programs.
- ☞ Monitoring how resources of livelihood-related programs and projects are being used, collecting sex-disaggregated data on beneficiaries and amounts, and assessing how they are affecting beneficiaries; in the case of training participants, tracking whether or not they found work and how long this took.
- ☞ Establishing effective safety nets for agricultural producers and workers, including women who are affected by the liberalization of the agriculture and fishery sectors.
- ☞ Reviewing and reconsidering such policies as the unilateral reduction of tariffs that threaten domestic industries and agriculture and, ultimately, women, men, and children.

Human rights

The focus of the FPW on the human rights of women and girl children proceeds from a recognition that part of the process of women's empowerment is the building of women and girl children's capabilities: to live a healthy life, to be educated, to move freely, and to be safe from violent assault. In November 2003, the Philippine Senate ratified the Optional Protocol, which seeks to provide a communication procedure that allows either individuals or groups of individuals to submit complaints to the CEDAW Committee, which will then consider petitions from individuals or groups of individuals that have exhausted all national remedies.

Access to basic services. Government actions to improve women and girls' access to and utilization of social services, such as education, health and nutrition, and other basic services, have been many. These cover the following:

- ☞ At the education front, integration of gender-related topics or modules and introduction of teaching aids for teaching gender issues in specific learning areas at the basic education level; integration of GAD topics (such as violence against women) into the medical curricula in participating universities and opening up of more women's studies programs or center; and promotion of nontraditional trades for women and continuing training programs at the TESDA Women's Center.
- ☞ Health-related efforts, including support for some women's health and development programs, but a refocusing of efforts and resources for family planning and other reproductive health schemes; and continuing advocacy to revise the National Health Insurance Act (RA 7875) to include coverage of injuries caused by violence against

women and accreditation of midwives, making home deliveries qualified for insurance claims.

- GO-NGO collaboration and NGO projects on reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, and the like.

In addition, the following improvements in women's lives have been noted, although many of these gains need to be qualified:

- With respect to 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 the boys. Women outnumber men at tertiary level, but they are performing more poorly in government board and licensure examinations. Moreover, 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 emphasized among women than among the men. However, relative nutritional levels of girls and women from puberty to adulthood have been lower than those of boys and men.
- Fertility rate has been falling, but continues to be high. The slow decline may be traced to the lack of access to contraceptive-related information and materials, consistently low (although increasing) prevalence of contraceptive use, and drying up of resources for family planning and reproductive health.
- In connection with the 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.

As have already been noted in connection with some of the accomplishments and gains in connection with social services, gender issues persist and old and new challenges need to be addressed. Paramount among these issues and challenges are:

- Minimizing, if not totally eliminating, gender stereotyping or gender tracking at the tertiary education level. This can be addressed by retraining secondary-level and tertiary-level guidance-cum-career counselors to enable them to promote nontraditional career choices for women and men.
- Improving education-job matching. This involves improving competencies of women and men in various fields, collaboration between the government and the private sector to facilitate entry, particularly of women trained in nontraditional fields, and conducting periodic tracer studies of groups of graduates of tertiary education and TVET programs.
- Minimizing the bias in favor of urban areas, which has caused highly divergent regional life outcomes along gender lines as well as among women. Addressing this issue requires a reconsideration of the geographical investment in social infrastructure and deployment of social service personnel to ensure that women and men, girls and boys, in poorer areas get preferential treatment.
- Arresting rapid population growth owing to high fertility rates, particularly in rural areas and some regions. This also means investing in interventions that address adolescent sexuality and reproductive health, and promoting contraception. The latter is a constant challenge, made more difficult in an environment where resources are siphoned away from it.

Violence against women. The performance in the economic empowerment area may have been mixed, but the achievements in the area of human rights of women and girls have been considerable, many as results of long years of advocacy and preparatory work. Topping these gains are:

- *Passage of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 (Republic Act [RA] 9208).* Thousands of Filipino women leave the country ostensibly as entertainers, fiancés of foreign nationals, service workers, tourists, or undocumented workers, and fall victim to organized criminal syndicates. Between 1992 and December 2002, the foreign affairs department recorded 1,084 cases of human trafficking, 66 percent of which involved women, with 18 percent forced into prostitution. As a result of the lobbying by women's movement and human rights activists (such as CATWAP, Visayan Forum, and ECPAT) and their partners in government, the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act was enacted in May 2003. The law defines as criminal the acts of trafficking in persons, and acts to promote trafficking in person, and redefines *prostitution* from a crime committed by women only to any act, transaction, 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 criminal liability assigned to those who promote it through trafficking in persons. Its other main features include: penalties for various types of offenses related to trafficking, with the fines to be placed in a Trust Fund that will cover the costs of implementing the mandatory programs for preventing trafficking in persons and rehabilitating and reintegrating victims into the mainstream of society; commitment of the state to provide trafficked persons with emergency shelter, counseling, free legal services, medical or psychological services, livelihood and skills training, and educational assistance; provision of legal protection for trafficked persons, recognizing trafficked persons as victims of trafficking; and the creation of the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT), which includes relevant government agencies and three NGOs representing women, children, and migrant workers. The council is mandated to oversee the strict implementation and monitoring of the law and its implementing rules and regulations (IRR).

As of the end of 2003, the council had completed the law's IRR, published it in two leading newspapers, begun the process of finalizing the National Strategic Action Plan to Address Trafficking in Persons that was prepared during a multisectoral strategic planning workshop in November 2003, and started work on an orientation module on the law and its IRR. The council is also set to convene the interagency task forces on international and local airports, seaports, and land transportation terminals.

- *Passage of the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004 (RA 9262).* About 7,200 to 9,200 cases of violence against women (VAW) are reported to the police every year, and an average of 5,200 women seek help from the social welfare department, many of them victims of battering, sexual abuse, involuntary prostitution, and the like. The Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004 has among its main features the following: criminalization of violence against women and their children (VAWC) and protection of women and their children in the context of a marital, dating, or common-law relationship; declaration of VAWC as a public crime, with the perpetrators to be meted 6 months to 12 years of imprisonment and a penalty of up to PhP100,000; recognition of the "battered woman syndrome" (BWS) as a legal defense for women who have suffered cumulative abuse from their spouse and/or partners, and have been driven to defend themselves; provision for a wide range of assistance, including "protection orders" to stop the violence and prevent the

recurrence of future violence; provision for the recognition of violence against women or “battering” as a public health issue, hence, women who have suffered violence may claim paid emergency leave from their employers; instruction to concerned line agencies to provide mandatory services to women and children victims of violence, from counseling to shelter and legal assistance; and creation of an Inter-Agency Council on VAWC to formulate programs and projects to eliminate violence against women, develop capability programs for its frontline people to become more sensitive to the needs of their clients, and monitor VAW-related initiatives. President Macapagal-Arroyo signed the legislation into law on 8 March 2004.

Other notable efforts in the area of support and justice for VAW survivors are the following:

- As a result of the December 2001 Socioeconomic Summit, a 15-agency VAW Coordinating Committee (VAWCC) was created and the NCRFW oversight function pertaining to VAWC strengthened, helping facilitate the advocacy for the passage of the two VAW-related laws and other initiatives.
- As part of the *Action Program for Judicial Reform, 2001-2006*, the Supreme Court has initiated reforms in judicial doctrines and court procedures. After the passage of RA 8369, which reinstated the family courts, new rules on domestic violence were instituted to facilitate the filing of cases and the issuance of emergency protection orders. Moreover, although the Supreme Court affirmed the conviction of Marivic Genosa, who had been jailed for the murder of her batterer-husband, the Court recognized the “battered woman syndrome” as a mitigating circumstance, and ruled for her release from custody, as she had already served the minimum penalty imposed upon her.
- There is continued support for government programs aimed at preventing violence against women or providing specific services to VAW survivors: the social welfare department’s rehabilitation of women in extremely difficult circumstances, operation of 23 “Havens” around the country, and operation of a crisis intervention unit per region; the health department’s women and child protection program; the justice department’s task force on child protection; the interior and local government department’s capacity development of agency personnel for the management of VAWC cases; advocacy, led by NCRFW, in conjunction with the women’s movement; and local government programs to combat violence against women, including the Bantay Banay of Cebu City and the Bantay Familia of Naga City.
- NGO programs, several of which predate government action, range from service delivery, such as shelter and counseling in crisis centers, and legal services; to community-based action against violence against women, including COMBAT-VAW, quick response team, and Bantay Banay; advocacy, such as the “Tigil Bugbog” and “Blow a Whistle” campaigns; and advocacy and services for prostituted women and abused children.

The precedent-setting executive, legislative, and judicial action notwithstanding, several issues and challenges remain. Among these are:

- Enforcement and monitoring of laws, particularly considering that many laws have not been implemented or compliance with them monitored;

- ☞ Geographical spread of VAWC services and matching these with VAW incidence per region or province;
- ☞ Prevalence of VAW cases and the need for wider gender-responsive judicial and non-judicial interventions; and
- ☞ Special needs for the rehabilitation and postconflict care of women and children in vulnerable situations and conflict areas.

Gender-responsive governance

The campaign that began in the late 1980s to transform the Philippine government bureaucracy to being gender-responsive gained grounds during the period 2001 to 2003. With the unstinting support of NCRFW, the past three years have seen remarkable developments. However, all these are highly vulnerable to the vagaries of politics and economics. Thus, with each gain come words of caution about their sustainability.

- ⊕ *Although the figures are still low, there have been more women elected or appointed to decision-making positions or bodies.* At no other time in Philippine history have so many women been appointed to the Cabinet. As of December 2003, 5 of the 16 department secretaries were women. Also, more women were appointed to fill the vacancies in the Court of Appeals, Sandiganbayan, and the trial courts. There was likewise an increase in the percentage of women heading Philippine embassies and consulates around the world, and holding Career Executive Service posts in the civil service. During the period 2001 to 2003, more women were elected as local government heads or members of local legislative councils or of the House of Representatives.

Gender equality and women's empowerment are often a matter of creating opportunities for women. Many of these chances have been made possible by legislative initiatives during the mid-1990s: the party-list system, which encouraged women's groups to form themselves into political parties; and the various rural development acts that created councils or boards to oversee the implementation of the law. However, only one of the six registered women's parties has been able to garner the required number of votes to get a seat in Congress. Moreover, women's share in development councils or management boards has been generally low. It was no more than 29 percent in agrarian reform governing units or councils, and a lower 11 percent of the members of the protected areas management boards in 2002, which marks a decline from the 19 percent in 2000. In comparison, women were better represented in local agricultural and fisheries councils (between 30 and 45 percent in 2001).

- ⊕ *Stronger partnership with members of the media.* This has resulted in the slow but increasing airing of women's concerns and gender issues in the national and local media, production of materials for print and broadcast media in support of GAD campaigns (especially on violence against women), and efforts of government (principally NCRFW and the Philippine Information Agency), NGO, and the private sector (private media companies and advertising firms) to make media practitioners aware of gender issues in the media and to help them produce more gender-sensitive materials and shows.
- ⊕ *Strengthened structures and mechanisms to sustain GAD mainstreaming in government.* A framework plan has been carved out of the PPGD to guide GAD efforts from 2001 to 2004. A GAD planning process is helping government agencies prepare their GAD plans. Finally, the GAD budget policy ensures that resources are available to realize the plans.

The policy also mainstreamed GAD in the government resource allocation system, serving as a model for other marginalized groups on how to negotiate with government for resources. As important perhaps, it has strengthened the position of NCRFW as the authority on matters concerning women.

- ✦ *Expanded GAD mainstreaming beyond the executive and the legislative branches to also include the judiciary.* The move of the Supreme Court in 2003 to create a gender-responsive judiciary completes the campaign to instill awareness and commitment in government to women's concerns and gender issues.
- ✦ *Increased evidence of GAD mainstreaming at the local level.* The advocacy of local GAD advocates and women's movement activists, working in conjunction with like-minded people in local government units and agencies, the support of the interior and local government department and relevant national agencies, and the technical assistance of NCRFW have made possible the adoption of GAD codes and GAD budgets, passage of local ordinances, creation of local women's councils, and implementation of programs that address gender issues, such as violence against women. In this connection, NCRFW has assisted in the development of capacities of local GAD Resource Centers; provided planning and advocacy tools and materials; and supported the preparation, production, and distribution of manuals or best practices in local-level GAD mainstreaming, and the like.
- ✦ *More and easily accessible guides for GAD mainstreaming.* The past three years have added materials—manuals, handbooks, methodologies, and tools—that can be applied to national and local development planning, agency and local government budgeting, program design and implementation in key sectors, and agency-specific operations, be these on health, statistics, police, agriculture, or social welfare. A considerable body of materials on violence against women has been produced and distributed, including manuals on handling sexual harassment in government, methodology for generating statistics on violence against women and children, handbook on handling and preventing domestic violence cases in the barangay, protocol for the medical management of VAWC survivors, and similar outputs. All these are designed to outlive administrations and individuals, but will need GAD advocates to ensure that they are not wasted, left to smolder in shelves or cabinets.

As with the other FPW areas of concern, these gains have to be nurtured and cultivated for them to grow and last longer. These pose challenges, the greatest of which probably is to secure the commitment of succeeding administrations to the efforts that have gone before them. Other challenges are:

- ☞ Examining the performance of women and men in power to gain a sharper focus on the campaign to secure a better gender balance in key political institutions of the country.
- ☞ Helping women who have been elected or appointed to decision-making positions create an autonomous women's voice in government.
- ☞ Passing of pending bills that will institute women's representation in local legislative councils, as provided for in the Local Government Code.
- ☞ Continuing vigilance to minimize, if not altogether eliminate, sexism and violence against women in Philippine media.
- ☞ Instituting a thorough evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the use of the GAD budget.

- ☞ Creating a stronger and broader mandate for NCRFW to oversee the GAD mainstreaming efforts and providing it with the corresponding budget.
- ☞ Ensuring that GAD mainstreaming gains in agencies or branches of government withstand the upheavals attendant to changes in leadership and the desire of new leaders to always start anew, and enabling GAD focal points to convince and secure the support of the new leaders.
- ☞ Recognizing the need for funding periodic GAD campaigns with local government officials, as the holding of local elections every three years often means another set of officials that needs to be made aware of gender issues and convinced that gender-responsive governance is an essential part of good governance.

Financial support for many government programs, including the poverty reduction and GAD mainstreaming campaigns, comes from official development assistance. Dependency on foreign funding creates doubts on the sustainability of programs and services as well as of results and outcomes.

*Chapter 1:
The Context of the Report*



In 1987, the Philippines embarked on a pioneering enterprise, gender and development (GAD) mainstreaming, long before it became an international norm. It began with influencing the 1987-1992 *Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP)* with the incorporation of the phrase “Women, who constitute half of the population, shall be effectively mobilized” in the plan’s overall thrust of harnessing the country’s human resources to reduce poverty, generate employment, promote social equity and justice, and attain sustainable economic growth. The phrase became the basis for the preparation and adoption of the *Philippine Development Plan for Women, 1989-1992 (PDPW)*, as a companion plan of the medium-term plan. As the national machinery for women, the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) worked closely with the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), the central planning agency, in coordinating the preparation and approval of the PDPW.

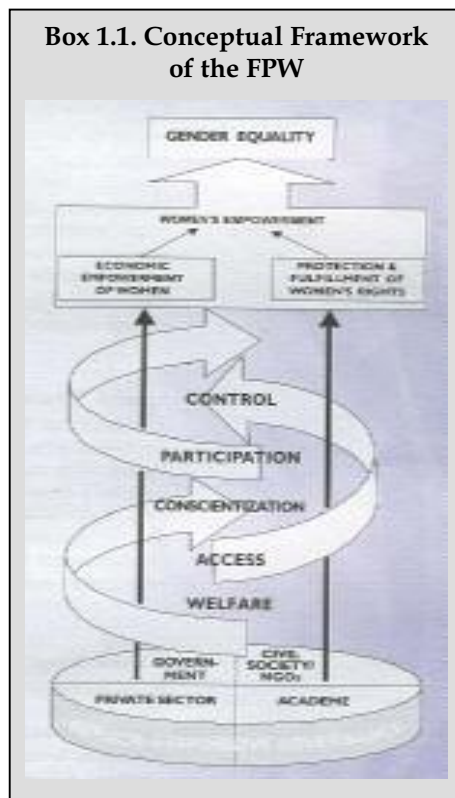
In the early 1990s, the government realized that the transformation of the sociocultural as well as ecopolitical system would require time and a systematic approach, and decided that the successor plan should have a longer time frame. The *Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development, 1995-2025 (PPGD)* is a strategic plan that translated the Beijing Platform for Action into policies, strategies, programs, and projects for Filipino women. Among the PPGD goals are women’s empowerment and gender equality. As with the PDPW, the formulation of the PPGD involved other government agencies and GAD advocates in nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and the academe. While the PPGD provided the government with its long-term road map for its GAD work, shorter-term operational plans were needed to realize the goals of the PPGD. To this end, government, in collaboration with its partners in NGOs and the academe, crafted in 2001 the *Philippine Framework Plan for Women (FPW)*.

THE FRAMEWORK PLAN FOR WOMEN

The FPW 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.” It incorporates the innovative strategies contained in the PPGD; includes more specific, doable, and results-focused programs and projects; and provides standards and mechanisms for fulfilling Philippine commitments to international agreements, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Beijing Platform for Action, and the Beijing+5 Outcome Document.

Conceptual Framework

The *Framework Plan for Women* calls for “a holistic and comprehensive response to reduce the gender gap” and address “systemic and structural causes of gender inequality” (NCRFW 2002a, 5). The analysis of the causes of gender inequality and the design of responses to address these causes are captured in Box 1.1.



The response hinges on gender-responsive governance that engages various sectors: government, NGOs and civil society organizations (CSOs), the private sector, and the academe. To attain gender equality and women’s empowerment, individual and structural causes of gender discrimination must be overcome at five levels, namely: welfare, access, conscientization, participation, and control (UNICEF 1994). As gender disparities are addressed and surmounted at each level, higher degrees of empowerment and development can also be achieved, hence, the spiral in Box 1.1, above.

The framework also argues that women’s empowerment is a necessary condition for gender equality. From 2001 to 2003, the women’s empowerment foci were *economic empowerment* and *promotion of women and girl’s human rights*, alongside *gender-responsive governance*, which would create an environment conducive for the attainment of gender equality and women’s empowerment. The objectives of each area (Box 1.2) serve as a reference for discussions in the relevant chapter.

Box 1.2. Objectives of Plans in Support of the Framework Plan for Women

Promoting Women’s Economic Empowerment

1. Enhance sustainable access of women to capital, market, information, technology, and technical assistance.
2. Enhance employment and livelihood skills of women, particularly in high value-adding industries and agricultural activities.
3. Establish an enabling environment that will ensure effective implementation of policies for the protection of women workers (areas: protection from any form of discrimination, welfare or working conditions, overseas Filipino workers, and others).
4. Increase women’s awareness of their economic rights and opportunities.
5. Strengthen women’s representation in economic decision-making bodies.

Upholding Women’s Human Rights

1. Enhance access to and utilization of basic social services.
2. Promote gender-responsive delivery of justice to survivors of violence against women.
3. Formulate and implement legislative measures that will eliminate gender bias.
4. Promote and advance women and girl children’s human rights.

Promoting and Strengthening Gender-Responsive Governance

1. Mainstream GAD in the bureaucracy.
2. Enhance women’s leadership roles and participation in decision making.
3. Strengthen women’s roles in promoting gender-responsive governance.
4. Strengthen partnership with the media in covering various women’s issues.

Source: Excerpted from the *Philippine Framework Plan for Women, 2002-2004*.

Gender Mainstreaming Strategy

Like the PDPW and PPGD, the FPW is being implemented through a gender mainstreaming strategy, which calls for the comprehensive integration of gender principles and concepts in the everyday life of organizations, as well as in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation

of policies and programs. The key elements for a successful implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy include: (i) sex-disaggregated data and statistics, (ii) skills and opportunities to undertake gender analysis, (iii) effective monitoring and evaluation systems and tools, (iv) national, subnational, and local structures with clearly defined roles for leadership and support for gender mainstreaming, (v) effective communication, networks, and linkages, (vi) skilled human resource base, (vii) civil society participation, and (viii) GAD budget.

Learning how PDPW implementation was held back by lack of budget, the government introduced the GAD Budget Policy in 1995. A provision of the General Appropriations Acts (GAA) of that year, the policy required all government agencies to set aside a portion of the budget allocated by the Act for GAD programs, projects, and activities to ensure that the goals and objectives of the PPGD are translated into agency plans and targets. Every year thereafter, the annual GAA allocates at least 5 percent of the budget of government agencies for GAD, and requires them to submit a GAD plan along with their annual agency budget proposals. As will be evident in the succeeding chapters, the GAD plans and budgets serve as the commitments of government agencies and offices to gender mainstreaming. However, they constitute but a part of the overall initiatives of government to address gender discrimination and biases in its policies, programs, processes, and practices.

THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

The Philippine population was counted at 68.6 million in 1995 and 76.5 million in 2000, or an annual increase of more than 1.5 million Filipinos. The National Statistics Office (NSO) projects the population to have reached 81.1 million in 2003 at an annual population growth rate of 2.36 percent. This rate remains one of the highest in the Asian region. Women comprised 49.6 percent of the population in both years (NSO 1995, 2000).

The population includes some 111 linguistic, cultural, and ethnic groups. The dominant religion is Roman Catholicism, accounting for more than 80 percent of the population. Protestants and Muslims make up 5 percent each. It must be noted, however, that there are differences among Christians and among Muslims, as between Christians and Muslims.¹

Politics and Governance

A relatively peaceful election was held in 1998, paving the way for a smooth transition of power. President Estrada was set to govern until 2004. Less than three years into his term, however, his administration was rocked by a scandal that triggered an impeachment trial by the Philippine Congress. Before the trial could run its full course and because of the public's growing distrust in the proceedings, a massive protest that culminated in a peaceful five-day "People Power II Revolution"² pressured President Estrada to vacate the presidency. Vice President-elect Macapagal-Arroyo was sworn into office in 2001, marking the second time for the Philippines to have a woman president.

¹The Philippines consistently registers a high population growth rate, much higher than neighboring countries. In a largely Catholic country, artificial contraception as a family planning method for population management is a contentious issue, sometimes pitting the Catholic Church against the state. In recent years, the government has adopted the Catholic Church line by promoting responsible parenthood and natural family planning, adversely affecting and retarding the country's family planning program.

²The first was in 1986. Like the first, the second People Power Revolution is known as EDSA II, after the long highway, Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA), where huge numbers of people converged during the "revolution."

After their successful ouster of a dictator in 1986, Filipinos have become more socially and politically vigilant and continued to take an active interest in the affairs of state. CSOs and the private sector have also shifted their stance from being merely cynical critics to critical collaborators toward a more meaningful change. The second “people power” movement that pressured President Estrada to leave his office demonstrated this engagement.

Throughout these changes, however, the Philippine bureaucracy has remained the most politicized, with politically motivated appointments down to the lowest positions (*1997 World Development Report*, cited in MTPDP 1998-2004). Related to the issues of patronage politics, graft and corruption has been the major challenge of good governance in the country. Between 1998 and 2001, Transparency International noted a decrease in the perception of graft and corruption (McKay 2001 cited in Illo and others 2002a, 33). This might be due to the removal from power and trial for plunder of former President Estrada. The Philippines, however, has since slipped in its ranking for corruption (Transparency International cited in ADB 2003e), creating a problem as great, if not greater, than crimes, insurgency, and the like.

Peace and Order Condition

The armed conflict in the Philippines consists of sporadic battles between government forces and the Islamic separatist groups in the South and the communist guerillas in other parts of the country. Since the late 1980s, the government has engaged in a series of peace talks with various rebel groups. Following the 1996 peace accord with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the national government pursued the successful establishment of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), complete with its regional structures of governance and budget. The creation of the Special Zone for Peace and Development (SZOPAD), as a result of the Mindanao peace process, attracted development aid and investment resources to the island. Building the capacity for governance, nurturing a culture of peace, and providing sustainable livelihoods for the men and women of ARMM had been among the priorities of the support programs for the region. Although the 1996 peace accord did not last long, it brought a few years of peace, as did the anti-crime campaigns of government. Crime incidence fell from 1995 (112.8) through 1998 (97.8; NSCB 2004a).

The secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Abu Sayaf, however, continued their armed struggle, with the latter engaging in highly publicized kidnap-for-ransom activities. These resulted in an escalation of conflict between government and the MILF in central Mindanao provinces, and the Abu Sayaf and other lawless groups in ARMM and other parts of Mindanao. A peace agreement was reached between the Macapagal-Arroyo government and the MILF. However, sporadic violence remained unabated in central Mindanao, where the 12,500-strong MILF force is located. The situation worsened in February 2003, when the Philippine military, accusing the MILF of harboring members of the Pentagon kidnap gang, launched a new offensive.³

Military clashes with the MILF and the Abu Sayaf have inflicted hardships on civilians, particularly women and children who are unable to protect and defend themselves. The conflict in Mindanao has caused the displacement of civilians, numbering 7,224 in 1998 to 304,908 individuals (about 51,000 families) in 1999 (ECDFC 1999 cited in Ferrer 2003). In 2000, the World Bank found that a total of 456 barangays (almost 5 percent of the total barangays in Mindanao) and more than a million people had been affected by the hostilities. Of these, half a million, many of them women and children, had been displaced. Subsequently, the number of displaced

³As part of the Philippines’s “strategic relationship” with the United States, Philippine and American forces undertook various exercises. Joint Philippine-US military forays (called BALIKATAN) were also conducted in Mindanao from January to July 2002, and again from April to May 2003 (SONA 2004).

persons decreased to at least 135,000 in 2001 and roughly 100,000 in 2002. Yet many are unwilling to return to their communities of origin because peace continues to be elusive. Whether or not the peace talks between the Government of the Philippines and the MILF, scheduled to take place in Malaysia in 2004, would yield lasting peace remains to be seen.

Uncertainties with regard to peace and order in many areas are leading to long and protracted evacuation. There have been many cases of families returning to their residences, only to re-evacuate with fresh encounters between government forces and the MILF. Damaged houses and lost livelihood are also forcing evacuees to stay at evacuation centers, where problems abound, including limited food supply, poor shelters and health and sanitation facilities, and lack of organized activities for children and adults.⁴

Women who are affected by the war against terrorism are unable to make their concerns heard because they are preoccupied with surviving the hardships brought about by the war or are not adequately represented in forums and panels. Moreover, the gender dimension of the conflict has rarely been raised, if ever, in peace negotiations and peace and development efforts.

Elsewhere, dissident communist armed groups are beginning to become active a decade after the government negotiated peace with the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA). Armed communist groups are on the rise, from an estimated 7,670 in 1994 (but down from a high 25,000 in 1986) to 10,238 in 2001. Clashes between rebel groups and the military have resulted in civilian fatalities: about 63 in 1994, 191 in 2001, and 84 during the first semester of 2002 (Ferrer 2003). The government, however, claims to have "reduced communist terrorist movement's strength" to 8,890 in December 2003, and after exploratory and informal talks in Norway, the Philippine government and the National Democratic Front have agreed to resume formal peace negotiations in early 2004 (SONA 2004).

The overall peace and order situation appeared to worsen in 1999, when the crime rate (propelled by "non-index crimes") rose to 110.5, before falling to 104.7 in 2000 and 98.8 in 2001. However, it jumped to 107.9 in 2002 (NSCB 2004a). The increase in criminality in 1999 could be traced to a rise in the number of drug-related incidents, involving the arrest of 20,110 persons in 1999 and 18,367 in 2001, as compared to 2,722 arrests in 1998. Outside Mindanao, kidnapping for ransom (which was part of the "index crimes") seemed to have been on a decline. Kidnappings were reportedly reduced from 99 in 2001 to 66 in 2002. From January to November 2003, some 87 kidnapping incidents were reported, but 65 of these were allegedly solved. The Philippine National Police claims to have neutralized 15 of the targeted 20 key kidnapping-for-ransom groups and rendered the remaining 5 inactive (SONA 2004).

Attempts of sections of the Philippine military to grab power, which occurred several times in the late 1980s to early 1990s, died down, that is, until 26 July 2003, when a group of junior military officers and enlisted men mutinied. Rumored and aborted coups, the continuing clashes between the military and rebel groups in Mindanao, terrorist bombings in Mindanao, and kidnapping for ransom by renegade groups have eroded investors' and tourists' confidence in the economic and political stability of the country, compromising attempts by government economic managers to lift the economy from the effects of the financial and economic crisis that hit the country in mid-1997. The peace and order problems have also caused the government to increase spending on military activities, consequently draining the government's meager resources and adversely affecting the delivery of vital services to the poor.

⁴Based on a joint assessment of the Philippines's National Economic and Development Authority and the United Nations Development Programme in 2000.

Economic Policies and Instabilities

Like its predecessors, the Macapagal-Arroyo administration has been committed to economic liberalization, macroeconomic stability, poverty alleviation or reduction, and people's participation in governance. It seeks to modernize agriculture and the fisheries sectors, promote comprehensive human development, reduce poverty, and privilege good governance and the rule of law. To respond to the needs of the third of the population living in poverty, the administration launched an anti-poverty agenda with five major strategies: asset reform, delivery of human development services, creation of employment and livelihood opportunities, basic sector's participation in governance, and social protection and security against violence. Some of the policies and programs, however, are fraught with problems.

As part of the Philippine membership in such multilateral trade organizations as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Philippine government has committed itself to reducing trade and nontrade barriers. The economic deregulation and trade liberalization may have contributed to the robust economic growth, high employment rates, and low poverty incidence in the mid-1990s. The deregulation of the financial market, however, introduced volatility in the current accounts of the country's balance of payments, which made the Philippines vulnerable to speculative attacks on its currency, as what happened in July 1997. Because of weaknesses in the country's macroeconomic fundamentals, the financial crisis degenerated into an economic crisis (Illo 1999, Lim 2000). The crisis sharply eroded the value of the peso vis-à-vis the US dollar, from PhP26.38 in mid-1997 to PhP51.40 in 2001, PhP53.10 in 2002, and about PhP55.57 by the end of 2003 (BSP 2004a).

Cycles and instabilities

The Philippine economy has experienced its share of busts and booms, a cycle that is closely linked to the national election cycle (Bautista 2003). In the past 13 years, negative or very little growth was recorded, particularly in 1991 and 1992, and again in 1998, which was exacerbated by the financial crisis that hit Southeast and East Asia.⁵

At the height of the crisis in 1998, Philippine real gross domestic product (GDP) contracted by 0.6 percent, but grew by at least 3.0 percent between 1999 and 2002 (Table 1.1). In 2003, it reportedly rose by 4.5 percent (NEDA 2004). Philippine GDP growth in 1999 and 2000 was slower than most of its neighboring countries. Partly because of the bloodless overthrow of then President Estrada, GDP growth faltered in 2001, but rallied in 2002 and 2003. The country's modest growth persisted despite the global slowdown that affected Singapore and Malaysia (whose merchandise exports were equal to, or more than, their GDP; ADB 2001), the SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) epidemic that hit Singapore and other countries in 2002, and the decline in volume of tourism traffic associated with the 11 September 2001 bombing of the World Trade Center in New York.

As noted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Philippines continued "to show resilience despite global uncertainties, a subdued world economy, the Iraq war, continuing civil strife in Mindanao, and the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) epidemic" (ADB 2003e, 1). This resilience will be sorely tested in 2004. In fact, the uncertainties and political risk surrounding the May 2004 elections, along with a heavy debt burden, has already caused the Moody's Investors Service to downgrade the Philippine government's credit rating by a notch (Batino 2004).

⁵Bautista (2003) also notes that, unlike its neighboring Southeast Asian countries, the Philippines has never experienced sustained and rapid growth. This problem is rooted in self-induced government expansionary fiscal policies (Fabella 1994), particularly prior to elections, and the crisis-prone structure of the economy, with its high import dependence, limited export-earning capacity, low savings ratio, and overvalued currency policy (de Dios 2000). This means that the onset of a crisis cycle usually begins with government spending to drive the economy out of recession and stimulate growth.

Table 1.1. Growth rates (in percent per year) of real GDP and per capita GDP of selected countries in Southeast Asia, 1996-2002

Indicator and country	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
<i>GDP</i>							
Indonesia	8.0	4.7	-13.1	0.8	4.8	3.3	3.7
Malaysia	8.6	7.3	-7.4	6.1	8.3	0.4	4.2
Philippines	5.7	5.2	-0.6	3.4	4.4	3.2	4.6
Singapore	6.9	8.5	-0.1	6.4	9.4	-2.4	2.2
Thailand	5.5	-1.4	-10.5	4.4	4.6	1.9	5.2
Vietnam	9.3	8.2	4.4	4.7	6.1	5.8	6.4
<i>GDP per capita</i>							
Indonesia	6.2	3.2	-14.6	-0.7	3.3	1.9	2.2
Malaysia	7.7	5.0	-9.7	3.7	4.9	-1.7	2.1
Philippines	3.5	2.9	-2.8	1.2	2.3	1.1	2.4
Singapore	3.6	5.2	-3.5	5.7	7.7	-5.2	5.4
Thailand	4.9	-2.3	-11.5	3.4	4.5	1.2	4.1
Vietnam	7.7	4.1	2.2	2.3	5.1	4.8	5.3

Sources: For GDP growth, *ADB Key Development Indicators* (various years); for GDP per capita for 1996, *Asian Development Outlook 2002* (ADB 2002), and for 1997-2002, *Asian Development Outlook 2003* (ADB 2003b).

Meanwhile, graft and corruption and peace and order issues (partly as a fallout of the anti-terrorism campaign following the 11 September 2001 attack) are likely to dampen long-term growth prospects. High population growth will also hobble growth prospects, as it has done in previous years (Table 1.1, above).

Growth in GDP has been fuelled mainly by the services sector. Since 1999, agriculture has signified a recovery from the double blow of the Asian financial crisis and the El Niño phenomenon, growing by 6.5 percent in 1999 and at least 3 percent per year thereafter (Table 1.2). The industrial sector's recovery has been less sustained, fluctuating from one year to the next. As the world economy slowly recovers and despite the continuing war in Iraq and the emerging epidemics (SARS and the avian flu) that plague neighboring countries, the economic prospects for the Philippines should be upbeat. As noted earlier, the "resilience" attributed by ADB to the Philippine economy will be heavily tested by the political uncertainties associated with the May 2004 national elections.

Despite the resurgence recorded in the agricultural sector, the Philippines continues to move away from agriculture. From being a traditional net foreign exchange earner (accounting for 66 percent of exports and 20 percent of imports; Bautista 2003), agriculture had ceased to be a net earner by the 1990s. Natural disasters, mismanagement of the sector, and low world prices for agricultural products combined to erode the potentials for growth of Philippine agriculture. For the period 1998 to 2003, its contribution to GDP fluctuated within a narrow band of 19.4 to 20.1 percent, and absorbed a continuously declining share of employment (Table 1.3). In contrast, services remained the most important sector. Industries, in turn, accounted for at least a third of GDP, but its share of employment was a far third from services and agriculture.

Domestic unemployment and labor migration

The financial and economic crisis in the late 1990s and the succeeding years of near-jobless growth, as displayed by increasing unemployment rates in the face of rising GDP (Tables 1.2 and 1.4), have contributed to the persistent poverty in the country. Filipino households have been

Table 1.2. Growth rates of gross domestic product, gross national product, and major sectors (in constant prices), 1990-2003

Year	Gross domestic product				Gross national product
	Agriculture	Industry	Services	Total	
1990	0.5	2.6	4.9	3.0	4.8
1991	1.4	-2.7	0.2	-0.6	0.5
1992	0.4	-0.5	1.0	0.3	1.6
1993	2.1	1.6	2.5	2.1	2.1
1994	2.6	5.8	4.3	4.4	5.2
1995	0.9	6.7	5.0	4.7	4.9
1996	3.8	6.4	6.4	5.8	7.2
1997	3.1	6.1	5.4	5.2	5.3
1998	-6.4	-2.1	3.5	-0.6	0.4
1999	6.5	0.9	4.0	3.4	3.7
2000	3.4	4.9	4.4	4.4	4.8
2001	3.7	1.3	4.4	3.2	3.5
2002	3.5	4.1	5.4	4.6	4.5
2003	3.9	3.0	5.9	4.5	5.5

Sources: *Key Indicators* (ADB, various years); *Asian Development Outlook 2003* (ADB 2003b, 2003c). Data for 2003 came from NEDA (2004).

Table 1.3. Percentage distribution of GDP and employment, by sector, 1998-2003

Item	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003 (H1)
<i>Gross value added</i>						
Agriculture	19.5	20.1	19.4	19.9	19.7	19.4
Industry	35.3	34.5	34.8	34.8	34.5	33.9
Services	45.1	45.4	43.9	45.3	45.8	46.7
<i>Employment</i>						
Agriculture	39.9	39.1	37.4	37.4	37.4	37.0
Industry	15.7	15.6	16.0	15.6	15.4	15.7
Services	44.4	45.3	46.6	47.0	47.2	47.3

Sources: The GDP figures for 1998 and 1999 were based on NSO (2002), while those for 2000 to 2002 were computed using data from NSCB (2004b). Employment shares for 1998 to 2001 were based on data from NSO (2002), while those for 2002 and 2003 were computed using figures from NSCB (2004c).

Table 1.4. Selected labor force and employment indicators, 1998-2003 (October survey rounds)

Item	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Labor force participation rate	66.0	65.8	64.3	67.5	66.2	67.1
Unemployment rate	9.7	9.7	10.3	9.8	10.2	10.1
Underemployment rate	23.5	21.9	19.9	16.6	15.3	15.7
Visible underemployment rate	12.3	11.1	10.7	10.9	10.0	9.7

Source: Labor Force Surveys, National Statistics Office (various years).

protected from the worst effects of the crisis by the dollar remittances of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs). In 1994, government deployed more than half a million OFWs to the Middle East and Europe (BLES 2002). Since then, the country has sent off an average of 218,200 new hires. By 2002, females had accounted for 73 percent of the new hires (Table 1.5).

In 1997, the OFW population was reported at 1.01 million in 1997, which dipped to 0.9 million in 1998 as a result of the crisis, but rose again to reach 1.06 million in 2002 (NSO 2003b). Meanwhile, the total deployed OFWs increased between 1996 and 2002, with the growth decelerating in 1999 and 2000 (Table 1.5). Since the early 1990s, women had accounted for a majority of the new hires. After the crisis, they make up 46 to 49 percent of all OFWs, land-based and sea-based.

As noted above, remittances from overseas workers have supported Filipino households that would otherwise be living in poverty. In the past six years or so, never have dollar transfers been as high as in 1998, when the financial crisis hit the country (Table 1.5). Although still considerable, remittances declined in the years 1999-2001, but rose again in 2002. Nonetheless, these continued to account for more than 6 percent of GNP during the period under review: rising from 6.5 percent in 1997 to 7.4 percent in 2001 (Table 1.5).

While labor migration contributes to the Philippine economy, it exacts a heavy toll on society. More than ever, it is eroding certain Filipino values, such as the paramount importance given to family unity and the role of parents in shaping the character of their children. Migrants continue to face various problems in their countries of destination: nonpayment of salaries and contract violations, illegal detention and physical and sexual abuse, and the consequent psychological and emotional distress caused by separation from their families. They are also vulnerable to politics that can result in their expulsion, as experienced by Filipino migrants in Sabah, Malaysia, in 2002.

At the same time that the government promotes overseas employment, aiming to deploy at least a million workers annually, it has expended considerable efforts and resources to address the problems facing OFWs. It has set up welfare centers, undertaken bilateral negotiations with receiving countries, and lobbied for policy reform and programs for migrant workers at international forums. The Philippines has figured prominently in international and regional discussions (as in the UN, ASEAN, and APEC) involving migration and trafficking in persons. It has likewise led in advocating programs and projects to heighten awareness of GAD issues through training and capacity building of pertinent personnel in ASEAN and APEC.

Labor migration remained an attractive option for many workers, as the employment situation deteriorated during the period. The decline in employment was more seriously felt in the agriculture, which was greatly affected by El Niño and by crop infestations in some regions, and industry sectors, and less in the services sector. About one million jobs were lost in agriculture between 1996 and 2000, although 80 percent of these were recovered in 2001 (NSO 2002). In the industrial sector, reports of the labor department indicated that prior to the crisis, 889 establishments, involving 39,263 workers, resorted to closure and retrenchment. This almost tripled to 2,258 in 2000, affecting 67,624 employees. Small establishments (with less than 50 workers) were hardest hit, as they comprised half of those that retrenched workers or shut down (BLES 2002). Unemployment rate rose from 7.5 percent in 1996 to 9.7 percent in 1998, and to double-digit figures in 2000, 2002, and 2003 (Table 1.4).

Table 1.5. Selected labor migration data, 1996-2002

Item	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Total deployed OFWs	660,122	747,696	831,643	837,010	841,628	867,599	891,908
Rate of growth of OFW deployment	1.00	13.27	11.23	0.65	0.55	3.08	2.80
Percent female of new hires	54	56	61	64	70	72	73
Total remittances (in million dollars)	4,306.6	5,741.8	7,368.0	6,794.6	6,050.5	6,031.3	7,189.2
Rate of growth of OFW remittances	11.3	33.3	28.3	-7.8	-10.9	-0.3	19.2
Percent of dollar remittances to GNP	5.0	6.5	9.3	8.7	7.7	7.4	8.7

Sources: Data on deployed OFWs came from POEA (2004), while remittance figures were taken from BSP (2004b). GNP figures (in dollars) were based on ADB (2001, 2003e).

To address the persistent economic problems, the government convened in December 2001 the National Socio-Economic Summit, which forged an executive and legislative pact focusing on measures to address the country's priority issues. These encompass the need to improve the peace and order situation, strengthen security and peaceful conflict resolution processes and mechanisms, put a speedy end to terrorism, especially in Mindanao, and accelerate efforts to restore peace and order in that region; enhance the delivery of basic social services (including housing) and protection of the vulnerable sectors, especially the poor, displaced workers, and women victims of violence; increase competitiveness, productivity, and social equity in agriculture, industry, and services; promote employment, workers' rights, social dialogue, and industrial peace; provide more efficient and effective governance and combat all forms of corruption; ensure economic stability through sound macroeconomic management; maintain commitment to asset reform; and sustain and enhance continuing dialogue on development strategies, programs, and paradigms.

Debt and Deficit

The country's foreign debt has been growing relentlessly, from \$30.6 billion in 1990 to \$53.9 billion by the end of 2002. Since 1998 at least, the Philippine external debt has been 60 percent of its GNP and more than double its exports (ADB 2003a). The debt burden continues to compromise the growth and anti-poverty programs of government, as interest payments are preempting an increasing share of the budget (Table 1.6).

Since 2000, the debt service fund has increased, such that by the end of 2002, it was 45 percent of the 2000 budget. In contrast, the budget for economic services contracted by 6 percent, and social services expanded by 9 percent. Only the defense budget registered a double-digit percentage change from the 2000 figure. It is interesting to note that for some years, the debt service fund was more than the country's deficit. The relative decline in the share of social services is likely to affect the amount of work women do in the unrecognized care economy, as they strive to provide for services that the government should have been offering (such as health and day care services).⁶

⁶A pilot project of the National Statistics Office notes that conventional GDP accounts for 53 percent of women's work and 94 percent of men's work (Erica 2001). Unpaid work, mainly activities involved in household provisioning, accounts for the deficit.

Table 1.6. Selected budget and debt information

Item	2000	2001	2002	Percent change in levels, 2000-2002
<i>National government fiscal position (in billion pesos)</i>				
Total expenditures	649.0	710.8	777.9	19.9
Total surplus (deficit)	(134.2)	(147.0)	(210.7)	-57.0
Deficit as % of GDP	-4.1	-4.0	-5.3	-
Foreign debt (in billion dollars)	52.06	52.36	53.87	3.5
<i>Budgeted national government expenditures, by source (as % of total)</i>				
Economic services	24.5	20.2	20.2	-5.7
Social services	31.2	31.0	29.8	9.3
Defense	5.3	4.7	5.9	27.3
General public administration and net lending	17.9	17.1	17.1	9.1
Net lending	0.4	1.0	0.8	134.6
Debt service fund	20.6	25.9	26.2	44.9
Debt service fund (in billion pesos)	140.9	181.6	204.3	
Debt service as % of GDP	6.9	7.7	9.1	-

Sources: For national government fiscal position, Department of Finance (DOF 2004); for budgeted national government expenditures, Department of Budget and Management (as reported in NSO 2002); and for foreign debt figures, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP 2004b).

