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Philippines

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PHILIPPINE NATIONAL REPORT TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL FOR THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

I. METHODOLOGY

1. The Philippine National Report (PNR) for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) was prepared by the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) following the general guidelines on the preparation of information for the UPR, and through a consultative and participatory process involving a wide range of stakeholders.¹
2. The Presidential Human Rights Committee (PHRC), as the multi-agency coordinating body on human rights, organized the Technical Working Groups (TWGs), conducted briefings and undertook preparatory work with concerned government agencies, independent bodies and civil society. The PHRC consolidated the TWG inputs and drafted the PNR, which was edited and adopted by TWG lead agencies.
3. All agencies designated in Administrative Order No. 163² (A.O. 163) agreed by consensus to head TWGs corresponding to each of the international human rights treaties to which the State has acceded or ratified³. These TWG lead agencies spearheaded the preparation of the PNR sections covering their respective areas of responsibility in close consultation with government and civil society stakeholders. In preparing their respective inputs, the TWGs were guided by the following considerations: (a) provisions of international human rights instruments; (b) domestic laws and their implementation; (c) the Millennium Development Goals vis-à-vis the Philippine Medium Term Development Plan; (d) Concluding Observations of treaty bodies and reports of United Nations Special Procedures; and, (e) outcomes of multi-stakeholder consultations.
4. The PNR devoted attention to vulnerable sectors such as children, women, the elderly, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, the extreme poor, and special topics such as HIV/AIDS and human rights, security concerns and human rights education. Cross-cutting issues relevant to human rights were also covered in the present report.
5. The present PNR serves two purposes— it complies with the requirement to submit information under the UPR mechanism and it provides the framework for the Baseline Study of the 2nd Philippine Human Rights Action Plan and Program pursuant to A.O. 163.

II. BACKGROUND

6. The Philippines is a democratic and republican State with a constitutional, representative, accountable and presidential form of Government. It is an archipelago located in Southeast Asia measuring approximately 300,000 square kilometers composed of 7,107 islands that frequently experiences typhoons, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. The Philippines is a country of diverse cultures with its multi-linguistic, multiethnic and geographically dispersed population estimated at 89 million as of 2007. Economically, the Philippines has been ranked as a developing, medium-income country.
7. The national normative framework for human rights protection consists of the Constitution, legislation, court decisions or jurisprudence, and customs and traditional practices.
8. The Philippines is one of the first States to have ratified all of the seven core international human rights treaties⁴ currently in force and other human rights-related instruments. The Philippines is presently strengthening its institutional mechanism, through the PHRC, to ensure its reporting compliance to the UN treaty bodies.

9. Commitment to these instruments and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights is enshrined in the 1987 Philippine Constitution, notably Art. XIII Sec. 17(1) creating an independent Commission on Human Rights (CHRP)⁵, which is tasked, *inter alia*, to monitor government compliance with its human rights obligations under international treaties. The provisions on the nature, mandate and functions of the CHRP pre-date the 1991 Paris Principles.
10. The Constitution is the supreme and basic law of the country and provides the general framework and principles by which the State is run. It is the standard on which national legal instruments, government actions and decisions are based and evaluated. Important elements of the Constitution include the Bill of Rights, the articles on human rights and social justice, accountability of public officers, citizenship, suffrage, national economy and patrimony.
11. The Constitution provides for the establishment and separation of powers of the three major branches of government – the Executive, Judiciary, and a bi-cameral Legislature⁶. It specifies the mandates and powers of the major institutions responsible for human rights promotion and protection.
12. The Constitution provides that, “*The Congress shall give highest priority to the enactment of measures that protect and enhance the right of all the people to human dignity, reduce social, economic and political inequalities, and remove cultural inequities by equitably diffusing wealth and political power for the common good.* (Article XIII, Section 1)”
13. The renewed commitment of the Government to human rights is also evident by the President’s issuance of A.O. No. 163 issued on December 2006, expanding the membership and strengthens the role of the PHRC, which is tasked with the formulation of the National Human Rights Action Plan and the coordination of policies and actions of the Executive Branch on human rights.
14. Human Rights Offices have been established in the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI). Women and Children’s Protection and Complaints Desks in all police stations and sub-stations are now in place nationwide.
15. The establishment of *Barangay*⁷ Human Rights Action Centers in the country is an important initiative designed to promote and protect human rights at the grassroots level.
16. Interagency councils dealing with various human rights concerns have also been set in place. These include the Inter-agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT), Inter-agency Council on Violence Against Women and Children (IAC-VAWC), Inter-agency Council on Children Involved in Armed Conflict (IAC-CIAC) and the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council (JJWC).
17. The criminal justice system is built upon five pillars⁸ namely—law enforcement⁹, prosecution¹⁰, judiciary¹¹, correction and community¹². The criminal justice system has legal mechanisms for the protection of women, youth, indigenous peoples, and other vulnerable groups.
18. The *Katarungang Pambarangay* System (Village Justice System) was created under the *Local Government Code of 1991* (LGC) to assist in the settlement of disputes between those residing in the same *barangay* (village). It institutionalizes the use of alternative dispute resolution¹³ (ADR) systems and remains to be the most important mechanism for reaching amicable settlement.