Poverty and Inequalities

Poor economic performance and continuing political crises compromised the progress that was briefly experienced in 1996-1997, including the decline in income-poverty incidence among Filipino families between 1994 and 1997. Critics claim that the problem of poverty is, in fact, greater than this. Opinion polls that report self-rated poverty ratings place the poverty figure as 16 percentage points higher than the official figure. The downward adjustments to the poverty incidence estimated for 1997 and 2000 (Table 1.7) suggest that the gap between these official figures and other estimates would be wider.

In 2000, as in the years past, the situation in rural areas remained more serious than in urban areas. The drop in poverty incidence between 1994 and 1997 was completely negated, as the rural poverty incidence rose in 2000 (Table 1.7). Poverty in rural areas is still a compelling force which drives people to urban centers, causing problems in housing, health and sanitation, and employment; or to other countries as migrant workers.

In 2000, income-poverty incidence was lowest in Metro Manila, Bulacan, and provinces close to Manila that have vibrant industrial zones, such as Rizal, Laguna, and Cavite (NSCB 2003c). In these provinces, the poor accounted for no more than 10 percent of the population. In contrast, poverty incidence *and* severity of poverty were highest in Masbate (Bicol Region), Mountain Province, Abra, and Ifugao in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), the Southern Tagalog provinces of Romblon and Oriental Mindoro, and four Mindanao provinces (Saranggani, Lanao del Norte, Maguindanao, and Zamboanga del Norte).⁷ In these places, the poor constituted 46 to 63 percent of the population, and to completely eradicate poverty there, the income of families

⁷NSCB (2003c) notes that another province, Sulu, had the highest poverty incidence in 1997 and 2000, but is not included in the 10 poor regions with severe poverty, as the incomes of most of its poor families are relatively close to the poverty threshold.

living in poverty would have to be increased by 17 to 23 percent of their respective poverty thresholds. In Masbate, this translates to PhP3,000.

Poverty, interpreted as income gaps, also varied throughout the country. In some places, like Batanes, poor families would require an additional income equivalent, on the average, to 3 percent of the provincial poverty threshold; in others, such as Saranggani and Mountain Province, families would need 38 to 40 percent.

With the notable exception of Batanes, which is located at the northern tip of the country far from Metro Manila, the degree of poverty tends to rise with the distance from national or regional centers of economic growth. Despite the rural character of Philippine poverty, however, urban poverty is palpable and is likely to erupt, as what happened in May 2001, when tens of thousands of urban poor marched to Malacañang in support of then President Estrada. Regardless of their reasons for joining the rally, their presence was a potent counterprotest to the middle-class “People Power II” and an evidence of a dangerous “social divide” in Metro Manila and probably elsewhere, too. The social divide in the highly urbanized areas of the country, as well as the more obvious rural-urban gap, requires government attention.

Income distribution has been deteriorating since the 1980s. NSO reports that in 1994, the Gini coefficient was 0.45, and fell to 0.486 in 1997 and 0.482 in 2000 (cited in Reyes 2003).⁸ The share in

Table 1.7. Income-poverty-related estimates of families living in poverty (in percent)

Item	1988	1991	1994	1997	2000	Difference 1997-2000
<i>Old methodology</i>						
Poverty incidence ¹	40.2	39.9	35.5	31.8	33.7	1.9
Urban	30.1	31.1	24.0	17.9	19.9	2.0
Rural	46.3	48.6	47.0	44.4	46.9	2.9
Income gap ²	31.7	32.7	31.5	29.8	29.6	0.2
Poverty gap ³	12.8	13.0	11.2	8.4	8.4	0.0
<i>New methodology</i>						
Poverty incidence	-	-	-	28.1	28.4	0.3
Urban	-	-	-	15.0	15.0	0.0
Rural	-	-	-	39.9	41.4	1.5
Income gap	-	-	-	13.6	13.1	-0.5
Urban	-	-	-	5.6	4.9	-0.7
Rural	-	-	-	20.8	20.9	-0.1
Poverty gap	-	-	-	29.8	29.8	0.0
Urban	-	-	-	26.6	26.1	-0.5
Rural	-	-	-	30.9	30.9	0.0
Poverty severity ⁴	-	-	-	3.5	3.4	-0.1
Urban	-	-	-	1.6	1.5	-0.1
Rural	-	-	-	5.2	5.3	0.1

¹Refers to the proportion of poor families to the total number of families.

²Pertains to income shortfall, expressed as a percentage of the poverty line over the whole population.

³Denotes the average income shortfall, as a percentage of the poverty line over families with income below the threshold.

⁴Measures inequality among the poor.

Source: 2002 *Philippine Statistical Yearbook* (NSCB 2002).

⁸The Gini ratio as a measure of income inequality is the area between the income-distribution curve (Lorenz curve) and the diagonal (the line of perfect equality). The Gini coefficient is a measure of the extent of income inequality. The closer to zero the Gini ratio or coefficient is, the more equal the distribution of income (BLES n.d., 18).

income of the poorest 30 percent was only about 8 percent, while the richest 10 percent had almost two-fifths of the total (39.3 percent in 1997 and 38.9 percent in 2000; NSO 2002). Improvements in income equity that could result from the land reform and poverty alleviation programs of the government have yet to be felt.

SOCIAL AND HUMAN CONDITIONS

The overall human development achievements of the Philippines have been adjudged as fair. The country's human development index (HDI) has been on a constant rise over the past 25 years or so, but the rate of improvement has been slow relative to many countries (UNDP, various years). While rated as a "medium human development country," the Philippines has consistently ranked low. It placed 67th out of 140 countries in 1995, 70th out of 162 in 1999, and then slid down to 77th out of 173 in 2000 and 85th out of 175 in 2001. Among 97 countries that are consistently included in the HDI computations, the Philippines ranked 47th in 1995 and 2001 (Reyes 2003). Nonetheless, with respect to democratic governance, the country scored 8 out of 10 in protection of civil liberties, political participation, and an "exuberantly free press" (UNDP 2002). In 2001, it attained "near universal primary and secondary enrollment," no small feat considering the country's paucity of resources.

Health and Nutrition

Major improvements have been observed in health and nutrition. Official data on life expectancy, infant and child mortality, and maternal mortality show improving trends. Female life expectancy rose from 70.1 years in 1995 (NSCB 1995) to 72.5 years in 2003. The comparative figures for males were 64.8 and 66.2 years. Maternal mortality rate fell from 209 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 180 in 1995 (NSCB 1995) and 172 in 1998 (NSO 1998). Mortality rates among infants and children dropped dramatically, with the rates generally lower among girls than boys. However, health efforts are continuously challenged by the rising cost of health services and drugs, low coverage of health insurance, high incidence of diseases, increased prevalence of malnutrition, and a rapidly growing population. Large variations in health status persist across population groups, income classes, and geographic areas. Drug addiction and violence against women are major concerns.

The program to help couples achieve their fertility goals and prepare individuals to become responsible parents in the future has failed to bridge the gap between desired and actual family size. The program is beset by such problems as high unmet needs, low contraceptive use, limited male participation in reproductive health, increasing teenage pregnancy, and lack of sustained mechanisms for rural health and family planning services (see MTPDP 2001-2004). From 1997 to 2000, more than 47 percent of women aged 15 to 49 years used family planning methods (NSO 2003e). This increased in the following years, but remained low (49.5 percent in 2001 and 48.8 percent in 2002). Birth control pills continued to be the leading family planning method, adopted by 14.1 percent in 2001 to 15.3 percent in 2002 (NSO 2003f, 2003g).

Education

The Asian financial crisis and the El Niño phenomenon in 1997 sharply limited the access of poor families to education, particularly at the tertiary level, where the government operates only 19 percent of the schools, compared to 60 percent and 91 percent of schools at the secondary and

elementary levels, respectively.⁹ Only 53 percent of high school graduates in 1997-1998 were able to attend college, and 75 percent of this number went to private colleges and universities. The same trend holds for other years. At the basic education level, school participation rate increased (ADB/WB 1999), except in school year 2000-01, when elementary participation rate fell to 96.8 percent from 97.0 percent the previous year (Reyes 2003). The growth rate after the crisis, however, has been flatter than before the crisis. Data culled by the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) show some differences in school performance of boys and girls as the level goes higher.

Nonetheless, some improvements in education and human resource development have been apparent in the last few years. Government interventions in the sector have centered on reforms to improve the efficiency of the education system, enhance the teaching-learning process and skills for competitiveness, and ensure equity in basic education. The thrust of the present educational program is toward increased accessibility of both formal and nonformal education, particularly tertiary education and vocational education and training, to equip every Filipino with skills to cope with the new economic environment.

Basic Services

Similarly, the government has been working to improve the delivery of basic services. As a result, there has been an increase in the percentage of all families with access to safe water (from 76.9 percent in 1997 to 78.5 percent in 2000), sanitary toilet facilities (74.9 percent in 1994, 77.2 percent in 1997, and 82.5 percent in 2000), and electricity (70.4 percent in 1997 and 75.4 percent in 2000; NSO 2003d). The cost of utilities, however, is still high despite legislation to curb it.

In other services, problems continue to abound. Housing shortage, for instance, remains acute. Between 1999 and 2004, it was estimated that the total housing need would reach 3.3 million units, 1.1 million of which would form the backlog up to 1999 and 2.2 million would constitute the needs of new households to be created as a result of rapid population growth and household formation (NSO 2002, 576). Moreover, with a considerable portion of the budget allocated for debt servicing, generation of jobs, and preserving peace and order, government investments in social services are reduced.

Gender and Social Exclusion

In many areas of life, gender remains an important social exclusion principle. For instance, while Philippine laws support gender equality in property rights, in practice, men are considered as the major property owners. Propertied parents tend to leave lands to sons but ensure the future of daughters by investing in their education (Quisumbing 1990). This enables men to gain access to higher, collateralized loans as it limits women's credit access to smaller loans. Moreover, although women are allowed by law to enter into contract without their spouse's signed agreement, many financial institutions continue to require the male partner's signature on the contract. In other parts of the country, too, prevalent are customary laws that traditionally discriminate against women and girls. This is apparent in education, an area where gender outcomes generally favor females, as parents generally send all their children to school, if they can afford it. In Muslim areas and among many indigenous peoples, however, investment in boys' education outstrips that in girls' education.

⁹For the past decade, the Philippines has implemented a trifocal education system, with the education department refocusing its mandate toward basic education, which covers elementary, secondary, and nonformal education; the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority administering the postsecondary, middle-level human resource training and development; and the Commission on Higher Education responsible for higher education.

In many places in the country, the responsibility of managing or running homes and ministering to family needs rests with women. Low wages and high costs of living have pushed many couples to work, with their incomes further supplemented by whatever their children can earn. In households with young children that require intensive care, women's home production time is at least double that of men (Illo 1997). Adding this to the hours worked by women in wage and/or market production activities results in the much-cited women's multiple burden. Over the past decade or so, more and more urban couples have turned the care of their children over to province-based grandparents, contenting themselves simply with weekend visits. This arrangement has become necessary for households that cannot afford domestic servants, and where couples are away from home from early morning to late evening because of the worsening traffic conditions in the city. In some Muslim groups, women's mobility outside the home is constrained, thereby limiting their access to gainful occupation, including trade. The lower educational attainment of many Muslim and indigenous women also places a severe constraint on taking on high-wage jobs. Norms about gender division of labor are observed not only by households but also by firms and employers. This is apparent in the assignment of tasks at work and the employers' preference for a particular gender for certain tasks. It is evident in the succeeding chapters that some changes have occurred in the way gender operates as an organizing principle in everyday life.

Communication and Connectedness

Rapid technological developments, particularly in the field of electronics communications and computer technology, have enhanced Filipinos' connectedness with the rest of the world. The World Bank notes an increase in the circulation of newspapers, subscription or ownership of cellular phones, and Internet hosts between the mid-1990s and 1997/1999 (cited in Illo 2002a). More dramatic changes took place between 1997 and 2000/2001, with fixed lines and mobile phones per 1,000 population leaping from 47.2 to 124.4 in 2000, and to 192.0 in 2001; personal computer ownership rising from 13.4 per 1,000 population to 21.7 in 2001; and Internet users increasing dramatically from 100,000 to 1.5 million in 2000, and to 2.0 million in 2001 (UNDP 2003, WB 2003a). By 2003, cellular phone subscribers had reportedly numbered 22 million, an increase by 9.4 million since 2001, while Internet subscribers had reached 2.2 million, up from 500,000 in 2001 (SONA 2004).

Daily, Filipinos perceive contrasting images of poverty and prosperity, turbulence and peace, justice and inequity, indifference and active participation. There has been a growing number of computer schools, the inclusion of computer subjects at the elementary, secondary, and tertiary educational levels (academic or vocational-technical degree), and the increasing number of Filipino professionals in computer, electronics, and information technology. The cellular phone is no longer a luxury but a necessity for business and personal use. The second people power movement reportedly occurred due to the speedy communication afforded by the cellular phone. Moreover, Filipino consumption and lifestyle preferences have been influenced by daily exposure to advertisements and cultures from around the world, and from relatives working abroad who send or bring home goods and new lifestyles. The information and communication technology has its underside, however, as it has also been used extensively in aid of pedophilia, trafficking, and prostitution.

As apparent, especially in Chapter 4, the Filipinos relate with the rest of the world not merely as workers in factories, homes, ships, or clubs, or as consumers of global products and images, but, more constructively, as key pioneering players in addressing gender equality concerns in government bureaucracy (what is now widely known as "gender mainstreaming") or international organizations (such as the APEC). All these feature Filipino women. Moreover, as a result of years of global

networking and national lobbying, Filipino women have led the campaign against trafficking in women and girls, linking with like-minded activists throughout the world.

This report highlights accomplishments and persistent issues that have constrained many an initiative in three broad areas: economic, particularly in the light of persistent poverty and continuing disadvantages faced by women workers and entrepreneurs; social, specifically access to basic services and facilities and the right to be protected against violence; and political, including participation in public life and the creation of a bureaucracy that respects, protects, and fulfills women's human rights.

*Chapter 2:
Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment*



Economic empowerment is not only an end to achieving gender equality. It is an end in itself, as it embodies the fulfillment of economic rights. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women includes at least three articles that directly speak of economic empowerment: Article 11, on employment, maternity concerns, and protective legislation; Article 13, on equal access to economic and social life and financial credit, among others; and Article 14, on problems faced by rural women, including their work in the nonmonetized sector of the economy, participation in development planning, and access to agricultural credit and other facilities. Moreover, Article 10 (on education) touches on access of girls and women to opportunities for building their capabilities to participate actively in the economy.

A full accounting of women's condition requires a framework that recognizes the intimate relationship between two spheres of activity: production and care. Production pertains to activities that are generally associated with the "economic": generation of exchange values, as exemplified by wage employment and production of marketable goods. Care, in turn, refers to nurturing that women usually do. It is associated with social reproduction, unpaid work, and invisible labor.

The introduction of care (or unpaid women's work) makes visible a number of concerns related to women's economic empowerment: social protection for workers other than those in paid work, harmonizing work and family responsibilities, access to facilities and services for women in the care economy, and the like. Activities in the care economy enhance the capacities and well-being of household members – the recipients of care – and, by extension, expand the economy's productive capacity, as these produce generations of workers with reliable human and social skills (UNDP 1999).

This chapter focuses on the involvement of Filipino women in the production economy, but comments as well on issues pertinent to care or social reproduction, which are also explored in Chapter 4 in connection with rights to basic social services. Guided by the Philippine *Framework Plan for Women*, this section of the Report assesses the changes in the lives of Filipino women in light of the following economic empowerment objectives: enhanced employment and livelihood skills of women, particularly in high-value-adding industries and agricultural activities; sustainable access of women to capital, market, information, technology, and technical assistance; and effective implementation of policies for the protection of women workers. It also comments on efforts to increase women's awareness of their economic rights and opportunities and women's representation in economic decision-making.

EMPLOYMENT AND LIVELIHOOD

Promoting women's economic empowerment is closely linked to the quality and quantity of available jobs. In fact, the MTPDP 2001-2004 advocates full, decent, and productive employment as a poverty-reduction strategy. Economic growth policies have varying implications for job creation. Jobless growth will most likely worsen poverty and inequalities, while some job-creating growth can spawn its own problems. Take trade and economic liberalization. An important effect of globalization and a key economic policy of the Philippine government, trade liberalization alters the structure of the domestic economy and the economic opportunities for women and men. New

industries, such as electronics in the 1990s, have created jobs for thousands of young women, while the shift to subcontracting in the garments industry “saved” women’s jobs at a time when the industry was cutting costs to become more competitive globally. While both have indeed expanded women’s employment, the former has done so in sectors with limited opportunities for career advancement and exercise of labor rights, and the latter has involved informalization of employment with the women workers assuming their social protection. These employment gains are reflected in the labor force statistics in different ways: increase in wage employment in the case of workers in the electronics industries, and increase in self-employment (informal sector) in the case of subcontractors. These employment gains, however, can be ephemeral, as experienced by garments subcontractors who have been increasingly beset by stiff competition in world markets with cheaper Chinese and Vietnamese products (Pineda Ofreneo 1999).

Participation in the Labor Force

Poverty requires household members, old and young, to contribute to the upkeep of the group. The gender division of labor, however, constrains many women from even looking for paid work, as their social reproduction duties tie them to the care of children and the home. They may be working long hours in the care economy, but all this remains invisible to measurements of economic participation.

As far as the production economy is concerned, much fewer women than men are at work. Female labor force participation rate (LFPR) continues to be significantly lower than male LFPR (Table 2.1).¹ The high fertility rate in the Philippines (3.5 births per woman, compared to 1.9 in Thailand, 2.6 in Indonesia, and 3.0 in Malaysia; ADB 2001) ties women to childbearing for years. Added to this are the years involved in childrearing. Unless child-minders are available, women tend to limit their economic involvement to enterprises that they can do at home or close to home. Informal economy work has allowed many women to combine home and market work.

Table 2.1. Labor force participation rates (in percent) and size of the labor force (in million) in urban and rural areas, by sex of workers (October survey rounds)

Item	1998		2000		2001		2002		2003	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
<i>Labor force participation rate</i>										
Total	49.3	82.9	48.4	80.3	52.8	82.3	51.7	80.8	50.9	83.4
Urban	50.1	78.8	48.8	76.6	52.8	78.6	51.7	77.4	-*	-
Rural	48.5	86.6	47.9	84.0	52.8	85.8	51.7	84.0	-	-
<i>Labor force</i>										
Total	11.77	19.51	11.67	19.24	13.11	20.25	13.16	20.51	13.36	21.72
Urban	6.00	8.74	6.14	8.97	6.83	9.47	6.87	9.57	-	-
Rural	5.77	10.77	5.53	10.26	6.27	10.78	6.29	10.94	-	-

*Data were not available at the time the report was being prepared.

Source: Labor Force Surveys, National Statistics Office (various years).

¹Labor force participation rate pertains to the proportion of the working-age population (or those aged 15 years or older) who are either employed or unemployed, or in the labor force.

Except a few years, Filipino women have been entering the labor force in increasing numbers, reaching 13.4 million in 2003. Female LFPR has likewise been rising and the gender gap narrowing across age groups (Table 2.2), and in most areas, women actively seek paid work in a difficult economic environment that has made a number of men withdraw from the labor market. Female LFPR for 2001 and 2002 are the highest so far, at 52.8 percent and 51.7 percent, respectively, and the gap with male LFPR, the narrowest.

Gender gaps in LFPR have been consistently wider in rural areas (Table 2.1, above) and widest in ARMM and Western Mindanao, or what is now known as the Zamboanga Peninsula. There, male LFPR is almost two to three times higher than female LFPR (Table 2.3). Several forces may be at work here: the nature of available jobs and cultural norms that limit women's mobility and involvement in trading and other activities that take them away from home, keeping women's LFPR in April 2003 to a low 35.6 percent in ARMM and 43.6 percent in Zamboanga; and the continuing peace and order problems in these areas. In rural areas, farming and similar rural enterprises are largely considered as male tasks and women are viewed as supplementary workers.

Table 2.2. Labor force participation rates (in percent), by age and sex of workers (October survey rounds)

Age group (in yrs)	1998		2000		2001		2002		2003	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
15-24	37.1	62.0	36.3	57.1	41.4	62.3	38.2	58.6	38.8	62.3
25-44	56.6	98.0	56.1	97.3	59.8	97.6	59.9	97.4	57.7	92.6
45 +	51.2	93.9	49.8	84.0	54.5	84.4	53.8	83.8	53.7	84.9

Source: Labor Force Surveys, National Statistics Office (various years).

Table 2.3. Regions with the narrowest and largest LFPR gender gaps, 2001 and 2003 (April survey rounds)

Range of sex ratio (M/F)	2001	2003
Less than 1.5	Northern Mindanao (1.32), Eastern Visayas, Davao	Northern Mindanao (1.28), Eastern Visayas, Davao, CAR, NCR, Caraga
1.80 or more	Central Luzon (1.80), Zamboanga Peninsula (1.88), ARMM (2.87)	Zamboanga Peninsula (1.89), ARMM (2.38)

Source: Labor Force Surveys, National Statistics Office (various years).

Employment and Unemployment

Since 2000, about 3.74 million more people have joined the ranks of employed workers, or an increase of 4.5 percent every year: fewer and slightly slower than the increase in labor force (Table 2.4). However, there has been an overall decrease in employment rates for both women and men since 1998, as a result of the crisis from which the country is barely recovering, global recession in early 2000, and uncertainties attending the presidential elections. The domestic unemployment situation has been partly addressed through labor migration. Some 2.62 million Filipino workers have been reportedly deployed to more than 165 overseas destinations (SONA 2004).

Table 2.4. Employed population (in million) and employment rates (in percent) in urban and rural areas, by sex of workers (October survey rounds)

Item	1998		2000		2001		2002		2003	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
<i>Employed population</i>										
Total	10.61	17.65	10.52	17.26	11.75	18.33	11.81	18.44	11.98	19.54
Urban	5.35	7.59	5.45	7.65	6.05	8.17	6.10	8.18	-*	-
Rural	5.25	10.06	5.07	9.61	5.70	10.17	5.71	10.26	-	-
<i>Employment rate</i>										
Total	90.2	90.5	90.1	89.7	89.6	90.6	89.8	89.9	89.7	90.0
Urban	89.3	86.9	88.7	85.3	88.5	86.2	88.8	85.4	-	-
Rural	91.1	93.4	91.7	93.6	90.9	94.3	90.8	93.8	-	-

*Data were not available at the time the report was being prepared.

Source: Labor Force Surveys, National Statistics Office (various years).

Job gains and losses

In October 2003, almost 12 million women were employed in a wage job or other gainful occupations (Table 2.4, above). This figure was 13.9 percent higher than in 2000, but only 1.4 percent more than 2002. The average annual growth of 4.6 percent between 2000 and 2003 was slightly faster than the 4.4 percent per year observed for male workers, but slower than the increase in the female workforce (4.8 percent) for the same period. This means that the modest GDP growth was accompanied by very little net job gains. In fact, as in 1998-2000 (and previously in 1992-1993 and 1994-1995; ADB 2003c), when employment declined despite improving GDP, a mild case of “jobless growth” seemed to be at work.

About 12 million women were employed in October 2003, about 1.46 million more than in 2000, but short of the 1.69 million additional female workers who have joined the workforce since late 2000.

Slight losses in employment were noted particularly among women, who in 2000 briefly experienced a higher employment rate than men. More urban women lost their jobs compared with their rural counterparts during the period, an effect of an industrial sector that was reeling from the effect of a global economic slowdown (registering a mere 1.3 percent growth in 2001; Table 1.2). Despite this, women’s employment or livelihood chances relative to men continue to be better in urban areas or regions that can offer educated women jobs in offices, or that have a manufacturing base that can absorb skilled female and male labor, or that have a thriving informal economy where enterprising women can open small stalls, or accept laundry jobs or production subcontracts. This is most evident in the National Capital Region (NCR), where female unemployment rate has been much lower than male unemployment rate (Table 2.5). In the Calabarzon (or the Cavite-Laguna-Batangas-Rizal industrial zone), with its economic zones and the ancillary activities they promote, as well as in more industrial parts of the Visayas, women’s employment rate approaches that of men. In contrast, in regions with large rural sections and where agriculture is the dominant sector, women are viewed primarily as secondary, unpaid family workers, and female employment lags behind male employment.

The impact of cultural norms on women’s economic involvement is apparent in the employment rates for two regions. In the Cordilleras, various cultures (including the Kalinga, Kankanaey, and Ifugao) allow women great mobility and involvement in mining, agriculture, and trading, in addition to a variety of microenterprises. A number of women have moved with their

Table 2.5. Regions with the most favorable and least favorable relative employment for women, measured in terms of sex ratio of unemployment rates, 2001 and 2003 (April survey rounds)

Range of sex ratio (M/F)	2001	2003
More than 1.0	NCR (1.27), Ilocos (1.08), Calabarzon and Mimaropa (1.06)	Ilocos (1.31), NCR (1.26), Calabarzon (1.26), Central Visayas (1.12)
0.90-0.99	Central Visayas	CAR, Northern Mindanao, Central Luzon
0.50-0.69	Zamboanga Peninsula, Cagayan Valley	Bicol, Cagayan Valley, Zamboanga Peninsula, Soccsksargen
Less than 0.50	ARMM (0.31)	ARMM (0.37)

Source: Labor Force Surveys, National Statistics Office (various years).

families to Baguio City and other places to ply their trade, beg, or embark on a new livelihood (Josef 2002). All this active economic participation is reflected in an employment rate as high as the men's. In the Muslim regions, in contrast, reported female unemployment rate is three times that of the men.

Women, education, and jobs

Unlike middle-educated male workers who can take on a wider array of jobs or occupations in construction, transportation, and industry, women have more limited choices. Thus, not surprisingly, male unemployment is consistently lower at each education level than female unemployment. Moreover, women's higher education does not serve them well in rural areas, where jobs (such as farming) demand skills that are education-neutral. But where jobs require a college degree, female employment rate exceeds that of the male. This explains the wider rural-urban differences in male employment rates, implying that males with low education may find work more easily in farms and rural enterprises than in cities. Among women, the gaps are not so discernible. Educated women may have better job or livelihood opportunities in cities, but they have to earn enough to pay for domestic helpers, while rural women may not have as well-paying jobs as their urban peers, but are more able to combine wage and farm work with their household responsibilities.

Women have more limited occupational choices than men, and the poor education-employment fit may be owing to the lack of employable competencies, particularly among female graduates of higher education programs.

Poor education-employment fit may be associated with the lack of employable competencies among graduates of higher education programs. This problem is reportedly being addressed in the technical-vocational education and training (TVET) field through a competency assessment and certification process using qualification criteria developed by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), together with industry experts. Under the Philippine TVET Qualification Framework, industry workers and graduates of TVET institutions are subjected to competency assessment based on approved Occupational Competency Standards and using Competency Assessment Tools to determine their competency levels and be certified as skilled workers, thereby increasing their employability. The assessment and certification process seeks to assure employers that workers have the knowledge and practical skills needed for a specific job, identify the training needs of their workforce, and serve as an objective basis for absorbing and promoting workers. However, it is not clear whether employment or promotion rates have indeed been higher for people that passed the certification process than for those who failed it.

For the period 2001 to 2003, only 55.5 percent of the 453,970 persons assessed (about 19.9 percent consisting of women) were certified for their particular skills (Table 2.6). Women performed particularly and consistently badly, with only 28.8 percent of them certified. In contrast, the men started well in 2001, but their performance deteriorated rapidly. Both trends are alarming, as poor performance reflects the quality of technical or vocational training and, in the case of the women, the possible lack of supportive structures that would have helped overcome women's handicaps, especially in skills areas that women have not traditionally gone.

Table 2.6. Number of persons assessed and certified, 2001-2003*

Year	Assessed			Certified			
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Rate	Male	Rate
2001	15,778	169,621	185,399	5,112	32	139,634	82
2002	40,186	118,199	158,305	10,549	26	57,980	49
2003 (partial)	34,407	75,859	110,266	10,347	30	28,352	37

*Excluding data from the TESDA Central Office and ARMM.

Source: Technical Education and Skills Development Authority.

Type of workers

Overall, wage and salary workers constitute 48 to 49 percent of all employed workers. In October 2003, however, they accounted for 51 percent of the total employed, while those working on their own account as self-employed workers or employers made up about 37 percent, and unpaid family workers, 12 percent. Men outnumbered women among the wage and salary workers, particularly in 2003, where men were landing construction and other industrial sector jobs (Table 2.7). They also outnumbered women among own-account workers, specifically in farming areas, while women accounted for the majority of unpaid family workers.

Table 2.7. Percent of female workers to total employed workers, by class of worker (October survey rounds)

Type of worker	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Own-account worker	32.8	33.7	33.4	34.8	34.5	33.2
Wage and salary worker	36.9	37.7	37.6	38.2	38.3	37.5
Unpaid family worker	53.0	52.9	52.4	54.0	54.8	54.9
All workers	37.5	38.2	37.9	39.1	42.1	38.0

Source: Labor Force Surveys, National Statistics Office (various years).

Youth Unemployment

As in many economies, unemployment is highest—and employment lowest—among young workers. In urban areas, the least employable workers are male teenagers, while in rural areas, female teenagers (NSO 2003c). Women workers in the 15-24 age bracket have the highest unemployment rate, 22.2 percent in 2000 and 23.8 percent in 2003; while women in the oldest age groups have the lowest. This is evident in the disproportionate number of female workers among the young unemployed (Table 2.8).

The ranks of unemployed youth continue to expand owing to the rapid growth of the youth labor force, consisting mainly of school leavers, vacationing students, and college graduates

Female teenagers in rural areas and male teenagers in urban areas have the highest unemployment rates, but female unemployment rates consistently exceed those of the male. Continued youth unemployment may lead to risky behaviors.

(BLES 2003f). This phenomenon is more marked among male youth in urban areas, although female youth have consistently higher unemployment rates than their male peers. Probably because of lack of information about job prospects, frustration with previous job searches, or the belief that no jobs are available, only a third of the unemployed youth are actively looking for work. Continued inability to land a job is bound to affect young people's self-esteem and, in some cases, lead them to practice risky behavior that may result in teenage pregnancies, drug addiction, and petty crimes.

Table 2.8. Proportion of female workers to potential workforce (population 15 years old or over), labor force (LF), and unemployed population (UEP), by age group, 2000-2003 (October survey rounds)

Age group (in yrs)	2000			2001			2002			2003		
	Pop 15+	LF	UEP	Pop 15+	LF	UEP	Pop 15+	LF	UEP	Pop 15+	LF	UEP
15-24	47.3	36.4	39.1	49.0	37.5	45.3	46.9	36.6	41.5	49.2	37.6	43.5
25-44	50.6	37.1	35.1	50.6	38.6	39.9	50.4	38.5	39.5	50.1	37.1	37.7
45 +	52.6	39.7	30.4	52.5	41.6	34.0	52.6	41.6	32.9	51.4	40.1	29.6
Total	50.2	37.8	36.2	50.2	39.3	41.3	48.1	39.1	39.3	50.2	38.1	38.8

Source: Labor Force Surveys, National Statistics Office (various years).

To help young people in their search for a job, the government has installed a Public Employment Services Office (PESO) in many towns and cities. Out-of-school youth can also acquire industrial and livelihood skills in government-run or affiliated nonformal education or technical training centers; or they can join any of the apprenticeship programs offered in cooperation with the private sector. Neither the training centers nor the apprenticeship programs, however, are easily accessible. In fact, less than 5 percent tap government placement services (BLES 2003f). The more popular ways of job search involve approaching employers directly and/or seeking the help of relatives and friends. These two modes are used by at least three of five job hunters, female or male.

The government has also initiated direct job creation for out-of-school youth. It reportedly provided "emergency employment" to 89,022 youth in Metro Manila (40,000) and Region IV (49,022) from July 2001 to October 2003 (SONA 2004). Moreover, from July 2002 to January 2003, its Project OYSTER (Out-of-School Youth Serving towards Economic Recovery) trained 62,162 out-of-school young women and men nationwide in various livelihood and skills areas. While these efforts do generate employment and livelihood for young people, the jobs are very short-term or of questionable sustainability.

Occupations and Sectors

Jobs and livelihoods in the Philippines are largely provided by the private sector, which absorbs about 43 percent of the wage workforce. Government or the public sector employs about 6 percent.² The balance is accounted for by unpaid family workers (10 percent) and self-employed workers (40 percent).

²The Philippine civil service classifies government positions into career and noncareer posts. Career positions are permanent or temporary appointments in executive and nonexecutive posts. Noncareer positions cover executive (appointive), elective, coterminous, and contractual appointments. Included in noncareer executive posts are department secretaries and undersecretaries, chairpersons and members of constitutional offices, and other high-level appointees; elective officials; and coterminous employees, or confidential or personal staff of elective and noncareer executive officials. In 1999, there were more than 1.4 million employees in government. Women occupied 55.5 percent of career and 36.5 percent of noncareer positions (BLES 2003d).

Occupational distribution

Women are found in large numbers in clerical, sales, and service positions. Like before, there are more women than men among professionals (68 percent) and clerks (67 percent), and in service and sales (53 percent; NSO 2003c). Although at lower levels than men, women outnumber men among officials of government, special-interest groups, managers, and supervisors (58 percent). There are also slightly more women than men among technical workers (51 percent). Their college education or technical training has helped them secure jobs as teachers, nurses, and midwives, positions that are classified under “professionals” but may also be viewed as extensions of women’s gender roles. In comparison, male workers are in “masculine” occupations that require physical strength. Hence, men are dominant among machine operators and assemblers (92 percent), farmers, fishers, and forestry workers (84 percent), and construction and manual laborers (54 percent).

Broad sectors and new industries

Filipino women remain dominant in two broad industrial categories: trade, especially small-scale retail trade; and services, primarily in community, social, and personal services. For the past years, women have outnumbered men in the education sector (75 percent), health and social work (76 percent), and wholesale and retail trade (63 percent). Meanwhile, men continue to dominate the construction (98 percent), transport, storage, and communication (95 percent), and fishing sectors (94 percent; NSO 2003c). The manufacturing workforce is 45 percent female, while agriculture is 72 percent male. Except in Muslim societies that frown on women’s involvement in trading, “selling” is reserved for people who exhibit “feminine” traits, like patience, caring, and nurturance, attributes that are viewed as important in building a core of loyal customers in the overcrowded small-scale trade sector. In large wholesale and trading firms, however, male workers outnumber females.

Some 706,798 women and men (or more than 2 percent of employed workers in 2001) worked in the 49 economic zones that the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) operates and manages throughout the country. About 80 percent of the zone workers consisted of women who were mostly employed in garments and textiles, food and beverages processing, wood manufacturing, and electronics. Employment in the zones has not been without its share of problems. Women workers in the Cavite Export Processing Zone, for example, cite low pay, excessive salary deductions, forced overtime, high production quotas, and lack of incentives as important problems. Other issues are poor ventilation, “no union policy,” unpaid overtime work, nonremittance of SSS payments, nonregularization, sexual harassment, difficulty in availing themselves of a maternity leave and in obtaining a doctor’s certificate, and gender bias in promotion. Only 7 percent of the firms are unionized and employees are not given the chance to participate in decision making, which makes it hard for them to air their problems.

To promote fast-growing industries that will generate “high-value jobs,” the government and the private sector have created information technology (IT) hubs and zones and set up several call centers. Between 2000 and 2003, some 52 call centers with 20,000 seats were established in Metro Manila, Clark Ecozone, Laguna, and Cebu, a dramatic increase from the two centers with 2,000 seats in 2000 (SONA 2004). During the first three quarters of 2003 alone, the centers employed 16,486 people, mostly young females. Moreover, 55 companies were operating in these IT hubs. In 2002, employment generated in the IT zones numbered 14,115; from January to November 2003, employment totaled 22,915 (Table 2.9).

Table 2.9. Selected information on the information communications and technology industry

Item	Number		Employment	
	Previously (year)	2003	Previously (year)	2003
Call centers	2 (2000)	52	2,000 (2000)	16,486 (Jan-Oct)
IT zones	8 (2002)	12	14,115 (2002)	22,915 (Jan-Nov)

Source: SONA updates as of 23 January 2004 (www.gov.ph).

Informal sector

At the other end of the spectrum from the IT industries are the more numerous informal sector enterprises. However estimated, the informal sector accounts for a significant part of the country's development. Informal sector workers, or employed workers that do not receive a wage or salary, account for more than half of the country's employment (NSO 2003c). Between 1996 and 2002, the sector expanded at about 1.5 percent per year, slower than the growth in total employment (about 1.7 percent; Table 2.10). A large portion of the growth in informal sector employment comes from women self-employed workers, whose number has increased by 22 percent since 1996.³ As heavily protected industries collapsed, workers who were laid off from their jobs sought refuge in self-employment as an alternative means of economic support. With the economic performance of the country still shaky, more workers, particularly women, are being pushed into the informal economy.

Despite the absence of social protection, the informal sector attracted about 40 percent of new workers between 2000 and 2003. It also continued to employ about half of the women in the workforce, although not as much as in 2001 and 2002.

Table 2.10. Own-account and unpaid family workers (in thousand), by sex

Sex of workers	2000	2001	2002	2003	Average annual growth rate (%)	
					2000-2002	2000-2003
Female	5,314	6,121	6,212	5,945	8.4	4.0
Male	8,634	9,212	9,419	9,501	4.5	3.3
Total	13,948	15,333	15,631	15,446	6.0	3.6
Total employed	27,775	30,085	30,252	31,523	4.4	4.5
Percent to total employed	50.2	51.0	51.7	49.0	-	-

Source: Labor Force Surveys, National Statistics Office (various years).

In 2003, half of the informal sector workers were small farmers and unpaid family workers. Outside agriculture, self-employed workers accounted for about 79 percent of the employed, of whom 50 percent were in sales or trading, 15 percent in transport, 9 percent in petty production, and 5 percent in various forms of services. The 1995 NSO urban informal sector survey reports that women accounted for at least 51 percent of operators of nonagricultural enterprises. Most of these involved traditional roles, such as sewing garments or *retaso* (surplus rags from the garments industry), laundry, and vending food or petty goods along the streets or in the markets (Pineda Ofreneo 1999). There is also a preponderance of women among homeworkers in the garments, food, footwear, and other manufacturing industries. In the country, 5 to 7 million home-based

³The informal sector has been expanded to include "units" engaged in the production of goods and services, with the primary goal of generating employment and incomes for the persons concerned. However, nonwage employment figures are still the most readily available measure of the informal sector.

women workers perform piece-rated work for the export industry and their number is growing. Most of them are under subcontracting arrangements.

Working children comprise a large number of informal sector workers, totaling 3.6 million in 1995 and 4.0 million in 2001 (ILO-IPEC/NSO 2003). A majority come from rural areas, and more than a quarter are unable to go to school because of work. More working children (65 percent) live away from home, and a majority (79 percent) of them are domestic helpers. Male children outnumber female children (2.5 million versus 1.5 million in 2001), but the female children workforce grows at a relatively faster rate (about 2.2 percent per year) than the male children workforce (1.9 percent; ILO-IPEC/NSO 2003).

Informal sector workers have very limited access to social protection enjoyed by employees in the formal sector, mainly because a great number of them are self-employed, or engaged in marginal activities. In cases where a semblance of employer-employee relationship exists, there are often no formal contracts but only verbal agreements on the work terms and conditions, as is true for subcontract workers and homeworkers. Thus, informal sector workers generally suffer from irregular employment, low income, and unsatisfactory terms and conditions of work, including nonentitlement to social security benefits (ILS 1996).

Gender Biases and Efforts to Broaden Livelihood Options

The concentration of female workers in certain industries or occupations is linked to gender-based choices of college training or career, as well as to “pre-employment sex discrimination” (Morada and Santos 1998). The latter is evident in sexist job advertisements, although a decline has been noted in the proportion of discriminatory print ads. Yet gender biases persist in many areas. Females continue to be preferred for some posts: cashier, secretary, nurse, teacher, waiter, and weaver. The gender bias seems to rest on the employers’ notion of women as (more) trustworthy, honest, meticulous, and patient. Like the garments industry of the past, semiconductor and electronic firms reportedly choose to hire young women because “they settle for low wages, their fingers are nimble, and they are patient and docile” (Aganon 1999, 71). “Preferably male” notices appear in ads for driver, messenger, mechanic, and security guard. As women engineers increase in number and more women perform well as managers, the pro-male bias in these fields has lessened. Such easing up of employers’ gender biases is expanding job chances for both women and men. This needs to be supported by also addressing educational practices that track women to a limited band of career and livelihood options, and the poor enforcement of policies (Illo 2002b).

Efforts have been initiated to improve women's competencies in nontraditional fields, but gender biases in hiring continue to be noted.

Results of efforts to broaden women’s skills training options have been very limited. A pilot project to promote nontraditional trades for women in 1988-1992 graduated 615 women in nontraditional trades, but only 6 percent were able to find employment one year after graduation. In 1996, TESDA instituted an affirmative action policy which requires that at least 10 percent of total TESDA annual training graduates are women. Moreover, since its establishment in 1998, the TESDA Women’s Center has actively promoted nontraditional training for women. It has produced and distributed posters and flyers that encourage women to enroll in nontraditional courses being offered by the center. While the majority of the women trainees prefer the familiar courses, 184 have so far completed training in such nontraditional courses as automotive (124) and welding (60). Of them, 158 underwent preemployment skills training; 21, skills upgrading; and 5, comprehensive trainers’ training. The 184 women account for a small percentage, particularly when compared with the hundreds of thousands that receive TESDA training each year (BLES 2003d).

Employment Terms and Work Conditions

Part-time work

Regular full-time workers in the Philippines put in at least 40 hours a week. Workers who are paid per piece or per hour of actual work, as well as unpaid family workers and own-account workers, keep variable hours. In the late 1990s, domestic service workers worked the longest. Urban women kept the longest average hours in a wage job or enterprise, while rural women, the shortest. The gender gap in working time was largest in rural areas where work in the field or a rural enterprise was sporadic and far in between (Illo 2002b). When home production time was factored in, women's average leisure time was shorter than the men's by an hour in rural areas and two hours in urban areas (Lim 2000). These differences in home production time continue to create problems for women.

Part-time workers, or those working less than 40 hours a week, accounted for 37.5 percent of all employed workers in 2002, but only 35.4 percent in 2003. They increased by an average of 6.1 percent between 1998 and 2002, or roughly double the growth rate of the employed population (BLES 2003b). Between October 2002 and July 2003, about 200,000 workers lost full-time work, primarily men (Table 2.11). This notwithstanding, the proportion of part-time workers among the women continues to be higher than among the men, although the gender gap has narrowed over the years.

Table 2.11. Selected statistics on part-time workers

Item	Oct 1998		Oct 2000		Oct 2002		Jul 2003	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Employed population (in thousand)	10,608	17,653	10,516	17,258	11,812	18,439	11,503	18,948
Percent part-time	34.0	30.8	33.6	31.8	37.9	36.9	34.8	32.7

Source: Labor Force Surveys, National Statistics Office (various years).

Wages

In 1992, women workers were paid lower hourly wages, on the average, than men (HDN/UNDP 1997). Gender-income differences were largest in sales and the services sector, where men were found in bigger firms that could pay more while women were in micro and very small enterprises. There were exceptions, however. In rural areas, public schoolteachers (mostly female) and clerks in local government offices constituted the bulk of the professionals. Here, women's mean hourly earnings would compare favorably with men's. This seems to be the only instance where, speaking of averages, women's higher education pays off. Education does explain variations in wages among women as among men, but not why men as a group, who are generally less educated than women, are paid higher (Alba n.d.). The higher wage that education is associated with does not seem to benefit women in the same way that it does men. This is probably because of the following interrelated factors: relative scarcity of graduates of "male" fields (such as engineering) vis-à-vis "female" fields (say, teaching), the higher valuation accorded to men's occupations, or mismatching of education and skills, with female college graduates ending up as clerks, call center operators, and the like.

There are relatively more part-time workers among women than among men, and women workers continue to earn much less than men.

Security and occupational health and safety

Occupational health and safety problems plague certain types of workers. The 2000 Occupational Injuries Survey placed the frequency rate of occupational injuries at 5.70 per 500 workers (per 1,000,000 employee-hours of exposure) in nonagricultural establishments employing 20 or more workers. The vast majority of these (5.62) have caused temporary incapacity and a loss of eight workdays, on the average (BLES 2003d). Incidence of occupational injuries (frequency and severity) tends to be high in manufacturing as well as in male-dominated sectors (utilities; transport, storage, and communication; mining and quarrying; and construction).

In connection with women workers, studies indicate that exposure to lead and solvents in the semiconductor industry can result in spontaneous abortion (OSHC 1996), narcotic effects and respiratory tract and skin irritations,

While incidence of occupational injuries tends to be high in male-dominated sectors, women are also vulnerable to work-related stress and other occupational health and safety hazards as well as sexual harassment.

or the occasional Steven Johnson syndrome (OSHC 2001a). Stress in teaching has been known to cause heart disease and cardiovascular accidents, pulmonary tuberculosis, allergy and bronchial asthma, peptic ulcer, and pneumonia. Night work can lead to sleep disorder and other health problems that may not manifest immediately (OSHC 2001b). Workers surveyed complained of malignancy, gastrointestinal tract disorders, kidney and urinary tract diseases, reproductive disorders, and neurological problems (OSHC 1997). In the Cavite Export Processing Zone, women workers cited overfatigue, migraine, and headaches induced by lack of sleep because of too much overtime work (Pineda Ofreneo, Honculada, and Bellin 1999). Blurred vision, respiratory illnesses, and accidents were believed to result from poor working conditions. Company doctors seldom visit, and when they do, women are rarely given time to consult with them due to long hours of work or short breaks. Family planning services are also not adequately provided – clearly a violation of the Labor Code (see Edralin 2001).

A study of the multiple burdens of women and men in government indicates differences in perceived sources of stress at home and at work (OSHC 1999). Significantly more female respondents report “inability to relax at home” after office work due to pressure of house chores, which is indicative of the double burden suffered by working women. The study prescribes flexible working arrangements to allow women to work from home and a stronger support network for women.

A more endemic “safety” or security issue in the workplace for women, sexual harassment has been so widely noted that it spurred women’s groups to lobby for the passage of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act (Republic Act or RA 7877) in 1995. Preventive measures as well as procedures for grievance and complaints were laid down. Since then, victims, mainly women, have been encouraged to file complaints. In the civil service, 38 cases have been filed with the Office of Legal Affairs of the Civil Service Commission, resulting in the dismissal of 15 respondents from the service and the suspension of 7 for 3 to 12 months. In the private sector, reports have also begun to come in.

Overseas Employment

The Commission on Filipinos Overseas claims that as of December 2001, a total of 7.4 million Filipinos were overseas: 3.1 million migrant workers, 2.7 million permanent residents, and 1.6 million irregular aliens. As of June 2002, the foreign affairs department reported an estimated 5.5 million OFWs and overseas Filipinos (13 percent of whom were undocumented) spread in 193

countries all over the world. This already constituted 74 percent of the total stock estimate in 2001 (Kanlungan 2002).

Some 1.6 million OFWs were deployed as new hires from 1995 to 2001. In 2002, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) reportedly deployed 891,908 OFWs, an increase of 2.8 percent from the previous year's figure, or about 2,444 daily (POEA cited in Kanlungan 2002). Land-based workers accounted for 76.5 percent (682,315), while (male) sea-based workers made up the rest. Land-based new hires numbered 288,155. Of these, 209,822 were women, representing an almost 13 percent increase from 186,018 in year 2001. Women comprised 73 percent of all new hires in 2002, the highest percentage share of women in the last 10 years. This figure was slightly higher than that in 2001 (72 percent) but much higher than the average from 1995 to 2001 (63 percent).

Among the women new hires who left the country in 2002, about 42 percent went into domestic service and 41 percent were classified as "professionals," mostly for Japan where they actually worked as entertainers. More and more women were leaving as professionals (41 percent versus 33 percent from 1995 to 2001) than domestic helpers (42 percent versus 45 percent). Among the land-based men, most (63 percent) were production (factory) workers or professionals (19 percent).

Despite the problems that continue to plague OFWs, more than 2,000 OFWs were deployed daily in 2002, easing the pressure to generate local jobs. Women, who comprised 73 percent of the new hires in 2002, left the country primarily as domestic-service workers or as entertainers.

Japan remains the country's top destination of women new hires (95 percent as "professionals" or entertainers), followed by Saudi Arabia (41 percent as domestic helpers or nurses) and Taiwan (70 percent working in factories or as building caretakers; POEA cited in Kanlungan 2002). The rest leave for places like Hong Kong, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, and Qatar as domestic workers; United Kingdom as nurses; and Israel, Canada, and Spain as caregivers or caretakers. Singapore, Brunei, and Malaysia have thousands of Filipino migrant workers in domestic service.

Over the past decade, the following trends have been noted with respect to export of labor: increasing deployment (Table 1.5) and deregulation of the industry, continuing feminization of newly hired, land-based workers, dominance of service occupations, and the emergence of East and Southeast Asian destinations (Alcid 2002). Moreover, large numbers of Filipinos overseas are undocumented migrants. The Japanese government believes that because of visa restrictions and lack of employment opportunities for skilled workers in the Philippines, half of the more than 40,000 Filipino workers who entered Japan in 1998 were undocumented. Two-thirds (63.8 percent) of these were women who risked abuse and exploitation (Sinag 1999). In Singapore, the Philippine labor attaché claims that around 70 percent of the 80,000 Filipina domestic workers there entered as tourists or were recruited by nonaccredited employers. This means that the Philippine government had not reviewed their employment contracts.

OFWs continue to experience contract violation or contract substitution that reduces their salaries and spells poor working conditions, violation of local laws, and, for women workers, vulnerability to physical and sexual abuse. Domestic helpers in Singapore and Malaysia complain of insufficient food; too much work, leaving them little time to rest; prohibition on the use of the telephone, socialization, or daily baths; verbal abuse from female employers; and sexual harassment and lascivious conduct from male employers.

ACCESS TO PRODUCTIVE RESOURCES

More than half of self-employed workers in the nonagriculture segment of the informal sector sell a variety of products in small stores, hawk farm produce and trinkets in sidewalks, or go around neighborhoods offering fish, bread, and other foodstuff. Three of 10 are engaged in an array of petty production activities, including some 5 to 7 million home-based women workers performing piece-rated work, sewing clothes on orders or as part of subcontracts. There is also a preponderance of women among homeworkers in the garments, food, footwear, and other manufacturing industries. These women have a problem in common: very limited access to credit.

Women entrepreneurs, however, are not all microentrepreneurs engaged in very small-scale trading and production. There are women-owned and led businesses in all sectors, including electronics and appliances, transportation, real estate, financial consultancy, restaurants, marketing and public relations, and publishing. However, a survey done by the Women's Business Council of the Philippines (WBCP) in 1997 showed that most of the women owner-managers of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) were in manufacturing (41 percent), garments, jewelry, and furniture (37 percent), marketing (9 percent), and real estate (7 percent). Another survey in 1998, this time conducted by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, noted that women-led firms might be few in number and smaller than male-led firms, but they made a significant impact on the economy. Women-led businesses accounted for a total of PhP7 billion in assets in 1998. However, women in business suffer from several disadvantages. They generally bring limited work experience and managerial training to their businesses, face conflicting demands of business and family, and lack a network of business contacts and support.

Enterprises or businesses secure licenses to operate from the local government unit, but those in the formal economy generally register their names with the Bureau of Trade and Regulation and Consumer Protection (BTRCP) of the trade and industry department. In May 2003, the bureau began disaggregating its business name registration database by sex of the owner. Of those that had been sex-disaggregated, totaling 242,178 business names, about 11 percent were registered as corporations, cooperatives, or partnerships, and 89 percent as single proprietorships. Of the latter, 113,167 were under the name of a woman, which constituted 47 percent of the total business names registered and 52 percent of singly owned enterprises. Because partnerships, corporations, and cooperatives are likely to be controlled by men, one may take 47 percent (rather than 52 percent) as an approximate estimate of the proportion of women-owned SMEs in the country.

Organizational Support for Small and Medium Enterprises

The WBCP was created by the trade and industry department in 1997 to be "the premiere advocate and resource for the Filipino women in business." Since then, the council has conducted a three-country study (Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines) of women's contribution to the economy and the impact of the 1997-1998 financial crisis on women's businesses. It also has various programs that aim to improve women entrepreneurs' access to skills, information, markets, and credit.

- ☞ *Access to skills and information.* The WBCP has developed and conducted gender-sensitive seminars or courses, including those on business entrepreneurial startup; business improvement, survival, and expansion; business development; and trainers' training. These capability-building programs and the greater awareness of training graduates of their rights as women and entrepreneurs have reportedly honed their decision-making abilities and self-confidence, enabling them to become more assertive and more active in community activities.

- ☞ *Access to markets and business linkages.* The WBCP has helped link Filipino women entrepreneurs with markets overseas through training in exports of handicrafts to Canada. This has allowed 60 women entrepreneurs access to practical information on how to enter the Canadian market, resulting in an expanded network among local women exporters; the hosting of an international convention that focused on business matching; participation in an international live video conference linkup with Australia, China, Malaysia, and Singapore; and membership and leadership in international organizations of women in business, such as the Confederation of Women’s Business Councils in APEC and the Global Summit on Women.
- ☞ *Access to credit.* A few years after its creation, the WBCP successfully negotiated a Php3.1 billion lending window for women in SMEs with leading government financial institutions (GFIs), such as the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP), the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP), and the Small Business Guarantee Financial Corporation (SBGFC), and private banks, like Banco de Oro and Equitable-PCI Bank. The council has actively disseminated the trade and industry department’s SME Unified Lending Opportunities for National Growth (SULONG) and has assigned two consultants to assist and mentor WBCP members on the program.

Training, Information, and Linkages

The government has long sought to help women entrepreneurs with limited success. The trade and industry department’s Specialized Training Centers and regional offices also offer various training in entrepreneurial, managerial, and skills development (Table 2.12) and other nontraining services, such as product design and development (PDDCP), business matching (BDT and CITEM), and export facilitation and promotion (BETP). Under the export-oriented programs, trainees are provided with not only skills but also linkages and information on markets overseas. To further support SMEs, 25 SME centers have been activated nationwide to serve as a one-stop shop for information and business counseling.

Table 2.12. Beneficiaries of the trade and industry department’s training and nontraining services for SMEs, as of December 2003^a

Agency	Training		Nontraining	
	Total	Percent female	Total	Percent female
Philippine Trade Training Center (PTTC) ^b	12,243	61	-	-
Construction and Manpower Development Foundation (CMDf)	2,077	23	-	-
Cottage Industries Technology Center (CITC)	7,304	70	-	-
Center for Industrial Competitiveness	9,520	71	-	-
Bureau of Small and Medium Enterprise Development (BSMED)	977	63	2,898	61
Product Design and Development Center of the Philippines (PDDCP) ^b	4,882	47	6,555	62
Center for International Trade Exposition and Missions (CITEM)	-	-	1,106	52
Bureau of Domestic Trade (BDT)	-	-	737	70
Bureau of Export Trade Promotion (BETP)	-	-	3,904	
Totals	37,003	61	15,200	60

^aPercentage figures relate to agency total.

^bFor PTTC, the data reflect those that have been disaggregated; for PDDCP, the data pertain to business matching only.

Source: Department of Trade and Industry.

By the end of 2003, the department's various training programs had benefited 30,003 entrepreneurs, of whom 61 percent were women. Participation in the training, however, seemed to have been gendered. Women outnumbered men, particularly in the training programs offered by the Cottage Industries Technology Center (CITC; 70 percent) – dressmaking, flower making, bag making, holiday décor, novelty items, homemade paper, food processing, handloom weaving, basketry, and pottery – but not in training related to the construction industry (23 percent) or product design (47 percent).

Similarly, women accounted for 60 percent of the 15,200 clients of nontraining services of the department. Given that the training and nontraining services are generally open to people in SMEs, it appears that women entrepreneurs have been more aggressive than men in accessing them, resulting in their being disproportionately represented among the department's clientele.

Credit for Women Small and Medium Entrepreneurs

Interest in lending to women SMEs has been spurred by legislative action and advocacy by the trade and industry department and women in business, all of which crystallized in the National SME Development Plan. In support of this plan, GFIs collaborated to design a uniform lending program, tailoring it to meet the funding needs of SMEs. Called the SME Unified Lending Opportunities for National Growth or SULONG, the program seeks to simplify and standardize lending procedures, thereby creating a "wider, borderless financing system" to address the short-term and long-term needs of SMEs. Among the participating GFIs are DBP, LBP, National Livelihood Support Fund (NLSF), Philippine Export and Import Bank (Philexim Bank), Quedan and Rural Credit Guarantee Corporation (Quedancor), and Small Business Guarantee and Finance Corporation (SBGFC). The expanded access of SMEs to funds has reportedly created jobs. The government website providing updates on the president's State of Nation (SONA) claims that from January to October 2003, lending to SMEs reached a total of PhP21 billion, compared with PhP6 billion from July 1998 to December 2000 (<http://www.gov.ph.access23january2004>). Moreover, 52 SMEs were said to have graduated to a higher level within six months of program implementation.

Tens of thousands of women entrepreneurs have benefited from government support to SMEs and micro-entrepreneurs, including the organization of women in business, skills training, establishment of linkages, and various credit schemes.

Women entrepreneurs can also tap the Transactional Guarantee and Direct Financing Facility, a program that aims to meet the financing needs of SMEs for specific or one-time transactions. In August 2001, the government restored the policy of providing government guarantees to SMEs. Since then, guarantees for 466 loan accounts, amounting to PhP1.7 billion, have been approved (Table 2.13).

Table 2.13. Sample government lending programs for SMEs

Program	Participating agencies or institutions	Beneficiaries (2003)	Total loans released (in million pesos)
SULONG	LBP, DBP, SBGFC, Philexim Bank, Quedancor, NLSF	258,524 ^a	21,000 (Jan-Oct)
Government guarantees for loan accounts	SBGFC	98 ^b	365
	Philexim Bank	72	337
	Quedancor	296	1,024

^aNumber of borrowers.

^bNumber of loan accounts.

Source: SONA updates as of 23 January 2004 (www.gov.ph).

Livelihood Assistance to Women Living in Poverty

The major modes of livelihood assistance to microentrepreneurs and women living in poverty are credit and/or skills development. To this end, various livelihood skills training programs are being delivered by different government agencies and NGOs, and microfinance or microcredit programs have been initiated. Moreover, legislation, executive orders, and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas circulars have been issued to support microfinancing.⁴ Most recent among these policies are RA 8425, or the Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act of 1998; RA 9178, or the Barangay Micro Business Enterprises (BMBEs) Act of 2002; Executive Order (EO) 110 (2002), which directs the People's Credit and Finance Corporation (PCFC) to administer the People's Development Trust Fund; and the controversial EO 138 (2002), which prohibits non-GFIs from giving loans and directing GFIs to lend at prevailing rates. An older law, passed in 1995, is RA 7882, which aims to provide assistance to women engaging in microenterprise and cottage business. To be given priority are women entrepreneurs who have a daily inventory of goods worth not more than PhP25,000, or a business equipment with a book value of not more than PhP50,000.

Credit for the "entrepreneurial poor"

In between women who own or operate SMEs and women living in abject poverty are millions of middle-class and "entrepreneurial poor" women who run their own microenterprises or cottage industries. RA 7882 mandates the government to assist Filipino women who are certified to have received appropriate training by any government or government-accredited training institutions, and are eligible to avail themselves of loans from DBP and LBP, which have set aside 5 percent of their loan portfolio for women's projects. So far, loans have been granted for businesses in agriculture and farm production, agro-processing, general trading, housing and construction, land and sea transport, manufacturing, and services. From 1998 to 2001, an increasing number of women acquired DBP loans (Table 2.14). Average loans amounted to more than PhP125,000 in 1998 and 1999, more than the limits for the priority groups, but were scaled down to PhP14,000 to PhP15,000 in the next two years. Land Bank loans, in turn, are retailed through conduits or "women accounts," which average no less than PhP900,000 per account.

Table 2.14. Selected information on loans extended to women by DBP and LBP, 1998-2001

Year	Development Bank of the Philippines		Land Bank of the Philippines	
	Number of women beneficiaries	Amount released (in million pesos)	Number of women accounts	Amount approved (in billion pesos)
1998	121	30.365	3,885	3.704
1999	445	57.359	3,526	3.874
2000	5,070	79.288	3,455	6.429
2001	9,692	136.849	3,726	5.043

Source: Department of Trade and Industry.

Government institutions involved in the project express some reservations about the law's long-term benefits. For one, to expand their business, the women will need large loans that command higher market interest rates. Unless they are willing to pay the higher rate, they will find it hard to get the required capital to graduate into larger-scale businesses beyond the micro

⁴An extensive review of microfinance policies in the Philippines from the perspective of women living in poverty is provided by Pineda Ofreneo and others (2003).

or cottage level. To most GFIs, 12 percent is too low to be cost-effective. In turn, borrowers find the bank requirements too stringent, particularly relative to the amount on offer, making the credit funds inaccessible for many.

Created in 1995 and strengthened by the Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act (RA 8425), the People's Credit and Finance Corporation serves as the lead government entity specifically tasked to mobilize resources for microfinance services for the exclusive use of the

Various government microfinance projects had reached some 1.032 million women by January 2004, thus delivering on the President's SONA five months before the target date. But the women need more than just production loans. They require savings, health or medical insurance, a pension plan, and a more diversified credit line that includes emergency and housing loans, and educational plans for their children.

poor. Generally, it wholesales short-, medium-, and long-term investment loans to accredited microfinance institutions (MFIs), such as rural or thrift banks, and nonbanks (mainly NGOs and cooperatives) that implement credit programs to finance livelihood projects of targeted poor clients. In 2001-2003, more than half of the conduits were banks; the rest were NGOs (about 16 percent) and cooperatives (30 percent). During this period, bank-MFIs and NGOs managed an increasing proportion of the loans released while the share of cooperatives fell (Table 2.15). From 2001 and 2003, their clients more than doubled, increasing by about 285,000 per year.

In her June 2001 State of the Nation Address (SONA), President Macapagal-Arroyo identified microfinance as a cornerstone of her administration's fight against poverty. She directed PCFC to reach one million women borrowers by June 2004. As of June 2001, PCFC had served some 349,036 borrowers; by December 2003, it had reached a total of 1.052 million active clients sharing in the PhP5.469 billion that had been released since its creation (Table 2.15). Of these, about 98 percent were women.⁵ From July 2001 to January 2004, PCFC and other microfinance programs reportedly served 1.032 million beneficiaries.⁶

Table 2.15. Selected information on PCFC operations at end of selected years

Item	2001	2002	2003
Total number of clients served (cumulative; active clients in 2003)	482,243	791,099	1,052,476
Total loans released (cumulative; in thousand pesos)	3,148,229	4,133,118	5,469,056
Percentage of loans released by conduit (number of conduits)			
NGOs	24.3 (30)	24.6 (33)	26.2 (32)
Cooperatives	11.5 (63)	12.4 (63)	11.9 (60)
Lending investors	1.5 (1)	1.1 (1)	0.8 (1)
Banks	55.4 (99)	61.8 (105)	61.0 (110)
Retail lending by PCFC	7.3 (0)	-	-

Source: People's Credit and Finance Corporation.

In February 2003, the "Isang Bayan, Isang Produkto, Isang Milyong Piso" (One Nation, One Product, One Million Pesos) program was launched to catalyze local economic activity. Four microfinance-oriented banks were established and 112 rural banks nationwide were mobilized to facilitate access to funds by microentrepreneurs.

⁵Raquel Castro, Head, Corporate Planning, MIS and Corporate Communication Department, People's Credit and Finance Corporation (personal communication).

⁶Considering more than just PCFC loan releases, another government source claims that the government in fact had released a total of PhP5.2 billion to 1.027 million new women borrowers over a 26-month period (July 2001 to September 2003). The loan volume was said to be double and the beneficiary population triple that registered for the period July 1998 to December 2000 (SONA 2004). Of these, about 85 percent were reportedly attributable to PCFC while the rest were accounted for by other smaller players.

Given the recent focus on the institutional sustainability of MFIs, have PCFC and similar agencies addressed as well the primary objective of microfinance, poverty alleviation? PCFC and bank-managed microfinance projects generally employ what Mayoux (1998) dubs the “minimalist” approach. Long associated with projects funded by the World Bank and other donors, this approach focuses on the ability of the program to cover its costs (hence, the high interest rates and service charges), economies of scale (rapid program growth), reduced complementary services, and use of “equity” or voluntary contributions of participants as criteria for identifying borrowers, ensuring repayment, and reducing delivery costs. Institutional sustainability (of MFIs) and high repayment rates are often touted as indicators of success, and testimonials of women borrowers of how the loans improved their lot as “empowerment” results. In a number of cases, the microfinance project has been credited for improving the incomes, assets, and household expenditures of borrowers. Pineda Ofreneo and others (2003), however, note that clients are saying they need more than just production loans. They need savings, health or medical insurance, pension plans, and more diversified credit lines that will address their other needs (education for the children, emergency, housing). A few NGOs, notably Ahon sa Hirap (ASHI) and Negros Women for Tomorrow, have begun to offer a more diverse service portfolio (Pineda and others 2003).

Negative impacts, however, have been many, but these are rarely touched during the monitoring and evaluation of microfinance projects by the monitors or the women borrowers. These adverse effects include high transaction costs for women who have little time and cash to spare from their enterprise and household responsibilities; increased social tension, as the high repayment rate hinges on social pressure being put to bear on would-be delinquent borrowers; and problems related to gender relations at home, when men do not share in the women’s ever-increasing burden of running an enterprise, paying off debts, and managing the family. These issues are being addressed, albeit not consistently, by several NGOs and women’s groups (Gabriela, PATAMABA, HASIK, WiseAct, Punla sa Tao, and the Maligaya Women’s Multi-Purpose and Transport Service Cooperative, among others) that have been combining credit with women-empowering activities, such as gender sensitivity training, analysis of gender and social issues, and leadership training.

Assistance for the poorest of the poor

Government livelihood assistance to the poorest of the poor has been in place for years, and traditionally channeled through the social welfare department. A large part of the assistance focuses on women, and includes organizing the women into associations, developing their livelihood skills, and extending them credit for their livelihood project. A long-standing project of the department, the Self-Employment Assistance-Kaunlaran (SEA-K) Integrated Program, served 24,422 families and organized 753 SEA-K associations in 2001. Its second level involved the organization of SEA-*Kabayans* that could access a higher loan assistance for microenterprises, house construction, or improvement projects. In 2001, some 17 SEA-*Kabayans* with 890 family members received additional capital assistance. With the issuance of EO 138 in 2002, however, the lending program of the department was discontinued.⁷

⁷Another casualty of the policy was the trade and industry department’s “Tulong sa Tao” program, a lending window for microenterprises. This credit program used to be implemented through GFIs and accredited NGOs. From 1998 to 2000, it benefited 1,538 women microentrepreneurs (about 75 percent of the total beneficiaries). It released almost PhP51.24 million, of which 68 percent went to women. It also generated 8,198 jobs nationwide, with 6,148 (75 percent) going to women. Part of the objectives of the trade and industry department’s program was to develop and strengthen the capability of NGOs through the training of beneficiaries, trainers’ training, and consultancy services. The department claims that as a result of the training, women NGOs have shown a marked improvement in their business operation, as evidenced by improved monitoring of loans, better recording, higher collection rate, clearer direction, and more responsive management.

Another program of the department, Productivity Skills and Capability Building (PSCB) for Disadvantaged Women, trained women in various trades. A total of 107 centers were created throughout the country before 2001, and 49 have already been turned over (devolved) to local governments, 6 have been partially devolved, and negotiations are underway for the devolution of 34 other centers. Meanwhile, the department continues to operate 18 centers. Of the women trained, 9 of 10 have found gainful employment as self-employed workers or subcontracting trainers, or in various wage jobs. The program benefited 31,827 women in 2001.

At TESDA, the Community-Based Training for Enterprise Development (CBTED) serves as its strategic response to President Macapagal-Arroyo's 7-point agenda and vision for a Philippines without absolute poverty by year 2010. Following the government shift in economic strategy from the macroeconomic demand side to the enhancement of microeconomic demand and productivity (microeconomic supply side), CBTED works with two levels of clients or customers: the immediate, consisting of local government units and NGOs; and the ultimate, the informal sector in urban and rural areas. It trains community training and employment coordinators who serve as "bridging" leaders, development managers, and TESDA's allies and partners in planning and managing CBTED at the local level. To date, there are 1,107 such coordinators throughout the country.

WOMEN IN ECONOMIC DECISION-MAKING

Management

Women are underrepresented in many occupational categories and sectors of the formal economy, specifically in the private sector. However, they outnumber men in administrative, management, and executive positions in private establishments and government offices (Table 2.16). But as noted in a previous section, compared to men, women tend to occupy lower management or supervisory levels.

Table 2.16. Percentage of female and male employed population in management, administrative, and professional occupations (October survey rounds)

Occupation	2001		2002	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Officials of government and special interest organizations, corporate executives, managers, managing proprietors and supervisors	15.3	7.1	16.7	7.6
Professionals	8.1	2.4	8.0	2.4
Technicians and associate professionals	3.2	2.1	3.5	2.1
Total number of employed workers	11,751	18,334	11,811	18,410

Source: National Statistics Office (various years).

Labor Organizations

Despite complaints of losses in union membership due to economic downturns and shifts in employment contracts, trade unions have been on the rise. In 1995, they numbered 7,882, with a total membership of 3.6 million. They increased to 9,374 in 1998 and to 10,296 in 2000 (NSO 2002). In 2002, there were 11,365 labor organizations; by September 2003, they had grown to 11,796 (BLES 2003a). Meanwhile, union membership rose from 3.92 million in 2002 to 3.96 million in September 2003. Women accounted for no more than a third of the members. About 75 percent of the women

trade unionists were reportedly found in the private sector and 25 percent in the public sector. The labor department estimated that women made up about 26 percent of the trade union leaders.

Apex labor organizations, such as the Federation of Free Workers, National Federation of Labor, and Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), as well as their affiliate unions, have sought to address gender concerns in various ways (Illo 2002b). One involved creating leadership opportunities for women by allotting several seats for women in the board and/or forming a special group to oversee programs or projects related to women members, and lead the GAD advocacy within the organization. Another focused on building leadership capacities of women members and, in the case of the Federation of Free Workers, preparing women members to participate in negotiations for collective bargaining agreements (CBAs). A third area of GAD advocacy is sexual harassment (see relevant section, below), while another concerns women workers in the informal sector.

Despite these initiatives, labor union practices continue to be heavily gendered. GAD advocates note that negotiations, mediations, and strikes seldom take into account women workers' readiness to participate or their multiple burdens. Resistance to women leaders' interest in key positions persists, and women's concerns and gender issues (including maternity benefits) are not generally considered as important to be included in CBA negotiations (Illo 2002b).

PROTECTION OF WOMEN WORKERS

The Philippines has been a signatory to various International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions, including those that pertain to eliminating gender-based biases in the workplace. In view of this, the Philippine government has put in place a number of measures that seek to protect women workers and to eliminate discriminatory practices in the workplace. In the past five years or so, the Philippine Congress has enacted several legislation that address gender-based discrimination in the workplace. For instance, the Solo Parents Act provides that an employer shall not discriminate against any solo parent with respect to terms and conditions of employment. Another law, RA 8187, grants a seven-day paid paternity leave to a married male employee, in both public and private sectors, whose legitimate spouse delivered a child or suffered a miscarriage, to enable him to effectively lend her care and support during and after childbirth and to assist in the care of the newborn. There are also bills in the Senate (Nos. 601 and 1248) that aim to empower women by providing for development programs, financial assistance to foster investment in businesses by women, and education and information assistance.

The Revised Labor Code stipulates the following: night-work prohibition, provision of facilities for women, maternity leave benefits, and provision of family planning services. Labor legislation prohibits sexual harassment, discrimination against any woman employee with respect to terms and conditions of employment (compensation, training, and promotion) solely on account of sex, and requirement as a condition of employment or continuation of employment that a woman employee not get married, or discharge of a woman employee on account of her pregnancy. There are laws and policies as well mandating government to render support services, including institutional childcare, to women workers.

The Philippine government has likewise initiated efforts to address issues confronting various groups of workers, particularly those working overseas, in economic zones, in the informal sector, and in government. As will be evident in the succeeding subsections, many of the measures have yet to be fully enforced or monitored. Since much, if not all, of these measures have been in place by 2001, the focus of this section is on the enforcement of these labor standards.

Work Conditions of Wage Workers

The Labor Code provides for the payment of a minimum wage to workers. Because of cost of living differences, the government has mandated regional tripartite and productivity boards to set the minimum wage(s) in their respective areas of responsibility. Workers have won wage concessions from government and employers in the form of cost of living allowances, holiday pays, and one-month bonus. Additional compensation has also been included in CBAs. However, government labor inspection data reveal that at least a fifth of establishments have routinely violated the minimum wage law: 19.6 percent of the 77,849 inspected in 1995; 25.5 percent of 37,080 in 1998; and 26.4 percent of 33,914 in 2001 (BLES 2003d).

Gender-related labor legislation is generally progressive, but its enforcement has yet to be fully monitored. Where monitoring occurs, compliance with some general labor standards is found to be low. Rates of violations of general labor standards or technical safety standards have been worse than noncompliance with occupational safety and health standards.

Another piece of legislation (RA 6725, enacted in 1989) seeks to strengthen the prohibition on discrimination against women with respect to terms and conditions of employment. The labor department has since issued the Implementing Rules, which define “work of equal value” and set forth the conditions under which payment of a lower compensation or benefits to a female employee does not constitute discrimination. Because of the ambiguities in the Implementing Rules, however, the pay equality provision has yet to take effect, and compliance of employers monitored.

In the case of overtime pay, which covers work performed on holidays and beyond regular working time, at least 3 of every 100 establishments have either underpaid or not paid their workers for overtime work rendered. In 1995, about 3.3 percent of firms inspected by government violated the overtime pay legislation. This rose to 3.9 percent in 1998 and 1999, but settled down to 3.5 percent in 2000 and 2001 (BLES 2003d). Another 10 percent were found to have violated mandated holiday, rest day, or service incentive pay. Whether or not workers got paid as a result of the disposition of the cases of violation could not be deduced from the available data.

The Labor Code also prohibits night work for women, except in specified circumstances. While this might aim to protect women workers, it discriminates against them, as it does not address the real issue of security for women working at night. Compliance with the night-work prohibition cannot be ascertained, but government has begun to respond to this issue. In 2002, the social welfare department launched a pilot project on night care for children of working women in the night shift. It renders childcare services in an effort to prevent violence against women (for neglecting their children) and abuse and neglect of young children.

While taking its cue from the Constitutional guarantees of equal employment opportunities for women and men, the Labor Code acknowledges certain biological and social considerations for working women. Hence, it requires the employer to provide a nursery in the workplace, maternity and paternity leave, separate toilet facilities for women and men, family planning services, and at least a dressing room for women.

Compliance with labor laws and standards has been low, and monitoring of the enforcement of gender equality and women-related laws has been limited.⁸ These are being addressed by moves

⁸Prior to 2001, a few cases of discrimination reached the Supreme Court, which decided in favor of the woman complainant. Consonant with the Constitution (specifically, Section 2, Article 11), the Court cited labor conventions that prohibit discrimination against women with respect to terms and conditions of employment as the basis of corrective labor and social laws where the services of a female employee were terminated because she contracted marriage during employment (SCRA 1997).

to include gender-related issues in general labor inspection of establishments, develop inspection guidelines on women workers' concerns, and strengthen the national policy on homeworkers.

Workers' Benefits and Social Protection

Formal sector workers are legally entitled to health or medical and social security benefits. Government workers are covered by the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), while private employees are protected by the Social Security System (SSS). The GSIS Act was amended by RA 8291, which expands the coverage of all workers, women and men, as well as the widows of civil servants. Meanwhile, the revised Social Security Act (RA 8282) extends SSS coverage to self-employed persons, housewives, and househelpers.⁹ The implementation of RA 8282 remains abysmal, leaving many women, particularly those in the informal economy, still without any social security.

Private sector women workers, whether married or unmarried, are granted a 60-day maternity leave in case of normal delivery, and a 78-day maternity leave in case of caesarian operation. Women's groups claim that some companies violate the law on maternity benefits, but these claims remain uninvestigated as women refuse to come out in the open for fear of jeopardizing their jobs. Other terms and conditions of work are negotiated through unions and through their CBAs. These benefits have included free Pap smear as well as maternity-related provisions, such as flexible schedules, nonassignment to the night shift, maternity loan, relief from heavy workload, exemption from wearing company uniform or provision of appropriate uniform during pregnancy, and granting of SSS maternity benefits in advance.

Support Services

The law mandating the establishment of a day care center in every village (RA 6972) was enacted in 1990.¹⁰ In this connection, the social welfare department has opened a day care center in 89.2 percent of the 41,943 barangays in the country. Two-thirds of the 37,422 centers reportedly provide quality services. In 2000, a total of 302,874 preschool children were served by the centers. Despite criticisms that day care centers allow only little time-off for women with young children to really enable them to undertake gainful employment, this still gives women some time to do other things for themselves if not for income generation.

A service of more general coverage, the Public Employment Services Office (PESO) is a one-stop center created to provide employment information and assistance to labor department clients and constituents of local governments. PESO offers employment referral services, such as local and overseas wage employment facilitation, self-employment and livelihood facilitation, and employability enhancement; recruitment assistance for employers; and employment information and guidance services. In the first half of 2001, a total of 456,272 applicants registered, of whom 320,123 were placed/assisted. About 50.2 percent of the job placements went to women, but this was still low since more women than men applied at PESO.

⁹The two laws promise: life insurance; health insurance, which pays a fixed portion of the cost of various types of hospital expense of all female and male GSIS and SSS members, and their qualified dependents; and housing. With a minimal contribution, employees are entitled to housing loans, short-term loans, livelihood loans, and provident or savings benefits.

¹⁰In 2002, the social welfare department launched a pilot project in Tanay, Rizal, on night care for children of working women in the night shift, which was later implemented in Cainta, Rizal. It was discontinued, however, because of lack of funds.

Security in the Workplace

The Philippines began implementation of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act in the late 1990s. The Civil Service Commission (CSC) took the lead, instructing government agencies to create a Committee on Decorum and Investigation (CODI) that would address sexual harassment complaints. Guided by the law and CSC rules, the committee defines the offense, identifies specific acts and forms of sexual harassment, and applies penalties, depending on the form and gravity of the offense and procedures for the disposition of cases. From 1994 to April 2000, CSC received 38 complaints. A total of 15 respondents were dismissed from the service; 7 were suspended for periods ranging from three months to one year; and 2 were acquitted. Fourteen of the cases were dismissed for various reasons, including lack of prima facie case, forum shopping, and desistance of the complaint.

In 1997, the Bureau of Women and Young Workers organized a series of seminars to train CODI members from the private sector in handling sexual harassment cases. In April 2003, or about six years later, the bureau also conducted the Regional Trainers' Program for Sustainable Action against Sexual Harassment and for Promotion of Women's Employment for the first batch (from NCR and the Luzon regions, excluding Region V). A trainers' training manual was developed to guide the regional trainers when providing business establishments with technical assistance in developing anti-sexual harassment policies and procedures, creating mechanisms to prevent sexual harassment and resolve complaints, and advocating for gender equality in the workplace.

Between 1997 and 2003, however, labor unions and NGOs led the campaign against sexual harassment. A notable exception, the TUCP-affiliated Disadvantaged Women (DAW) Coalition conducted orientation sessions with management and workers in unionized and nonunionized plants, and distributed pamphlets on salient points of the law. In collaboration with PEZA, the coalition ran a number of sessions for firms in the economic zones. By early 2002, some 259 unions or firms had reportedly created their CODI and/or formulated their anti-sexual harassment policies; 432 sexual harassment cases were being investigated; and 20 complaints had been formalized. Eight CBAs had included sexual harassment provisions. Although the coalition is striving to track the progress of its advocacy on sexual harassment and other issues, monitoring remains a problem. On the part of the government, monitoring of private sector compliance with RA 7877 is nonexistent.

Occupational Safety and Health

The labor department promotes safety in the workplace through two major programs – the proactive Work Initiative on Safety and Health (WISH) and the Work Improvement in Small Enterprises (WISE) that links improved work condition with labor productivity (BWC 2004a, 2004b) – and instructs its inspectors to monitor technical safety as well as occupational safety and health (OSH). From 1992 to June 2003, noncompliance with technical safety standards, at 11 percent in 2000 and 21 percent in 2001, was consistently lower than violations of general labor standards (40 percent and 62 percent; BLES 2003d, BWC 2004c). Violations were corrected in at least half of the cases, benefiting tens of thousands of workers.

Meanwhile, rate of violations of OSH standards was generally lower than that of technical safety rules. The most common violations of OSH rules were administrative in nature (nonregistration of establishment, absence of safety committees, and nonsubmission of required reports). Noncompliance with the protective equipment rule stood at a maximum of 2.1 percent in 2000 (BLES 2003d).

The labor department maintains the Occupational Safety and Health Center, which conducts training and research studies, develops or produces and disseminates information on safety and health in workplaces, and conducts medical examinations, on request, to determine the level of exposure to chemical hazards. From 2001 to 2003, it conducted the following examinations on women workers: blood lead determination (1,458 women), audiogram for those in selected manufacturing industries (176), urine examination for lead (30), and organic solvent exposure (243).

Issues and Measures for Specific Workers' Groups

The nature of work or employment faced by particular sectors or groups of workers sometimes requires special measures. The following groups are highlighted here: women workers in government, informal sector entrepreneurs and laborers, overseas contract workers, rural women, and child labor.

Women in government

Paid maternity leave for women workers in government applies to full-term delivery and miscarriage. It involves a leave of 60 calendar days with full pay for employees who have rendered two or more years of service. Benefits of women who have worked less than two years but have one year or more of service are computed proportionate to their length of service, while those with less than a year of service are granted a 60-day leave with half-pay. In 2001, a bill to establish a Civil Service Code was proposed, which will codify existing laws on civil service and provisions on maternity leave for unmarried women, paternity leave, parental leave for solo parents, and flexible working hours, as well as a provision for disciplinary action on the ground of sexual harassment.

Efforts to improve the benefits that government workers can enjoy have been noted, including extension of paid maternity leave for unmarried women workers.

Even without the proposed Civil Service Code, however, the government has introduced three policies. The oldest of these is flexi-time (flexible working schedule), which allows workers to report any time between seven and ten in the morning, and leave work between four and seven in the evening, provided they complete the required eight-hour workday. Another is the Swap Work Assistance Program (SWAP), which aims to reduce employee travel time by exchanging their post with a counterpart so they can work in a station geographically closer to home. It covers first- and second-level employees with permanent status. Yet another scheme pertains to harmonizing work and family responsibilities through part-time employment, establishment of day care centers in the workplace, special leave privileges, and observance of family week every September. Within the CSC, third- and fourth-level directors who are assigned away from their families are allowed to make regular family visits for a maximum of 12 visits a year, with pay and transportation allowance.

Overseas women workers

The Philippine government has initiated bilateral arrangements with foreign countries on the protection of the welfare of Filipino workers since the 1960s. It has had long-standing labor agreements with the United States and Iraq; and long-standing social welfare agreements with Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In the 1990s, it concluded labor agreements with such countries as Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar. Social security agreements were signed with countries including Canada and France in the 1990s and Quebec in 2000. From 2001 to 2003, labor agreements were forged with Cambodia, Norway, Switzerland (pending ratification),

the United Kingdom, and Northern Mariana Islands (amended Memorandum of Understanding).¹¹ Negotiations over social security were initiated or concluded with Austria (supplementary convention), Belgium (pending ratification), Canada (new supplementary convention), the Netherlands (pending ratification), and Switzerland (pending ratification). In many cases, the agreements take a few years before they are ratified and entered into force. Other countries have reportedly adopted skill-specific Standard Employment Contracts (for household workers and performing artists). Alternative mechanisms in other multilateral forums are also being looked into, including participation in conferences organized by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) that will help coordinate and enhance policies and programs against international trafficking in women migrants at the regional and subregional levels.

In 2002, POEA introduced new rules and regulations for overseas employment, imposing stricter entry requirements for new recruitment agency license applicants and stiffer penalties for violators of rules. These also liberalized the requirements for the accreditation of foreign

Bilateral labor and social security agreements have been concluded and new policies and programs for OFWs initiated, but they all need to be constantly monitored and assessed as to how they benefit OFWs.

principals and the processing of papers of migrant workers while strengthening the accountability of Philippine Overseas Labor Officers (POLOs) and recruitment agencies for their respective obligations and liabilities. Despite the latter, the deregulation of the overseas employment industry has been criticized partly because it is seen as a reduction of government's accountability for the protection of the rights and welfare of overseas Filipinos. Alcid (2002,98), for instance, asks: "If recruitment violations as well as violation of workers' human rights abound with all the regulations in place now, how much more in a deregulated environment?"

POLOs are under the administrative jurisdiction of the Philippine diplomatic missions. They are posted in different countries to provide on-site welfare services to millions of OFWs and to actively seek new employment opportunities for Filipinos by conducting periodic field visits and maintaining a reliable information system on overseas labor markets. Female POLOs, consisting of labor attachés, welfare officers, and welfare center coordinators, are posted in host countries that have large populations of Filipino women workers. Between April 2001 and January 2004, the number of women labor attachés rose from 11 to 16, while female welfare officers and center coordinators increased from 11 to 13. As of January 2004, six female labor attachés were found in Asia (Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Brunei, and Taipei), three in the Middle East (Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Lebanon), and seven in Europe and the Americas (Saipan, Rome, Milan, Geneva, Madrid, Greece, and London). There were eight welfare officers and center coordinators in Asia (one each in Singapore, Tokyo, Brunei, Korea, Taipei, and Kaohsiung, and two in Hong Kong), four in the Middle East (Qatar, Kuwait, Abu Dhabi, and Lebanon), and one in Europe (Milan).

Back in the Philippines, POEA continues its various orientation seminars for women who are interested to work overseas and for departing workers. The seminars have been upgraded to help

¹¹Since 2001, the Philippines has also reportedly forged bilateral agreements with Indonesia, Taiwan, Greece, Ireland, and the Dominican Republic to strengthen the protection of OFWs and open doors to provide more job opportunities (SONA 2004).

specific groups of OFWs.¹² In all, 63 competency standards and training regulations for caregivers, performing artists, and other priority occupations have been developed. Hence, to upgrade the skill level of domestic workers, POEA has begun requiring new hires to obtain a certificate of competency from TESDA. In a different vein, in 2001, the labor department, through Department Order No. 11, recognized the growing alternative mode of recruiting Filipino household workers to Hong Kong, which is cheaper, faster, and more trustworthy: recruitment through word of mouth and referral by relatives.