19. The diverse indigenous peoples' justice systems and conflict resolution institutions, which are based on traditional practices and serve as alternative dispute mechanisms, are recognized in Republic Act 8371, otherwise known as the "Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997."
20. Presidential Decree 1083 provides for the codification of Muslim Personal Laws¹⁴ and the recognition of the Shari'a justice system based on Islamic religious law, thus acknowledging the perspective of Muslim Filipinos of what is just and lawful in civil relationships. Criminality continues to remain within the purview of the Revised Penal Code and other laws and not the Shari'a justice system.
21. The Philippines has a robust and vocal civil society composed of non-government organizations of diverse advocacies, trade unions, faith-based organizations, media, academe and the private sector. They play an increasingly active role in the domestic human rights system both as instruments of accountability and as partners in providing support services. The domestic climate presents many channels for them to report, express their opinions, and interact with their constituents, government, and the international community.
22. The Philippine Congress has enacted various human rights and human rights-relevant laws¹⁵ including those that uphold the rights and welfare of the disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, including women, children, indigenous peoples, migrants and persons with disabilities.

III. IMPLEMENTATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS: ACHIEVEMENTS, BEST PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

23. The Philippine Constitution enshrines the respect for the protection, promotion, and fulfillment of human rights. It is the declared policy that "*The State values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights*" (Art. II, Section 11). Art. XIII of the Constitution is devoted in its entirety to Social Justice and Human Rights, and to creating the independent CHRP (*supra*).
24. It is the State's policy to promote social justice in all phases of national development (Art. II Section 10) and promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all. (Art. II, Sec. 9).
25. Constitutional provisions promote and protect the role of women in nation-building and ensure the fundamental equality before the law for all; the right to health and a balanced and healthful ecology, the rights and welfare of workers, the rights of women and children, the elderly, and indigenous cultural communities, among others. It pays particular attention to, *inter alia*, the family, non-governmental, community-based and sectoral organizations, rural development and agrarian reform, indigenous cultural communities and human rights.
26. GRP efforts on economic, social and cultural rights are linked very closely with its plans and programs towards the attainment of its Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets. Laws such as the Labor Code, the Social Reform Agenda Act, and the Family Code, *inter alia*, complemented by strategic plans, policies, and programs such as the Medium Term Development Plan and the Anti-Poverty Strategy, have ensured the implementation of these constitutional provisions.
27. Effective remedies are available in the judicial, administrative, and legislative institutions as well as independent bodies such as the Office of the Ombudsman and the CHRP. The CHRP

has taken cognizance of ESCR matters as part of its mandate to monitor government compliance with international obligations. Jurisprudence is well-developed in areas such as labor rights, sexual harassment, and eviction, *inter alia*.