In the case of overseas performing artists (OPAs), major reforms were instituted to streamline the system of training, testing, and certification, with the intention of arresting the malpractices in what has become a complex testing and accreditation process. Embodied in Labor Department Order No. 10-2001, the changes involved replacing academic training and testing with the Comprehensive Orientation Program for Performing Artists; upgrading the eligibility requirements of training centers, trainers, and testing officers; transferring the responsibility of the predeparture showcase preview to the recruitment industry; and releasing the Artist Record Book to the direct custody of the OPA or through the respective recruitment agencies. The policy assigned the licensing of recruitment agencies to POEA and the accreditation of training centers to TESDA. Informal talent managers run the risk of violating anti-illegal recruitment and trafficking laws if they fail to be licensed or accredited under the system. Moreover, after realizing that the minimum age requirement of 23 years old for female performing artists encouraged misrepresentation, the POEA governing board, in 2001, reduced the minimum age for migrant workers to 18 in accordance with the minimum age prescribed under the ILO Convention, provided that any age requirement higher than 18 prescribed by the host government must prevail.

In the Philippines, OFWs can bring their complaints before the migrant workers' desk of the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC), which is handled by women and is headed by a labor arbiter (or labor judge per Supreme Court instruction). The desk advises complainants, including victims of trafficking, on how to pursue claims for money, injury, and damages. Since Philippine recruitment agencies are jointly and solidarily liable to their foreign principal, the worker can lodge contract-violation complaints at NLRC and POEA, naming the recruitment agency as co-respondent. From July 1995 to September 2001, about 3,370 cases a year were lodged at NLRC regarding claims for illegal dismissal (43 percent) and money or disability claims (49 percent). The annual disposition rate was 63 percent. In 1999, about 33 percent of the cases were filed by women workers.

During the period under review, the Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration (OWWA) implemented a number of programs for overseas workers' security and social protection, such as assistance in the emergency repatriation of documented workers and facilitating the safe return of distressed OFWs, an insurance program that provides insurance coverage to all OFWs who have

¹²Since the mid-1990s, the Philippine government has instituted skills upgrading and skill-specific (in some cases, country-specific) predeparture education programs. Predeparture orientation seminars (PDOS) for domestic workers (most of whom women) integrate modules dealing with special information needs of women workers, such as GAD, health and sexuality, HIV/AIDS, and self-defense techniques. For factory workers, including women who are preferred by semiconductor and computer firms in Taiwan and Korea, PDOS includes orientation on occupational and environmental safety in the workplace, the use of safety gadgets, and the need for the ability to follow instructions and guidance through colors, symbols, and signs as a substitute for written and spoken foreign language.

A comprehensive orientation program for entertainers is in place, which seeks to ensure the job readiness of the overseas performing artist (OPA), and raise awareness of and desire for continuing self-development toward better career options. Meanwhile, requirements for nurses now include language training and testing, in addition to verification by Philippine overseas labor officials of suitable accommodations for nurses on night shifts prior to deployment. The small but increasing number of women seafarers working aboard cruise-passenger lines or floating hotels as waitresses, chambermaids, or entertainers are subject to the international training standards for safety that are required of all seafarers by the 1978 Standards of Training, Certification and Watch-keeping, as amended.

paid the OWWA fee, financial aid, assistance in case of disability and aid for burial, legal services, and scholarship and skills training for OFWs or their dependents. Of the 472,153 OFWs enrolled under the insurance program in 2000, some 4,310 had been paid claims of PhP14 million. Of the claimants, 10 percent were women. In 2001 or 2002, a number of OFWs benefited from the other programs, as follows:

- ☞ 633 women workers received disability assistance (cash reimbursement of PhP1,500 to PhP10,000), while 945 families of female workers were provided with burial aid.
- ☞ 3,313 workers (26 percent female) acquired monetary donations of no more than PhP5,000 as OWWA members who were no longer qualified to avail themselves of any other social benefits for members but who were in dire need of help.
- ☞ 48 women received monetary aid of up to PhP7,000, which is available to indigent former OFWs and OWWA members.
- ☞ 2,269 female OFWs received legal services, such as counseling, documentation, conciliation, and mediation.
- ☞ Women accounted for 76 percent of OFW participants in the free livelihood training course in food processing and agricultural technology for poor but deserving OFWs and their dependents, with an optional credit facility to finance livelihood projects.
- ☞ 1,717 female OFWs and their dependents participated in the skill-for-employment scholarship program.
- ☞ 483 children benefited from the scholarship program for the primary and secondary education of children of financially distressed OFWs or returnees; of them, 289 (60 percent) were children of female workers.

In 2001, the government set up the OFW Provident Fund (SSS-Flexi-Fund) to provide OFWs with social protection and services for life, retirement plans, and/or emergency plans. Some 31,421 OFWs are enrolled in the Provident Fund. Many of them are working in Hong Kong, Jeddah, Qatar, Milan, and Rome.

In 2002, OWWA became embroiled in a controversy that made the headlines of the major dailies. OWWA reportedly diverted 77 percent of the OFW contributions to cover the salaries of its

Some 6,700 women OFWs (of a total of 10,000 or so OFWs) were assisted under long-standing OWWA programs, but OWWA has been under fire for mismanaging OFW funds.

employees and other administrative and operational costs. To curb the mismanagement of OFW funds, the OWWA head forwarded the suggestion to transfer OWWA to the foreign affairs department, which eventually cost him his job. The controversy also resulted in the slashing of the OWWA budget to PhP562.3 million, which was almost PhP200 million lower than the 2002 budget of PhP748.4 million (Karlungan 2002).

Beginning in September 2002, OFWs in some destinations could avail themselves of additional welfare services on site under the program “International Social Welfare Services for Filipinos” of the social welfare department. As part of this program, the department deployed the first batch of social workers to five Middle Eastern countries (Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Kuwait, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia) and three Asian destinations (Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan); and fielded a social welfare attaché in Malaysia and social workers on secondment in Japan. They are expected to render direct services (transportation, shelter, and food assistance); case management, including referrals to other social services, counseling, group therapy, and filing of cases; jail and hospital visits; values enhancement and skills training; and advocacy and social mobilization. A year since

their deployment, the social workers have been able to assist Filipinos (6,429) in Malaysia (3,820), Japan and Hong Kong (158), and other countries (2,451) where the social workers serve as technical assistants to the labor attaché. About 90 percent of the clients are women, aged 22 to 40 years; the rest are men and children.

Women in the economic zones

The state recognizes collective bargaining as a right of workers and a means of eliminating gender-based wage inequalities. In support of organized labor, the labor department has offered labor education to unionized and nonunionized establishments, and training and consultations on negotiation and advocacy leadership to women union leaders and workers from 204 workers' associations and labor organizations. In the public economic zones, seminars have been held to promote economic rights among workers, union members, and management in locator enterprises; and general labor inspections have begun to include issues related to gender equality.

To protect the interests of women in economic zones, PEZA undertook a number of measures. It required prospective inventors to preregister and submit a Memorandum of Undertaking that prohibits the practice of child labor in their operations. It also partnered with the Federacion Internacional de Abogadas and the DAW Coalition for the conduct of seminars to raise awareness of various laws that concern women workers, particularly the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law. These seminars were given in 11 economic zones, resulting in the formation of the Committee on Decorum and Investigation, or CODI. The impact of CODI in the zones has yet to be studied.

Women in the informal sector

Workers in the informal sector face a number of problems, among which are poor access to credit for those who are in business, lack of employable skills, and absence of social protection. Various microfinance programs have been launched, benefiting more than a million women in the past 26 months. As noted in a previous section, the social welfare department assists poor and disadvantaged women through community-based capability-building programs. With a budget of PhP460.6 million, its PSCB centers have directly benefited 115,303 individuals, of whom 70 percent are women. Members of the 15 mothers' associations also shared in the seed capital of PhP100,000 that each group received for livelihood projects. There were 107 PSCB centers nationwide at the beginning of 2001. No new centers were opened, but by end of 2003, the bulk of the centers (89) had been either fully or partly, or would soon be, turned over to local governments.

To assist women entrepreneurs in the informal sector, the labor department continues to offer practical and low-cost improvements aimed at raising the productivity of small enterprises; promote rural employment through technical assistance and entrepreneurship training for rural workers, including women; and implement the women workers employment and entrepreneurship development (WEED) program, which seeks to respond to the economic needs of women workers, especially those in the marginalized sectors. The program focuses on capability building through a training-cum-production scheme, whereby the trainees acquire skills in the production of goods and services. In 2001, some 209 capability-building activities were undertaken, involving 6,390 women. About 670 training sessions more were conducted in 2002 and 2003, benefiting an additional 16,590 women.

Various efforts for informal sector workers have been noted: skills training, credit, one-stop shop, facilitation of payment of SSS premiums, recognition in official statistics, and adoption of a country program which includes development of capacities of local governments and local-level informal sector organizations.

For the period 2001 to 2003, therefore, a total of 22,980 women participated in the 879 training activities under the WEED program.

The TESDA Women's Center provides an array of services to displaced workers and informal economy workers. In May 2001, the center launched the "Kasanayan-Kabuhayan One-Stop Shop," a facility that serves as a resource center providing existing women producers or microentrepreneurs with information on and assistance in gaining access to market, capital or credit, technology, and training in occupational skills and entrepreneurship development. In 2001, the center served 801 women. In 2002, a total of 932 women availed themselves of the center facility, as follows: 601 participated in the "empowerment" training; 95 women were referred to microcredit facilities, such as the NLSF and the Libro ni Loren Foundation; 90 were jobseekers registered with Philjobnet; 123 gained access to the e-market through a forum; and 23 attended a trainers' training in e-market matching. Moreover, four food associations gained access to markets through the Filipino-Chinese Federation of Business Women and Professionals (FIL-CHI).

In connection with the social protection issue, the Revised SSS Act has legally extended SSS coverage to self-employed workers, a category to which the majority of informal sector workers belong. Implementation of the law, however, has been fraught with problems, including difficulties in the remittance of premiums (Yu 2001, Illo 2002b). In June 2002, DBP developed a special savings program, the *Maginhawang Manggagawa* Savings Account, for SSS members from the informal sector. It aims to facilitate payment of SSS premiums by informal sector workers by combining regular savings account and an automatic debit arrangement using the SSS member's savings account. It is being tested in three cities in Metro Manila, Cebu City in the Visayas, and Davao City in Mindanao.

Another assistance to the informal sector involved the crafting of the sector country program. In partnership with the Bishops-Businessmen's Conference, National Anti-Poverty Commission Workers in the Informal Sector Council, NEDA, and other stakeholders, the labor department implemented in 2001 and 2002 a project for the promotion and protection of the informal sector. With support from ILO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the project produced the country program for the informal sector, "Institutionalizing the Programs and Policies for the Informal Sector through the Local Governments." The Social Development Committee of the Cabinet approved the program in July 2003. Drawing on the lessons gleaned from the pilot project, the program includes capacity development of local government units to support their respective informal sectors and the strengthening of organizations of informal sector workers at the local government levels. Informal sector workers in the rural areas have been identified as priority under the country program.

The informal sector had been invisible in official statistics, being defined as consisting of workers outside wage employment. Recently, however, the labor department has successfully lobbied the National Statistical Coordination Board to adopt a new, official definition that includes those "units" engaged in the "production of goods and services, with the primary objective of generating employment and incomes to the persons involved." For statistics purposes, these units are referred to as household incorporated enterprises composed of both informal own-account enterprises and those enterprises that have informal employers. This newfound statistical visibility of informal sector workers will hopefully provide the database for designing policies and programs appropriate to their situation.

Rural women

A little over half of women in rural areas work in their family farms, laboring without pay.¹³ What the official statistics do not show is that many also hire themselves out as landless workers, trade in agricultural or fishery produce, or engage in a variety of micro-manufacturing enterprises.¹⁴ They also undertake important tasks – credit or capital sourcing, cooking food for farm workers, vegetable growing, and marketing – that contribute significantly to actual farming and household provisioning. This richness and complexity of rural women’s lives are lost in the highly aggregated statistics.

Rural women undertake a variety of production and caring activities. This richness and complexity of rural women’s lives are lost in highly aggregated statistics.

As farm workers, traders, and entrepreneurs, rural women share the problems of women in similar occupations in the informal sector of cities and towns. As noted during the October 2003 Rural Women’s Congress, their issues of access to credit, skills training, information, and markets are magnified by their location and distance from seats of power. Moreover, they face problems particular to their role as producers, a fact often overlooked, since men are generally viewed as farmers, fishers, or livestock raisers.

The environment and natural resources department has instituted major policies to grant women equal access to natural resources. Its Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) Program has adopted a gender-mainstreaming handbook to ensure gender parity in its implementation. Since 2000, however, women have accounted for no more than 32 percent of program participants and a much smaller proportion in the succeeding three years (24 percent in 2001 and 2003 and a slightly larger 26 percent in 2002). Among the beneficiaries of CLASP (Community Livelihood Assistance Special Program), which the department launched in 2002 in line with its policy of sustainable development and the government’s poverty reduction campaign, women initially comprised 39 percent, but this dipped to 26 percent the following year.

Efforts to improve gender parity in participation and distribution of benefits have been noted. Women have participated in rural development programs, although they have rarely accounted for more than 40 percent of participants, beneficiaries, or members.

Women also made up no more than 32 percent of CBFM agreement holders. However, they comprised 43 percent of those who received land patents in 2001, and 37 percent in 2002 (Table 2.17).¹⁵ All this reflects the factors that tend to limit success in promoting gender parity: local politics, lack of infrastructure and support services, and sexist biases in rural and upland areas.

¹³The Philippine Peasant Institute (PPI), citing NSO data, reports an increasing percentage of women declaring themselves “unpaid family worker”: 49 percent in 1999 to 52 percent in 2000. In contrast, men are likely to describe themselves or be classified as “own-account worker” or “employer,” with 57 to 59 percent categorized as such during the same period.

¹⁴A PPI survey of 246 rural women in the rice and corn sectors indicates that apart from doing their share of work in their own farms, 17 percent still work in neighboring farms, 20 percent actively sell their produce, and 7 percent have set up their own small stores. Similar patterns were noted in intensive case studies of rice-farming villages in the Bicol region (Illo 1985), a fishing village in Quezon (Illo and Polo 1990), and other types of farming systems around the country (Illo 1995, 1997).

¹⁵The environment and natural resources department plays a very important role in the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program by distributing alienable and disposable lands in the uplands to qualified beneficiaries.

Table 2.17. Distribution of beneficiaries of natural resource distribution programs of the environment and natural resources department

Item	1998-2000			2001			2002		
	Female	Male	Percent female	Female	Male	Percent female	Female	Male	Percent female
Land patents	-	-	-	1,605	2,105	43	21,710	37,057	37
CBFM agreements	12,982	33,898	28	-*	-*	-*	3,183	7,187	31

*No sex-disaggregated data for this year.

Source: Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

In the lowlands, access to land is largely influenced by how the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) is being implemented. The Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law provides: "All qualified women members of the agricultural labor force must be guaranteed and assured equal rights to ownership of land, equal share of farm's produce and representation in advisory or appropriate decision making bodies." To implement this, the agrarian reform department adopted GAD as a key principle of CARP implementation and a key element of the Agrarian Reform Community (ARC) development approach.¹⁶ It also provided guidelines to ensure gender equality in the generation and issuance of emancipation patents and certificates of landownership award (EPs/CLOAs) between spouses who are agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs). In the last few years, the department has introduced additional safeguards. Administrative Order No. 1, series of 2001, requires the issuance of EPs and CLOAs in the name of both spouses, in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Family Code and the Civil Code on property relations involving legally married and common-law spouses. It also ordered the integration of a gender-responsive reporting system in the reporting system for land acquisition and distribution, and in the department's computerized information system. The national GAD Steering Committee, through the GAD Technical Working Group Focal Point, provides the direction for the gender-based monitoring of agrarian reform programs. The regional and provincial GAD Focal Points serve as the implementing bodies to ensure compliance with the implementing rules and regulations.

The efforts of recent years to obtain gender parity in land distribution are beginning to bear fruit. In 1992, women recipients accounted for no more than 12 percent of total EP/CLOA recipients. During the first nine months of 2001, about 27 percent of the 13,466 recipients of individual land patents or certificates were women; an additional 11 percent were awarded jointly with their male spouses.¹⁷ For the same period in 2003, women beneficiaries received a total of 18,205 EPs/CLOAs, or 33 percent of the total. Included among the individual beneficiaries were husbands and wives who opted to have their EPs/CLOAs issued separately and, in case of collective CLOAs, to be listed or annotated as separate beneficiaries, regardless of their marital affiliation, provided their respective vested rights to the awarded land had been verified and established according to law.¹⁸

¹⁶An agrarian reform community is composed of a cluster of land-reformed barangays in a municipality where farmers and farm workers are awaiting the full implementation of agrarian reform.

¹⁷Preliminary figures were based on reports of compliance of 11 regions with Department of Agrarian Reform Administrative Order No. 1, series of 2001. For 2001, the department distributed 109,661 hectares (ha) of agricultural lands to 62,164 agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs), but sex-disaggregated data on ARBs cover only the reporting period from January to September.

¹⁸In the case of EPs/CLOAs that were issued in the names of both spouses, the property relations are governed by provisions of the Family Code on the conjugal partnership of gains or absolute community of property between legally married spouses; and for lands awarded to common-law spouses during their cohabitation, by Articles 147 and 148 of the Family Code, and by the rules on co-ownership provided in Articles 484 to 501 of the Civil Code on all matters not covered by the Family Code.

From 1993 to December 2003, the agrarian reform department established 1,587 ARCs nationwide where 661,201 beneficiaries cultivated their land (Table 2.18). Of the total beneficiaries, only 22 percent were women. However, in 2001, they made up 35 percent of ARBs in organizations and about 36 percent of officers (41 percent of committee members, but only 28 percent of members of the boards of directors). Such women's involvement was possible because, apart from the 3,391 farmers' organizations or cooperatives that operated in these areas, some 205 women's organizations and 1,103 informal women's groups were also supposed to be found there.¹⁹ Women also accounted for 22 to 29 percent of local agrarian reform governing bodies (Table 2.18).

Based on the 2002 ARC level of development assessment (ALDA), there were reportedly more women among the members (37 percent) and officers (49 percent) of the organizations than before. It must be noted that the percentage of women to total ARB population, and the membership and leadership of ARB organizations differed among the regions.

The third government department with a rural mandate, the agriculture department has reportedly undertaken a wide range of gender-responsive programs through its different bureaus and offices. It has a joint project with NCRFW to mainstream GAD in the implementation of the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA). Included in the AFMA are provisions that give women workers in the sector the opportunities to participate in planning and implementing agricultural programs and to equally benefit from these. At least 5 percent of the department budget is allocated for GAD mainstreaming in the development programs. In addition, gender concerns are being integrated into the data-gathering tools of the Bureau of Post-harvest Research and Extension, which influences the design parameters of postharvest technologies. The bureau has developed and is continuously improving its gender-friendly processing equipment, such as mechanized cashew nut sheller and peeler.

Table 2.18. Distribution of ARBs in agrarian reform communities, 2001/2003

Item	Female	Male	Total	Percent female
Total ARBs (2003)	147,632	513,569	661,201	22.3
Total ARB members in organizations (2001)	105,831	196,648	302,479	35.0
Composition of boards of directors (2001)	5,090	13,232	18,322	27.8
Membership in committees (2001)	10,611	15,093	25,704	41.3
Representation of ARBs in local agrarian reform governing units or councils (2001)	4,447	11,858	16,305	27.3
Provincial	64	158	222	28.8
Municipal	387	1,305	1,692	22.9
Barangay	3,996	10,395	14,391	27.8

Sources: Department of Agrarian Reform. The data for 2001 were based on the agrarian reform department's submission for the Fifth and Sixth Reports of the Philippines to the Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The department has also provided training and credit programs. Women accounted for 40 percent of the total trained by the Agricultural Training Institute from 1996 to 2000, and 81 percent of the beneficiaries of loans released in 2001 to 2003 in connection with the institute's livelihood training projects (Table 2.19). In contrast, women only represented 24 percent of loan beneficiaries of the National Agricultural and Fishery Council. For the same period, Quedancor reportedly released PhP1.2 billion to women borrowers, of which PhP779 million came in 2003. With an average loan of PhP42,000 going to 18,677 women borrowers, the trend of serving more

¹⁹Philippine Peasant Institute (personal communication, February 2004).

rural women continued. This came about after the initial shift in 2001 from granting large loans to fewer women that characterized the lending pattern until 2000 (Table 2.19). The Quedancor loan figures are indeed impressive, even if the loans granted to women constituted only 28 percent of the estimated loan releases in 2003.

Agricultural services were devolved to local government units in 1991. While it is difficult to ascertain how rural women have benefited from extension and similar services, the agriculture department claims that extension services have been provided to both women and men, and lately, there has been a deliberate move to involve more women. In each town or city, an agricultural technologist lends technical assistance to the Rural Improvement Club (RIC), a barangay-based women’s organization that serves as a channel for developing women’s leadership and potential for home and community improvement. As of December 2003, there had been about 8,578 active and functional clubs, with 417,344 members nationwide. A special department project, the RIC-Home Economics Extension Association of the Philippines (HEAP) Foundation Entrepreneurial Project has a total funding of PhP6.7 million, and involves 136 organizations and 1,589 beneficiaries.

At least 62,000 rural women (or 1.1 percent of total rural women workers) have received production loans from programs of the agriculture department. However, there is no evidence that these loans support sustainable livelihoods.

Table 2.19. Sample programs of the agriculture department

Name of program (Implementing agency or office)	Benefits (year)	Data on beneficiaries
Livelihood enhancement for agricultural development (National Agricultural and Fishery Council)	Loans (2001-2003): PhP75.309 million	12,068 women (24 percent of all beneficiaries)
Agricultural training programs (Agricultural Training Institute)	10,674 courses in production and postproduction technologies, food processing, entrepreneurship, cooperative development (1996-2000) Loans (2001-2003): PhP5.554 million	174,000 women (40 percent of all trainees) 5,110 women (81 percent of all loan recipients)
Credit projects for women (Quedancor)	Loans (1994-2000): PhP1.476 billion Loans (2001-2003): PhP1.200 billion	12,401 women 44,457 women

Source: Department of Agriculture, including the Quedancor and Rural Credit Guarantee Corporation.

In addition to the rural-oriented departments, the labor department runs a project called Promotion of Rural Employment through Self-Employment Entrepreneurship Development, with components such as skills training with product enterprise development, accredited co-partners’ development, and loan assistance to rural workers below the poverty line. From 1996 to 2000, the project reportedly aided about 18,295 women. TESDA continues to conduct skills training in its regional and provincial centers nationwide. It offers training in nontraditional trades alongside traditional women’s trades, but most of the 60,000 women who attended TESDA training have done so in the latter. How many of the women trainees come from rural areas could not be ascertained from the available data. Nor could the rural reach of the education department’s adult literacy program for women and men in communities, the Reading Education Training Program, be determined.

Working girl children

Owing to intensive lobbying and advocacy efforts, the Philippine government ratified ILO Convention 138 (Minimum Age for Admission to Employment) in 1998 and ILO Convention 182 (Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor) in 2000. Three years later, and also as a result of persistent lobbying by the National Program of Action Against Child Labor (NPAAL) partners, including the Bureau of Women and Young Workers, two new laws were enacted: RA 9208, which institutes policies to eliminate trafficking in persons, especially women and children, establishes the necessary institutional mechanisms for the protection and support of trafficked persons, and provides penalties for violations; and RA 9231, which provides for the elimination of the worst forms of child labor and affords stronger protection for the working child (amending RA 7610, otherwise known as the “Special Protection of Children Against Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act”).

NPAAL partners have successfully lobbied for the passage of laws that seek to eliminate trafficking in persons (RA 9208) and the worst forms of child labor (RA 9231), and continue to wage campaigns to detect, monitor, and rescue child laborers, about 27 percent of whom are girls.

The labor department issued policies, implemented programs to progressively eliminate the worst forms of child labor, and, in 1999, issued an updated list of hazardous work and activities for working children. The list included, among others, work that exposes children to physical, psychological, and sexual abuse, such as those in lewd shows, cabarets, bars, and dance halls. By end of 2001, there had been five convictions against persons who violated RA 7658 (minimum employable age) and RA 7610 (special protection against child abuse, exploitation, and discrimination), particularly for the use of children in obscene publications and indecent shows.

The government campaign against child labor is contained in the NPAAL, which has as its flagship activity the *Sagip Batang Manggagawa* (Save the Child Worker) Project. Officially launched in 1994, the project is an interagency quick action mechanism led by the labor department for detecting, monitoring, and rescuing child laborers in hazardous and exploitative working conditions. The program focus was expanded under the new program framework for the period 2000 to 2004 to include eliminating the worst forms of child labor; transforming the lives of child laborers, their families and communities; and ensuring that the children would be protected and/or withdrawn from hazardous activities, healed, and reintegrated into a caring society.

In 1995, the labor department sent its inspectors to a specialized training in child labor, and developed a supplement inspection form on the violation of the anti-child labor law. Labor inspectors found 287 female child workers in 66,277 establishments inspected in 2001 and 2002. Children in hazardous work were removed outright from the establishments but with restitution of unpaid benefits. An interdisciplinary team usually attends to the rescued children for their healing and reintegration into their families and communities. Its operation covers more than the establishments that are covered by labor inspectors. By the first semester of 2001, a total of 303 rescue operations had been launched, liberating 1,000 minors from slave or bonded labor, prostitution, and other hazardous activities. From January 2002 to September 2003, the department led the rescue of 971 child laborers. Of them, 264 (or 27 percent) were girls.

In partnership with the Philippine Ports Authority, the Visayan Forum Foundation, an NGO that helps migrant child domestic workers, operates a halfway house in the Manila North harbor. The facility offers 24-hour services to victims of trafficking, especially women and children, such as emergency shelter; information assistance about travel, employment, and possible support networks; quick referral of cases; telephone hotline counseling; regular outreach to stranded passengers; training and advocacy for port community members; and research and volunteer immersion. As of September 2001, the project had saved 255 victims of trafficking from exploitative

employment. The project partners are working on the opening of halfway houses in other major ports in the country.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

As noted in the foregoing discussion, there have been several notable gains in the area of women's economic empowerment during the past three years. These gains, however, are extremely fragile. The Philippine government needs to constantly monitor and enforce the agreements in order to encourage fulfillment of the conditions by signatory governments. Monitoring is also the key to discouraging sexual harassment, as training in the implementation of the law and creation of structures (such as CODI) are but the beginning of compliance with the law; and to improving results of most other programs, including microfinance and other livelihood assistance schemes for women. More specific issues and challenges are:

- ☞ Lack of social protection and lack of access to credit (despite microfinance schemes), markets, and information for women in the informal sector. Various programs of government for the sector should be harmonized and rationalized to address the key areas of concern of different groups of informal sector workers and entrepreneurs in a process that would engage both organized and unorganized members of the sector. The country program for the informal sector can be reviewed in this regard.
- ☞ Disadvantage suffered by poor women in rural areas as a result of the concentration of growth and development in a few urban and regional centers. There must be a socially equitable deployment of resources (credit, training, information) so that both rural and urban areas could benefit. This also requires the full and gender-responsive implementation of agrarian reform and other rural development programs.
- ☞ High unemployment rate of young people, partly because of the rapid growth of the youth labor force, an offshoot of a high population growth rate. The other side of this issue is the large number of child workers, some in highly hazardous occupations. While there are more boys than girls among the child workers, the size of the female workforce is growing faster than the male.
- ☞ A need for labor standards and other laws concerning women to be reviewed, responsibilities of agencies for enforcement and monitoring clearly spelled out, and enforcement more closely monitored. These include the anti-sexual harassment law and legislation and policies governing gender-based discrimination in the workplace and economic transactions.
- ☞ Gender stereotyping of occupations and industries due to hiring and preemployment biases, on the one hand, and poor matching of education/training and jobs, on the other. Educational, training, and placement programs should be reviewed and analyzed to foster a better job-education or job-skill fit, and to promote hiring of women in a wider array of occupations other than those traditionally associated with females.
- ☞ Reconsideration of government policies and programs on overseas employment, including the deregulation of the industry; preparation of officials and frontline workers in agencies tasked to assist or protect women workers, including OFWs, to address their gender concerns; and funding and provision of more services for OFW survivors of violence against women.

- ☞ Review and reconsideration of economic policies that have resulted in the discontinuation of livelihood assistance schemes for the poorest of the poor – programs that probably serve people living in poverty better than the single-focused credit or skills development programs.
- ☞ In connection with the multitude of livelihood-related programs and projects, there is a need to monitor how resources are being used, collect sex-disaggregated data on beneficiaries and amounts (credit and other inputs) going to each gender group; and focus on results by assessing how they are affecting beneficiaries; in the case of training participants, monitoring concerns whether or not they found work and how long this took.

Other important challenges to women's economic empowerment are such macro issues as budget deficits, foreign debt and an increasing debt service fund, and globalization, as manifested, for instance, in trade and economic liberalization policies that it fosters. In view of the severity of poverty in rural areas, safety nets should be established for agricultural producers and workers, including women, who are affected by the liberalization of the agriculture and fishery sectors. As important is the review of policies, such as unilateral reduction of tariffs and those that threaten domestic industries and agriculture and, ultimately, women, men, and children. Only then can economic empowerment truly take place.

*Chapter 3:
Upholding Women's Human Rights*



The focus of the *Framework Plan for Women* on women and girl children's human rights proceeds from the recognition of the interdependence between human rights and human development. As the *2000 Human Development Report* (UNDP 2000) observes: "Human development is essential for realizing human rights, and human rights are essential for full human development." Both human rights and human development aim at securing basic human freedoms and, with it, the development of capabilities, of what one can become, and of living a life that one values (Sen 2002). Part of the process of women's empowerment is the building of women's capabilities: to live a healthy life, to be educated, to be able to move freely, and to be safe from violent assault (Nussbaum 2002).

In September 1996, the Philippine government ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which states internationally accepted principles and measures to achieve equality for women everywhere, regardless of their marital status in all fields: political, economic, social, cultural, and civic. In November 2003, the Philippines also ratified the CEDAW Optional Protocol, which seeks to provide a communication procedure that allows either individuals or groups of individuals to submit complaints to the CEDAW Committee, which will then consider petitions from individuals or groups of individuals that have exhausted all national remedies. The Optional Protocol also entitles the Committee to conduct inquiries into grave or systematic violations of the Convention.

This chapter explores the state of Filipino women in three human rights areas: education and training, health and nutrition, and protection from violence against women (VAW). It presents the gains made relative to the four rights-related objectives of the FPW, namely: enhanced access to or utilization of basic social services, gender-responsive delivery of justice to VAW survivors, formulated and implemented legislative measures to eliminate gender bias, and increased awareness of women and girl children's rights. It also analyzes gender gaps in both access and outcomes in order to identify issues and areas of intervention.

ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Philippine Constitution enshrines the right of the child, boy and girl, to basic education, and mandates the state to provide free basic education to all. At the level of social and cultural practice, gender bias in educational investment is not systemic, and parents generally send all their children to school, if they can afford it. However, gender biases differ among cultural groups.¹ Thus, while simple literacy rates (pertaining to the ability to read and write a simple message in any language) among population 10 years or older in the other Philippine regions hover around 90 percent or more, that for ARMM is a low 74.5 percent, with male literacy rate (75.6 percent) exceeding that for females (71.4 percent).

¹For instance, *lumad* (indigenous peoples) and Muslim groups traditionally tend to favor sending or keeping their sons in school while keeping their daughters at home (Uy 1990). The Muslim struggle, however, has greatly affected the education of young boys and men who have been drawn to fight for one Muslim rebel group or another (Abitona 2002).

The government provides free public education for all at the elementary and secondary levels, and subsidizes tertiary-level and technical/vocational education through the state colleges and universities in provinces and cities around the country. In 1997, about 92 percent of elementary schools were run by the state, but this proportion dropped to 89 percent beginning in 2000-2001, as more private schools opened. At the secondary level, government schools accounted for about 59 percent. The government, through the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), offers scholarship opportunities to financially incapable but deserving students who wish to pursue higher education.

In 2000, simple literacy rates for women and men 10 years old or older were almost equal, at 92.3 percent and 92.0 percent, respectively (NSO 2003h).² What is troubling is that between the census years of 1990 and 2000, literacy rate declined from 93.7 percent for the males and 93.4 percent for the females, after the dramatic rise in literacy rate by over 17 percentage points for the two groups between 1980 and 1990. This could mean a combination of poor quality of education, which plagues the Philippine education sector (ADB/WB 1999; Illo 2002a), and the effect of the economic crisis that has forced parents to withdraw or delay the entry of young children to school.

Basic Education

School participation and performance

As before, women tend to stay longer in school and a greater number pursue higher education. More boys start school, with an enrolment rate of 51 percent in 2000-2001 versus 49 percent among girls. But school participation rates, or the proportion of 7- to 12-year-olds who are in school, of girls at the elementary level have been rising, but not for boys (Table 3.1). At higher levels, the proportion of girls to total enrolment and the female school participation rate exceed those for males. The lower male net enrolment could be owing to the fact that more male children drop out to help their families earn a living, as suggested by the much higher percentage of boys among child workers (NSO 1995; 2001 Child Labor Surveys). It could also imply recognition among parents that daughters tend to perform better in school (HDN/UNDP 1997) and are more likely than sons to finish the school year and their education (see cohort survival rates below). Hence, investing in the education of girls makes sense.

The high national school participation rate masks inequalities in access to basic education. It is lower in remote areas, among street children and those living in extreme poverty, among indigenous peoples, and those in areas under armed conflict (Reyes 2003). In addition, the dropout rate is high and cohort survival rate low, particularly among boys (Table 3.1) and children in ARMM (where dropout rate averaged over 20 percent between 1996 and 2001) and Western Mindanao (13 percent; Reyes 2003). These pose a continuing challenge to the government's "Education for All Program."

Gaps were noted in school participation: rising among girls, but not among boys; lower among street children, indigenous peoples, those in remote areas, those living in extreme poverty, and those in areas under armed conflict. Alternative nonformal education systems have been developed for some of these groups.

²The most recent data source on functional literacy is the 1994 Functional Literacy and Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS). Functional literacy, or the ability to perform basic computational procedures, was lower for both women and men, but women fared better than men (85.9 percent versus 81.7 percent). The same could not be said in ARMM, where women's functional literacy rate was 4.1 percentage points lower than that for men (NSO 1999a). A large disparity could be noted in the functional literacy between urban and rural women (83.9 percent versus 68.8 percent). This trend could be attributed to the lack of educational opportunities, the lack of access to educational institutions, or the greater tendency of parents in rural areas then to discourage previous generations of girls from attending school.

Table 3.1. Selected school participation statistics for female and male children, by level of education

Education level and school year	Dropout rate		Participation rate		Cohort survival rate	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
<i>Elementary</i>						
1998/1999	7.4		94.0	97.4	74.3	65.6
1999/2000	7.3	8.7	97.2	96.8	74.2	64.9
2000/2001	5.8	8.4	97.2	96.4	67.2	
2001/2002	N.A.		N.A.		67.1	
<i>Secondary (based on first year)</i>						
1998/1999	9.1		68.0	62.4	77.3	65.2
1999/2000	7.8	13.9	68.2	62.7	77.0	65.1
2000/2001	7.1	10.4	69.5	62.7	73.0	
2001/2002	N.A.		N.A.		73.2	

*The entry "N.A." means that no data were available at the time of writing the report.

Sources of data: For sex-disaggregated data, Planning Services, Department of Education (cited in Reyes 2003); otherwise, http://www.deped.gov.ph/Statistics/StatBul/AY2001_02. Accessed 5 February 2004.

The poor quality of education is reflected in very low mean scores in the National Elementary Achievement Test (NEAT) and the National Secondary Achievement Test (NSAT). Particularly bad were the NEAT mean scores in Mathematics, Science, and English (below 50 in 1999 and 2000; NSCB 2001). For several years, too, the national average NSAT scores for the same subjects fell below 50.

Nonformal or community education programs

The Bureau of Non-Formal Education (BNFE) offers, among others, Functional Education and Literacy Programs in 10 of 16 regions of the country. Some regions conduct female functional literacy classes with maternal and childcare as core topics. It has also expanded alternative nonformal education systems for indigenous communities to include *Magbasa Kita* (Let Us Read) that teaches women and girls to read, and established school-based child-minding centers so that older children, mostly school-age girls who take care of younger siblings, can attend classes despite their child-minding task.

Efforts to improve gender sensitivity

As late as July 2001, the Women's Studies Association of the Philippines (WSAP) conference pointed out that the instructional materials and classroom practices at the basic education levels tend to reinforce stereotypes not only regarding gender roles, which affect career decisions, but also gender relations, which normalize peer harassment of girl students. In this connection, the education department has been exploring means to maximize its resources through educational reforms, alternative forms of instruction, community-based programs, and partnership building with community institutions and NGOs toward the delivery of educational service to the Filipino people. It has included gender-related topics or modules, such as human rights and sex education, in the school curriculum. In addition, it has issued a teachers' guide containing exemplars of lesson plans for both elementary and high school levels where gender issues are integrated in the five learning areas under the 2002 revised educational curriculum, namely: English, Science, Math,

Filipino, and *Makabayan* (Social Studies, History, Arts, Technology, and Home Economics). The guide has been field-tested in several provinces and duplicated for distribution in 2002-2003.

The department has also been evaluating textbooks and teaching materials for use in public schools at all levels in terms of their gender responsiveness, thereby helping improve the self-image, lives, and work opportunities of girls, particularly in areas where they have traditionally been underrepresented (Mathematics, Science, and Technology). The materials are assessed based on their appropriateness and the gender balance in the treatment of roles, occupations, and contributions in the text and illustrations. Of the elementary books in English, Science, Math, Filipino, and *Sibika/Hekasi* that were evaluated in 2000-2001, some 67 books (or 71 percent of the total evaluated) were approved, or rated appropriate and gender-responsive. The following year, approved elementary books totaled 96 (66 percent of the total). For high school books in English, Science, Technology, Math, Filipino, and *Araling Panlipunan* (Social Studies), the department approved a smaller percentage of books evaluated: 47 percent (16 books in all) in 2000-2001, and 38 percent (40 books) in 2001-2002. However, these materials have to be evaluated also in terms of their effects on female and male students' self-images and their attitudes and behaviors toward each other.

There have been government efforts at various levels to introduce gender-sensitive curricula and instructional materials, but these efforts need to be assessed in terms of their effects on female and male students' attitudes and behaviors related to gender norms.

The education, social welfare, and tourism departments coordinated their efforts in mobilizing media for the campaign to promote and protect the rights of children. The social welfare department developed and disseminated appropriate materials for media use, and convened a forum on the portrayal of girl children in the media during the Girl Child Week celebrations. The National Youth Commission organized a "Youthspeak" and formed the *Bantay Cinema* Youth Network to serve as monitoring team in various localities.

Meanwhile, in 2001, the Philippine Commission on Human Rights (PCHR) launched a campaign to promote human rights information among the youth, civil servants, and the masses. One of its two projects is implemented in coordination with the education department and involves the establishment of a human rights desk in educational institutions, which will disseminate human rights materials and conduct human rights orientation sessions and seminars for students and the academe.

Efforts to improve the quality of teachers

The department offers an Integrated Scholarship Program to improve the quality of its teachers. The program has been attracting high participation of women, even in its masteral courses in Biology, Mathematics, Economics, Physics, Chemistry, and Music. Of the trainees of the National Computer Literacy Program for teachers, administrators, and support staff under the modernization program for teachers, 93 percent were women, which reflects the fact that a large majority of public schoolteachers are women.

The department is also addressing the deficiencies in literacy approaches by retooling trainers or teachers through its Reading Education Training Program, an adult literacy program open to both women and men who are trainers in reading at the elementary, secondary, and nonformal education levels. On its third year of implementation, the program had updated 7,000 trainers on current trends in teaching remedial and reading recovery, an approach that would resolve the personal confidence of learners and minimize dropouts.

Higher Education

Tertiary-level enrolment is female-dominated, outnumbering males by almost 0.3 million (Table 3.2). Male enrolment, however, has been catching up, as more and more young men are lured by the prospects of landing a job in the information technology industry, going overseas to work as a seaman, or even grabbing for themselves a teaching job. In contrast, young women or their parents seem to be losing interest in a college education, partly because of the persistently high female unemployment rate, which has made investment in women's education in times of economic crises a highly risky matter. By academic year 2001-2002, men represented 44.4 percent of total enrolment, having grown at an average of 4.4 percent per year between 1996 and 1997 and 2001 and 2002, compared to the sluggish 0.7 percent growth in female enrolment. In fact, the number of women tertiary-level students dropped in 1998-1999 and again in 2000-2001. It was only in 2001-2002 that female enrolment exceeded that recorded in the precrisis academic year of 1996-1997.

Table 3.2. Tertiary enrolment, by sex, selected years

Academic year	Female	Male	Total	Percent female
1996-1997	1,325,087	895,751	2,220,838	59.7
1998-1999	1,280,172	999,142	2,279,314	56.2
1999-2000	1,310,240	1,063,246	2,373,486	55.2
2000-2001	1,250,840	1,159,462	2,410,302	55.5
2001-2002	1,370,842	1,095,214	2,466,056	55.6

Source of data: Commission on Higher Education.

Career choices appear to be influenced by perceptions about job prospects. Private sector jobs continue to be associated with business administration, making it still the most popular college or university course for both women and men, although it appears to have lost some of its appeal to young people. In contrast, more women and men are enrolling in education and teacher training, as well as in computer science (Table 3.3). The other high-enrolment fields are medical/health courses and engineering. While women and men continue to differ in their career preferences, the differences have not been as marked as in earlier years, as a result of gradual changes in attitudes among students and their parents; in some cases, gender equality laws;³ and less sexist training and employment that seem to encourage women to enter areas that have been traditionally associated with men, and vice versa.

At the tertiary level, women continue to outnumber men, but the latter have been catching up. Gender stereotyping of career choices remains, but not as much as before, as a result of gradual changes in attitudes, gender equality laws, or less sexist hiring practices.

Women are getting more than their share of government scholarships. Of 32,521 recipients of CHED in 1997-1998, about 67 percent were women. The distribution was even more uneven the next year, with 19,426 female recipients accounting for 69 percent of the total. In 2001-2002,

³A field that has opened its doors to women is military training, which was made possible by the passage of Republic Act (RA) 7192 in 1991 that gave women "equal opportunity for appointment, admission, training, graduation, and commissioning in all military or similar schools of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police." At the Philippine Military Academy, some 257 women, or 17.3 percent of the total, passed the admission exams for school year 1999-2000. But because of inadequate facilities, the intake per year has been limited to a maximum of 20 female cadets.

beneficiaries of the CHED-administered Student Financial Assistance Programs (STUFAP) totaled 22,329, with 9,601 males (43 percent) and 12,728 females (57 percent). As in previous years, the women won a large share (62 percent) of the scholarships and financial grants offered for school year 2002-2003. The only notable exception to all this is the scholarship program for Muslim students, where 60 percent of educational assistance went to men.

Table 3.3. Concentration of female and male students in selected tertiary-level courses

Discipline	Percent female to total				% distribution of enrollees, 1996-97		% distribution of enrollees, 2001-02	
	1996-97	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	Female	Male	Female	Male
Home economics	88.2	88.6	76.9	89.6	0.3	-*	0.4	0.1
Service trades	84.9	79.0	79.9	81.5	0.5	0.1	0.9	0.3
Education and teacher training	78.4	74.7	74.9	75.7	17.8	7.5	24.3	9.7
Mass communication and documentation	76.6	65.4	72.9	75.1	0.7	0.3	1.7	0.7
Business administration and related courses	74.9	65.7	65.8	65.7	43.8	21.7	30.7	20.1
Medicine and allied courses	73.8	69.0	69.5	74.5	11.1	5.8	8.9	3.8
Social and behavioral sciences	69.7	62.7	67.6	67.0	2.2	1.4	3.9	2.4
Natural sciences	66.4	64.2	66.7	67.5	1.2	0.9	1.5	0.9
Humanities	64.1	54.3	55.6	58.5	0.7	0.6	1.3	1.1
General courses	62.5	62.6	63.0	61.1	5.1	4.5	1.9	1.5
Math and computer science	59.4	56.4	55.3	54.5	6.9	7.0	10.4	10.9
Agriculture, forestry, fishery, veterinary medicine	50.3	46.6	47.0	50.9	2.7	4.0	3.5	4.3
Fine and applied arts	49.7	49.8	49.9	58.3	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.3
Law and jurisprudence	41.0	43.0	40.5	43.8	0.5	1.0	0.6	1.0
Architecture and town planning	24.6	34.7	28.4	30.4	0.4	1.9	0.6	1.6
Engineering	20.0	25.7	25.1	24.7	4.6	27.6	6.8	25.9
Total	59.7	55.2	55.5	55.6	1,325,087	895,751	1,370,842	1,095,214

*Less than 0.05 percent.

Source: Commission on Higher Education.

Women's access to higher education may be better than that of men, but women have not been doing as well in government board or certification examinations. In 2000, for instance, 35.9 percent of women examinees (versus 37.6 percent among the men) passed (NSCB 2001 cited in WAGI 2002). Only in 3 (dentistry, electrical engineering, and nursing) of 18 fields did the women rate relatively better than the men, while in the two teachers' certification tests, the passing rates for the two groups were a low 35 to 37 percent. In the remaining 13 fields, the men outdid the women. The largest passing rate gap was noted in midwifery (27.1 percentage points, with 78.4 percent of the 51 male examinees passing the test versus 51.3 percent of the 2,646 female examinees); pharmacy (12.5); and chemical engineering (11.8).

Other gender issues in higher education persist. First, women generally tend to prepare for careers that do not pay as well as the men's (ADB/WB 1999).⁴ They train as teachers, while men study to become engineers. Women take up nursing, pharmacy, and midwifery, while men go to medicine. Second, there has been a persistent mismatching of jobs with school training. Among women, graduates of engineering and nursing end up as sales representatives or clerks, or, along with trained teachers, they go overseas to work as domestic helpers. Third, with the increased demand for nurses and physical therapists in the United States and other countries, (male) medical school graduates have been known to return to school to enroll in nursing and physical therapy. Lastly, career counseling in high school seems to reinforce gender stereotyping of career choices.

However, gender issues in tertiary education persist: women crowding in low-paying areas, mismatching of education and employment, and career counseling that reinforces gender stereotyping of career choices.

Efforts of government to address gender issues

Topics related to GAD, particularly violence against women, have been integrated into the medical curriculum of one of the country's major universities offering medical courses. With this pioneering effort, negotiations with CHED are underway to integrate a course in handling VAW cases in all medical schools in the country. Gender reforms at the higher level are likewise being pursued, such as the revision of textbooks, curricula, instructional materials, and teaching methods toward gender responsiveness. The commission continues to monitor the implementation of gender mainstreaming curriculum and the integration of GAD concepts into the syllabi of selected subjects.

Two government institutions have been active in developing the GAD capacity of academic and research institutions at the subnational level. The Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCARRD) has embarked on a program to engender the national agriculture and resources research and development network throughout the country. Another institution, the University of the Philippines Center for Women's Studies (UCWS), in collaboration with WSAP, has completed a project to establish or strengthen women's/gender studies and resource centers, and build capacity for gender planning and gender policy formulation in the regions to help ensure the sustainability of GAD programs and projects in government. By mid-2003, six women's/gender studies and resource centers had been established and networks of GAD resource pools had been set in place, consisting of trained academic and professional researchers in gender planning, monitoring, and evaluation.

During the period 2001 to 2003, the Philippine Congress passed the National Service Training Program Act of 2001 (RA 9163), making military training at the tertiary level (known as the Reserved Officers Training Corps, or ROTC) but one of three requirements for graduation that male and female students could choose from, beginning in academic year 2002-2003. The other two are Civil Welfare Training Service (CWTS) and Literacy Training Service (LTS).

⁴A study of the education sector in 1998 showed that among the 1995 graduates of medical and health courses who were surveyed in 1997, those in nursing and pharmacy were paid the lowest (PhP7,217 per month) compared to medicine (PhP9,508). Marine engineering, which accounted for a large share of enrolment in engineering, reportedly paid an average of PhP10,832 a month, much more than civil engineering (PhP8,476), the engineering course of choice among women (ADB/WB 1999).

Moreover, several bills are pending in the Philippine Senate that aim to provide women with scholarship or financial assistance.⁵ Senate Bill Nos. 764, 1104, 1108, and 1247 seek to grant women equal opportunities with men in the field of sports by awarding them athletic scholarship programs and equal prize money in professional competitions. Senate Bill Nos. 601 and 1248 intend to empower women by giving them assistance and opportunities in enterprise to enhance their welfare, realize their full potentials, and play their role in nation building.

Efforts of educational institutions, professional organizations, and NGOs

An increasing number of universities and colleges are offering women's studies. WSAP has 50 member-schools and over 300 teacher advocates all over the country. As noted in a preceding section, in July 2001, it organized a conference on the theme of sexism in campus, which involved teachers and researchers in women's studies as well as young women students who spoke on various forms of sexism that they had encountered in school. Held simultaneously with the conference was a training of guidance counselors in feminist guidance counseling and nonsexist career counseling. During the period under review, WSAP members also undertook teacher training and curriculum development in women's studies. For instance, WSAP provided training in peace education as part of its March 2002 conference on gender, peace, and justice.

Private educational institutions and professional organizations have promoted women's studies courses, programs, or centers; while a few NGOs have tackled women's issues and gender concerns in special television programs, magazines, or theater. Like government initiatives, these have yet to be assessed as to their effect on women's lives.

Private women's colleges and universities have actively promoted key courses and programs. Miriam College created the Women and Gender Institute (WAGI) in 1999 and has been offering three international women's human rights seminars on an annual basis. St. Scholastica's College requires its students to take a course in women's studies prior to graduation. In 1990, it created the Institute of Women's Studies as part of its outreach program. The institute offers formal courses and trains women from various parts of the country and Southeast Asia in gender-fair education, women and development, women and health, feminist theories, violence against women, and gender issues in marriage. Meanwhile, the Philippine Women's University's community outreach program conducts volunteer health workers' leadership training, literacy classes, and a values formation program for women living in poverty.

Since 1995, the Women's Media Circle has created programs discussing women's issues (such as "Body Talk" and reproductive health for adolescents and women) and GAD over television (XYZ), radio (XYZone), and magazines (XYZine). Using the theater, another NGO, the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA), has staged in various parts of the country two plays on women's issues, where it encouraged women and men in the audience to ask questions and share their experiences in life situations, in the family, in their place of employment, instances of sexual harassment, job discrimination, role stereotyping, and other gender issues.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training

The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority manages the technical-vocational education and training (TVET), which covers school-based training, nonformal center-based (skills

⁵In a related development, for those employed in government, the Civil Service Commission implements a Local Scholarship Program for those who want to complete their college, masteral, or doctoral degree. The scholarship, which can be availed of on a full- or part-time basis, is open to women and men who meet the requirements. From 1993 to September 2001, a total of 4,261 employees enrolled in the program, with women comprising 57 percent of the total.

development) education, industry-based training, and community-based sector training. The school-based system provides courses of one- to three-year duration to women and men who have completed a secondary education. Nonformal education offers courses or training to a wide range of clients, including out-of-school youth and women seeking to enter the workforce. Industry-based training and industry partnership refer to a range of training arrangements, which are in place. Community-based sector training covers livelihood and entrepreneurship.

So far, private institutions have graduated about 90 percent of the products of the school-based system. Meanwhile, a national network of TESDA provincial centers and accredited training providers offers skills training programs to out-of-school youth and unemployed and employed women. As of 2001, about 40 percent of enrollees in all TVET institutions were women. In 2003, women accounted for over 53 percent of total TVET enrollees and graduates (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4. Percentage of female enrollees and graduates of TVET school-based and non-school-based programs, 2003-2004

Program	Enrolled	Graduated
School-based (academic year 2003-2004)	49.5	48.7
Non-school-based (calendar year 2003)	55.7	54.7
Total	53.4	53.3

Source: Technical Education and Skills Development Authority.

The TESDA alone enrolls more than 150,000 a year (BLES 2003d). For women, they provide training in traditional trades (food processing, dressmaking, and the like) as well as nontraditional courses, such as welding, general electronics, rural barangay electricity, auto electricity, building construction, basic soldering, car air-conditioning, and welding. Women made up 45 percent of the total enrolment in 1997, but more than half in 1998 (64 percent) and 1999 (59 percent). Of the total enrolment, only around 17 percent graduated in 1998, from a high 66 percent graduation rate the previous year, for both sexes. As of 1998, around 19,199 had graduated from the various courses offered under the program.

Women made up more than half of total TVET trainees in 2003. Partly by choice and partly owing to lack of employment opportunities for women in male trades, women tend to concentrate in traditional areas. This creates an oversupply in "women's fields," pushing down wages and profits that lead to low-return jobs or enterprises.

The TVET figures disguise at least two gender issues. Women tend to congregate in traditional programs, such as sewing, arts and crafts, and food services that usually lead to oversupply of these skills or services, which push down wages or profits. Such gender segmentation in the labor market perpetuates unequal incomes among women, and men. A second issue pertains to the failure of women trainees to acquire trade credentials. In 1998, for instance, 7,400 women took the national trade tests after completing their studies, as compared to 26,700 men. Only about 33 percent of the women passed the trade test, versus 39 percent of the men.

Efforts to address gender issues

Greater attention is now being given to expanding the job options of women through technical-vocational training and nonformal education programs that are implemented by government agencies and NGOs. Thus, in 2001, the school-based TVET programs enrolled 6,219

women and graduated 2,522 in traditionally “masculine” fields. Women constituted over 11 percent of total enrolment and graduates in these areas.

Established in 1997, the National Vocational Training and Development Center for Women, also known as the TESDA Women’s Center, offers women-friendly facilities, including day care and nursery and space for networking among NGOs. It likewise offers training in nontraditional trades, in addition to a menu of traditional skills areas.

The center approaches women’s economic empowerment through technical skills training, entrepreneurship training, social skills training, research, advocacy, career guidance and job placement assistance, and counseling services. From 1998 to 2003, the center graduated a total of 1,500 women in various traditional and nontraditional trades. Most of these graduates (1,388) attended the six-month preemployment training where they acquired basic knowledge and skills in their chosen trade area in preparation for gainful employment. About 100 completed skills upgrading courses that deepened their knowledge and skills in specific aspects of their chosen area, and 12 trainees completed the 18-month comprehensive trainers’ training for potential or future trainers.

The women trainees generally prefer traditional “feminine” fields, partly because of the belief that they will not find a job in nontraditional fields, given the persistent bias among employers against hiring women trained in nontraditional skills. Of 1,388 graduates of the preemployment skills training program, so far, 86 percent trained in hotel and restaurant management (36 percent), garments (15 percent), gifts, toys, and houseware (8 percent), food processing (8 percent), jewelry (6 percent), ceramics (4 percent), and electronics (9 percent). The other 13 percent specialized in the nontraditional fields of automotive (9 percent) and welding (4 percent), which was an increase of at least 73 women from the total of 107 in 2001.

ACCESS TO HEALTH

Health is a basic human right. Article II, Section 15, of the Constitution provides that the “State shall promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.” Meanwhile, Article XIII, Section 11, provides that the “State shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development. There shall be priority for the needs of the underprivileged, sick, elderly, disabled, women and children.”

Women’s health encompasses their physical, mental, and social well-being throughout their life cycle. It is integrated with concerns about reproductive health, sexuality, gender relations, violence against women, women’s human rights, access to economic resources for health maintenance, and the overall sociocultural representation and reproduction of women. The status of women’s health impacts not only on the productive capacity of half of the population but also on the health and well-being of the next generation.

Health Services

The health department, the lead agency in health, maintains specialty hospitals, regional hospitals, and medical centers. It has a regional field office in every region, a provincial health team made up of representatives to the local health boards, and personnel involved in controlling malaria and schistosomiasis. Private sector involvement in maintaining people’s health is enormous, ranging from provision of health services in clinics and hospitals, to health insurance; manufacture of drugs, vaccines, medical supplies, equipment, and other health and nutrition products; research and development; human resource development; and other health-related services.

The devolution of health services to local government units in the early 1990s involved the creation of a local health board, chaired by the local chief executive, and the turnover of the provincial and district hospitals to the provincial government, and of rural health units and barangay health stations (BHS) to the municipal government. In 1997, there were 1,817 hospitals with a total bed capacity of 86,468, or one per 869 people (NSO 1999b). Three years later, the number of hospitals fell to 1,712, with a total bed capacity of 81,016, or one per 1,060 people (NSO 2002). In 2001, hospitals numbered 1,708, which was lower than the years immediately following the economic crisis (Table 3.5). Closures were noted in both private and public sectors, but more private hospitals closed down than government hospitals. By 2001, the 640 public hospitals represented 37.5 percent of the total, up from 35.5 percent in 1997 and 36.4 in 2000. They also provided more than half of all hospital beds in the country.

Table 3.5. Selected information on the Philippine health care system

Item	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Number of hospitals	1,817	1,713	1,794	1,712	1,708
Government	645	616	648	623	640
Private	1,172	1,097	1,146	1,089	1,068
Government health human resources					
Doctors	2,582	2,848	2,948	2,943	2,957
Dentists	1,370	1,713	2,027	1,943	1,958
Nurses	4,096	4,389	4,945	4,724	4,819
Midwives	13,275	14,962	16,173	16,451	16,612
Barangay health stations	13,096	14,267	14,416	15,204	15,107
Rural health units	2,405	-	-	-	1,879

Sources: NSCB (2004c, 2004e).

At the local level, rural health units were closing down, while more BHS were being established, at least until 2000. These BHS operated in 42,020 villages across the country, serving an average of 5,277 people each. In 2001, the 15,107 BHS were 97 short of the 2000 figure (Table 3.5, above). Similarly, there was a decline in the reported number of rural health units, from 2,405 in 1997 to 1,879 in 2001 (NSCB 2004c).

Although the health care system is extensive, its accessibility, especially to the poor, is hampered by high costs and physical, social, and cultural barriers. It is also constantly threatened by budget cuts. Since 1997, the health sector's share of the national budget has been contracting: from 3.0 percent in 1997 to 2.1 percent in 2000 and 1.9 percent in 2001 (NSCB 2004c). This decrease in government spending on health has resulted in a corresponding decline in per capita public health expenditures – from PhP607 in 2000 to PhP569 in 2001 – with social insurance and private sources taking up the slack. At 1985 prices, per capita government health spending fell by 11.6 percent, while social insurance and private sources improved by 5.9 percent and 2.5 percent, respectively (NSCB 2004f).

In 2003, government claimed that it had cut by half the prices of medicines frequently bought by the masses, a claim reportedly supported by recent survey results which showed that half of those who bought medicines (versus 20 percent in previous surveys) found them inexpensive (SONA 2004). It is not clear, however, where the low-cost drugs were made available. It could be that, like the enormous human resources for health,

The uneven distribution of health resources between urban and rural areas puts rural women at a disadvantage. Unless local budgets are allocated, revenues raised and health workers trained, efforts to decentralize health services will not help rural women.

these were unevenly distributed. Most health practitioners are in the private sector in Metro Manila and other urban centers. In 2000, the ratios of government health workers to the population were one doctor per 9,797 people, one dentist per 36,481, one nurse per 7,361, and one midwife per 4,503 (NSO 2002).

The uneven distribution of health resources in urban and rural areas puts rural women at a disadvantage. Devolving health administration to local governments under the Local Government Code is likely to adversely affect women's health if local governments do not undertake immediate measures to ensure that budgets are allocated, revenues raised, and health workers trained.

General Nutritional and Health Condition

Nutrition

As in most developing countries, the malnutrition problem in the Philippines is more of deficiency rather than excess. Nutritional deficiencies are widespread and recognized as a national problem. The typical Filipino diet consists of rice, fish or meat, some vegetables, and an occasional fruit. The series of national food and nutrition surveys conducted by the Food and Nutrition Research Institute from 1978 to 1993 showed a generally declining trend in mean per capita total food consumption, and in consumption of major food groups. Only the consumption of fish, meat, and poultry remained higher than the 1978 level, although there was a significant drop between 1987 and 1993.

Among adults, women are more nutritionally disadvantaged than men, having higher incidence of chronic energy deficiency. In particular, pregnant and lactating women have poor nutritional condition, suffering from high incidence of iron deficiency anemia.

The 1998 National Nutrition Survey indicated that, compared with earlier surveys, females and males at various ages experienced similar nutritional deterioration (Table 3.6). This was most notable among the very young, particularly the boys.

Table 3.6. Prevalence (in percent) of malnutrition, by sex

Item	Previous		1998		Year and data sources
	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Among children 0-59 months					
Underweight	17.0	9.8	40.9	35.3	1988 (Tan 1991) 1998 (Laña, Villavieja, and Cerdeña 2001)
Stunted	11.6	11.8	26.7	36.5	
Wasted	11.4	6.7	6.6	7.1	
Among children 6-10 years old					
Underweight	28.3		25.0	35.0	1996, 1998 (FNRI 2001)
Stunted	39.1		35.0	47.0	
Wasted			7.9	9.5	
Among children 11-12 years old (using body mass index [BMI])					
Thin	19.2	27.1	27.2	34.0	1993 and 1998 (Villavieja and others 2001, 19)
Overweight/obese	1.5	2.6	3.2	1.8	
Among children 13-19 years old (using BMI)					
Thin	5.9	19.1	12.9	19.3	
Overweight/obese	2.5	2.5	5.2	1.0	
Among adults (using BMI)					
Chronic energy deficiency	16.1	11.5	15.4	11.1	
Obese	18.6	14.4	23.3	17.0	

In terms of prevalence of malnutrition, gender gaps and direction of gender differences tend to change with age, although females at various life stages tend to be shorter and lighter than their male peers. At age 0-5 years, boys and girls had practically the same nutrition status, while among children aged 6 to 10 years, girls had lower malnutrition rates than boys. But at puberty through adolescence (11 to 19 years old), females were more at risk of being overweight than males. Among adults, females were more nutritionally disadvantaged than males, having higher incidences of chronic energy deficiency and overweight. Pregnant and lactating women, in particular, had poor nutritional condition, exemplifying the nutritional vulnerability of female adolescents and female adults. Malnutrition in various forms, especially protein-energy malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies, persisted. More females than males were afflicted with iron deficiency anemia, with the highest incidence found among pregnant and lactating women. Goiter, thiamine, and riboflavin deficiencies continued to be more prevalent among women than men (FNRI 2001).

General health situation

In spite of the persistent problems with nutrition, recent years have shown a steady improvement in the overall health situation of the country. Women appear to have gained from the vigorous health improvement efforts of government and from the progress in the science of medicine and health care. The health conditions of Filipino women have been progressing through the years, notably in increasing life expectancy and decreasing mortality rates (Table 3.7). The life span of women and men has been increasing, but more so among women, resulting in a widening gender gap between 1990 (3.6 years) and 2000 (5.3 years). The longer life expectancy may be attributed to better health services, improving living conditions, and better health education, factors that could have also contributed to the decline in mortality rates.

The country has significantly reduced mortality for both sexes since 1946. The crude death rate per 1,000 population fell sharply from 15.1 in 1946 to 7.3 in 1959 and 4.7 in 1994, then oscillated between 3.7 and 5.0 until 1999 (NSO 2002). The fall

Filipino women appear to have gained from government health efforts and from the progress of medicine and health care, as evident in their longer life expectancy and decreasing mortality. Maternal mortality is also falling, although it continues to be high.

in death rates had been greater for females, especially during infancy and at older ages. The leading causes of mortality continued to be diseases of the heart, diseases of the vascular system, pneumonia, malignant neoplasm accidents, and all forms of tuberculosis (DOH 1999).

In 2000, some 942,098 people reportedly suffered from one disability or another, an increase by 2.5 percent since 1995. Women with disabilities outnumbered their male peers (50.2 percent to 49.8 percent), a reversal of the 1995 trend, when men accounted for 51.1 percent of persons with disabilities. There were more women among those with low vision (56.3 percent), suffering from partial blindness (50.3 percent), or with hearing difficulty (50.2 percent).

Table 3.7. Selected health status indicators, by sex

Item	Previous		Recent		Year and data sources
	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Life expectancy (in yrs)	66.4	62.8	72.5	67.2	1990, 2003 (NSO 2003h)
Mortality rate					
Infant (per 1,000 live births)	32.9	43.5	32.3	39.4	1993, 1998 (NSCB 2003b)
Child 1-4 yrs (per 1,000 live births)	56.8	69.9	18.5	20.8	1993, 1998 (NSCB 2003b)
Maternal (per 100,000 live births)	180	-	172	-	1995, 1998 (NSCB 2003b)
Total fertility rate	3.8	-	3.4	-	1995, 2000 (WB 2003b)
Registered live births	779,555	853,304	772,790	840,544	1998, 1999 (NSO 2003h)

Reproductive Health

Reproduction and contraception

From 1995 to 1997, the Philippine total fertility rate was estimated at 3.8 children per woman (Table 3.7, above). It declined to 3.4 in 2000 (3.0 in urban areas and 4.7 in rural areas), but still high compared to other Southeast Asian countries (2.7 for Malaysia, 2.4 for Indonesia, 1.9 for Thailand, and 1.4 for Singapore; UNDP 2003).

In 1998, roughly 92 percent of mothers received prenatal care from doctors, nurses and midwives, or *hilot* or traditional birth attendants (NSO 1998). *Hilot* attended to 41 percent of women at childbirth; while doctors, 31 percent, and nurses and midwives, 26 percent. In 2000, midwives assisted in the largest proportion of deliveries (41 percent), as the shares of *hilot* and doctors declined to 30 and 27 percent, respectively (DOH 2004). Two-thirds of child deliveries took place at home. Medical assistance at delivery was more common among women with lower order births, who lived in urban areas, who had higher education, and who had made four or more prenatal visits. Wide regional variations were noted. In Metro Manila, professional health workers attended to 92 percent of deliveries versus 16 percent in ARMM (DOH 1999).

Fertility and maternal mortality rates in the Philippines have declined, but still higher than in neighboring countries. Young pregnancies account for 30 percent of all births, and three of four maternal deaths.

Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births in the Philippines has always been high: 36.8 in 1990, 35.3 in 1995 (NSO 1998), and 29 in 2001 (UNDP 2003). It continues to be higher than that in neighboring countries, particularly Singapore (7) and Malaysia (8). Incidence of infant deaths varies with socioeconomic and demographic factors. In 1998, it was notably high among infants of mothers with no education, with no antenatal and delivery care, and younger than 20 and older than 40 years (NSO 1998). Infant mortality rate was also high among male infants (39.4 versus 32.3 among female infants; Table 3.7, above). Respiratory conditions of the fetus and newborn and pneumonia were the two most common causes of infant deaths.

Although still high, maternal mortality has also been decreasing, from 209 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1990-1992 to 172 in 1995-1997 (NSO 1998). Maternal deaths made up less than one percent of the total deaths in the country, but accounted for 14 percent of all deaths in women aged 15 to 49 years (NSO 1998). Maternal deaths were primarily due to complications related to pregnancy occurring in the course of labor, delivery, and puerperium (38 percent), hypertension and complications (27 percent), postpartum hemorrhage (18 percent), pregnancy with abortive outcome (9 percent), and hemorrhages related to pregnancy (8 percent; DOH 2004). Failure to obtain prenatal care and limited access to professional health care during pregnancy and childbirth also contributed to maternal deaths. For most births (77 percent), mothers made three or more prenatal visits, and for almost half of the births, the first prenatal visit was made in the first three months of gestation. A high proportion (86 percent) had gone to professional health workers for prenatal checkups, but only 56 percent were assisted by these health workers during childbirth.

Young pregnancies accounted for 30 percent of all births, 6 percent of spontaneous abortions, and three of four maternal deaths. This is so because young pregnant women are prone to pregnancy complications, and are less likely to seek prenatal care (PopCom 2003).

Promoting contraceptive practice remains a challenge, as fewer than half of currently married women have used at least one contraceptive method. However, more and more women are using modern contraceptives.

Promoting contraceptive practice among women remains a challenge. Over the last seven years, fewer than half of currently married women

had used at least one contraceptive method and no more than 36 percent had used a modern method (Table 3.8). Despite prohibition of the Catholic Church, the prevalence rate for use of any modern contraceptive method rose from 30.2 percent in 1996 to 35.1 percent in 2002, and of pills, from 11.6 percent to 15.3 percent. The pill was becoming more popular, and injectables were gaining ground. Condoms were used by less than one percent of the couples. Surveys show that men object to their spouses' practice of family planning, and very few of them use condoms, or take the responsibility of contraception. They also tend to prefer more children, unlike the vast majority of married women (81 percent) who want either to space their next birth or to limit childbearing altogether (see NSO 1998).

Table 3.8. Percent distribution of currently married women, by selected contraceptive method currently used

Method	1996	1997	1999	2000	2001	2002
Any method	48.1	47.0	49.3	47.0	49.5	48.8
Any modern method	30.2	30.9	32.4	32.3	33.1	35.1
Pill	11.6	12.5	13.1	13.7	14.1	15.3
Female sterilization	10.6	10.6	10.7	10.6	10.5	11.0
Intrauterine device (IUD)	3.7	3.0	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.7
Injection	1.6	2.0	2.7	2.5	2.8	3.0
Condom	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.3	1.7	1.6
Any traditional method	17.9	16.1	16.9	14.7	16.4	13.8
Calendar/rhythm	10.3	9.7	9.6	9.5	10.4	7.9
Withdrawal	6.9	5.9	6.7	4.8	5.6	5.3
No method	51.9	53.0	50.7	53.0	50.5	51.2
Number of women (in thousand)	11,088	10,595	11,087	11,031	11,300	11,604

Source: NSO Family Planning Surveys (various years).

Location, religious beliefs, educational level, and age tend to influence contraceptive use. In general, higher prevalence rates have been noted among urban women, those with more than an elementary education, and those aged 25 to 39 years.

HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are considered as a public health threat because of their devastating complications in women and neonates, but very little is known about STD prevalence among the general population. Meanwhile, the

While probably not as serious as in other countries, reported HIV/AIDS cases have reached a significant level. Hardest hit are men and the economically productive age group. In most cases, transmission was through heterosexual contact.

menace posed by HIV/AIDS infection has reached a significant level, but it is reportedly not as serious as in other countries. From 1984, when the first AIDS case was noted in the country, to 2002, some 1,789 HIV cases were reported to the AIDS Registry (NSCB 2003a). By 2001, roughly 66 percent were HIV-positive and 34 percent had developed AIDS; 234 (43 percent) of the AIDS victims are now dead (NSO 2002). Hardest hit by the virus are men (62 percent of HIV cases) and

the economically productive age group. In males, incidence is highest among 30- to 39-year-olds (38.4 percent); in females, among the 20- to 29-year-olds (46.2 percent; NSCB 2003a).⁶

Health department data suggest that in 84 percent of HIV cases, transmission was through sexual contact (NSO 2002). Of these, 74 percent were through heterosexual contact; 20 percent, homosexual; and 6 percent, bisexual. The less frequent modes of transmission were needle-prick injuries, blood or blood products, and injecting drug use (2 percent); no exposure was reported for the remaining 14 percent. The yearly number of HIV infections picked up in 1993, rising to 100 from 69 in 1992, and peaked in 1998, with 190 cases. With AIDS, the annual number of cases jumped to 56 in 1994, and since then, had averaged about 50 new cases a year (NSO 2002).

Policy Developments

The Philippine government has sought to provide the appropriate legislative mandate and framework for health programs and the development of the health sector. By 2001, Congress had enacted several health sector laws. One, RA 7875 (the National Health Insurance Act of 1995), specifically identifies women as one of the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups that should be covered and provided with medical benefits. The implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of the law are now being revised to possibly include coverage of injuries caused by violence against women and accreditation of midwives, thereby making home deliveries qualified for claims. The law provides for enrolment programs for the self-employed and the indigents. A partnership program between the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation and local governments subsidizes the National Health Insurance Program (NHIP) coverage of the poorest of the poor. Moreover, the health department issued the IRR of the Barangay Health Workers Incentive Act (RA 7883), which specifically benefits village health workers, who are mostly women. However, there were no available data on the number of women beneficiaries as of the reporting period.

Among the laws enacted in the years prior to 2001 were RA 8504, or the Philippine AIDS Prevention and Control Act of 1998, which promotes public awareness of HIV/AIDS; RA 8172, an Act for Salt Iodization Nationwide, approved in December 1995 to eliminate iodine deficiency disorder (IDD) among the populace and avoid its consequences; and RA 8980, or the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Act of 2000, which institutionalizes a comprehensive, integrated, and sustainable national ECCD system, and mandates the Council for the Welfare of Children to act as the National ECCD Council. RA 8172 benefits women and children who are more prone to IDD. To date, 10 percent of Filipino households are reportedly using iodized salt, but the impact of iodized salt intake on women and girl children cannot be ascertained.

The government has sought to provide the appropriate legal mandate and framework for health programs and the health sector. However, a key piece of legislation — the Reproductive Health Care Act — was deemed too controversial to be passed by Congress.

Two bills in Congress on a proposed Reproductive Health Care Act of 2002 sought to establish an Integrated National Policy and Program on Reproductive Health that recognizes women's reproductive rights and gender equality, and ensures universal access to reproductive health, services, information, and education. The bills, which never progressed, also wanted to

⁶Because of the way government collects its data on HIV/AIDS cases, many of the women are prostituted women who work in establishments whose workers are being monitored by the health department. There may be more cases from the general population that remain unreported. The term "prostituted women" and not "female sex workers" is used since the latter term legitimizes the practice of prostitution. The use of prostituted women also recognizes poverty as the primary factor that pushes women into prostitution.

push for the expansion of NHIP coverage to a wider population, especially including the poor, and to a full range of sexual and reproductive health services and products. Heated debates erupted around the explanatory note of the bill, which cited the need to remove legal barriers to abortion, but these were never reported beyond the committee level. For its part, the health department stresses that the government does not promote abortion as a family planning method, but recognizes that the prevention and management of abortion complications is a concern. It welcomes the proposed Reproductive Health Care Act because it would enable it to provide more goods and services, particularly to the poor, beyond its family planning programs. However, it does not agree with the inclusion of emergency contraceptives, claiming that these act as abortifacients. Some local governments, like the city of Manila, are already banning the dissemination of information about and sale of emergency contraception.

Investments in health affect the well-being of the population, especially women, as they are primarily responsible for their family's health. An adequate health infrastructure requires personnel, equipment, medicines and supplies, and education of the public on the utilization of health services. Public health and sanitation also necessitate investments in garbage disposal, sewerage disposal, and safe water supply system for every household. Aware of the implications of a healthy population for the overall economic and social well-being of the country, the government has been pursuing an integrated health policy and program for various population subgroups, such as women, infants and children, elderly, school children, the poor and rural sector, and health workers. Among the key policy initiatives, some approved in the mid-1990s and implemented through 2003, were as follows:

- The health department's Ten-Year Investment Plan (1996-2005) embodies the overall goals and strategies of the health sector, and seeks to assure the sustainability of national health programs, support the process of devolution, rationalize sector spending, and enhance institutional capabilities for management and planning. About 30 percent of the investment package for this plan has been set aside for the improvement of women's health, for which some of the projects are still being implemented. Presently, the Health Sector Reform Agenda, which updates and improves on the plan, is the basis for investments in the health sector. The agenda aims to improve the effective coverage of national and local public health programs, increase access to health services especially by the poor, and reduce financial burden on individual families.
- The Medium-Term Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition, 1999-2004, aims to increase the proportion of children with normal weight, and reduce the prevalence of protein-energy malnutrition among children, chronic energy deficiency among adults, and micronutrient deficiencies and the prevalence of overweight among children and adults.

In 2000, the health department was reorganized, unifying the management of foreign-funded health programs and projects under the Bureau of International Health Cooperation. Among the initiatives were a five-year project involving local government units in comprehensive population, family planning, safe motherhood and child survival programs, and the development of family health packages addressing specific health needs of local communities.

Prior to 2001, the government adopted a gender-responsive population program framework.⁷ But in 2001, the health department refocused its family planning program on one that promotes family planning as a health intervention that shall be made available to all men and women of reproductive age. The current National Family

From 2001 to 2003, the national government either not released or diverted budgets for family planning (especially artificial contraceptives) to other health programs. In fact, it has not procured contraceptives, leaving this to foreign donors. In other health areas, the government program framework is being revised to incorporate women's health and gender issues.

Planning Policy is anchored on the following principles: responsible parenthood and responsible parenting, respect for life, birth spacing, and informed choice. It purportedly promotes both artificial contraception and natural family planning methods. However, budgets for family planning (particularly funds for artificial contraceptives) have been used for natural planning. In 2001, the latter involved the utilization of funds earmarked for contraceptives to improve hospitals or increase the supply of drugs for the indigents, while PhP50 million were released in 2003 for programs of the Couples for Christ Medical Foundation, Inc. In 2003, too, the family planning budget shrunk from PhP144 million in 2002 to PhP40.7 million. In fact, no procurement of family planning contraceptives has been made using government funds, since, the government argues, foreign donors (the United States Agency for International Development [USAID] and the United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA]) are already providing these items.

Nonetheless, there have been efforts to review the current program framework and revise it to incorporate relevant aspects of women's health, gender issues, and other concerns in both conceptual and operational terms. These include the constitution of a task force on family planning/reproductive health, the crafting of reproductive health indicators, and the establishment of women's desks in police stations by the Philippine National Police (PNP) to address cases of violence against women. Meanwhile, no progress has been noted on the amendment of the Local Government Code about the permanent appointments of population officers.

Programs to Address Gender and Health Issues

Women's health

The health department continues to implement several major programs that offer services and other packages of benefits that are universal in coverage and given free of charge in all government health facilities. Principally supported by overseas development assistance funds, these include the women's health and development program; reproductive health program, which offers a range of contraceptive methods (innovative methods of natural family planning, pills, condom, injections, sterilization) using a reproductive health care approach, promotes better nutrition of infants, and urges mother- and baby-friendly hospitals to convince mothers to breast-feed their babies from birth to 2 years old; safe motherhood program, which currently includes a comprehensive safe motherhood package that covers quality prenatal, natal, and postnatal

⁷In 1998, through Administrative Order No. 1-A, the health department defined a reproductive health framework that incorporates 10 elements of the Reproductive Health Package, namely: (i) family planning; (ii) maternal and child health framework and nutrition; (iii) prevention and management of abortion complications; (iv) prevention and treatment of reproductive tract infection (RTI), STD, and HIV/AIDS; (v) breast and reproductive tract cancers and other gynecological conditions; (vi) adolescent reproductive health; (vii) education and counseling on sexuality and sexual health; (viii) men's reproductive health; (ix) violence against women; and (x) prevention and treatment of infertility and sexual disorders. The Philippine Population Management Plan of the Population Commission has included gender equality and women empowerment among the major components. However, the decentralization of health services has been known to result in the inconsistent application of women's health and contraceptive policies.

services, micronutrient supplementation, and tetanus toxoid immunization; breast and cervical cancer prevention campaign, which urges women over 30 years old to do regular breast self-examination and women over 34 years old to have Pap smear examination every year; national AIDS/STD prevention and control program; and national health program for older persons, which addresses the health needs of older women and men. The health department coordinates with the social welfare department on its program for elder persons, which set up a total of 130 day care centers for older persons in selected areas of the country.

The government likewise runs social welfare programs integrating a component on personal and child care skills development that deals with care of self of females during puberty, menstruation, pregnancy, and childbirth, breast-feeding, weaning, and detection of breast cancer and common disorders of women. It also has primary health and nutrition programs that provide continuous information and guidance to women in their pursuit of a healthy life for themselves and their families.

Health programs for women and girl children have taken a broad view, incorporating their life cycle health needs as well as violence done on them. There have also been programs to address adolescent sexuality and reproductive health. In a related development, there are now efforts in the educational sector to address these health issues.

The health department and six local governments have likewise created 44 Women and Children Protection Units in regional, district, and provincial hospitals in the country. Collaborating Centers for Violence against Women and Children have been established in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao to render one-stop services to survivors of violence. In a related development, a module on “Integrating Domestic/Family Violence Issues in the Nursing Curriculum” was developed and endorsed by CHED. The curriculum is currently being piloted at the Silliman University College of Nursing. A similar module is being developed for the medical curriculum, in coordination with the Association of Philippine Medical Colleges. This initiative will enable future doctors and nurses to respond with relevance to victims and survivors of violence.

Several local-level measures to improve the well-being of women who worked as entertainers in former military bases could be noted. In Olongapo City, the health and social welfare offices conduct regular monitoring of the physical condition and provide medical assistance, skills training, and scholarship to children of HIV/AIDS victims. Their Parent Effectiveness Services facilitate the integration with the community of former entertainers and their families. NGOs Buklod and WEDPRO (Women’s Education, Development Productivity and Research Organization) are also working with prostituted women in Angeles and Olongapo.

Health programs for children and adolescents

A country program for children implemented by the government and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) provides, among others, nutrition education, micronutrient projects, family food production and food security, early childhood care and development, and nutrition advocacy among decision makers. It targets all children 0-59 months, male and female, in selected provinces and municipalities in 12 regions.

Three health-related issues affecting girl children were identified in 1995: vulnerability of the girl child to iron deficiency anemia, goiter, and infection due to malnutrition owing to traditional practices favoring other members of the family; adolescent pregnancy and motherhood; and vulnerability of the girl child to HIV/AIDS and

Health interventions for children and adolescents range from immunization and early child development to adolescent sexuality and reproductive health. The importance of systematic reproductive health programs for adolescents has been noted, given the high incidence of teenage pregnancies and maternal mortality rate.

other STDs owing to premature and unprotected sexual relations and being victims of sexual abuse and exploitation. As of January 2002, the health department AIDS Registry had recorded 40 girl children and 23 boy children who were HIV-positive.

In response to the adolescent reproductive health issues, the government and a number of NGOs, with the support of UNFPA, Packard Foundation, and other donors, embarked on several projects, ranging from various school- and community-based advocacy campaigns, many involving peer educators and counselors and youth-friendly materials; to the delivery of services through clinics, “tambayan” (hangouts) or similar centers (Illo and others 1999, 2000). These efforts, however, are not adequate to arrest teenage pregnancy. In 2002, some 122,166 teenagers gave birth, almost 78 percent for the first time (NSO 2004 cited in NCRFW 2004).

In addition, the health department developed policies and guidelines, and often provided technical and logistics assistance to local governments in connection with the following: micronutrient supplementation; food fortification, wherein a Food Fortification Plan was crafted in consultation with the food industries; and enforcement of the Milk Code, through the training of health workers in breast-feeding counseling, skills training in Milk Code monitoring, and promotion of breast-feeding in hospitals through the mother- and-baby-friendly hospital initiative.⁸

Likewise, the Expanded Program on Immunization has issued policies and guidelines for immunization of all children 0-11 months old against seven diseases. The Knock-out Polio Campaign, aimed to immunize all children aged 0-59 months to eradicate polio by 2000, reached 97 percent of its target in 1996 and 1997. In 2000, the World Health Organization declared the country polio-free. To be launched in February 2004, the Philippine Measles Elimination Campaign aims to immunize all children 9 months to 15 years old and eliminate measles by reaching 98.4 percent of its target group in schools by 2008. Program strategies include regular health-center-based immunization and door-to-door immunization campaign.

The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank support an interagency project entitled “Early Childhood Development Project” (ECDP). Launched in 1999, the ECDP is a six-year project that seeks to promote child- and family-focused services to enhance the quality and coverage of essential health, nutrition, psychosocial development, and early education services for 0- to 6-year-olds. It is being implemented in three regions, supplementing and enhancing the resources of local government units involved in the project. The project provides, among others, equipment for the expanded program on immunization, training in integrated management of childhood illness, provision of micronutrients (vitamin A and iron), and food fortification.

Advocacy and research on women’s health

Ribbon advocacy campaigns that involve health workers, professionals, students, and other women and men have been conducted to raise the general public’s consciousness of women’s rights, importance of breast self-examination, and other women’s health issues. Each month represents a woman’s health concern and a corresponding colored ribbon worn by advocates. The media has been used extensively to promote health-related programs and campaigns initiated by the government.

Research support for advocacy, policymaking, and services in connection with women’s reproductive health has been noted. Some of these feed immediately into decision making and programming; others have more indirect effects, being used more for instruction and advocacy.

⁸In 1998, the department supplied iron drops to at least 56 children with low body weight, and vitamin A to about 70 percent of preschool children aged 12 to 59 months. Inadequate funds hindered the department from providing iodized oil to girl children with goiter.

The NCRFW continues to use the outputs from the joint NCRFW-UNFPA project entitled "Policy Development and Advocacy for Women's Health, Population and Development." Implemented from 1996 to 1998, the project primarily produced pamphlets or papers formulating or popularizing policy or legislation, such as: Economic Costs of Violence against Women; the National Health Insurance Law and the Civil Service Code: A Review of Specific Provisions Applicable to Women; Towards a Gender-Sensitive CBFM Program; and Towards a Gender-Sensitive Workplace: Integrating Women's Concerns in the occupational safety and health standards. In addition, four policy briefs and six policy papers on priority women's health and population issues were prepared, including hospital case records of violence against women and gender-sensitive technological impact assessment system. The project also supported public awareness campaigns, such as the Beijing Watch Bulletin, media dialogues, press releases, information leaflets, and video documentation.

Research focusing on various health concerns has flourished, some with immediate applications, others feeding into campaigns to improve women's health. Of the former type are two studies of the Occupational Safety and Health Center (OSHC) that deal with the effects of occupational health issues on women's reproductive health. A study of women in semiconductor companies shows that exposure to lead, mercury, anesthetic gases, carbon monoxide, and ionizing radiation have adverse effects on both woman and offspring. Another study of negative reproductive outcomes in occupational health settings reveals that hazardous occupational health settings have negative effects on menstrual, ovulatory, and hormonal patterns, with consequences on the fertility of couples and fecundity of women; pregnancy outcomes, such as increased risk of fetal loss, prematurity, low birth weight, congenital defects, and disease in the offspring; and infection-related infertility and infant mortality aggravated by exposure to chemical and physical pollutants.

Although not probably of immediate policy or program importance, many research studies help shape people's (including policymakers' and advocates') understanding of different aspects of the reproductive health issues and are, thus, valuable in that respect. Examples of these are the research and publications on women's reproductive health and rights of the Center for Women's Studies of the University of the Philippines. From 2000 to 2002, The Ford Foundation sponsored several research and publications on women's reproductive health and rights coordinated by the center.⁹ One study examined the construction of gender and reproductive roles across two generations in a rural community. It stressed the need to formulate sexuality and contraceptive education programs in the context of gender identities and roles, with masculine and feminine roles redefined so that marital and family relations would be characterized not only by sanctity, harmony, and respect, but also by equity and equality between women and men across generations. Three studies explored gender relations and reproductive health topics: one on marital separation, another on traditional fertility control practices of indigenous peoples of Panay Island, and a third on date rape and sexual aggression in dating situations.

⁹In 1995, the center undertook a three-year women's health research consortium, in partnership with two other academic research centers and six women NGOs. Funded by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the project provided information and methodology for understanding and addressing women's concerns. The studies revealed that despite the unwillingness of women to exercise their rights in the reproductive process, a conception of reproductive rights dominates their thinking about their sexuality and roles in society. They also noted that awareness of fertility regulating technologies (FRTs) is high but a free and informed choice is not a reality for women due to inadequate information, lack of services, and gender domination. Women have limited power to refuse sexual relations, as they are aware that violence is a likely result of such negotiations. The studies concluded that gender does matter and an active participation of men in fertility regulation should be promoted and biomedical research expanded into men-friendly FRT.

ACCESS TO AND UTILIZATION OF BASIC SERVICES

Good health, proper nutrition, and adequate education are goals that may be beyond the reach of 4.3 million Filipino families, or 26.5 million Filipinos, whose family incomes fall below the income poverty line (NSCB 2003a). To pull themselves out of poverty, they need to increase their income, on the average, by 30 percent of the poverty threshold. The stress on income in traditional poverty discourse has led to income-focused programs involving extension of credit or capital, developing livelihood skills, and the like (see Chapter 2).