28. GRP's overall peace policy framework aims to end internal armed conflicts (including in Southern Philippines) that have lasted for decades and at the same time address the root causes of armed struggle and social unrest through the protection and promotion of all human rights. The Office of the Presidential Adviser for the Peace Process (OPAPP) oversees the implementation and coordination of the government's comprehensive peace agenda which includes initiatives for the rehabilitation and economic development of conflict-affected areas, community empowerment, and cooperative programs with non-government organizations, civil society groups, the private sector, and other sectors.
29. Respect for and protection of human rights is of crucial importance in laying the ground for a just and lasting peace. This is recognized in the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHIHL)¹⁶ which the GRP signed with the National Democratic Front.¹⁷ OPAPP, through the GRP Negotiating Panel for Talks with the CPP/NDF/NPA (GPNP-CNN), has been strengthening the human rights monitoring work of the government's monitoring committee.
30. **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).** In the UNDP 2007/2008 HDR, the Philippines ranked 90 out of 177 countries and falls under the Medium Human Development category. Within this range (Human Development Index 0.500-0.799), the Philippines is in the upper range with a Human Development Index (HDI) Value of 0.771. HDI Trends show steady progress for the Philippines since 1975. The country is nearing the threshold towards High Human Development and breaching the threshold is attainable within the foreseeable future.
31. The Philippines ranks 77 out of 177 countries based on Gender-related Development Index (GDI). Life expectancy for females (73.3) is higher than males (68.9) and adult literacy for females (93.6) is also higher compared to males (91.6). Similarly, combined gross enrollment ratio for females (83) is higher than males (79).
32. In terms of Inequality in Income or Expenditure Index, the Philippines' Gini Index¹⁸ is 44.5, which is comparatively respectable compared to other developing countries.
33. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has dedicated 10-billion pesos for 2008 towards poverty eradication. GRP has pursued an integrated and comprehensive national anti-poverty strategy called the *Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan*. (Linking Arms Against Poverty), which focuses on asset reform, human-development services, employment and livelihood, social protection and participatory governance.
34. GRP has been implementing major programs and projects designed to fast-track poverty-reduction efforts in cooperation with Foreign partners. Foreign-assisted projects include the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) Social Fund for Peace and Development, Development of Poor Urban Communities Sector Project, Achieving the Millennium Development Goals and Reducing Human Poverty Programme, and the KALAHI ("Brethren") Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services.
35. GRP has initiated the implementation of the following: (1) microfinance and livelihood services, (2) Poverty Free Zone Program, (2) *Unlad Kabuhayan* ("Progressive Livelihood") Program, and *Ahon-Pamilyang Pinoy* ("Lifting the Filipino Family from Poverty") Project. The Accelerated Hunger Mitigation Plan was likewise launched to address the problem of hunger with the following programs: Self Employment Assistance – Kaunlaran ("Progress")

Program¹⁹, *Tindahan Natin* (“Our Store”) Project, *Gulayan ng Masa* (“Backyard Gardening”) and Barangay Food Terminal Program, emergency public work and food for work programs.

36. The Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition 2005-2010 provides interventions to alleviate hunger and malnutrition. Through the institutionalized local nutrition committees, the National Nutrition Council and other national agencies are able to coordinate the formulation of plans at the local level and the implementation of various health and nutrition programs such as *Garantisadong Pambata* (“Guaranteed for Children”), the Salt Iodization Nationwide Act, Food Fortification, Nutrition Education, National Supplemental Feeding Program, and Food-for-School Program.
37. GRP has set up the Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) to better identify who and where the poor are and what their needs are. The CBMS is a poverty monitoring system that makes use of computer-based processing in generating the core local poverty indicators at the household level.
38. The Philippine populace has also enjoyed better health over the past 20 years, indicating progress in achieving the country’s Millennium Development Goals (MDG) health targets by 2015. Overall infant mortality and under 5 mortality rates dropped from 46/1000 and 72/1000 live births in 1998 to 24/1000 and 22/1000 live births in 2006, respectively.
39. GRP’s education strategy flows from the Education for All (EFA) 2015 Program, the overarching framework for basic education. Proposed reforms under the Department of Education’s (DepEd) Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA) have also been undergoing refinements, e.g., the Schools First Initiative (SFI) and empowering the local communities to improve education.
40. DepEd has incorporated basic Human Rights Education (HRE) in the elementary and secondary levels of the education system. Human rights values and principles are integrated into the school curricula to promote human dignity, humanism, sense of nationhood, work ethics, and other similar values. HRE is provided in the non-formal system for out-of-school youths, children, and adults. Children and women’s rights and their protection are also given emphasis.
41. The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) has adopted employment-promoting strategies at the national and regional levels. In 2007, average employment growth accelerated by 2.3% with a commensurate decline to 6.3 % as of October 2007 in the unemployment rate.
42. In pursuit of the MDGs target, GRP, in partnership with the private sector, provided security of tenure or shelter security units (e.g., house and lot, house only or lot only) to 710,203 households from 2000 to 2006. The Government’s main home loan facility has liberalized requirements, lowered interest rates, and extended its repayment period.
43. To reduce the number of Philippine families with substandard dwellings, the National Shelter Program launched by the Government implements the following: (a) resettlement; (b) slum upgrading; (c) sites and services development; (d) core housing; (e) Community Mortgage Program; and (f) asset reform program. The private sector such as *Gawad Kalinga* (“To Give Care”), an initiative of “Couples for Christ,” and Habitat for Humanity also implemented housing projects.
44. GRP launched the FOURmula One for Health Program as the implementing framework for health sector reforms to achieve better health outcomes, create a more responsive health system and provide for equitable health care financing. The four thrusts of the program are the following: (a) higher, better and sustained financing; (b) regulation to ensure quality and