Minimum Basic Needs

Poverty is more than just income deprivation. It is multidimensional, requiring an approach that captures this. The government has chosen the minimum basic needs (MBN) approach, which takes into account survival (biophysical requirements), security (protection from physical harm), and empowerment (facilitation of the attainment of other needs; NSO 2003d). Using MBN indicators, it is evident that, compared to 1998, access of families to basic survival and enabling requirements has improved, but not in some of the security-related needs (Table 3.9). This seems to be particularly true for access to jobs. The security situation appears worse when 2002 is viewed relative to 1999, but overall, more Filipino families in 2002 than in 1999 perceived no change in their lives during the past 12 months (54 percent versus 52 percent in 1999; NSO 2003i) or that they were better off than before (15 percent versus 14 percent in 1999), while fewer thought they were worse off (31 percent versus 34 percent in 1999).¹⁰

Efforts to Reduce Poverty

KALAHI-CIDSS

In 2001, the Macapagal-Arroyo presidency launched the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) *Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan* (KALAHI) as a platform for an accelerated, focused, and systematic anti-poverty strategy. The program was designed after consultations with the poor sectors. For 2002, the KALAHI program financed projects that would address the unmet minimum basic needs of the poor in 367 barangays in the lowest-income (fifth- and sixth-class) municipalities across the country. The projects principally involved infrastructure, electrification, shelter assistance, livelihood, and other basic service programs of various agencies. Moreover, KALAHI special projects were implemented, as follows (NAPC 2004):

- Rural projects were supported by the President's Social Fund (PSF) to a total of PhP40 million, including potable water projects, farm-to-market roads, day care centers, and livelihood projects. These covered 71 barangays in 34 municipalities, and benefited 500 to 6,000 persons per project, or about 120,000 rural poor individuals.
- Urban projects for the provision of basic and human development services, as well as support for land and housing security for urban poor families, were financed by a PhP20 million release from the PSF to eight cities and urban centers.

¹⁰Some areas, especially those far from urban centers, are in fact in a worse condition. Reports about these areas vary, however. The agrarian reform department, for instance, claims that 95 percent of households belonging to agrarian reform communities (ARCs) have access to safe and potable water. In contrast, a recent survey by the Philippine Peasant Institute of 246 rural women in the rice and corn sectors showed that only 29 percent of rural households had access to water in their homes, and 34 percent, to communal water sources. Rural women and young girls sometimes have to walk a long way (in a MODE case study, 30 to 45 minutes) to fetch water.

Table 3.9. Selected indicators of access to minimum basic needs (in percent of families)

Item	1998	1999	2002	Difference 1999-2002
Total families (in thousand)	14,371	14,746	15,925	-
Survival				
Access to safe drinking water	78.1	81.4	80.0	-1.4
With sanitary toilet	80.4	85.8	86.1	0.3
With electricity	72.3	73.3	79.0	5.7
Security				
With roof made of strong materials	62.2	70.5	72.2	1.7
With outer walls made of strong materials	55.9	68.1	62.1	-6.0
With own house and lot	68.3	71.5	66.5	-5.0
Own house and lot through government program	6.3	5.9	5.1	-0.8
Own land other than residence	18.3	21.4	21.5	0.1
Acquired land other than residence through CARP	8.8	9.1	11.0	1.9
With family head who is gainfully employed	86.1	66.2	81.2	19.9
With member aged 18 years or over who is gainfully employed	95.1	95.0	93.5	-1.5
Enabling				
With children aged 6 to 12 years who are in elementary	91.1	91.6	91.2	-0.4
With children aged 13 to 16 years who are in high school	69.9	71.5	77.0	5.5
With member involved in at least one legitimate people's organization	15.9	19.1	26.9	7.8
With working children aged 5 to 17 years	15.2	14.7	12.8	-1.9

Source: Annual Poverty Indicators Survey, or APIS (NSO 2003d).

- Local initiative projects in rural and urban areas received an initial release of PhP4 million in December 2002 for strengthening local, multisector initiatives for asset reform, human development services, and livelihood and employment opportunities.
- Resettlement sites received a total of PhP50 million from the PSF to improve basic services and implement livelihood support projects, particularly in six underdeveloped settlement sites in Metro Manila and Regions III and IV.
- Conflict areas received PhP40 million to fund quick response to human and basic services needs, particularly in at least 60 very remote areas and communities under armed conflict.

In January 2003, the KALAHÍ was joined by the comprehensive and integrated delivery of social services (CIDSS) approach that was adopted by government in the late 1990s. KALAHÍ-CIDSS is "a community-driven development project where decision-making resides in the community . . . Implementation and management of community projects also reside in the community and is based on values of good governance and sustainability" (DSWD 2004).

The social welfare department generally provided the guidelines for the implementation of the CIDSS project, which seeks to address the minimum basic needs of the disadvantaged families and communities in all the fifth- and sixth-class municipalities and in urban poor communities to enable them to access social services. CIDSS uses the four-pronged approach of community organizing, total family development, convergence, and focused targeting. It also aims to alleviate poverty through an integrated delivery of social services and to develop the capabilities of families for undertaking productive activities. From 1994 to 1998, the department claimed that the top 10

unmet minimum basic needs were reduced by 68 percent, on the average. As of December 2000, the program had been implemented in 3,250 barangays of 1,084 municipalities, and in 100 urban poor communities, benefiting 233,128 families. In

The multipronged anti-poverty program of the government has benefited countless of women, men, and children, although it cannot be ascertained how many women and girl children have indeed gained from them.

2001, the cumulative total of families served rose to 358,608. Under the KALAH I program, the anti-poverty program was said to have covered a total of 29,338 family beneficiaries in 2002.

Since January 2003, KALAH I-CIDSS has reportedly reached a total of 1,503 poor barangays in 67 municipalities, or 35 percent of target barangays and 38 percent of target municipalities in only 17 percent of the project's total life. It also claims to have involved more than the targeted 80 percent of the total barangay population, even reaching 98 percent in some areas. Community volunteers who had been chosen by the barangays designed the barangay action plan, which was subsequently presented to the barangay assembly for validation. To date, KALAH I-CIDSS has funded community development projects of 114 of the 201 barangays in Phase I; the local community counterpart reportedly accounted for 37 percent of the total project cost. As of 15 November 2003, the KALAH I-CIDSS funds had purportedly gone to water projects (47 percent), road projects (24 percent), school classrooms (7 percent), multipurpose buildings (5 percent), day care centers (4 percent), health centers (3 percent), and others.

All these projects benefit women, men, and children, although it cannot be easily ascertained how many women and girl children they have indeed assisted. However, hundreds of thousands of women have profited from the government's microfinance program. Designed to benefit women living in poverty, the program was launched by the President during her State of the Nation Address in 2001, where she committed to providing 300,000 new women borrowers with microfinance every year for three years. Implemented by the People's Credit and Finance Corporation and microfinance institutions, the program reportedly benefited about 1.02 million women between July 2001 and the end of 2003 (see Chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion on the PCFC program).¹¹ NCRFW and the NAPC Women Sector are currently undertaking a gender and credit study to ascertain the gender impacts of microfinance.

Other Social Welfare Programs

To help women in their care economy activities, the social welfare department has been expanding its day care center program. In a department order (No. 11, series of 2000), the department set forth the minimum standards and guidelines to ensure quality of the delivery of day care services through the accreditation of day care workers and centers. Another initiative seeks to meet the demand for care of autistic children by testing out strategies for their integration into the regular day care services program. Recently, the department also launched its Integrated Day Care Center Services for Senior Citizens and Children, which could serve as the venue for testing out and demonstrating strategies for programs and projects for the young and old. Children attending the regular day care sessions have older persons as resource persons to talk about values. A related program for the elderly, "Neighborhood Support Services for Older Persons," recognizes the forces affecting the capacity of families to support their older members. It builds the capabilities of potential caregivers within the family and the community, thus developing options for burden sharing. This project is initially being pilot-tested in three regions, including the National Capital Region (NCR).

¹¹By January 2004, the total microfinance beneficiaries had reportedly numbered 1.032 million.

Another project of the social welfare department, Sagip Kalinga, aims to address the problem of increasing mendicancy in metropolitan areas by taking away vagrants, mendicants, children, and adults who frequent and have taken shelter on the street from the hazards of street life, and providing them with the appropriate social care. An interagency task force has been constituted to undertake the campaign.

Aside from people living in poverty, the government responds to the needs of persons with disabilities. So far, it has implemented a number of programs, such as educational services and material support from the education department; and from the social welfare department, a community-based project for children and out-of-school youth that actively involves family members in the rehabilitation process of children with disabilities. The latter also has an ongoing project that provides women with disabilities with skills training in sewing, rattan and toy crafts, food processing, loom weaving, ceramics, and home aide service. It also enhances women's understanding and practice of maternal and personal care, community participation, livelihood, and social communication skills. From 1995 to 1999, it served a total of 166,293 disadvantaged women nationwide. Of the women graduates, some 136,262 (or 81 percent) were absorbed by the labor force either through self- or open employment, sheltered workshop or community manufacturing, or subcontract jobs. Meanwhile, the National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons (NCWDP), with the trade and industry department, conducted skills training programs on food processing and craft making in three cities for disabled women and for parents or guardians of disabled persons.

Poverty should be viewed in the context of cyclical and erratic economic growth and high population growth rate, and as a state that people inherit. Breaking the cycle of poverty is, thus, of paramount importance.

The government's poverty reduction program should be viewed in the context of cyclical and erratic economic growth and high population growth rate. One should note that poverty in the Philippines, probably as in many other places, is something people inherit. With occasional cases of upward mobility, the children of the poor who are malnourished and drop out of school before completing elementary education would probably be like their parents, if not worse off, unless they could move to the city, find a job there (most likely in the informal sector), or work overseas (Templo 2003). And when they become OFWs, a host of family and social problems could arise from children growing up unsupervised by one or both parents, consumerism, and marital breakups. Working overseas, however, is open only to those that can meet the cost of placement and initial departure. Another important feature of poverty is the fact that the effects of crises that spawn poverty are likely to be gender-differentiated (Illo 1999; Lim 2000; Illo and Pineda Ofreneo 2002). Since crises generally involve government budget cuts, the burdens women carry range from providing goods and services that would otherwise be provided by the state (entailing longer hours at work than at home and elsewhere), to going into other microenterprises (often associated with going into debt) and seeing their children go hungry and uneducated.

SUPPORT AND JUSTICE FOR VAWC SURVIVORS

To many women, the question of security is more than just sturdy houses, access to land, and jobs. Rather, it is a question of freedom from fear and abuse, be it physical, psychological, or verbal; or committed by strangers, co-workers, acquaintances, family members, or intimate partners. Since sexual harassment in the workplace and in educational and training situations has been discussed in Chapter 2, this section deals with domestic violence and other gender-based crimes against women, trafficking, prostitution, and violence in areas under armed conflict.

Based on the international human rights document, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAW), violence against women is “any act of gender-based violence that result, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.” Meanwhile, violence against children refers to the “commission of all forms of abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation, violence and discrimination and all other conditions prejudicial to their development.” Most recent violence against women legislation in the Philippines encompasses violence committed against their children, too, as will be discussed in subsequent subsections.

Reported Domestic Violence, Rape, and Other VAW Crimes

Violence against women persists, with the number of reported crimes rising between 2000 and 2002 before declining to 7,805 in 2003 (Table 3.10). The 2003 figure for VAW cases is 6 percent lower than that in 2000 and 13 percent lower than that in 2002. While probably the most gruesome, rape constitutes less than 13 percent of cases reported to the police. The more common remains to be physical abuse and wife battering (Table 3.10).¹²

Table 3.10. Distribution of VAW cases reported to the police (in percent)

Item	2000	2001	2002	2003	Percent change 2000-03
Physical injuries/wife battering	58	62	61	60	-6.1
Rape	14	11	12	14	-6.8
Incestuous rape	3	2	1	1	-70.2
Acts of lasciviousness	9	8	9	9	-1.9
Others	16	17	17	16	-4.0
Total reported VAW cases	7,837	9,132	8,284	7,204	-8.1
Total reported gender-related crimes against women	7,895	9,903	9,097	7,805	-0.7

Source: Women’s and Children’s Concerns Desk, Directorate for Police Community Relations, Philippine National Police.

Meanwhile, cases of violence against children numbered 7,303 in 2003, which is 15 percent less than those in 2000 and 8 percent lower than those in 2002. Of these cases, 46 percent were victims of rape, including incestuous rape (4 percent); 27 percent involved physical abuse, and 15 percent were acts of lasciviousness.¹³ In 2002, for which data are available, three of six child victims were 12 to 17 years old; 25 percent were 6 to 11 years old. As with the women victims of violence, about half of the perpetrators of crimes against children were not related to the victims. In fact, many (31 percent) were total strangers to the child. Husbands accounted for 28 percent of VAW crimes, while close male relatives were responsible for 13 percent of the reported crimes of violence against children (NSCB 2003a).

¹²Reports, however, are conflicting, particularly those referring to rape. Data from the Women’s and Children’s Concerns Desk of the Philippine National Police (PNP) indicate a decline of 5 percent between 2001 and 2002, while NSCB (2003d), also citing police reports, notes a 2 percent increase for the same period.

¹³Based on the “Annual and Quarterly Comparative Statistics on Crimes Against Children” table provided by the PNP Women’s and Children’s Concerns Desk to NCRFW in March 2004.

Key Government VAW-related Actions

After the Fourth UN World Conference on Women in 1995, particularly in recent years, there have been initiatives to synchronize and systematize all efforts to eliminate violence against women and children (VAWC), committing the three branches of government (executive, legislative, and judiciary) to intensify collaboration to holistically address this. The executive branch, through the social welfare, health, and justice departments and the local government units, strengthened or established various mechanisms to address violence against women and children. Various VAW bills were filed in Congress, and several – reestablishment of family courts, anti-trafficking and anti-VAWC laws, among them – were subsequently enacted into law as a result of multisector lobbying efforts. The Supreme Court, for its part, promulgated new Court rules and procedures that would strengthen enforcement of the laws. Predating these efforts, however, were NGO programs, some of which were later adopted by the government. Many of the NGO and government programs are still in place, and discussed in a later section of this chapter.

Legislation

Efforts to pass laws against domestic violence and trafficking in women were initiated in 1994 by the first sector representative of women in Congress, who formed a technical working group headed by NCRFW and the Commission on

Filipino Overseas, with experts from NGOs and the justice, social welfare, and interior and local government departments. In the late 1990s, the government adopted laws penalizing violence against women, such as sexual harassment (RA 7877), rape and sexual assault (RA 8353, or the Anti-Rape Law),¹⁴ reestablishing family courts (RA 8369, or the Family Courts Act), and establishing crisis centers nationwide and providing assistance and protection to rape victims and survivors (RA 8505, or the Rape Victims Assistance Act). In May 2003, Congress passed RA 9208, otherwise known as the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 (see Box 3.1 for its main features). In January 2004, the Bicameral Conference Committee ratified the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act, which has as its forerunner the Family Courts Act.¹⁵ It is the consolidated version of the legislative initiatives on domestic violence and anti-abuse of women in intimate relationships. The main provisions of the Act are found in Box 3.2.

Various anti-VAW laws have been enacted since the mid-1990s. The most recent are the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 and Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004. The challenge lies in monitoring the enforcement of these laws.

A study of the two rape-related laws by the Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development Foundation found that the lack of familial, institutional, or societal support for the rape victim is a major drawback in the reporting of rape (Santos, Llarinas-Angeles, and Ador 2001). It asserts that early gains can be lost if existing judicial doctrines are allowed to apply and if court procedures that force rape victims to relive the crime when giving testimony are not changed.

¹⁴Pursuant to RA 8505, Department of Justice Memorandum No. 9, series of 1998, on the Guidelines on the Handling of Rape Cases Involving Adult Victims, was adopted. The policy ensures, among others, the fair and respectful treatment of the adult rape victim, assignment of a woman investigator during the preliminary inquest, prevention of admission of evidence of the victim's past sexual conduct or reputation unless such evidence is material and relevant to the case, and banning of the public during the conduct of the preliminary investigation.

¹⁵The Anti-Violence against Women and Their Children Act was signed into law (RA 9262) by the President during the 8 March 2004 celebration of the International Women's Day.

Box 3.1. Main Features of the Anti-Trafficking Act 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, or removal or sale of organs regardless of 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” [emphasis supplied], with the criminal 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 PhP5 million) are reserved for any person found guilty if the trafficked person was a child, or the person trafficked died or incurred HIV/AIDS, or the offender was related to the victim or a member of the law enforcement units of the government. Fines are to be placed in a Trust Fund that will cover the cost of implementing the mandatory programs under the law and other measures to prevent trafficking in persons and to rehabilitate and reintegrate victims into mainstream society.
- Commits the state to providing 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 to trafficked persons, recognizing that they are 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 the order made by the trafficker.
- Creates the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) composed of the secretaries of DOJ and DSWD as chair and co-chair, respectively, and will have as members the heads of NCRFW, DFA, DOLE, POEA, BID, and PNP, and three representatives from NGOs. The council is mandated to oversee the strict implementation and monitoring of the law and its implementing rules and regulations.

Upgrading judicial procedures

In 2000, the Supreme Court initiated reforms in judicial doctrines and court procedures. It was guided by *The Action Program for Judicial Reform, 2001-2006* (SC 2001), more popularly known as the “Davide Watch,” which provides a system for the administration of justice geared toward achieving the goal of delivering fair, impartial, inexpensive, and swift justice on family matters, including domestic violence.

Guided by The Action Program for Judicial Reform, 2001-2006, the Supreme Court has begun to institute new court rules on domestic violence, examination of a child witness, and juveniles in conflict with the law. The Court has also embarked on mainstreaming GAD in the judiciary. Early effects of such a campaign have already been noted.

After the passage of RA 8369 in 1997, reestablishing family courts, the Supreme Court created the Committee on the Revision of Court Proceedings, which sought to harmonize the court rules and procedures with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the UN Minimum Standards Rules for the Administration of Justice (Beijing Rules), and adopted the new principle of “restorative justice” (Sections 5, 10, and 13, Article II, 1987 *Philippine Constitution*).

“Restorative justice” is a process of resolving conflicts with the maximum involvement of the victim, the offender, and the community. It seeks to obtain reparation for the victim, and reconciliation (restoration) of the offender, the offended, and the community. It also enhances

Box 3.2. Main Features of the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004

- Defines violence against women and their children as “any act or a series of acts committed by any person against a woman who is his wife, former wife, or against a woman with whom the person has or had a sexual or dating relationship, or with whom he has a common child, or against her child whether legitimate or illegitimate, within or without the family a bond, which result in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering, or economic abuse including threats of such acts, battery, assault, coercion, harassment or arbitrary deprivation of liberty.”
- Defines children as those below 18 years of age or older but are incapable of taking care of themselves, as defined by RA 7610, and includes the biological children of the victim and other children under her care.
- Criminalizes violence against women and children, and as a public crime, perpetrators will be meted 6 months to 12 years of imprisonment and a penalty of up to PhP100,000.
- Recognizes the “battered woman syndrome” (BWS), a scientifically defined pattern of psychological and behavioral symptoms found in women living in battering relationship as a result of cumulative abuse, as a defense.
- Reiterates that if the victim-survivor is found by the courts to be suffering from BWS, she does not incur any criminal and civil liability notwithstanding the absence of any of the elements for justifying circumstances of self-defense under the Revised Penal Code.
- Provides a wide range of assistance, including the provision of “protection orders,” to stop the violence and prevent the recurrence of future violence. Under the law, women as well as their children can seek redress and protection order.
- Provides for the recognition of violence against women or “battering” as a public health issue. Under the law, women who have suffered violence may claim emergency paid leave from their employers.
- Instructs concerned line agencies to provide mandatory services to women and children victims of violence, from counseling to shelter and legal assistance.
- Entitles the woman survivor to the custody of her child or children, and emphasizes that the custody of minor children should be given to the woman even if the victim is suffering from BWS.
- Mandates the respect for the privacy of the victim.
- Mandates the creation of the Inter-Agency Council on VAWC to formulate programs and projects to eliminate violence against women, develop capability programs for the frontline people of the relevant agencies to become more sensitive to the needs of their clients, and monitor VAW -related initiatives.

public safety by involving the people in prevention strategies (Shurpe 1998; van Ness and Heetderks 2001; Zehr 2003).

The new rules on domestic violence include the following. To facilitate the filing of charges, courts shall have ready-made forms so that any victim can seek redress from the courts by filling out the complaint form without the need for a counsel, anytime of the day, as the courts are required to be open on a 24-hour basis. Being open round-the-clock allows the courts to respond more effectively to acts of domestic violence that often happen at night. On the basis of sworn statements, the victim can be issued an emergency protection order, which is enforceable anywhere in the country. The court may grant her custody of the children and support that may be deducted from the offender’s salary, and may order the offender against staying in the conjugal home to prevent further violence. The new rules further provide that only trained judges may sit in family courts.

Other new rules pertain to the examination of a child witness and the rule on juveniles in conflict with the law. The rule on the examination of a child witness, which took effect on 15 December 2000, aims to create an environment that will allow children to give reliable and complete evidence and minimize their trauma, and to promote maximum accommodation of

child witnesses. It also authorizes the judge to appoint a guardian *ad litem*, an interpreter, a facilitator, and a support person for the child during trial. Likewise, it makes use of a live-linked television testimony or the use of screens, devices, one-way mirrors, and others, if there is a likelihood that the child will suffer trauma from testifying in the presence of the accused. The Ateneo Human Rights Center, with the assistance of UNICEF and Assisi Development Foundation, is conducting awareness-raising seminars on Court-Appointed Special Advocates/Guardian *Ad Litem* (CASAGAL) in the various judicial regions.

Meanwhile, the rule on juveniles in conflict with the law, which took effect on 15 April 2002, incorporates provisions found in the CRC, the Beijing Rules, and other UN Standards, such as releases on recognizance, diversion proceedings, and the right of the juvenile to be protected, including exclusion of the media. The Supreme Court Rules prohibit branding or labeling of the juvenile as a young criminal, juvenile delinquent, prostitute, vagrant, or any derogatory name. The Court has also issued Administrative Order No. 04-2002, dated 15 February 2002, directing trial judges to hold regular dialogues with appropriate government officials and to visit jails to check the welfare of prisoners, especially minor detainees. Local governments are required to establish separate youth detention homes.

There have also been efforts to raise the awareness of the public and the pillars of the justice system. The Philippine Judicial Academy has conducted gender awareness seminars for prosecutors and judges (1999); gender-sensitivity program for the five pillars of the criminal justice system (2000); eight multisector seminars on juvenile and domestic relations (September 2000 to October 2001); and judicial workshop on “Realizing Economic, Social and Cultural Rights” (12-14 September 2001). Partners included the UP Institute of Judicial Administration, the NGO Harnessing Self-Reliant Initiatives and Knowledge (HASIK), UNICEF, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and The Ford Foundation. In 2003, the Supreme Court chief justice created the Committee for a Gender-Responsive Judiciary (CGRJ) that would plan and lead the campaign to enable the judiciary to better address women’s concerns and gender issues (see Chapter 4 for details). An early result of these efforts is reflected in the Supreme Court’s ruling on the Genosa case, which admitted the “battered wife syndrome” as mitigating circumstance (not as defense), not only overturning the death sentence but setting the accused free, as she has served the minimum sentence meted out in her case (see Box 3.3 for excerpts of the Supreme Court’s decision).

Executive-branch initiatives

At the National Socio-Economic Summit in 2001, the executive and legislative branches of government jointly committed to enact a law relating to domestic violence, as well as an anti-trafficking in women law, which has since been passed. The President tasked NCRFW to strengthen its oversight function on violence against women. In this connection, NCRFW created the VAW Coordinating Committee (VAWCC), composed of 15 government agencies with VAW-related mandates, which committed themselves to systematizing and synchronizing their efforts to eliminate violence against women and their

The government campaign to eliminate violence against women follows an integrated approach, whereby different stakeholders (government, private sector, and civil society) act collectively, collaborating, coordinating, and networking with each other.

Box 3.3. Excerpts from the Supreme Court Ruling on the Genosa Case

. . . Admitting she killed her husband, appellant anchors her prayer for acquittal on a novel theory – the “battered woman syndrome” (BWS), which allegedly constitutes self-defense. Under the proven facts, however, she is not entitled to complete exoneration because there was no unlawful aggression – no immediate and unexpected attack on her by her batterer -husband at the time she shot him . . .

. . . Absent unlawful aggression, there can be no self -defense, complete or incomplete. But all is not lost. **The severe beatings repeatedly inflicted on appellant constituted a form of cumulative provocation that broke down her psychological resistance and self -control. This “psychological paralysis” she suffered diminished her willpower, thereby entitling her to the mitigating factor under paragraphs 9 and 10 of Article 13 of the Revised Penal Code . . . [emphasis supplied]**

. . . In addition, appellant should also be credited with the extenuating circumstances of having acted upon an impulse so powerful as to have naturally produced passion and obfuscation. The acute battering she suffered that fatal night in the hands of her batterer -spouse, in spite of the fact that she was eight months pregnant with their child, overwhelmed her and put her in the aforesaid emotional and mental state, which overcame her reason and impelled her to vindicate her life and her unborn child’s . . .

. . . Considering the presence of these two mitigating circumstances arising from BWS, as well as the benefits and the indeterminate Sentence Law, she may now apply for and be released from custody on parole, because she has already served the minimum period of her penalty while under detention during the pendency of this case . . .

. . . While new in Philippine jurisprudence, the concept [battered woman syndrome] has been recognized in foreign jurisdictions as a form of self -defense or, at the least, incomplete self -defense. By appreciating evidence that a victim or defendant is afflicted with the syndrome, foreign courts convey their understanding of the justifiably fearful state of mind of a person who has been cyclically abused and controlled over a period of time . . .

services and assistance to VAW victims and survivors.¹⁶ Agency commitments have been translated into programs and projects contained in the Memorandum of Agreement signed in March 2003. These commitments are to be monitored and assessed using a set of performance indicators, particularly: (i) establishment of performance standards for key VAW services, such as investigation, medical, legal, and judicial; (ii) standardization of documentation format for VAW cases; (iii) development of GAD-VAW messages for training, education and information campaign, and basic education curriculum; and (iv) capacity building of the coordinating committee.

One of the VAWCC projects seeks to gather data and systematize generation of data on violence against women and domestic violence. The project to generate statistics on violence against women and children sets in place an integrated reporting and monitoring system that will track the number and status of cases reported to and handled by the various government agencies. The implementation of the NSCB survey design to generate primary data on the national incidence of violence against women and children is in order, along with the administrative recordkeeping system. However, coordination with other research institutions is needed in order to develop a more comprehensive and in-depth database on violence against women and children.

Government programs to address VAW

As apparent in the 2001 National Socio-Economic Summit, the government views violence against women as a multidimensional issue that requires a multipronged strategy and

¹⁶The 15 agencies are the Departments of Education, Interior and Local Government, Health, National Defense, Social Welfare and Development, and Justice; and the Civil Service Commission, Commission on Human Rights, Philippine National Police, National Bureau of Investigation, National Police Commission, Philippine Information Agency, National Statistical Coordination Board, Board of Jail Management and Penology, and NCRFW.

multisector and interagency cooperation. This led it to employ an integrated approach to eliminate violence against women, wherein all the critical stakeholders (government, private sector, and civil society) would act collectively – through collaboration, coordination, and effective networking – to address the issues related to the needs of VAW survivors and offenders, the nature and causes of violence against women, and those associated with changing societal values. The integrated approach is evident in the content and the process being observed to finalize the Integrated National Action Plan to Eliminate VAW (NAP-EVAW). The plan was drafted by the VAWCC, but consultations with other stakeholders, such as the judiciary, legislative branch, and NGOs, are ongoing.

The multipronged response to violence against women involves the provision of services (health, social welfare, legal, and police protection), development of capacities and institutions to address the problem, advocacy and media campaigns, and monitoring and data generation. The key VAW programs of the government are as follows.

- Social welfare. The social welfare department is the government agency mandated to help VAWC victims, although a number of NGOs also provide crucial assistance to abused women and children. Community-based and center-based programs handled about 77 percent of the cases of women in especially difficult circumstances (WEDC) in 2000 and 67 percent in 2001; the rest went through the Women’s Help Desk, which operates a hotline and provides counseling services and temporary shelter (Table 3.11). Since 2000, the annual WEDC caseload of community and center facilities has ranged from 4,000 to 5,800. In 2000, 6 of 10 women assisted were sexually abused (14 percent) or victims of physical violence (46 percent). The figure rose to 67 percent in 2001, before reportedly dropping to 35 percent in 2002 and 42 percent in 2003. These latter figures, however, are suspect, considering that more than half of the cases reported have not been properly classified and are, instead, merely lumped under “others.” Apart from adult women, the department assists children in especially difficult situations as well as disadvantaged youth. Interestingly, girls account for 72 percent of the child clients, but only 19 percent of the youth.

The social welfare department’s Rehabilitation Project for Women in Especially Difficult Circumstances provides temporary care and rehabilitation to women victims of involuntary or forced prostitution, illegal recruitment, and battery and sexual abuse, as well as women survivors of armed conflict and detention. Homes called “The HAVEN,” of which 13 operate nationwide, offer residential care, including psychological services; referrals for legal, psychiatric, and other services necessary for the early recovery of the victims; and training in livelihood skills.

The department also runs a Crisis Intervention Unit in all 15 regions of the country. The unit has a 24-hour hotline operation that renders counseling services through the telephone, carries out rescue operation, refers the victims to appropriate agencies, and gives other types of support. Girl child survivors of violence, including incest, can find shelter in any of the 12 homes for girl children, 12 Reception and Study Centers for Children, and 4 *Lingap* (care) Centers operating throughout the country. These centers provide a complete range of services, from case diagnosis and management, to organized nonformal activities for individual and

The multipronged strategy of government is evident in the range of services and programs it offers: social welfare, health, protection, capacity building, and advocacy. Performance indicators have been identified and an integrated reporting and monitoring system is being set up to assess the VAW efforts of agencies, which can strengthen the weakest element of government programs: monitoring.

Table 3.11. Women in especially difficult circumstances assisted by community-based and center-based programs of the social welfare department, by clientele type

Clientele type	2000		2001		2002		2003	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Physically abused/ maltreated/battered	2,661	46.1	2,090	51.1	1,417	25.3	1,846	32.9
Sexually abused	789	13.7	663	16.2	519	9.2	493	8.8
Victims of trafficking	715	12.4	357	8.7	10	0.2	43	0.8
Victims of illegal recruitment	113	2.0	177	4.3	99	1.8	102	1.8
Victims of involuntary prostitution	157	2.7	146	3.6	151	2.7	91	1.6
Victims of armed conflict	42	0.7	24	0.6	14	0.2	53	0.9
Women in detention	90	1.6	54	1.3	31	0.5	59	1.0
Others	1,203	20.8	582	14.2	3,367	60.0	2,928	52.1
Total	5,770	100.0	4,093	100.0	5,608	100.0	5,615	100.0

Source: Department of Social Welfare and Development.

group-oriented treatment and rehabilitation. There is likewise formal schooling as well as vocational and skills training. Health and psychological or psychiatric services, along with recreational sports and other sociocultural activities, complete the package.

A special project of the department is the Assistance to Lolas (grandmothers) in Crisis Situation, which seeks to rebuild the self-esteem of former comfort women through psychological interventions, and to meet their basic needs through financial assistance. In 2002, local governments took over the project.

- **Health.** The health department institutionalized the Women and Children Protection Program in all its 44 hospitals nationwide. Now called the Women and Children Protection Unit (WCPU), each unit is founded on a 24-hour quick-response approach that delivers a personalized and comprehensive health care to survivors. In collaboration with the Children Protection Unit and Women's Desk of the UP-Philippine General Hospital, the health department developed a training program for WCPU doctors to respond with competence and sensitivity to the needs of women and children survivors of violence. The training program further enables doctors to do forensic work so they can provide evidence and stand as expert witnesses in court.
- **Protection.** The various agencies involved in law enforcement have their own units to deal with violence against women and children and incest. At the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), the Violence against Women and Children Division investigates cases and provides protective services, counseling, medical examination and assistance, and proper custody to child victims of molestation or rape, and to victims of drug abuse. At the justice department, the Task Force on Child Protection investigates, prosecutes, and litigates cases of child abuse and exploitation.

All police stations now have women and children protection desks, as mandated by RA 8551, or the Philippine National Police (PNP) Reform Act. Staffed mainly by women police officers, these units receive complaints by victim-survivors. As of late 2001, the PNP had set up 1,612 women and children's desks in police precincts all over the country, staffed by 2,138 female and 405 male personnel. The PNP recently designed a national law enforcement framework to guide its campaign to reduce, if not totally

eliminate, the victimization of women and children arising from violence, abuse, and exploitation through trafficking, prostitution, and pornography, among other crimes. The women and children protection desks and other operating units are currently implementing the five-year plan of action. The desks are being complemented by a one-stop PNP Women's Crisis and Child Protection Center based in Camp Crame, Davao City, and Legazpi City. Likewise, the PNP National Capital Region has activated a regional office for the protection of women and children (ROPWAC) to respond to the commercial exploitation of women and children. The PNP also maintains a website (www.sagipbata.com) to inform the public about reported cases of missing children who may have fallen victim to white slavery, trafficking, pornography, and the like.

- Capacity building. There have been various interventions oriented toward building the capacity of those with the duty to address this human rights issue.¹⁷ The interior and local government department helped set up community-based women's desks in all 19 municipalities and one city (San Fernando City) of La Union Province (see subsection on local government action for details). The PNP has also been raising the awareness and enhancing the capacities of police personnel as duty holders dedicated to handling VAWC cases.
- Advocacy. The NCRFW, with other GAD advocates, has successfully lobbied Congress for the passage of VAW-related bills, including the recently passed anti-trafficking and anti-VAWC laws. It has also produced advocacy materials and worked with the media to raise people's awareness of the VAW issue. Meanwhile, the PNP has reportedly conducted such VAWC-prevention-oriented activities as community dialogues, seminars, and interagency collaboration. It has likewise participated in efforts to institutionalize government measures to help eliminate the victimization of women and children. It has activated, for this purpose, the Family, Juvenile and Gender and Development Division, under the Directorate for Police Community Relations. The division is tasked primarily to provide policy directions, formulate programs, and initiate projects geared toward the prevention and elimination of violence against women and children.

To strengthen the advocacy to eliminate violence against women, NCRFW has institutionalized the commemoration of the 16-day campaign against gender-based violence that begins on 25 November, the International Day to Eliminate VAW, and ends on 10 December, the International Human Rights Day. This campaign kept the pressure on for the passage of two recent major laws: the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 and the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004.

Recently, NCRFW launched the program, "Men Speak Out against VAW," which aims to strengthen collaboration with prominent and distinguished men in the bureaucracy, such as Chief Justice Hilario Davide, Jr., selected legislators, and local officials to talk to other men to stop violence against women.

¹⁷Another effort, initiated in 1993, by a group of NGOs from the coalition KALAKASAN, including the Women's Media Circle and the Women's Crisis Center (WCC), was implemented under the auspices of NCRFW, together with the health department and East Avenue Medical Center. Known as the Hospital-Assisted Crisis Intervention for Women Victims/Survivors of Violent Environments (or Project HAVEN), the project tested a government-hospital-based healing center for victims/survivors of violence against women. Part of the project output is the development of protocols for the proper handling of VAW victims/survivors in different government agencies, and of a video manual for setting up hospital-based crisis centers.

In collaboration with the University Center for Women's Studies Foundation, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and UNDP, NCRFW launched the Gender Justice Awards. The Awards hopes to raise the judges' level of awareness of the need to render gender-sensitive decisions on VAW cases. It also aims to help raise the quality of court decisions on VAW cases, inform the judges of the state obligations under CEDAW, inspire trial judges to be gender-sensitive in the way they conduct hearings and make decisions on VAW cases, and raise the level of expectations of the public from the judges.

NGO programs to address VAW

The NGO community can be credited not only for raising domestic violence as a public issue, but also for rendering services, along with church groups, long before government recognized it as so. Many NGO-community-based programs intended to assist women victims of violence have now been, or are being, replicated by national government agencies and local governments. The Women's Crisis Center (WCC) runs the oldest crisis center for VAW victims/survivors in the country. Launched in 1997 in 18 cities and municipalities nationwide, its National Family Violence Prevention Program continues to offer a community-based strategy of preparing family members to protect themselves against violence and manage peaceful resolution of conflict within the context of family relations. It aims to organize and mobilize multiagency action groups for the prevention of family violence from the regional up to the barangay level. Other programs include COMBAT-VAW (Community-based Approach to Violence against Women), which was pioneered by the Women's Legal Bureau and HASIK, and which the local government of Quezon City has adopted; and Lihok Pilipina's Bantay Banay (Family Watch), which became the backbone of Cebu's anti-domestic violence program.

SALIGAN (Sentro ng Alternatibong Lingap Panlegal), Women's Legal Bureau, and Womenlead assist women survivors of violence by contributing to the pool of lawyers who render legal services to VAWC advocates. The Center for Legislative Development targets local legislators, especially women, helping them pass ordinances in the absence of a national law, while the Samasamang Inisyatiba ng Kababaihan sa Pagbabago ng Batas at Lipunan (SIBOL), an alliance of women's groups and NGOs, continues to actively push for legislation. The Bacolod-based DAWN (Development through Active Women Networking) Foundation has established community-based quick response teams (QRTs) to address VAW cases in Bacolod and two other cities in Negros Occidental.

The accomplishments associated with violence against women from 2001 to 2003 could trace their roots to initiatives in the 1990s. Moreover, predating many of the government efforts were NGO programs, some of which were later adopted by national government agencies or local governments. Many of the NGO programs are still in place.

Since 1991, KALAKASAN (Kababaihan Laban sa Karahasan) has maintained its multimedia campaign against domestic violence, "Tigil Bugbog," and runs the oldest telephone hotline on domestic violence.¹⁸ It also offers face-to-face counseling, paralegal training, and survivor support organizing activities, as well as holds a campus tour in schools on violence against women and women's rights.

Childhope Asia-Philippines and Lunduyan (formerly Children's Laboratory Foundation) are two of a number of NGOs working on children's rights. Childhope Asia works particularly in

¹⁸Its award-winning anti-VAWC posters and television advertisements, produced together with the Women's Media Circle, has been copied by other NGOs in Asia for fund raising and awareness raising across the region.

the fields of prevention, protection, and care of sexually exploited children, while Lunduyan has, among others, trained village justice advocates in Roxas and Iloilo, helped barangays decide on three cases of child abuse in Roxas and five in Iloilo, and trained judges and prosecutors in Guimaras and Antique, and in the Visayas.

Local government actions on VAWC

In 1974, the Child and Youth Welfare Code mandated the creation of local and barangay councils for the protection of children. By 2002, such councils could be found in 3,354 barangays in the country. In 1997, the interior and local

government department strengthened these councils, including training prospective council members and barangay officials on how to conduct planning-consultation workshops. The department also helped set up community-based women's desks in San Fernando City and all 19 municipalities of La Union Province. Among its services to local government units in this area were VAWC training for the community fieldwork team, facilitation of a gender and VAWC orientation for barangay officials and women's organizations, and conduct of a planning workshop to develop strategic mechanisms to address violence against women and children.

Several notable efforts of local governments to combat violence against women include community or family watches, referral systems, and quick response teams. Ensuring that these initiatives survive the periodic local elections is a formidable challenge.

With the help of NGO partners, Cebu City, Quezon City, and Naga City have adopted programs dealing with violence against women. The Bantay Banay program of Cebu City, which was patterned after Lihok Pilipina's program, is described in Box 3.4. Naga City also has a Bantay Familia program, and its city council has a network-level mechanism for handling violence against women.

Local governments and communities can also learn from a replication guide that the Local Government Support Programme, a project funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), has published to help local governments fashion their response to violence against women. Entitled *Freedom from Fear: Establishing Quick Response Team for Violence against Women* (LGSP 2003), the guide consists of a set of manuals drawn from the QRT experiences of DAWN in Negros Occidental, but also of COMBAT-VAW, WCC, and other community-based anti-VAW efforts. In so doing, *Freedom from Fear* offers a wide array of possible tools and models that local government units can study and learn from.

Initiatives of local governments in the area of eliminating various forms of violence against women and children are generally vulnerable to changes in political leadership. Newly elected local chief executives and legislative councils are bound to have their own agenda and priorities, and addressing violence against women and children may not be one of these. The survival of VAWC programs and similar efforts to promote women's interests is a formidable challenge that will need an integrated approach, involving various sectors of society.

Trafficking in Women and Girls

The Philippines is a state party to a number of international instruments addressing trafficking and migration, including the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, and the

Women account for two of three persons trafficked in various ways. To protect them and other trafficked persons, the government, with the support of the women's movement, has succeeded in getting Congress to pass the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (RA 9208) and setting up mechanisms for ensuring its implementation.

Box 3.4. The Bantay Banay Story*

Cebu City is a place where violence against women is not just a domestic and private affair but also a community struggle. It all began 12 years ago, when a survey conducted by NGOs showed that 6 of 10 women in Cebu City were victims of battering and sexual abuse. "This is a skeleton in the closet that the government needs to address," says City Mayor Tomas Osmeña.

The situation needed multiple interventions, involving the provision of immediate shelter to battered women and their children, food, counseling, legal assistance, medical and medico-legal checkup, temporary livelihood, and support services. To meet these, the local government created the Bantay Banay (Family Watch) program. Support eventually grew with the participation of the private sector and various NGOs.

Each barangay has its own group of volunteers. The mayor describes the volunteers as "leaders, specific persons whom people could run to," and Bantay Banay as "not a paper organization, but a real and active organization." At present, Bantay Banay has more than 5,000 volunteers throughout the city.

Bantay Banay organized and trained volunteers to be gender-sensitive. It also trained them in violence against women, basic counseling, family dialogue, and laws and legal processes to address women's issues. It further formed interagency bodies to render services and coordinate with local authorities, the police, NGOs, and private sector groups.

Since 1998, around 13,000 cases have been reported to Bantay Banay. Many of these were solved through dialogues, mediation, and counseling at the barangay level. Only about 10 percent of the cases ended up in court, as women still preferred to settle matters out of court. To provide moral support to women victims, Bantay Banay members attend court hearings and bring to the attention of the media possible lapses or delays in the legal proceedings.

Bantay Banay not only places VAW issues in the mainstream; it has also earned a lot of "firsts" for Cebu City. For instance, the local government passed the first anti-violence ordinance in the country. It was also one of the first local governments to establish women's desks in city police stations and to enact a GAD Code that provides the framework for GAD programs in the city. It also formed the Cebu City Women and Family Affairs Commission, with the private sector and NGOs as members, and passed an ordinance creating the Committee on Decorum and Investigation at City Hall to look into cases of sexual harassment and abuse.

Beginning in 1998, an annual women's summit has been 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 5 percent of their annual barangay budget for GAD activities.

Bantay Banay has likewise yielded some results. Reported VAW incidents went down to only 2 of 10 women in 2002. The program is also being replicated in as many as 65 local government units all over the country.

*Shortened version of "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*. Page 12.

International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.¹⁹ On 24 October 2001, the Philippine Senate ratified the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and Its Supplementary Protocols, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Air, and Sea. This will open opportunities for local agencies to link up with other countries in a global effort to fight trafficking in narcotics and other transnational crimes, and to put a stop to the exploitation of and trafficking in women and children.

¹⁹The Philippine government also addressed the problem of irregular migration by reinforcing the integrity of the Philippine passport, continuing the fight against illegal recruitment, and monitoring departures of nationals and aliens. Such measures are implemented under the Philippine Passport Act of 1996, the Philippine Labor Code, and certain provisions of the Immigration Act of 1940. Moreover, the social welfare department continues to require a permit whenever a minor travels with anyone other than the child's parents or guardian.

These human rights commitments are salient because a number of women who leave the country ostensibly as entertainers, fiancées of foreign nationals, service workers, tourists, or undocumented workers fall victim to organized criminal syndicates. Their undocumented or illegal status has kept them outside the protection of laws. From 1992 to December 2002, the Philippine Foreign Service establishments recorded 1,084 cases of human trafficking. Women comprised 66 percent of the victims, of whom 18 percent had been forced into prostitution. The government repatriated 31 percent of the victims. In a related development, the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) recommended the blacklisting of nine foreign nationals involved in operating pen-pal clubs or recruiting Filipino women for marriage to foreigners, following the report in 2000 by the Philippine Center on Transnational Crime (PCTC) of 153 cases of illegal recruitment, illegal migration, and human trafficking.