- affordability; (c) service delivery to ensure access and availability; and (d) governance to improve performance.
45. To date, the Government was able to establish 10,000 “*Botika ng Bayan*” (low cost pharmacies) throughout the country by providing subsidies. The Philippine Legislature is presently considering the passage of appropriate legislative measures to address the rising cost of medicines.
 46. The Philippine AIDS Prevention and Control Act (1998) has been cited by UNAIDS and used by many countries as a model legislation for national HIV response. The Philippines AIDS Medium Term Plan covers the right of People Living with HIV (PLWH) to access comprehensive prevention, treatment, care, and support and support the fight against the resulting stigma and discrimination. Some companies have now established their AIDS in the Workplace Programmes.
 47. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and Civil Society organizations maintain halfway houses, shelter and social service centers for women and youth who are victims of crime or are in conflict with the law.
 48. Recognizing that persons with disabilities, as a vulnerable sector and a human rights concern to which particular attention should be paid, GRP has adopted legislation and initiatives to create an “inclusive and rights-based environment” for persons with disabilities. From a surge of enabling laws, the most crucial was the “Magna Carta for Disabled Persons,” a landmark law that established for this sector the right to education, to work, to health and auxiliary services, the right to organize, vote, be elected. It also advocates the passage of rights-based legislation.
 49. In 2006, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP) and the Asia Pacific Center on Disability (APCD) recognized the country’s high-impact programs on Non-Handicapping Environment and Accessible Information & Communications Technology (ICT) for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), as among Asia Pacific Region’s best practices. In 2003, the country hosted 13 countries in sync with the UN-Division on Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), which passed 2 milestone documents, i.e., the “Manila Declaration,” and “Recommendations on Accessible ICT.”
 50. The President transferred the National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons (NCWDP), the national lead agency on persons with disability, to the Office of the President, through Executive Order 676 to further enhance the rights of this sector. Earlier, in April 2007, the government passed Republic Act No. 9442, amending the Magna Carta, by providing the sector a 20% discount on public establishments similar to that provided to senior citizens, and added provisions on the sector’s protection from public ridicule and vilification.
 51. Graft and corruption remain serious concerns. Accordingly, “Anti-Corruption through Good Governance” is one of five priority areas identified by the President of the Philippines, as the foundation of her administration.
 52. Firm legal, regulatory, and punitive counter-corruption measures are being implemented including the following: (1) strengthening of the Office of the Ombudsman’s investigation and prosecution capacities; (2) adoption of continuous trials in Philippine anti-graft court, the *Sandiganbayan*²⁰; and (3) installing electronic case management and information systems. The Philippines’ anti-corruption strategies also include lifestyle checks on public officials, as well as procurement reforms, which opens government projects to public scrutiny.
 53. Government decentralization has also posed challenges on the division of labor and financial responsibility between national and local governments. About 90% of local governments

depend on the national government's internal revenue allotment system. Local government units should have the responsibility to develop means to attract investments on their own to spur their development.

54. The Philippines has to devote a large budget share for debt-service payment. Although robust economic growth, trade expansion through liberalization and facilitation, a strong currency, and sound financial and economic fundamentals have improved the government's budget situation, greater budgetary resources are needed to sustain socio-economic and governmental reforms.
55. Addressing the country's rapid population growth is important for overall economic growth and prospects for poverty reduction. The GRP's population policy includes the promotion of responsible parenthood and better health services, including reproductive health services. The goal is to reduce the population growth rate to 1.9% by 2010.
56. Migration is believed to have caused both "brain drain" and social problems. Given the large number of overseas Filipinos, estimated at about 10 percent of the total population, these problems have serious implications for economic and social stability and development. Government programs are anchored on a holistic approach to the migration phenomenon, encompassing development, human rights protection, health and family services, skills acquisition and socio-economic reintegration.
57. The country is working to overcome the consequences of decades-long internal conflicts that impede stability, development, poverty-alleviation and the protection of all human rights in conflict areas. GRP, nonetheless, pursues a policy of utmost respect, protection and support for all human rights, both as integral to the national Peace Process, and to all internal security and defense operations.
58. Government offices are presently understaffed, underfinanced and under-equipped in both office and technical equipment and capacity development initiatives. Public sector salaries cannot compete with those of the private sector, thus making it difficult to attract the skilled professionals to the investigative, prosecutorial, judicial, and human rights services.
59. Challenges also remain in the areas of ensuring the sustainability of these livelihood and micro-enterprise activities and linking them with the mainstream market in terms of skills, products/services, credit, and information technology, among others.
60. Social welfare programs and projects need to be better-targeted and strategically designed to address the needs of the poor and the vulnerable groups such as women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, and indigenous peoples. Cooperation between government, civil society and local intermediaries should be strengthened.
61. Challenges in the workplace include the need to increase social security coverage; enhance enforcement by increasing the labor inspectorate; and, boost compliance rate in occupational health and safety standards. Collective organizations such as unions and workers' associations in the public and private sectors as well as collective bargaining coverage rate could also be further encouraged.
62. The Philippines is prone to natural disasters being in the Pacific Ring of Fire and the typhoon belt. Resources that otherwise would go to economic development and public services and infrastructure are drawn away by the need to respond to human catastrophes caused by natural disaster and calamities.
63. Despite the abovementioned challenges, the Philippines has made respectable gains in providing "better standards of life in larger freedom" for its people in terms of human

development (as measured by UNDP's Human Development Index) and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

64. **Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).** The Philippines has made progress in closing the gender gap as it ranked 6th among 128 countries in the 2007 Global Gender Gap Report published by the World Economic Forum. This index was developed measuring four categories – economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, political participation, and health and survival.
65. In terms of Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM)²¹, the Philippines ranks 45 out of 177 countries. Ratio of estimated female to male earned income is 0.61. There are more female professional and technical workers (61% of total) than males. There is also an increase in the number of female legislators in Congress.
66. The Philippines has a long tradition of women's participatory inclusion and empowerment, in both public and private sectors. Women are well represented in all three branches of government (two presidents have been women) and are also in the police and armed services. Landmark legislation on women, include the Women in Development and Nation-building Act, laws promoting the greater participation of women in the economy, and laws addressing violence against women and children.
67. For 33 years, the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) has ensured that policies, plans, structures and mechanisms to sustain gender mainstreaming in government were developed and strengthened. A Framework Plan for Women, a time-slice of the 30-year Philippine Plan for Gender-responsive Development (PPGD), 1995-2025, prioritizes women's economic empowerment, women's human rights, and gender-responsive governance. A Gender and Development (GAD) Budget Policy requires at least 5 percent of national and local government budgets are allocated for programs and services for women and gender equality.
68. At the local level, 63 local government units have enacted GAD Codes and 1,650 local women's or GAD councils have been created. Implementation of programs that address gender issues such as violence against women and women's health services have improved. Regional GAD Resource Centers have been set up in 8 regions to provide technical assistance.
69. The NCRFW and OPAPP have held joint workshops to forge cooperation among stakeholders in recognizing issues and promoting initiatives concerning gender and peace. NCRFW co-organized with civil society groups a workshop on UN Security Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security geared towards the formulation of a national action plan to implement the Resolution.
70. With the improved performance of women in formal education, greater attention is now being focused in expanding job options of women through technical-vocational training and non-formal education programs that are implemented by government agencies and NGOs. In the last decade, Filipino women have become increasingly active as men in realizing their economic rights, while being assisted with their childcare and other family responsibilities. They are in all kinds of employment in formal or informal work settings here and abroad. The last decade had seen an increase in the number of women in the labor force with 49% of all women working compared to 79% of men.
71. Filipino women almost equal men in numbers as workers overseas. There had also been a rising percentage of women in management and economic decision-making positions.
72. Credit programs have reached over a million women in urban and rural areas, including women operating small and medium enterprises.²² In March 2007, the President instructed concerned