Government action and institutional mechanisms

The alarming number of cases of trafficking in women that surfaced in the mid-1990s forced the government to take action, extending immediate help to victims while designing and implementing a national strategy to arrest human trafficking. The foreign affairs department, as well as its diplomatic and consular offices abroad, serves as the frontline government agency in combating trafficking in women and children. Created by virtue of RA 8042 (The Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995), the Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers' Affairs (OUMWA) functions as the nerve center on matters related to assistance to Filipinos in distress overseas, and coordinates the Philippine Foreign Service assistance to nationals.²⁰

In March 2000, the Philippines was involved in two important international activities: the "Global Program against Trafficking in Human Beings" of the UN Center for International Crime, in which the Philippines agreed to implement a pilot demonstration project with the aim of strengthening crime prevention strategies against trafficking, improving the effectiveness of law enforcement and criminal justice responses, and improving victim and witness protection and assistance in the country; and the "Asian Regional Initiative Against Trafficking in Persons, Particularly in Women and Children" (ARIAT), which it co-hosted with the United States and which produced a regional plan of action that identified information and databanking, cooperation with various groups (international organizations, NGOs, private sector, civil society, and media), and the use of gender mainstreaming as its strategic areas of concern. In May 2000, a presidential memorandum created an Executive Council on the Suppression of Trafficking in Persons, particularly women and children. The council coordinates activities of all concerned government agencies and bodies toward a more effective action against trafficking in persons.

²⁰Trafficking cases documented by the Philippine Foreign Service establishments are reported to OUMWA with dispatch, with the view of immediately repatriating the victim and alerting local authorities on the alleged recruiter or trafficker. Temporary refuge is given at the Filipino Workers' Resource Center, while appropriate representations are done with the employer and the labor ministries/departments of the host country. The department, meanwhile, alerts the appropriate investigative bodies on the alleged recruiter and coordinates assistance for the victim upon the latter's arrival in Manila. Victims are assisted in filing appropriate charges against the suspected trafficker or recruiter. The social welfare department is coming up with a reintegration project for trafficked victims, particularly women and children. It will provide counseling and therapy, as well as other support, to enable them to live normal lives. In January 1999, the Philippine Center on Transnational Crime was created and tasked to establish a shared central database among government agencies for information on criminals and arrests and convictions on various transnational crimes, including human trafficking.

In February 2002, the Philippine government participated in the “First Regional Conference in People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime” held in Bali, Indonesia. As a result, the President directed the foreign affairs department in March 2002 to convene immediately and regularly the Senior Government Working Group (SGWG) on Human Trafficking and People Smuggling, composed of the following member-agencies: the justice, labor, interior and local government, social welfare, and tourism departments, the immigration bureau, CFO, PCTC, NBI, and NCRFW. In preparing the national strategy to address people smuggling and human trafficking, the SGWG conducted an inventory of the current initiatives of government to address existing projects, particularly the Strategic Plan that the Coalition against Trafficking in Human Beings in the Philippines developed under the auspices of the UN Center for Transnational Crime Prevention. For the elements of the national strategy, the SGWG drew on the ARIAT Plan of Action, the existing legislative anti-trafficking proposals, and the UN Protocol on Trafficking. The draft National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking and People Smuggling was adopted by the SGWG through the signing of a covenant on 21 April 2003. A few weeks after, the President signed into law RA 9208 and SGWG was dissolved.

To strengthen the national campaign against trafficking in women and girls and to fulfill its commitment to suppress traffic in persons, the Philippine government, with the strong support of the women’s movement, succeeded in getting Congress to pass the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 (RA 9208) and President Macapagal-Arroyo to sign it into law. As evident in Box 3.1, RA 9208 is a comprehensive law that institutes policies to eliminate trafficking in persons, especially women and children, establishes the necessary institutional mechanisms for the protection and support of trafficked persons, and sets sanctions and penalties for traffickers, those who facilitate trafficking, and those who buy or engage the services of trafficked persons for prostitution. In this connection, the Inter-agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) was created in 2003, which includes relevant government agencies and three NGOs representing women, children, and migrant workers. The council is responsible for formulating an integrated and comprehensive program to prevent and suppress trafficking in persons, to address the issues attendant to it, and to reintegrate the trafficked persons. It is also tasked to conduct a massive information campaign, complement the shared government information system for migrant workers with data on cases of trafficking in persons, and initiate training programs for implementing the interventions necessary to help victims. The council is required to submit an annual report on the implementation of the law to the President and Congress.

As of the end of 2003, the council had completed the law’s implementing rules and regulations (IRR), subjected these to a series of public consultations in Cebu, Davao, and Metro Manila, and published these in two leading newspapers. It had also begun the process of finalizing the National Strategic Action Plan to Address Trafficking in Persons that was prepared by the council and other relevant agencies and NGOs during a strategic planning workshop held in November 2003, and started work on an orientation module on the law and its IRR, including core messages on trafficking. The council is likewise set to convene the interagency task forces on international and local airports, seaports, and land transportation terminals.

NGO advocacy and programs

NGOs and civil society groups have been engaged in critical advocacy for legislation, research, and delivery of services, such as shelter and predeparture training and counseling. They also set up multisector watch groups and educated the public about trafficking in human beings. All these are reflected in the activities of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women in Asia Pacific (CATWAP), which has been working on

NGOs have been involved in the campaign against trafficking in women and girls for years. In recognition of this, IACAT has among its members three representatives from NGOs. So far, only one (ECPAT) has been approved by the President.

the issue of trafficking for over a decade, both nationally and internationally. It has organized community-based programs to educate the youth and barangay officials on trafficking in young women from vulnerable communities, such as those found in Samar, Zamboanga, and Sapang Palay. The coalition undertakes regular training programs on human rights, and has developed documentation systems on violence against women, especially trafficking. It works in partnership with more than 22 NGOs all over the Philippines to monitor incidents and the magnitude of trafficking. Among its members are Womenlead and SALIGAN, which provide legal assistance and advice to trafficked victims. With its international network of organizations and partners, the coalition has helped trafficking victims who returned to the country, particularly those from Japan and Korea. It is one of three NGOs nominated to sit in the IACAT, which is tasked by law to monitor and prevent trafficking in women and girls; the other two NGOs are the Philippine Migrant Rights Watch and ECPAT Philippines. So far, however, only ECPAT has been named by the President to IACAT.

ECPAT Philippines, or End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes, is a member of a global network to protect children from commercial sexual exploitation. It has long been engaged in six activities: information drive, aimed at preventing more children from becoming victims of commercial sex exploiters; monitoring of sex exploiters and facilitation of their prosecution through casework; legal assistance and delivery of services to child victims; networking and advocacy; research and documentation; and child participation activities. Visayan Forum is another NGO involved in the anti-trafficking campaign. It operates halfway houses for trafficked women and children in the ports, with funding support from The Asia Foundation, and spearheaded the formation of the Multi-Sectoral Network Against Trafficking (MSNAT). Two other groups involved in advocacy against trafficking in human beings are Kanlungan Centre Foundation, Inc., an NGO advocate of overseas Filipinos' rights and welfare; and the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), which is implementing an anti-trafficking project.

Prostitution

Poverty and the absence of alternative sources of income are usually cited as reasons that continue to push women into prostitution. Often forgotten is the fact that sexual abuses in the family have limited women's life options for work, as many women in prostitution were victims of incestuous rape. Preying on the women are den

While the total number of prostituted women and children could not be ascertained, the estimates are staggering. Many have been pushed into prostitution by poverty or sexual abuses at home. The government and various NGOs have programs to rescue prostituted women and girls from sexual exploitation, offer them services, and link them with alternative employments.

operators and pimps. Customers and police officers contribute their share of violating the prostituted women's rights. Unscrupulous operators in the tourism and entertainment industries have used loopholes in laws to continue to exploit prostitution. The total number of prostituted women and children could not be ascertained, as the trade is considered as illegal and perpetrators conduct their business clandestinely. But the estimates are staggering.

The social welfare department and a number of NGOs are conducting programs to provide alternative employment to women in prostitution who choose to leave the trade, or have been rescued from white slavery and sexual exploitation. NGOs take on the very critical role of organizing the women, informing them of their rights, and providing them with legal and counseling services.

NGOs working for and on behalf of prostituted women have likewise provided shelters, counseling services, and alternative livelihood to women and children in prostitution systems.

Notable among these are the efforts of Bukal and Buklod, two organizations that have pioneered in organizing women to get them off the streets through self-help programs on empowerment, access to health services, and alternative livelihood. Lawig Bubai, an organization of women in prostitution, has offered its members educational and economic opportunities. WEDPRO, an advocate for the rights of women victimized for sexual exploitation, conducts research and advocacy programs with women in prostitution. All these organizations have been working toward the abolition of Article 202 of the Revised Penal Code, which defines and criminalizes women in prostitution. The advocacy is directed at removing the onus of criminalization from women who are already victims of sexual and economic exploitation. Instead, criminal accountability must be meted against brothel owners, operators, pimps, and customers and buyers who help perpetrate the industry.

Women in Areas of Armed Conflict

Civilians displaced from their homes suffer at the evacuation centers owing to poor living conditions, malnutrition, and illness. Congestion, lack of food, poor sanitation, and unavailability of medical facilities and supplies at evacuation centers have caused a rise in common illnesses, such as diarrhea, dysentery, and respiratory ailments, resulting in deaths among evacuees. According to the social welfare department, most of the reported deaths due to illness at evacuation centers involve children below 2 years old (www.inq7.net).

Some reports of violations of human rights of civilians – men, women, and children – have been committed by combatants in Mindanao. Amnesty International (2001) states that in 2000, the escalation of armed conflict in central Mindanao led to the displacement of over 400,000 civilians amidst indiscriminate bombings and

A majority of the hundreds of thousands displaced as a result of the escalation of armed conflict in Mindanao are women and children. Cases of violence against women have been noted. Interventions range from training and other initiatives on peace building and resettlement of internal refugees, to reintegration of former MNLF combatants and their families.

human rights violations by the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Based on the records of evacuation centers managed by the social welfare department and NGOs, about 135,000 to 150,000 persons were displaced by conflict-related incidents from January to November 2001 in Mindanao. A majority of them were women and children. The Human Rights Commission also recorded cases of violence against women in armed conflict. From 1980 to 1999, about 100 cases were documented as occurring in Regions II, VI, and IX.

The Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) is charged with the management and supervision of the comprehensive peace process. It pursues social, economic, and political reforms to address the root causes of internal armed conflicts and social unrest; consensus building; and empowerment for peace. It is also engaged in sustaining and enhancing the viability of Peace Zones-Special Development Areas (SDAs) through negotiated settlement with the different rebel groups; programs for reconciliation, reintegration into mainstream society, and rehabilitation of former combatants and their families; addressing concerns arising from continuing armed hostilities, such as children in armed conflict and immediate relief and rehabilitation of conflict-affected families and communities, through the Civilian Victim of Internal Armed Conflict Program; and building and nurturing a climate conducive to peace.

Meanwhile, with The Asia Foundation assistance, the Institute for Women's Leadership organized meetings for the Mindanao Commission on Women. Composed of Muslim, Christian, and indigenous women leaders from government, civil society, and the private sector, the commission pursues an agenda for peace and development in Mindanao with special emphasis on training young women leaders in peace building (The Asia Foundation 2002). Moreover, the

Government of the Philippines (GOP)-UN/Multi-donor Programme (Phases I and II), involving the UN agencies in the Philippines and 10 donor countries, supported the reintegration of some 70,000 former Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) combatants, supporters, and their families into the mainstream of civilian, economic, and social life. Its activities and outputs included cooperative formation and community organizing for livelihood, reaching a total of 14,056 beneficiaries; and agriculture-based livelihood training in aquaculture, crops, farm machinery, livestock, and women's concerns, covering almost 2,000 trainees and resulting in the establishment of 532 livelihood activities that benefited some 20,084 MNLF combatants and their families (GOP-UN/MDP n.d.). Moreover, TESDA released PhP11.5 million to finance community-based training in enterprise development. With the support of Netherlands and UNFPA, 1,286 local health personnel were trained and 24 MNLF communities benefited from programs on family planning and reproductive health. The Bangsa Moro Women's Foundation for Peace and Development was the main partner, particularly in the conduct of community-based surveys.

Women and Children in Detention

The Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, an agency under the interior and local government department, is responsible for the safekeeping and development of inmates in all district, city, and municipal jails nationwide. The bureau conducts regular inspections and monitoring of jails, and looks into the inmates' condition.

The number of female and youth detainees has been growing. At present, they total 3,973, compelling the bureau to prioritize the construction of separate cells for female and minor

There are at present 3,973 female and youth detainees, who are vulnerable to various forms of harassment and abuse. A few efforts to address this have been noted.

offenders. In some jails, where no separate cells are provided for women and minor detainees, they are kept in cells along with adult male inmates. In such a situation, women and minors are exposed to various forms of harassment and abuse. Thus, it is mandatory that female offenders be confined in separate cells. At present, the Quezon City government has a Female Dormitory that confines women offenders in the city. Various rehabilitation programs designed for women are implemented in this jail, including the so-called "Therapeutic Community (TC) Modality."

Because the youth run the risk of being influenced by adult offenders, separate cells for minors are maintained in some jails. In fact, there are already two youth centers – the Molave Youth Homes in Quezon City and Operations Second Chance in Region VII – that confine children offenders. These centers offer basic social and health services that the bureau provides, plus programs that address the developmental needs of youth offenders. Programs like sports and TC Modality are only among the activities that youth offenders can engage in.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Performance in the economic empowerment area may have been mixed, but achievements in the area of human rights of women and girls have been considerable, many as results of long years of advocacy and preparatory work. Government actions and NGO efforts to improve women and girls' access to and utilization of social services, such as education, health and nutrition, and other basic services have been many. However, gender issues persist and old and new challenges need to be addressed. Paramount among these issues and challenges are:

- ☞ Minimizing, if not totally eliminating, gender stereotyping or gender tracking at the tertiary education level. This can be addressed by retraining secondary-level and

tertiary-level guidance-cum-career counselors to enable them to promote nontraditional career choices for women and men.

- ☞ Improving education-employment matching. This involves improving competencies of women and men in various fields, collaboration between the government and the private sector to facilitate entry, particularly of women trained in nontraditional fields, and conducting periodic tracer studies of groups of graduates of tertiary education and TVET programs.
- ☞ Minimizing the bias in favor of urban areas, which has caused highly divergent regional life outcomes along gender lines as well as among women. Addressing this issue requires a reconsideration of the geographical investment in social infrastructure and deployment of social service personnel to ensure that women and men, girls and boys, in poorer areas get preferential treatment.
- ☞ Arresting rapid population growth due to high fertility rates, particularly in rural areas and some regions. Investing in addressing adolescent sexuality and reproductive health and promoting contraception are key interventions. The latter is a constant challenge, made more difficult in an environment where resources are siphoned away from it.

More dramatic gains were noted in the campaign to stop violence against women: passage of groundbreaking laws, establishment of mechanisms to ensure implementation, and enhancement of programs to develop capacities of agencies to address VAW cases or incidents. The precedent-setting executive, legislative, and judicial action notwithstanding, several issues and challenges remain. Among these are:

- ☞ Enforcement and monitoring of laws, particularly considering that many laws have not been implemented or compliance with them monitored;
- ☞ Geographical spread of VAWC services and matching these with VAW incidence per region or province;
- ☞ Prevalence of VAW cases and the need for wider gender-responsive judicial and nonjudicial interventions; and
- ☞ Special needs for rehabilitation and postconflict care of women and children in vulnerable situations and conflict areas.

Financial support for many of the programs – including the poverty reduction campaign – comes from official development assistance, a large portion in the form of loans. The dependency on foreign funding for basic services creates doubts on the sustainability of programs and services as well as of results and outcomes. Moreover, the decline in the relative share of the national budget going to the social sector, partly caused by the increasing debt service, raises questions of credibility over the resolve and the capacity of the state to respect, protect, and fulfill basic human rights of women and girl children.

*Chapter 4:
Strengthening and Promoting
Gender-Responsive Governance*



The *Framework Plan for Women* highlights the important role that good governance and the interaction of the three sectors – the state or government, private sector, and civil society – plays in the success of the implementation of the plan. If it governs well, the state creates the enabling environment for sustainable human development; the private sector generates jobs and incomes, and develops people’s productive capacities; and civil society mobilizes society to participate in economic, sociocultural, and political activities.

Good governance, many advocates, including UNDP, assert, is participatory, transparent, accountable, effective, and equitable. It promotes the rule of law and addresses priorities; makes decisions based on broad consensus, paying particular attention to the concerns of the poorest and the most vulnerable in society; and promotes a vision of sustainable human development. Good governance must also be gender-responsive, focusing on the abilities of both women and men to contribute to and benefit from development.

This chapter investigates the state of Filipino women in areas related to governance, including political participation. It also presents the gains made relative to the four governance-empowerment objectives of the FPW, namely: enhanced women’s leadership roles and participation in decision making, strengthened roles of women in promoting gender-responsive governance, enhanced partnership with media in covering various women’s issues, and mainstreaming GAD in the bureaucracy.

PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS AND DECISION-MAKING BODIES

The Philippine Constitution guarantees equal rights to women and men in political and public life. However, women continue to be a minority in electoral politics and at the highest levels of public office, on appointive capacity, in the executive and judicial branches of government. Years before the period under review (2001-2003), policy statements and mechanisms had been put in place to advance women’s participation in public life and decision-making processes.

Women’s Involvement in Electoral Politics

For the second time in its history, the Philippines has a woman President, also installed into the presidency by people power. There have been no significant changes in other elective positions, however. In 2001, as in 1998, no more than 20 percent of the candidates were women. Also, the proportion of women who won the elections remained at 20 percent or below. These trends persisted despite women voters outnumbering men voters (17.2 million versus 16.9 million during the 1998 national elections).¹ Women’s voter turnout rate was also higher in 1998, at 87.0 percent versus the men’s 85.7 percent, and in the May 2001 national and local elections, at 76.7 percent versus 75.9 percent among the men.

¹Based on the 2000 Census of Population and Housing, the voting population, or the total population aged 18 years and over, numbered 43.3 million. There were slightly more women (50.1 percent) than men (49.9). For the 2004 election, the projected voting population is estimated at 49.25 million. This figure is about 60 percent of the projected 82.67 million Philippine population by 2004. The projected female voting population is a little more than the expected male voters, with a sex ratio of 98.89 males for every 100 females. There are more male voters in the younger age groups (20 to 24 and 25 to 29), while female voters dominate the older age groups (50 and over).

In the legislature, the share of women in the Senate went down from 17 percent in 1998 to 9 percent in 2003, with only 2 women out of the total 23-member Senate. The trend is reversed in the House of Representatives, where women's share of the seats increased from 10 percent in 1998 to 16 percent of the 205-member chamber in 2001 (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1. Number and proportion of women elected officials to total, 1998 and 2001

Item	1998		2001	
	Total female	Percent to total	Total female	Percent to total
Senators	4	16.7	2	8.7
Representatives	20	9.6	33	15.7
Governors	13	16.7	15	19.5
Vice governors	9	11.5	10	13.0
Provincial councilors	102	14.2	120	16.5
Mayors	239	15.0	241	15.6
Vice mayors	179	11.2	192	12.4
Municipal/city councilors	2,181	16.7	2,198	17.3

Source: *Women and Men in the Philippines, 2003 Statistical Handbook* (NSCB 2003a).

The implementation of RA 7941, or the Party-List System Act of 1995, allocates 50 seats, or 20 percent of 250 seats in the House of Representatives, for party-list representatives from the marginalized sectors, such as peasant communities, urban poor, farmers, fishers, and women. In the 1998 elections, the Commission on Elections accredited six women's parties, but only one, *Abanse! Pinay*, garnered the required percentage share of votes for a seat. *Abanse! Pinay* again won a seat during the 2001 elections, after the Supreme Court disqualified the parties that garnered more votes but did not represent the marginalized sectors. The party-list mechanism provides an opportunity for the representation of women's interest by the representatives of women themselves. However, the low level of awareness of the party-list system, along with the inexperience and lack of funds of the sector parties, has so far limited its impact.

At the local government level, more women are joining and winning electoral politics. The widespread practice of women contesting the positions vacated by their male spouse appears to apply particularly for local executive positions. In addition, women are running for vice governor or vice mayor, posts that have long been associated with women.

Women among Justices and Judges

As of September 2003, 4 (27 percent) of the 15 justices of the Supreme Court and 12 (25 percent) of 47 justices in the Court of Appeals were women. Three (27 percent) of 11 incumbents in the Sandiganbayan, which handles graft and corruption cases involving government officials, were women. The gender balance has improved compared to a year ago, when 10 (24 percent) of the 41 justices in the Court of Appeals and 3 (20 percent) of the 15 in the Sandiganbayan were women. Women justices were named to fill two of the vacancies in the Court of Appeals, and the three women in the Sandiganbayan kept their posts while four male members left. Meanwhile, the judges in the Court of Tax Appeals remained all-male. In the lower courts, women judges accounted for no more than a quarter of all judges, except in Metropolitan Trial Courts, where they comprised half of the incumbent judges (Table 4.2). It should be noted, however, that in 12 months, women judges were filling vacancies, resulting in an improvement in gender balance throughout the lower courts outside the Shar'ia Circuit Court.

Table 4.2. Percentage of female incumbent judges in the Philippine trial courts, 2002

Philippine courts	2002			As of September 2003		
	Number of women judges	Total number of judges	Percent female	Number of women judges	Total number of judges	Percent female
Regional Trial Court	165	778	21	172	761	23
Metropolitan Trial Court	29	64	45	36	72	50
Municipal Trial Court in Cities	31	132	24	36	142	25
Municipal Trial Court	56	220	26	60	218	28
Municipal Circuit Trial Court	41	201	20	46	204	23
Shari'a Circuit Court	0	18	0	0	18	0

Source: Supreme Court.

Appointments of Women to Government Positions

President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration is notable for having appointed the most number of women to the Cabinet. By end of 2003, 5 of 19 department secretaries were women. Women held the budget, environment and natural resources, labor, social welfare, and science and technology portfolios.² Women also headed two of five constitutional commissions, namely, Civil Service and Human Rights; as well as the Social Security System and the Presidential Commission on Good Government. There were likewise women commissioners in the Commission on Elections, Audit, and Civil Service; and 2 women representatives (informal sector and women) among the 14 NAPC Sectoral Council members. The foreign affairs department has a policy that at least one undersecretary shall be a woman.

In 1999, CSC reported that women comprised a majority (53 percent) of the 1.45 million government employees. As in the early 1990s, they dominated the second-level employees (professional, technical, and scientific in nature), at 71.9 percent. However, women appointees to the third level, or Career Executive Service (CES) positions, accounted for only about a third (34.8 percent) of the total. Similarly, women continued to form a minority of those in second-level positions in government-owned or controlled corporations, such as the Water Districts, the Philippine Port Authority, the Philippine Fisheries Development Authority, and the Bases Conversion Development Authority. This reflects the continued gender-based segregation in the bureaucracy.

Probably owing to the CSC programs, women's share of decision-making positions in the bureaucracy has increased. In 2002, women held 1,148 CES posts, including those designated as acting or office in charge in constitutional agencies and national government agencies. These accounted for about 36.0 percent (versus 34.8 percent in 1999) of the total filled-up CES positions. In government-owned and controlled corporations, women in CES positions numbered 963, or 43 percent of the total. There were fewer women among CES-level appointees (1,056, or 37 percent of the total) in constitutional agencies and national government agencies.

The Women in Nation Building Act of 1992 (RA 7192) opened the doors of a number of institutions to women. The Philippine Military Academy is one such institution. In 1997, women

²In early 2004, three more women were appointed as department secretaries (finance, foreign affairs, and justice). Also holding Cabinet rank were the women heads of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) and the acting lead convenor of the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC). They brought the total number of women in the Cabinet to 10, the highest ever in Philippine history.

accounted for 15 percent of the 47 graduates of the Philippine Military Academy. In the 1999-2000 admission exams, 17 percent of 1,486 women applicants passed, with a woman topping the exams.

The annual recruitment to the police force was influenced not only by RA 7192 but also by RA 8551 in 1998. Since then, the annual recruitment of women police officers has been above the prescribed 10 percent quota. Although it initially dropped from 15 percent in 1999 to 11 percent in 2000, it has since been rising. By 2002, women recruits had made up 17 percent of the total, mostly for junior officer positions. No woman police officer had been hired for top-level positions, although the adoption in 1999 of an affirmative action program in the Police Academy made possible the lateral entry of women police officers into the command. From 1999 to 2002, a total of 1,781 women police officers, or 14 percent of the total police officers, were hired (PNP 2002).

There were already more than 5,000 women of a total of 108,291 police officers in 2000. Many of them were assigned to the women's desks or units in charge of handling cases of violence against women and girls. Much remains to be done, however, to promote women's participation in the military and police service, including the opportunity to work in areas of law enforcement other than the women and children's desks.

Some institutions, however, have been harder to influence than others. In various sports associations, including the National Archery Association, Philippine Amateur Track and Field, Philippine Equestrian Association, and Gymnastics Association of the Philippines, only 7 percent of 67 representatives were women.³

Women's Presence in Foreign Affairs

In September 2002, women headed 22 (or 28 percent) of the 80 embassies and consulates maintained by the Philippines around the world. Of these, 12 held the rank of Ambassador, and 10, Consul-General. In November 2003, there were 17 women (28 percent) among the 61 Ambassadors and Charge d'Affaires, and 10 (53 percent) among the 19 Consuls-General. In December 2001, 51 women served around the world as attachés. By December 2003, their number declined to 49, holding trade, labor, tourism, agriculture, or welfare portfolios. Women labor attachés are usually posted in countries where women OFWs abound.

Filipino women easily attend international activities or represent the country in international bodies. They have been designated as lead representatives to international organizations, such as the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, where a woman served as the country senior official representative from 1997 to 2002, and the APEC Business Advisory Council, where one of the three member-representatives of the Philippines was a woman. Women invariably served as head of the Philippine delegation to all regional and global conferences on women.

In the past two decades, Filipino women have been elected to head such UN bodies as the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (incumbent Chair) and the UN Commission on the Status of Women (three times Chair). They have also served other UN bodies and international and regional organizations, such as CEDAW, UN Committee on Human Rights, UNIFEM, and ILO.

³In 1999, the Integrated Bar of the Philippines reported that 18 percent of lawyers were women. In the Philippine Medical Association, the ratio of women national officers was higher (8 of 22, or 36 percent), although the ratio was much lower at the provincial level. In the Philippine Dental Association, only 9 percent of the officers were women, even if females comprised 68 percent of the total membership.

In coordination with other APEC member-economies, women business leaders, government officials, and gender experts from the Philippines led the organizing of the first APEC Ministerial Meeting on Women in Manila in October 1998, a response to the APEC Leaders' call for the integration of women and youth made in 1996, when the Philippines chaired APEC and led the advocacy for gender mainstreaming. The Philippines co-chaired the task force for the integration of women in APEC.

There has been an improvement in the participation of women in international forums and they have consistently championed gender issues in global policy discussions, such as the rights of overseas workers, including women, and the need for integration of gender issues in economic policies. The Philippines, through women leaders from NCRFW and the academe, led the resource team for the development and delivery of Gender Information Session to all key APEC forums. It contributed to the conceptualization of the APEC Gender Focal Point Network, which is expected to institutionalize gender mainstreaming. In partnership with New Zealand, the Philippines prepared a paper on the impact of trade liberalization policies on women which was presented at the Second APEC Ministerial Meeting on Women held in September 2002 in Guadalajara, Mexico.

Filipino women have also directly and indirectly assisted other countries in gender mainstreaming, either through bilateral arrangements or through organizations like the UN and CIDA. Men and women officials have come for study missions on GAD from Indonesia, India, Bahrain, Mongolia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Cambodia, East Timor, and the All China Women's Federation.

Efforts to Broaden Women's Participation

In 1997 and 1998, a number of legislative and executive policies were adopted to increase women's participation and representation in decision making. For instance, the Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act of 1997 allots one seat for the women's sector in NAPC. The Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997 also mandates the representation of women, as a result of which two of the seven commissioners of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples are women. Similarly, women are reserved at least one seat in local fisheries and aquatic resource management councils (RA 8850), agrarian reform bodies, protected areas management boards, and local agricultural and fishery councils. In 2001, women constituted 30 to 45 percent of agricultural and fishery councils at the regional (40 percent), provincial (30 percent), and municipal levels (45 percent). They accounted for a much smaller percentage (no more than 29 percent) of the membership of agrarian reform governing units or councils, with the smallest share observed at the municipal level (23 percent); and a yet much smaller share in protected areas management boards (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3. Participation of women (in percent of total membership) in protected areas management boards

Sex of board members	Total in previous years	2000	2001	2002
Female	391	18	39	22
Male	1,942	77	155	170
Total	2,333	95	194	192
Percent female	17	19	20	11

Source: Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) Reorganization Act of 1998 (RA 8551) specifies, among others, a 10 percent quota in the PNP annual recruitment, training, and education of women police officers. In addition, the Fisheries Law of 1998 requires the appointment of women as members of the city or municipal fisheries and aquatic resources management council. An environment department directive mandates the inclusion of women as members of the protected areas management board, a multisector board created in each protected area established under the national integrated protected areas system.

Meanwhile, CSC issued a memorandum circular on the equal representation of women and men in third-level positions in the civil service. Elsewhere, a few bills pending in Congress are seeking to increase the participation of women in decision making in government. One is an enabling law on women sector representation in local councils, which will make operational the women sector representation provision in the 1991 Local Government Code. Another is the proposed Women Empowerment Act, which will mandate at least a 30 percent representation of women in decision-making positions in government.

The CSC leads the implementation of programs to propel more women to higher-level positions, which include increasing their capacity and leadership. In cooperation with NCRFW and the Career Executive Service Board, among others, CSC undertakes three programs. One is the Career Advancement of Women in Government Service, which seeks to enhance support mechanisms, capability building, training, and other enabling mechanisms for women employees. Its components cover improved working conditions, prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace, facilitation of career advancement, and advocacy. Among the gender-sensitive policies instituted are paternity leave and leaves for various family-related occasions, establishment of day care centers, and flexible working arrangements, which include modified maternity leave, part-time employment, and flexible working hours. A second program, the revised Merit Promotion Plan, was formulated to ensure nondiscrimination in the selection of employees and to emphasize equal employment opportunities for women. Lastly, a “Directory of Women on the Move” was published to provide appointing authorities with choices of qualified women for top posts.

At the subnational level, regional institutional mechanisms for GAD have been created, such as the one established in the regional development councils of Regions I, VIII, X, and Caraga; the Provincial Commission on Women in Bulacan in Central Luzon (see Box 4.1 for story); or GAD technical committees that are covered by local ordinances. Moreover, several NGOs have been working to support women in local government within the broad framework of women in politics and decision making. The Women’s Legal Bureau conducts legal training for elected officials at the local and national levels, and wages advocacy campaigns for women in politics. Meanwhile, the Center for Legislative Development provides critical intervention to legislative staff, legislators, and NGOs through training, documentation, and research on legislative processes; and holds gender sensitivity training for elected local officials and legislators, as well as regular dialogues with other NGOs on legislative advocacy for women. It is also spearheading the program “50/50 Gender Balance in Political Participation by 2015.” The Center for Asia-Pacific Women in Politics (CAPWIP), a regional organization based in the Philippines, is advancing women’s political participation by creating a critical mass of competent, effective, and committed women politicians who espouse a transformative approach to leadership. CAPWIP conducts training to empower women for transformative leadership and citizenship, in line with its thrust of building transformative communities.

Box 4.1. The PKKKB Story*

The Panlalawigang Komisyon para sa Kababaihan ng Bulacan (PKKB) was formed in the mid-1990s to create a clear vision for women, ensure gender equality, provide women with access to sociopolitical and economic opportunities, and utilize and develop their skills and abilities. To reach out to all the women of Bulacan, PKKB assigned commissioners to the four districts of the province. PKKB has recently created the Konsehong Pambayan para sa Kababaihan (KPK) in seven pilot municipalities. KPK will be PKKB's counterpart at the municipal level. PKKB plans to work with 15 municipalities and cities in 2004.

More than 100 women's organizations are actively involved at present in the community-level implementation of PKKB programs. The women NGOs work together, using their own resources as well as tapping external assistance to address the needs of the community.

Prior to PKKB, women in the province reportedly suffered from gender bias and unequal treatment. Males dominated legislative and executive positions, raising the probability of bias in policymaking and relegating women's concerns to the background. Incidents of violence against women were oftentimes unreported and unrecorded.

Now, with PKKB, "women power" serves as an important catalyst in the development of Bulacan. Bulakeñas now actively take part in politics – from the Sangguniang Kabataan (Municipal Council) to the highest office in the provincial government. As Governor Josefina de la Cruz, whose ascendance to power exemplified the emerging role of women in her province, noted: "Women are now getting their chance to be elected and to prove themselves worthy of serving the people."

The PKKB has instituted various programs and initiatives. As part of the annual celebration of Women's Day in March, Bulacan confers the "Gawad Medalyang Ginto" (Gold Medal Award) to women who have demonstrated exemplary performance in various fields. Since 1997, nearly 300 women have already been given recognition at the provincial and municipal levels.

The PKKB has also sponsored seminars on women's rights and empowerment, which provide women with knowledge of handling cases of abuse and sexual harassment, and gender-sensitive training and orientations from the provincial down to the barangay levels. To date, 22 towns and 2 cities have already served as venues for advocacy activities on women's rights, gender mainstreaming, maternal health issues, and strengthening the family and child.

Among the programs Bulakeñas have initiated under PKKB is the *Sikap-Angat* Program, in which NGOs help provide livelihood for the poorest of the poor. Under the program, beneficiaries get to earn around PhP5,000 a month from selling fishballs, giving manicure, and rendering other home services. In Marilao, the Women in Service for the Differently Aabled of Marilao (WISDAM) was created to help poor children who have difficulty in being accepted to regular schools and, thus, need special education.

*Based on "Bulacan Province: Panlalawigang Komisyon para sa Kababaihan ng Bulacan," in *Gawad Galing Pook 2003: A Tribute to Innovation and Excellence in Local Governance*. Page 11.

The NCRFW has linked with the Galing Pook Foundation, an award-giving body for excellence in local governance, to recognize gender-responsive programs at the local level. In 2003, the Special Citation on Gender-Responsive Governance was awarded to Cebu City for its program "Community Initiatives and Partnerships to Respond to Violence against Women and Other Gender Concerns" (see Box 3.4 in Chapter 3 for the story). NCRFW, along with NGOs and other government agencies, also supports measures to build the capabilities of women elected officials. In May 2003, it convened a national summit of local women executive and legislators to develop a program to support women officials and to assist them in formulating and/or implementing gender-responsive policies and programs in their localities. Attended by 200 local government heads, the summit forged and adopted the Manila Declaration on Gender-Responsive Local Governance. Among the salient features of the declaration are the institutionalization of gender mainstreaming at the local level through the creation of local GAD

mechanisms, allocation of resources for the implementation of GAD programs and projects, issuance of gender-responsive legislation and policies, and advocacy to amend the Local Government Code of 1991 to incorporate a gender perspective, to pass a legislation on local sectoral representation, and to enjoin local leagues to adopt a GAD agenda.

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE MEDIA

In the area of communication and media advocacy, women's rights, issues, and concerns are slowly being aired at the national and local levels. This was evident in the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women, where the Philippines was represented by government and NGO women, as well as by members of the Philippine media, both government and private. This international event has influenced other media practitioners to give more media coverage to women as well as children's concerns. Through the years, multimedia efforts have been utilized in gender mainstreaming by government, NGOs, and civil society.

A number of women NGOs, alternative media groups, and the government Philippine Information Agency have coalesced to strengthen their advocacy work in the media industry. Mediawatch, a network of individual women and women's groups, has produced slides and videos assessing the image of women in media, while advocates have written letters to the editor and opinion articles or columns, calling attention to negative reporting on or portrayal of women in media. Kalayaan, an NGO working against violence against women, has staged mime-drama-musicales projecting feminist views and values.

Media women continue their efforts at highlighting women's news and issues, and at linking with women's organizations, media-oriented NGOs, and similar groups. In particular, the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) Executive Director, who was awarded the 2003 Ramon Magsaysay Award for Journalism, leads the PCIJ in its attempts to make mass media relevant to the current national situation. One of its projects seeks to create an environment of public opinion sensitive to women's health, gender, population, and development issues. PCIJ trains women media practitioners to make them more gender-sensitive in their reporting of issues. Content analyses of newspapers and magazines are also being done to encourage policymakers to design appropriate measures to improve media coverage of women issues.

Women's groups and other NGOs are producing alternative media programs and undertaking other women and media projects. Some of these projects are (i) a 24-episode television series by PETA on the grassroots people's issues and experiences, six of which pertain to gender concerns; (ii) a trimedia campaign by the Women's Media Circle for the empowerment of young women and girls, which includes a radio program that mixes music with interviews on health and empowerment issues (such as violence and teenage pregnancy), a supplement in one of the leading magazines, and printing of publications on the same topics; and (iii) a multimedia discussion on women, religion, and reproductive health by the Women's Feature Service (WFS) Philippines, a part of an international news agency reporting on development from the women's perspective with the objective of putting women's issues in mainstream media. From 2000 to 2002, WFS conducted forums (called "Body and Soul"), radio and television talk shows in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, and Internet forums. With participants representing Muslims, Protestants, and Catholics, as well as health workers, NGOs, media, government, and the academe, the forums tackled contentious topics, such as lesbianism, abortion, adolescent sexuality, family planning, condoms and AIDS, reproductive technology, media and religion, and divorce and family violence.

Meanwhile, the Philippine Information Agency has produced and disseminated information education campaign materials on various women's concerns. These materials include a briefing module on women's rights that promotes a balanced and nonstereotyped portrayal of women in media. Since 1995, the agency has been producing 30-second public service infomercials on its specific concerns. These are aired on the six major television networks and cable channels all over the country. The agency also integrated a briefing module on women's rights in all its training programs.

Women advocates in media and a few advertising firms (such as McCann-Erickson) have begun portraying women in more positive ways. For example, a laundry soap advertisement expounds that women can perform roles other than being housewives. The product also contributes to a fund for women interested in small business. Meanwhile, television programs, such as "By Demand," have featured segments on violence against women, marriage annulment, the informal sector, and family law.

To promote a balanced and nonstereotyped image reportage of women's issues, the Philippine Information Agency, with NCRFW, convened a series of roundtable sessions that involved media practitioners from print, radio/television, and the advertising industry. Basic gender-sensitivity briefings and seminars were also organized for media practitioners and members of media organizations and associations (broadcasters' association, advertising board, and television networks) to promote a balanced and nonstereotyped image of women. These interactions have started the discussions on the need for the formulation of Media Guidelines on Media Reportage concerning women and children's issues and concerns, with the active participation of the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster sa Pilipinas (Broadcasters' Association of the Philippines), print media, and the Ad Board. The continuing concern of women media practitioners and journalists to produce gender-sensitive materials is manifested in the broadsheets, television programs, and advertising.

There is now a pool of prominent women journalists and media advocates who have been articulating gender issues and women's concerns in their columns, and projecting gender sensitivity and fair reportage or handling of women's issues and concerns in their crafting of sound bytes, messages in "advertorials/infomercials," and television documentaries. Women have carved out for themselves a career in the media profession. A number have become chief executive officers (CEOs), editors-in-chief, film directors, movie producers, and other posts previously enjoyed only by men. As of December 2003, women headed McCann-Erickson (CEO), Campaigns and Grey (president), Ad Board (president and chairperson), Philippine Daily Inquirer (editor-in-chief), and Manila Standard (editor-in-chief). The following media organizations have a woman vice president: Center for Press Freedom and Responsibility, PCIJ, Asian Institute for Journalism, and the leading broadcast networks, ABS-CBN and GMA-7.

Networking and advocacy among media practitioners in the academe, government, and private sector aim to raise public consciousness and understanding of women's issues to a level where people can be mobilized to take positive action to address the stereotyped and negative portrayal of women and girls in the media. The media has the capacity to influence how people look at the world, and as such, must promote a balanced and nonstereotyped image of women and men. Such a view promotes women's greater participation, allowing women to freely practice their rights to free speech and expression, avail themselves of new communication technologies, or become key decision-makers in the news desk or production room.

While efforts to create a nonsexist, gender-sensitive media have been noted, the overall portrayal of women and girls in the media continues to perpetuate gender role and relations stereotypes, including the gratuitous use of the female body to lure (male) buyers of a wide range

of products. The need for guidelines on media reportage and advertisements is immediate, as urban and rural landscapes are littered by images that do violence to women and girls.

MAINSTREAMING GAD IN THE BUREAUCRACY

Recognizing that much of the discrimination experienced by Filipino women takes more subtle forms, the Philippine government puts high priority on the transformation of society's attitudes and values toward the recognition of the equal roles, rights, and responsibilities of men and women. In this connection, it has adopted three development plans for women since 1989. The *Philippine Development Plan for Women, 1989-1992* (PDPW) recognized the shared responsibility of government agencies for implementing programs on women's advancement.

Structures and Budgets

Agencies created GAD focal points to coordinate plan implementation and lead the capacity building of the agency for GAD mainstreaming. As of 2002, some 100 agencies had operational GAD focal points. Meanwhile, the *Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development, 1995-2025* (PPGD), is deliberately long-term in perspective and is envisioned to inform medium-term plans, such as the FPW, whose objectives, programs, and projects are set for a shorter period.

To lend muscle to GAD mainstreaming efforts, the government instituted the Philippine GAD Budget Policy. Enshrined in the annual budget law, the policy requires the use of at least 5 percent of every agency's budget to implement its plans under the PPGD and FPW. NCRFW is tasked to monitor the implementation of the FPW and the budget policy, together with NEDA and DBM (Department of Budget and Management).

In 1999, NCRFW was given, in addition to its monitoring functions, the authority to review agency GAD plans prior to their endorsement for approval by DBM. Results of the NCRFW monitoring of the implementation of the GAD Budget Policy showed that in 1999, almost 40 percent of all government agencies prepared their respective GAD plans, for which a total of PhP3.42 billion was allocated for implementation (NCRFW 1999-2002). Three quarters of this amount were allotted for institution and capacity building related to gender mainstreaming. Less than one-fifth was set aside for women beneficiaries of agencies, and about 4 percent for the needs of their women employees. In 2000, 41 percent of all government agencies complied with the GAD budget provision, allocating a total of PhP3.3 billion for GAD programs, projects, and activities. A total of 214 local government units submitted their GAD plans with a total budget of PhP113.25 million for GAD programs, projects, and activities. As of October 2001, 130 agencies had submitted their GAD plans with a total GAD budget allotment of PhP2.8 billion. NCRFW has yet to conduct a thorough evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the use of the GAD budget.

In almost eight years of implementation of GAD planning and budgeting, the following gains in addressing the concerns of Filipino women have been noted (NCRFW 2002b). The GAD plans and budgets became the basis for women to lobby and negotiate with government for GAD programs, projects, and activities, and for adequate resource allocation. On the part of government, the GAD planning and budgeting exercise focused on GAD as a government agenda and mainstreamed GAD in the government resource allocation system. The activity also forced agencies and local government units to look at the gender dimension and impact of their programs, projects, and activities. It further clarified the roles of oversight agencies in gender mainstreaming, and strengthened NCRFW as the authority on women's concerns, as it oversees/provides policy

direction and technical assistance on the process, monitors implementation, and recommends measures to further improve it and make it responsive to women's needs. Finally, GAD planning and budgeting served as a model for other marginalized sectors, such as the elderly, the differently abled, and the indigenous people, on how to negotiate with government for resources to carry out specific programs for specific sectors.