- agencies to work with cooperatives and NGOs to provide wider access to microfinance funds for women, and instructed the Philippine Credit and Finance Corporation (PCFC) to make microfinance available to women in government.
73. Landmark laws to eliminate violence against women, such as sexual harassment, rape, trafficking in persons, and domestic violence have been passed.²³ The delivery of government and NGO programs aimed at preventing violence against women has benefited a considerable number of Violence Against Women (VAW) survivors. Performance standards for gender-responsive handling of VAW cases by local officials, police, social workers, health workers, and prosecutors have been developed.
 74. The Supreme Court has created a Committee on Gender-Responsiveness in the Judiciary. In support of the Violence against Women and Their Children (VAWC) Act, the Court issued the *Rule on Violence Against Women and their Children*, which seeks to protect the rights of the family and its members, particularly women and children, from violence and threats to their personal safety and security, and enables the courts to manage and monitor such cases.
 75. The Inter-agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) monitors the implementation of prevention, protection, recovery and reintegration programs. Information dissemination campaigns, enforcement of local ordinance against trafficking in persons, and livelihood assistance for victims and families affected by trafficking continue to be done.
 76. The PNP and the NBI conducted 25 rescue operations and investigated 109 cases of trafficking for the period 2003-2005. The Department of Justice (DOJ) received a total of 114 cases of trafficking in 2005, 60 cases in 2004, and 12 cases in 2003. Since the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law was enacted in 2003, ten persons have been convicted.²⁴
 77. Government policies that promote women's reproductive health include: promoting Responsible Parenthood; promoting birth spacing of 3 to 5 years from recent pregnancy; respecting 'Informed Choice'; and promoting 'Respect for Life' Health services, including Reproductive Health Services, are devolved by the Local Government Code (LGC) to the local government units (LGU). To date 20 LGUs have enacted reproductive health codes.
 78. Programs for safe pregnancy, contraceptive self reliance and networking with NGOs for policy advocacy, public awareness and service delivery are being undertaken.²⁵ To reduce maternal deaths, the health department provides an integrated package of women's health and safe motherhood services in strategically located health facilities²⁶The maternal and newborn care package provides mothers with easy access to Emergency Obstetric Care services (EmOC) approach.
 79. The establishment of a legal framework for the promotion of gender equality and women's rights is imperative. The Philippines needs to enact a comprehensive legal framework that will integrate CEDAW in the national legal system through the passage of the Magna Carta of Women (MCW) bill. This is to ensure that gender discrimination is addressed across all sectors, including indigenous and Muslim women, and in all spheres. Also, the passage of the MCW will strengthen the national machinery for the advancement of women and provide it with the authority, decision making power, and human and financial resources vital to its work to effectively promote gender equality. The Women's Priority Legislative Agenda should receive higher priority in Congress. The NCRFW is also working with government agencies to develop and monitor indicators for the progressive realization of women's human rights.
 80. Other identified gaps include the need to match location of VAWC services with VAW incidence per region or province, prevalence of VAW cases, and the need for wider gender-responsive judicial and non-judicial interventions. The special needs for rehabilitation and post-

conflict care of women and children in vulnerable situations and conflict areas need to be addressed.