Support for Mainstreaming Efforts

The NCRFW plays a pivotal role in the ongoing gender mainstreaming in the three branches of the Philippine government. To strengthen this role, some 17 additional positions were created in 1997. From 1997 to 2003, the second phase of the CIDA-supported NCRFW Institutional Strengthening Project injected Can\$5.0 million, over five years, into the very limited program budget of NCRFW. The additional staff and budget allowed the agency to pursue its program to build its capacity as well as those of key government oversight and implementing agencies and pilot local government units in specific areas. NCRFW was envisioned as a technical resource base for gender-responsive policy analysis and development, project development and implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. The oversight agencies (NEDA, DBM, CSC, Department of Interior and Local Government [DILG]) and the House of Representatives would create an enabling environment for gender-responsive policymaking, planning, human resource development, and management in government. Statistical agencies (National Statistics Office [NSO], National Statistical Coordination Board [NSCB], Statistical Research and Training Center [SRTC]) were tasked to generate gender-responsive statistics. Meanwhile, pilot agencies were assigned specialized elements of an enabling environment for gender-responsive policies and programs. The Department of Agriculture (DA) was responsible for policy analysis and implementation down to the field level; the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), for institutional capacity building for GAD; the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), for program-level GAD monitoring and evaluation; and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), for field-level people's participation.

Mainstreaming GAD in local governments has gained momentum in the past decade. The enactment of GAD codes by local governments helped. The codes spelled out their vision of promoting, protecting, and fulfilling women's rights and gender equality, and offered comprehensive interventions responsive to the practical and strategic gender needs of women and men (NCRFW 2001). Among the model GAD codes are in Davao City (Ordinance No. 5004-1997), Cotabato Province (Ordinance No. 202-2000), Misamis Occidental Province (Ordinance No. 26-2000), Quezon City (Ordinance No. 1036-2001), and Angeles City (Ordinance No. 634-1998). In Aklan Province, key interventions related to strengthening the provincial GAD coordinating mechanism and advocacy with top local officials had helped the province in identifying its priority gender issues and in developing plans on such issues as reproductive health and violence against women.

Gender mainstreaming did not occur exclusively in the executive branch. As early as 1994, the House of Representatives had sought ways to promote gender-sensitive legislation. Among these efforts were House Bill Nos. 3021 and 13457, establishing Women's Resource and Development Centers as focal points for local gender needs. In fact, nine centers were established from countryside development funds for this purpose. In the late 1990s, NCRFW, together with WEDPRO, embarked on a project focusing on gender-responsive legislative analysis and development. This produced two guidebooks (Santos, Conda, and Natividad 1999a, 1999b) and a group of key legislative personnel that had been introduced to crafting gender-sensitive legislation.

Meanwhile, in 2003, the Supreme Court constituted the Committee for a Gender-Responsive Judiciary, which was tasked to provide leadership in integrating gender equality and sensitivity to gender issues in the policies, processes and procedures, and decisions and practices of the judiciary. By year's end, CGRJ had prepared the GAD Plan for the Judiciary and was gearing up for a nationwide campaign to review court procedures and processes and develop gender sensitivity and responsiveness among judges and other court personnel.

Outputs and Results

These various initiatives have resulted in important outputs, including manuals, handbooks, and tools to guide the agency and the rest of the bureaucracy in their GAD mainstreaming work. Among the agency outputs are:

- ☞ Manual on Handling Sexual Harassment Cases in Government (CSC); Manual on Formulating Gender-Responsive Development Plans (NEDA); Technical Assistance Package for GAD Planning and Budgeting for Local Government Units, and the associated Gender-Responsive Local Planning and Budgeting: A Guidebook for Beginners, Handbook for Handling and Prevention of Domestic Violence Cases in the Barangay, and Training Manual on Integrating GAD in Local Legislation and Policy Formulation (DILG); Gender-Responsive Program of Instructions for the Philippine National Police-Basic Recruit Course and Basic Course (Philippine Public Safety College/DILG); Primer on GAD Plan and Budget for budget officials and personnel (DBM); Guidelines in Integrating GAD into the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (DA); Methodology for a National Time-Use Survey (NSO); Training Manual on Statistics for Gender-Responsive Local Development Planning (SRTC); and Methodology to Generate Statistics on Violence against Women and Children (NSCB).
- ☞ Tools produced by the health department to guide its personnel in implementing gender-responsive programs and projects include gender and health training module for health workers, protocol for medical management of women and children survivors of violence, protocol for reproductive health service, gender-sensitive primary health care training modules, a set of gender-sensitive information materials, and gender-sensitive standards for quality health service.
- ☞ The social welfare department's set of training modules, notably a training module on GAD for integration into all training programs of the department, training module for prosecutors and police officers in the handling and management of women and children victims of abuse and exploitation, and a training module on gender mainstreaming and rights-based programming.
- ☞ The Population Commission's "An Analytical Framework on Gender Responsive Population Policy with Reproductive Health Perspectives" and an "Advocacy and Training Manual on Basic Concepts of Gender Equality and Reproductive Health for Population Program Workers."
- ☞ NCRFW tools that can be used by agencies: Sourcebook on GAD Training for Government Agencies, GAD Dictionary, Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation Framework, Ways to Gender-Responsive Organizations.

As part of its thrust of developing gender-responsive organizations and plans, NCRFW provides technical assistance to government agencies and local governments. It also links with subnational GAD Resource Centers to strengthen information exchange and networking among

GAD advocates and researchers in the regions, and to help build a resource base for training, research, and technical assistance on GAD. To date, there are eight (8) active centers, two each in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

With CIDA support, the Philippine government's gender mainstreaming efforts have had promising outcomes. Increased personal security through better handling of domestic violence at the community level is one important result. NCRFW's initial discussions with DILG on implementing a GAD mainstreaming strategy focused on barangay-level responses to domestic violence. This included developing a barangay protocol⁴ for handling cases of domestic violence, with the aim of improving reporting and action on VAW cases, and crafting guidelines and technical assistance on domestic violence by barangay and DILG officials. These are currently being tested in several pilot barangays prior to implementation in the country's 41,000 barangays. Such a collaborative effort between national agencies can have a significant impact, as DILG has the capacity to promote nationwide implementation, training, and monitoring.

At the field level, DENR's community-based forestry program involved a gender analysis of the participating communities and of the program itself. Subsequent changes in the program resulted in the awarding of more stewardship contracts to women, thereby increasing women's control over forest resources. DENR also revised the criteria for the selection of participating people's organizations. It trained the groups to ensure women's participation and decision making in community livelihood projects. As this is a flagship program, a reorientation of direction can increase opportunities for women in many areas. Moreover, the positive experience with GAD mainstreaming in this program provided the impetus for a reconsideration of DENR's other programs.

Results were likewise obtained at the local government level. Over the years, the GAD budget policy has become the focus of intense lobbying by women's organizations, many actively working for its implementation. It has been a powerful instrument for women to negotiate with government agencies and local governments for better programs, projects, and services. This is exemplified by the 70-member women's group in a village in Mindanao, which negotiated with the barangay officials for the group's accreditation as a legitimate organization, prepared a GAD plan, and presented it to the barangay council. Funds released in the first year were used, in part, to convert the old village hall into a women's center, while funds in the second year went to livelihood training and the purchase of equipment for entrepreneurship. As a result of the process of consultations about the GAD budget, the women's organization has also secured a place in the decision-making and political processes of the barangay.

Since the beginning of the GAD mainstreaming campaign in the late 1980s, planning and monitoring of the activities and results of the campaign have required gender statistics. By 2003, sex-disaggregated and gender-related information have become more readily available to planners, researchers, and advocates. This has been made possible by institutionalized policies in agencies and the Philippine statistical system to generate statistics on gender issues, increased generation and publication of statistics on women/gender issues for dissemination and utilization in training and research, and established and enhanced mechanisms for collaboration on gender issues and gender statistics (NCRFW 2002c).

⁴With the passage of a new law, RA 9262, the AVAWCA and protocol are being revised.

SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ISSUES

The campaign that began in the late 1980s to transform the Philippine government bureaucracy to being gender-responsive gained grounds during the period 2001 to 2003. New initiatives (tools and manuals, in particular) have helped institutionalize processes and mechanisms, while efforts to extend the coverage of the GAD mainstreaming campaign have borne fruit. All these have contributed to the creation and maintenance of what can be termed as gender-responsive governance at various levels and areas. With the unstinting support of NCRFW, the past three years have seen remarkable developments. However, all these are highly vulnerable to the vagaries of politics and economics. Thus, with each gain come words of caution about its sustainability.

- ✦ *More women elected or appointed to decision-making positions or bodies, although the figures are still low.* During the period 2001 to 2003, more women were elected as local government heads, or members of local legislative councils or of the House of Representatives. Also a greater number of women were appointed to the cabinet, embassies and consulates, and CES posts; and to fill the vacancies in the Court of Appeals, Sandiganbayan, and the trial courts. Gender equality and women's empowerment is often a matter of creating opportunities for women. Many of these chances have been made possible by legislative initiatives during the mid-1990s, but only one of the six registered women's parties has been able to garner the required number of votes to get a seat in Congress, while women's share in development councils or management boards has been generally low. After achieving greater numbers of women in elected or appointive positions, the following questions have to be asked: Do these women work to promote gender equality and women's empowerment? Are they able to garner support for GAD, wherever they are located? The performance of women and men in power must be examined to gain a sharper focus on the campaign and secure a better gender balance in key political institutions of the country.
- ✦ *Stronger partnership with members of the media.* This has resulted in the slow but increasing airing of women's concerns and gender issues in the national and local media, production of materials for print and broadcast media in support of GAD campaigns (especially on violence against women), and efforts of government (principally NCRFW and the Philippine Information Agency), NGOs, and the private sector (private media companies and advertising firms) to make media practitioners aware of gender issues in the media and to help them produce more gender-sensitive materials and shows. Despite these efforts, however, the Philippine media continues to be sexist, promoting gender stereotypes, violence against women, and other forms of gender inequalities.
- ✦ *Strengthened structures and mechanisms to sustain GAD mainstreaming in government.* A framework plan has been carved out of the PPGD to guide GAD efforts from 2001 to 2004. A GAD planning process is helping government agencies prepare their GAD plans. Finally, the GAD budget policy ensures that resources are available to realize the plans. It also mainstreamed GAD in the government resource allocation system, serving as a model for other marginalized groups on how to negotiate with government for resources. As important perhaps, it has strengthened the position of NCRFW as the authority on matters concerning women. NCRFW, however, recognizes the need for a systematic evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the use of the GAD budget. To

effectively oversee the GAD mainstreaming efforts, however, NCRFW needs a stronger and broader mandate and, with it, a corresponding increase in its budget.

- ♣ *Expanded GAD mainstreaming beyond the executive and the legislative branches to also include the judiciary.* This completes the campaign to instill awareness and commitment in government to women's concerns and gender issues. These gains are very vulnerable to changes in leadership and the desire of new leaders to always start anew, rarely pursuing what others before them have begun. It is important to establish processes and structures that can weather the changes and help GAD advocates from within to begin the cycle of convincing and securing the support of the new leaders.
- ♣ *Increased evidence of GAD mainstreaming at the local level.* The advocacy of local GAD advocates and women's movement activists, working in conjunction with like-minded people in local government units and national agencies, and with the technical assistance of NCRFW, has made possible the adoption of GAD codes and GAD budgets, passage of local ordinances, creation of local women's councils, and implementation of programs that address gender issues, such as violence against women. GAD initiatives and results, however, are periodically threatened, as local elections held every three years often means another set of officials that needs to be made aware of gender issues and convinced that gender-responsive governance is an essential part of good governance.
- ♣ *More and easily accessible guides for GAD mainstreaming.* The past three years have added materials – manuals, handbooks, methodologies, and tools – that can be applied to national and local development planning, agency and local government budgeting, program design and implementation in key sectors, or agency-specific operations, be it on health, statistics, police, agriculture, social welfare, and the like. A considerable body of materials has been produced and distributed, particularly on violence against women, including manuals on handling sexual harassment in government, methodology to generate statistics on violence against women and children, handbook on the handling and prevention of domestic violence cases in the barangay, and protocol for the medical management of women and children survivors of violence against women and children. All these are designed to outlive administrations and individuals, but will need GAD advocates to ensure that they are not wasted, left to smolder in shelves or cabinets.

As with the other FPW areas of concern, these gains have to be nurtured and cultivated for them to grow and last longer. These pose challenges, perhaps the greatest of which is to secure the commitment of succeeding administrations to the efforts that have gone before them.

*Chapter 5:
Issues and Challenges*



Filipino women, men, and children, both girls and boys, are living in an environment marked by disarray, danger, and discontinuities. The modest growth posted in the last two or three years barely dispelled the vision of an economy that has been limping along even as neighboring economies have recovered from the slump in the late 1990s. It has also not boosted confidence in the robustness of an economy that is, at the same time, hobbled by corruption and by the specters spawned by the coming national and local elections.

Despite "institutional mechanisms" – commissions, task forces, working groups, and councils – that have been created to address specific issues, the problems just would not go away. Poverty continues to be high, especially in rural areas, while in urban centers, the poor remain trapped in unhealthy and dangerous "informal settlements." Allegations of fund mismanagement are hounding government agencies, including those charged with the hard-earned contributions from OFWs. Danger lurks both within and outside. Peace has been uneasy at best, with continuing skirmishes in Mindanao and NPA rebel attacks in various places. In these areas, women and children are the most vulnerable. The crime index may be declining, but the people, particularly women and the young, elderly, and disabled, feel vulnerable in the streets and even at home. Violence against women has become a public issue, rendering it visible and punishable by law. One can only hope that this unmasking will deter crimes perpetrated against women and children.

Economic growth and human development have not proceeded smoothly, and political uncertainties and disquiets accentuate the business-cycle busts and shorten the booms. What seem to have gone undeterred are the Philippine government's commitment to trade and economic liberalization and the near-mechanical allocation of domestic resources for the servicing of the foreign debt. It is against this almost bleak backdrop that we must view the various gains that have been made during the past three years, and the innumerable gaps that remain in the three areas of concern of the Framework Plan for Women: economic empowerment, human rights of women and girl children, and gender-responsive governance.

GAINS AND GAPS

Economic Empowerment

The past three years have seen several notable gains in the area of women's economic empowerment. Each, however, also suggests gaps that remain unanswered. The most common issue pertains to the *absence or inadequate gender-based monitoring of programs and projects that involves the collection of sex-disaggregated data and results in the determination of their impact on women and men.*

- ☞ More women are employed, and new or continuing efforts are being made to improve workers' competencies, enhance their participation in economic decision-making, aid workers in finding gainful employment, and assist workers in their childcare and other family responsibilities. There has also been a rising percentage of women in management and similar decision-making positions. However, female unemployment rate continues to increase, and much of the jobs are generated in the unprotected, informal sector.

Moreover, local public employment services reach no more than 5 percent of the out-of-work. Women fare worse than men in industrial-skill competency assessment and accreditation. Some 20 percent of Philippine barangays are unserved by day care centers. Efforts to provide childcare support to women workers on night shifts could not be implemented beyond the pilot stage owing to lack of funds.

- ☞ Credit programs have reached over a million women in urban and rural areas, including women operating small and medium enterprises. However, there is little evidence that the loans extended to women living in poverty support *sustainable livelihoods*, as loan amounts are too small and effective credit cost too high; or that they are truly empowering. Also, training and nontraining support to provide new skills or upgrade skills; share information regarding markets, technologies, and product design; and facilitate market linkages has reached very limited numbers of women, especially those in microenterprises.
- ☞ Efforts to protect and promote women workers' welfare and interests through anti-sexual harassment campaigns, provision of family planning and other health services, and inclusion of gender-related standards in the coverage of labor inspection have been noted. However, the labor inspectorate coverage of establishments continues to be limited by available resources, and compliance with general labor standards remains low.
- ☞ Programs and mechanisms have been instituted to extend social protection to informal sector workers and to safeguard rural women's share in development resources and decision making. However, social coverage remains ineffective and women's participation in bodies created to oversee or implement rural development programs continues to be low.
- ☞ Some progress has been noted in efforts to improve working conditions and support system for the increasing number of Filipino workers overseas. In addition to the labor agreements and OFW programs to be monitored, there are issues pertaining to the government policy on exporting labor, the deregulation of the industry, and the continuing dominance of domestic service and entertainment ("professional") workers among the OFWs.

Women and Girl Children's Rights

The past months have seen the culmination of years of advocacy and hard work of human rights and women's movement activists and their partners in government in the area of women and children's rights.

- ☞ Ratification of the Optional Protocol on CEDAW in November 2003 by the Philippine Senate. The Optional Protocol seeks to provide a communication procedure which allows either individuals or groups of individuals to submit complaints to the CEDAW Committee, which will then consider petitions from individuals or groups of individuals that have exhausted all national remedies. The Protocol also entitles the Committee to conduct inquiries into grave or systematic violations of the Convention.
- ☞ At the education front, increasing school participation rate of girls at lower levels, but their dropout rate at the secondary level has been falling more slowly than that for the boys. Women outnumber men at the tertiary level, but they are performing more poorly in government examinations. More women's studies programs or centers have

been opened; awareness of students and teachers of gender issues is being raised in school through the integration of gender-related topics or modules and the introduction of teaching aids for teaching gender issues in specific learning areas; and nontraditional trades for women are being promoted. However, gender stereotyping in the choice of courses or skills areas continues, although not as much as before.

- ☞ Fertility rate has been falling but continues to be high mainly owing to lack of access to contraceptive-related information and materials, consistently low (although increasing) prevalence of contraceptive use, and drying up of resources for family planning and reproductive health. Teenage pregnancies account for a significant proportion of childbirths and maternal deaths. There is a need to arrest rapid population growth due to high fertility rates, particularly in rural areas and some regions, but promoting contraception is a constant challenge, made more difficult in an environment where resources are siphoned away from it. Longer life expectancy, particularly among females, would require setting up support systems for older people.
- ☞ GO-NGO collaboration and NGO projects on reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, and the like, but these have been heavily funded by overseas development assistance, raising the issue of postproject sustainability. Moreover, there has generally been very little awareness or appreciation of lesbian rights and reproductive health issues.
- ☞ Passage of two anti-VAW laws – the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 (RA 9208), and the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act (RA 9262) – and the creation of institutional mechanisms to spearhead the anti-VAW and anti-trafficking campaign. However, vigilance is required for these legislative initiatives to change the lives of women and children. An important part of this involves monitoring their enforcement and ensuring that all parties are prepared to do their part.
- ☞ Upgrading of judicial procedures and gender-sensitive court decisions, as articulated in the Supreme Court's *Action Program for Judicial Reform, 2001-2006*. However, as the Court recognizes, making the rules, procedures, and court decisions gender-responsive entails a massive reorientation of justices and judges, and other members of the judiciary.
- ☞ Continued delivery of government and NGO programs aimed at preventing violence against women or providing specific services to VAW survivors. These notwithstanding, several gaps have been noted, including the geographical spread of VAWC services and matching these with VAW incidence per region or province, prevalence of VAW cases and the need for wider gender-responsive judicial and nonjudicial interventions, and consideration of the special needs for rehabilitation and postconflict care of women and children in vulnerable situations and conflict areas. There is a need to minimize bias in favor of urban areas, which means a reconsideration of the geographical investment in social infrastructure and deployment of social service personnel to ensure that women and men, girls and boys, in poorer areas get preferential treatment.

Gender-Responsive Governance

Gender and development mainstreaming in Philippine government bureaucracy has gained grounds during the period 2001 to 2003. Broad-based alliances that NCRFW has crafted with various government agencies, the NGO community, the women's movement, and the academe have produced remarkable results. However, all these results are highly vulnerable to the vagaries

of politics and economics. All these, too, need to be assessed as to how they have improved the condition and status of women.

- ☞ Increased number of women elected or appointed to decision-making positions or bodies. This includes the 5 women of 19 department secretaries; the women who were appointed to fill the vacancies in the Court of Appeals, *Sandiganbayan*, and the trial courts; the women named to head Philippine embassies and consulates around the world; and the women holding Career Executive Service posts in the civil service. Despite their greater number now, they still account for a small percentage of the total. Similarly, women comprise a minority in boards or councils created by law in connection with the agrarian reform program and the like.
- ☞ Stronger partnership with members of the media. This has resulted in the slow but increasing airing of women's concerns and gender issues in the national and local media, production of materials for print and broadcast media in support of GAD campaigns (especially on violence against women), and efforts of government (principally NCRFW and the Philippine Information Agency), NGO, and the private sector (private media companies and advertising firms) to make media practitioners aware of gender issues in the media and to help them produce more gender-sensitive materials and shows.
- ☞ Strengthened structures and mechanisms to sustain GAD mainstreaming in government, including a framework plan that serves as a blueprint for GAD activities; a GAD planning and budgeting process that is helping government agencies prepare their GAD plans; a GAD budget policy that mainstreamed GAD in the government resource allocation system; and conferment on NCRFW of the authority on matters concerning women.
- ☞ Coverage of GAD mainstreaming of the three branches of government, with the judiciary coming on board in 2003, with a plan by the Supreme Court to create a gender-responsive judiciary.
- ☞ Increased interest in GAD mainstreaming at the local level, as shown by the adoption of GAD codes and budgets, passage of local ordinances, creation of local women's councils, and implementation of programs that address gender issues, such as violence against women. Local GAD Resource Centers have been set up, with the support of NCRFW, to provide technical assistance to local governments.
- ☞ More and easily accessible guides for GAD mainstreaming, such as GAD manuals, handbooks, methodologies, and tools for national and local development planning, agency and local government budgeting, program design and implementation in key sectors, and agency-specific operations. Various VAW educational materials and manuals have also been produced.

CONTINUING CHALLENGES

It is apparent from the discussion of gains and gaps in connection with the three areas of concern of the FPW that despite the interventions to address women workers' issues in various fields, there are challenges that require serious attention. A few of these are discussed below.

Protection from the Adverse Effects of Globalization and Economic Liberalization

While some sectors may have benefited from economic and trade liberalization policies, the policies have eroded women's economic situation and status, as companies increasingly resort to flexible labor arrangements (by reducing the core of permanent workers and increasing temporary and casual employees, and part-time or homework arrangements) to stay globally competitive. Flexible employment is usually beyond the reach of labor legislation and social protection. Displaced women workers who join the informal sector have to make do with stagnant wages or returns to labor while prices increase. Incorporating gender into the scope of economic inquiry and analysis of economic policies can bridge or level opportunities for both sexes in an economic setting, as this means taking into account how these policies affect the gender wage gap, job security, and the quality of jobs of women and men.

To minimize the negative impacts of globalization on women, the following actions are needed:

- ☞ More social protection measures must be provided for women workers. Increasing access to social insurance benefits and legal protection for women in various types of informal activities should be prioritized. Bringing this about may involve considering alternative social insurance schemes, and supporting social groups that are able to provide the necessary framework of social solidarity and mutual insurance and protection. Group-based strategies for mobilizing internal savings and credit services should also be considered.
- ☞ Women in small and medium enterprises need safety nets, as they face stiff competition with cheap products from other countries. Like other local industries, they require reasonable protection to shield them from too cheap imported goods and services.
- ☞ Overseas labor migration continues to pose dangers, particularly to women workers. Initiatives to forge bilateral and multilateral agreements with receiving countries should be treated as short- or medium-term measures, since the long-term solution to labor migration problems of the country lies in the creation of sustainable local employment for its female and male citizens. Dollar remittances of overseas migrant workers should be invested in developing viable and globally competitive industrial and agricultural enterprises that will generate jobs in the country, ensure food security, and boost the country's financial capacity to provide adequate social services.

Gendered impacts of globalization, as reflected, for instance, in economic liberalization policies, should be investigated systematically. This requires disaggregating by sex sector and sub-sector employment data, wages, hours worked, and nature of work (part-time, full-time; time-rated, piece-rated), ownership of establishments retrenching or closing, workers affected by noncompliance with labor standards, compliance data on gender equality standards, and the like. The situation of women entrepreneurs needs looking into, but it has been difficult to establish a database on them.

Improvement of Work Conditions and Social Protection

Employment is more than just the creation of jobs; it is the creation of decent work, which includes quality of work and social protection issues. The challenges in this regard include:

- ☞ Regular monitoring of compliance with labor legislation on gender-based discrimination and imposition of sanctions on violators. One may assume that if the rates of compliance

with general labor standards, such as the minimum wage and payment of SSS premiums, by employers were low, rate of compliance with gender equality standards would also be low, if not lower.

- ☞ Review of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law, particularly its enforcement in the private sector, where many women workers are found. Presently, the law is not clear as to which agency should monitor private sector compliance with the law, hence, data on its implementation in the private sector are generally not available.
- ☞ Lack of knowledge or awareness of occupational hazards and risks, especially in the informal sector, where women and child workers are found in great numbers. There is a need to disseminate a wide range of information to raise the awareness of the risks and dangers and the necessary precautions for those in hazardous occupations. This can be reinforced with continuous seminars for small and medium enterprises in hazardous industries to enlighten both the workers and the owners about the dangers inherent in their jobs.
- ☞ Sex-disaggregating data on beneficiaries or recipients of social protection benefits. This is particularly important in light of the fact that women have longer life expectancy than men and depend on their pension for support in their old age. On health insurance, there is a need to advocate for the provision of full benefits to beneficiaries who will otherwise pay the full cost of hospital charges, doctor's fees, surgical expenses, and surgical or family planning procedures.
- ☞ Further improvement of access to social protection by workers in the informal sector. This involves simplifying the complex SSS administrative processes, from registration, collection of contributions, and verification of claims, to actual provision of the benefits. Given the irregularity and seasonality of informal sector workers' incomes, their financial capacity to pay the required contributions, in itself, is already a serious concern; identifying the correct and necessary amount of contribution and mode of collection further complicates the problem. Also, there are acknowledged difficulties with respect to the adjudication of benefits, such as requirements and procedures for access, particularly for the self-employed. Finally, informal sector workers are hardly organized. This fragmentation, and sometimes isolation, makes it extremely difficult for social development agencies and, probably, specialized insurance companies to reach them for the extension of social protection and support services.

Support for the Self-Employed and Informal Sector Workers

The government has made credit available to numerous women. High interest rates and stringent credit policies of lending and financial institutions hamper the growth of women's enterprises, however. Among the persistent challenges for truly empowering women entrepreneurs and workers in the informal sector are:

- ☞ Simplification of access to information, markets, technical assistance, and credit. The fragmented delivery of services further complicates the process of acquiring information and resources to gain access to markets, technical assistance, and the like.
- ☞ Designing assistance programs that respond to the needs of a highly heterogeneous sector. While workers in the informal sector share several concerns, they are nonetheless a highly heterogeneous group. This should be considered when developing economic programs or a comprehensive social protection strategy, be it in the area of expansion of

coverage under the national security system or propagation of innovative schemes. Needs and capacities are as varied as there are varied groups. Identify, particularly, those groups that are difficult to organize for assistance. Women entrepreneurs need technical or capital assistance, particularly if they are to go beyond microenterprises. In contrast, domestic helpers need appropriate training to elevate their position as professional workers who can demand more reasonable wages. The implementation of the law for domestic workers is not being adequately monitored, particularly in terms of minimum salaries, educational benefits, and the like.

- ☞ Micro and small enterprises for women actually produce items that are among the prime products (such as garments, food, and giftware) in the export market. Such enterprises need to be provided with comprehensive technical and financial assistance to make them more viable and globally competitive. Microentrepreneurs are complaining about the lack of capital, declining demand, and competition with cheaper imports. These issues can be addressed by making available breakthrough credit as opposed to microcredit accessible to all kinds of poor women; strengthening cooperativism among women; providing skills training in financial management; and integrating credit schemes with livelihood and enterprise development.

Assistance to Rural Women

The issues facing rural women are many. In some parts of the country, peace and order is an added problem. Generally, however, rural women, like rural men and children, suffer because of their geographical location or isolation. Schemes to assist rural women need to address the following challenges:

- ☞ Peace and order is a problem of the country that takes its greatest toll on rural areas. Certain parts of Mindanao continue to be caught in the secessionist movement and kidnaps for ransom. Rural women caught in the midst of armed conflict suffer not only from extreme poverty but also from severe anxiety and threat to their security. There is a need to address the peace and order situation in Mindanao and implement an integrated development program for Mindanao, especially for its women and children victims of armed conflict.
- ☞ Despite efforts by government to alleviate the plight of the rural poor, poverty remains a major issue confronting rural women. Poverty is related to such issues as lack of employment, education, and skills, and peace and order. It manifests itself in poor health, high incidence of child labor, and rural-urban migration. The imbalance in resource distribution between urban and rural areas creates a wide disparity in the development of the two areas in favor of cities. A different kind of imbalance occurs along gender lines in rural areas. Agriculture and fisheries are viewed as male areas, even if women engage in such occupations. Because of this nonrecognition, rural women suffer. They have limited access to resources, agricultural support system, training, and technology. Most migrate to cities or overseas to work. Rural poverty is most often the push factor for rural women migration. To address these imbalances,
 - Viable agricultural industries and livelihood and job opportunities must be created for rural women and men that harness the resources in the area while ensuring food security and protecting the environment.

- Training and building the capability of women should match the skill requirements of local industries, existing as well as planned, in order to arrest the migration of women to urban centers to search for employment opportunities.
 - Local government units and devolved government agencies should deliver basic social services that respond to specific needs of women in the rural area. The programs and services to be delivered to rural women should be anchored on a comprehensive collection and analysis of socioeconomic data on women's needs and concerns in the locality.
 - The importance of an integrated approach to credit and technical assistance for women's agriculture-related enterprises cannot be overemphasized. This should be pursued vigorously with special attention to ensuring food security as they produce and market globally competitive agricultural products.
- ☞ Government should have a more realistic and more comprehensive approach to the problem, one that gives women a greater share in decision making, and the necessary tools and resources to help them break away from destitution. The implementation of the Local Government Code that devolves power and resources to local government units should ensure a more equal distribution of resources for health, education, livelihood, and other social amenities to help the rural poor.

Improving Access to Basic Social Services

Education. Despite various government initiatives, gender role stereotyping persists in classrooms, guidance counseling offices, and other educational programs.

- ☞ There is a need to expand the review of curricula, schoolbooks, and instructional materials up to the tertiary level in both private and public schools to eliminate stereotypes and include gender-sensitive ideas, such as joint parenting, reproductive rights, and nonviolent forms of handling conflict, among others. All this means that teachers and school administrators at all levels must be given further training for a more gender-sensitive approach to education. Similarly, secondary- and tertiary-level guidance-cum-career counselors should be retrained to enable them to promote nontraditional career choices for women and men.
- ☞ Women continue to be disproportionately represented in top education positions. Their large number in the educational system and their comprehensive/extensive educational training notwithstanding, women are provided with limited career opportunities at decision-making levels where they can apply their knowledge and where they can further enhance their capabilities on the job.
- ☞ Negative results of gender tracking at the tertiary level include placement of women in lower-paying jobs. Without viable employment opportunities locally, educated women end up overseas, working in domestic service. This produces a deskilling at two levels: nationally, as the country loses its educated workers; and personally, as people hold jobs that require less skills than they have been trained for. To avoid this, education needs to be attuned to global trends so that women may be employed in jobs that match their skills and knowledge.
- ☞ Also due to the difficulty of finding work in the country, job seekers, both women and men, tend to grab the first available job opportunity. When this happens to women

who have trained in nontraditional professions or careers, their opportunity to grow in their profession diminishes unless they go for retraining. As a result, there are still few female role models in nontraditional occupations, like engineering, science and technology, architecture, and even in vocational-technical courses, such as computer technology. There are inadequate data to monitor women's education and training and job matching. Women's concentration in a narrow band of traditional areas has kept wages down or produced stiff competition among women entrepreneurs. While data show that more and more women are entering traditionally masculine professions or training, it is important to establish if they are able to land jobs for which they have been trained and the reasons why they have not.

- ☞ Lower literacy and education in rural areas predisposes rural women (and men) to lower-level jobs, such as domestic service and unpaid family work, or worse, makes them an easy prey to prostitution. Although not all college graduates find a job, postsecondary education has been directly related to better-paying jobs, better family health, higher use of contraception, and lower number of children. There is thus a need to put more resources and expand government education programs to rural and indigenous women.

Health. The government has made efforts to meet the comprehensive health needs of women, but the following challenges remain:

- ☞ The needs of older women have to be addressed, as women are expected to live longer and longer. Other age groups, such as adolescents and menopausal women, are also not given adequate attention. There is a need to intensify the implementation of current programs and services in a holistic manner for them to adequately respond to the needs of women across the life cycle. More resources have to be provided so that health programs can expand their area coverage. There is also a need to document the specific effects of government programs and services on the health and well-being of women.
- ☞ Local government units play a crucial role in ensuring that women's health programs and services reach the communities. Issues arising from the devolution of health service delivery must be promptly addressed, and the financial and technical capability of local governments to implement programs taken into account when devolving service delivery. In addition, training and capacity building in all aspects of local governance must include gender sensitization. Several projects of UNFPA and the European Union have started to address these needs of local government units and must be monitored for compliance with targets. Health statistics must be routinely disaggregated by sex and other attributes, most especially at the local level.
- ☞ The revision of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the National Health Insurance Act must also be closely monitored to ensure that women-friendly provisions are considered and integrated into the program. The Plan 500 is also silent on women. There is a need to review said plan and how gender can be integrated into its major components.
- ☞ Although gender and health training for officers of the health department has been conducted in the regions and at the central office, implementation of participants' action plans to mainstream gender in their projects and activities remains to be seen. For instance, they should intensify their efforts to enlist the participation and support of men for responsible parenthood, which includes family planning and child rearing, to ensure the well-being and health of their children and spouses.

- ☞ Debates concerning reproductive health continue, while contraception rate remains low (but increasing), and promoting contraception continues to be a problem. Moreover, the national government has refocused its efforts and resources away from family planning and other reproductive health concerns. If this continues, high population growth will remain a problem, constraining poverty reduction efforts, in particular, and economic and social development, in general. At the individual level, multiple births tend to increase the risk of maternal morbidity and mortality.

A current concern about women's health revolves around the women's comprehensive health needs across the life span. Women's health and nutritional needs must be seen in the context of their various roles. Apart from reproductive health, attention should be paid to mental health, occupational health and safety, and the impact of the environment on health. Access to health services for comprehensive women's health, including reproductive health, needs to be made widely available if women are to be empowered to lead productive and healthy lives. Women and men must be given adequate education and information so they can make informed reproductive health choices.

Freedom from Violence

Some challenges are notable in the area of combating or eliminating violence against women and children. These are:

- ☞ *Anti-trafficking.* Because enforcement is often a problem, there is a need to ensure the full implementation of the Anti-Trafficking Law of 2003. It can build on the achievements and mechanisms now in place in the Philippines and in the countries of destination, involving both government and NGOs. Bilateral cooperation, particularly with recipient countries, should be pursued.
- ☞ *Violence against women and children.* Even after the passage of two important VAW-related laws, the challenges pertaining to the VAW campaign are many. There is a need to address the following:
 - Gaps in data and information that can help in the programming and distribution of VAWC services throughout the country. Other than implementing the NSCB research design to generate primary data on the national incidence of violence against women and children, government should strengthen its documentation system and its police-community relations to prevent crime and protect victims. Government should also encourage victims to report VAW crimes and avail themselves of services, thereby helping update its database on violence against women.
 - A more sustained gender sensitizing and training of service providers, particularly police investigators, social workers, police, health officials, and barangay officials involved in assisting survivors. Government should provide relevant agencies with adequate resources to address violence against women. This should enable the PNP women's desks to train police and medico-legal officers in handling and diagnosing victims; and to equip police precincts with separate rooms to allow privacy in interviewing and examining victims. Some provinces and cities do not have family courts and judges to attend to victims of abuse and violence.
- ☞ *Prostitution.* There is a need to continue addressing the root causes of prostitution, which include lack of viable employment for women, brisk demand in the flesh trade,

and violations of girls and young women's bodies at home. The anti-prostitution bill should be passed immediately in order to accord justice to the prostituted men, women, and children who are victims but are instead treated as criminals.

- ☞ *Women in armed conflict.* The impact on civilians of the government's war against rebel forces and terrorist organizations must be given immediate and serious attention. Women should be enabled to participate in peace building and in the rehabilitation of their communities, even as their livelihood and basic services should be assured.

Making the Laws Work for Women

There have been various efforts of government to promote equal rights of women before the law and in civil matters and to expand their rights to property relations and treatment in court procedures. However, inequality in the legal capacity of women is found within marriage and family relations that may affect their rights over concluding contracts and landownership and property administration. The following challenges must be addressed:

- ☞ There are inconsistent laws and laws that serve to nullify women's equality rights. Education on women's rights should be prioritized so that women could truly be empowered. Strict implementation of laws upholding equal rights and equal access to opportunities (such as employment, training, promotion at work, participation in decision-making bodies) must be monitored, and policies and laws reviewed to correct loopholes in existing laws.
- ☞ Government must ensure that concerned government and nongovernment entities implement the provisions of laws concerning contracts and property administration, as certain gaps are surfacing. For instance, some banks are reportedly violating the provision on the capacity of women to borrow and obtain loans or secure credit arrangements. Women have to voluntarily submit for membership in GSIS or SSS rather than these systems initiating the procedures to ensure women's membership.
- ☞ Efficiency of the courts is important in providing equal treatment to women and girl child victims. A more gender-sensitive bench is also called for in hearing VAWC cases. Accessibility of the courts to VAWC victims should likewise be enhanced. For instance, court facilities should be specifically designed to render protection and security to victims and witnesses. Providing accurate information on criminal court processes, protecting the victim/survivor through appropriate court orders, and preventing the perpetrator from using further illegal means to continue the coercive control of the victim should be done.

Creating an Autonomous Women's Voice in Government

The advocacy to enhance women's representation in decision-making bodies in government goes beyond mere numbers. As important, if not more, is promoting women's interests and agenda in government offices and councils. This requires:

- ☞ Creating a stronger and broader mandate for NCRFW to oversee GAD mainstreaming efforts and providing it with the corresponding budget. The executive director heads the Secretariat of the Board of Commissioners, but the chairperson has overall responsibility over the commission. The latter, however, is neither paid nor vested with legal authority. Without a cabinet rank, she has little access to cabinet-level decision making, weakening the policy function of NCRFW. With the end of the CIDA project, the budget allocation of NCRFW will be too inadequate. The NCRFW structure and mandate should be strengthened and broadened, and its budgetary allocation increased, to enable it to meet its obligations as a policy group and an oversight agency for women empowerment and gender equality.
- ☞ Helping women who are elected or appointed to decision-making positions create an autonomous women's voice in government. Career counseling, actual exposures to political processes, and examination of structural constraints to women's participation in politics and civil service have to be consciously addressed. Moreover, government must intensify actions to help women break the glass ceiling in the bureaucracy. The Civil Service Commission has begun to address these issues, and its initiative must be strengthened to enable more women to handle key positions in the bureaucracy through training in leadership, communication, negotiation, and assertiveness, among others. For women to really make their mark in the highest councils of the land, they have to be given adequate time to settle in and do their jobs. Appointing them a few months toward the end of the presidential term is probably not the best way to achieve this. A better approach involves examining the performance of women and men in power to gain a sharper focus on the campaign *to secure* a better gender balance in key political institutions of the country.
- ☞ Passing of pending bills that will institute women's representation in local legislative councils, as provided for in the Local Government Code.
- ☞ Building an informed, committed, and activist electorate. A vigorous public education on civil rights and on political parties and candidates is always a good starting point, as voters (female and male) have to make informed choices on who will lead them. Women (and men) must be prepared to elect men and women who support women's empowerment and gender equality. There is also a need to sustain the political agenda and parties of women over the long term and reorganize model capability-building interventions for women's political groups.
- ☞ Eliminating gender stereotypes among voters, appointing authorities, and women themselves in order to open the political sphere to equal participation by men and women. In aid of this, women's empowerment and gender balance bills have been introduced in Congress to mandate at least 30 percent representation of women in decision-making positions in government and to reserve at least one-third of the total number of certain appointive positions in the national and local government for qualified women. In addition, the bills propose that duly accredited political parties reserve at least one-third of their party slate of official candidates for women, and that

at least one-third of scholarships, grants, fellowships, and training in national and local government agencies or units be reserved for qualified women.

Strengthening the Role of the Media in Promoting Women's Issues

- ☞ The absence of a lead government agency or instrumentality responsible for policymaking and monitoring for women and the media has adversely affected the government's inability to address gender issues in the media. Even without such agency, however, a positive media environment among media practitioners should be created. This would involve reorienting/sensitizing women media practitioners to the important roles they play in highlighting women's issues vis-à-vis other human-related issues, and setting up a database to determine the extent to which trimedia advertisements portray women in sexist, demeaning, and stereotypical roles.
- ☞ Continuing vigilance to minimize, if not altogether eliminate, sexism and violence against women in Philippine media. The campaign to eliminate pornography, which perpetuates women as mere objects, is hampered by the lack of effective legislation against trafficking in pornographic materials and the absence of a government agency that is tasked to combat pornography on print. In the meantime, the interior and local government department is implementing an anti-pornography drive in cooperation with NGOs. However, a comprehensive approach to the problem of pornography is required, including an anti-pornography law. Pornography is linked to poverty, as it is viewed as a means of escape for those who are economically deprived. Cutthroat competition has encouraged the print media, the tabloids, and the cinema, in particular, to outsell each other by going into smut and pornography, perpetuating images of women and girls as rape victims and their bodies as commodities.

Sustainability of GAD Efforts and Results

The short term of office of local government officials and the uncertain tenure of department secretaries and other heads of office who serve at the pleasure of appointing officers generally result in interrupted implementation of programs and projects, including those related to GAD. The primary challenge then is to ensure that GAD mainstreaming gains in agencies or branches of government withstand the upheavals attendant to changes in leadership and the desire of new leaders to always start anew, as well as to enable GAD focal points to convince and secure the support of the new leaders. This means addressing the following specific challenges:

- ☞ Periodically renewing the campaign to seek the support of leaders and officials for GAD mainstreaming, including the GAD budgeting process. Owing to the changes in government that occur every three years at the local level and six years at the national level, there is a continuing need to inform elected officials and their appointees about GAD mainstreaming. This involves:
 - Recognizing the need to fund periodic GAD campaigns with local government officials, as the holding of local elections every three years often means another set of officials that needs to be made aware of gender issues and convinced that gender-responsive governance is an essential part of good governance.
 - Instituting a thorough evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the use of the GAD budget to provide support for advocacy to continue the GAD budget. Because of their limited knowledge of the GAD budget process and its purpose, as well as their skepticism toward the impact of the GAD budget, heads of offices

tend to resist the implementation of the policy and instead finance other projects. Moreover, there are no sanctions for those who do not comply with the GAD budget policy.

- ☞ Further improving the mechanism for monitoring progress. Much progress has been made in this regard. The remaining challenge is the full implementation or application of these indicators, frameworks, and modalities in order to generate the much needed information on gender issues, like prevalence of violence against women and children; quantifying the economic contribution of women, including measurement of unpaid work; or statistics on the informal sector. There is also a need to sensitize and orient users and producers on key sectors to effectively use and analyze gender statistics currently being generated by the statistical system. The continuing task is the development of a comprehensive monitoring framework to cover most areas of concern and thereby address the clamor of government agencies to synchronize all reporting and monitoring activities into one.
- ☞ All efforts at reform are compromised by the lack of funds. Government has not been consistently successful in raising its revenues, and public programs and projects are funded by loans. Domestic resources are tied up with the repayment of the debt, such that even governance reform, including GAD mainstreaming efforts, has been financed by multilateral and bilateral aid agencies. A problem that underlies all pertains to funds and funding. Financial support for many of the programs—including the poverty reduction campaign—comes from overseas development assistance, a large portion in the form of loans. The dependency on foreign funding for basic services creates doubts on the sustainability of programs and services as well as of results and outcomes. Moreover, the decline in the relative share of the national budget going to the social sector, partly caused by the increasing debt service, raises questions of credibility over the resolve and the capacity of the state to respect, protect, and fulfill the basic human rights of women and girl children.

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