81. While women are very visible in the labor force, major concerns of women include their dominance in informal economy and unpaid work. In formal employment, they are in low-paying and insecure jobs. Thus, jobs and economic opportunities with social protection measures should be designed.
82. **Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).** Consultations with children revealed the need for the Government to enhance its plans and programs to strengthen their protection as a vulnerable group.
83. In response, the Philippine National Strategic Framework for Plan Development for Children, otherwise known as “Child 21” was adopted by the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) for the period 2000-2025. It aims to build a “child-sensitive and child-friendly society” as the country’s promise to Filipino children in the 21st century. It is a road map and guide to make plans and programs for children that are more focused and that follow the provisions, principles and standards of the CRC. The current medium term plan for Child 21 called National Plan of Action for Children (NPAC) for 2005-2010 adopts the relevant Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and the World Fit for Children (WFFC) Goals. A Comprehensive Programme on Child Protection (CPCP), an elaboration of the child protection component of NPAC, was launched on 18 June 2007.
84. In accordance with guidelines developed by Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), local councils for the protection of children (LCPC) at provincial, municipal, city and barangay levels have been organized, activated and strengthened to serve as institutional mechanisms for coordinating and monitoring CRC implementation at the local level. As of December 2006, 73 out of 81 provinces, 126 out of 132 cities, 1,365 out of 1,496 municipalities and 40,994 out of 41,994 barangays have organized local councils, at varying levels of functionality.
85. GRP protects children from involvement in armed conflict which has been given specific attention by the Inter-Agency Committee on Children Involved in Armed Conflict (CIAC) Program co-chaired by OPAPP and CWC. Based on combined reports from (DSWD, Department of National Defense-AFP and NGOs), from 2001-2006, 174 out of 186 have been demobilized and reunited with their families. Three-hundred (300) children aged nine (9) to seventeen (17) years old benefited from DOLE’s Community Sala’am (Peace) Corps Project with education, skills training, employment and livelihood assistance in 2005-2006. DSWD also provided social services and interventions to protect and rehabilitate children who are direct or indirect victims of armed conflict. OPAPP monitors compliance by concerned agencies, including the AFP, of the existing guidelines on handling and treatment of rescued and recovered CIAC.
86. Institutional and technical capacity to ensure the functionality of “Child 21” and its medium-term plan called National Plan of Action for Children (NPAC) should be sustained. The network and the mechanism through which Child 21 will be implemented, requires functional certainty both at the national and local levels. This mechanism includes the strengthening of the Local Protection Mechanism for Children (LCPC).
87. **Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families (CMW).** Today, the Philippines is among the largest migrant-sending countries in the world. The number of documented Overseas Filipino Workers exceeded the 1 million mark in 2005, registering a total of 1.205 million. The Overseas Workers’ Welfare Administration (OWWA) successfully provided comprehensive services and programs for the OFWs and members of their families.

88. To provide workers with social security consistent with the standards set under ILO Conventions²⁷ on the Establishment of an International System for the Maintenance of Rights in Social Security, the Philippine government has entered into several Social Security bilateral agreements with Austria, Belgium, Canada, Quebec, France, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The agreement with Republic of Korea is currently under negotiations. The bilateral agreements cover: a) mutual assistance in the field of social security; b) equality of treatment for nationals of both countries; c) export of social security benefits; and d) accumulation of membership periods in both the host country and the Philippines schemes.
89. GRP exerts all possible diplomatic and legal means and resources to assist its distressed migrant workers/nationals abroad.
90. **Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD).** The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) administers programs for the Indigenous Peoples/Indigenous Cultural Communities (IPs/ICCs) in the country. It has ensured IP land security tenure by issuing 57 Certificates of Ancestral Domain Titles (CADTs) covering 1,116,260 hectares of land, representing 20% of the projected 6 million hectares of Ancestral Domain nationwide. It has also issued 172 Certificates of Ancestral Land Titles (CALTs) covering an area of 4,838 hectares, assisted in the formulation of 21 Ancestral Domains Sustainable Development and Protection Plans (ADSDPP) with 73 ADSDPPs ongoing formulation. NCIP, in partnership with civil society constituted 66 Provincial Consultative Bodies. It also assisted 86,340 Educational Assistance grantees, and provided legal services and various socio-economic and cultural projects.
91. The ADSDPP adheres to the rights-based approach (RBA) in governance and development with the Indigenous Peoples being fully responsible in formulating their ADSDPPs in accordance with their customary laws, practices, traditions and institutions. On the other hand, the Indigenous Peoples Consultative Body (IPCB), a multi-level and independent council of IP leaders serves as the collective voice of Indigenous Peoples in advocating their concerns and aspirations at all levels.
92. Challenges confronting Indigenous Peoples/Indigenous Cultural Communities are handled by the NCIP through the application of relevant provisions of the IPRA, the “Rules and Pleadings, Practice and Procedure before the NCIP”, the NCIP “Guidelines on Free, Prior and Informed Consent” (FPIC), and the regular existing legal instruments.
93. Indigenous Peoples have rightful access to mainstream governance as well as in exercising their rights to self-governance. The Local Government Code of 1991 and the IPRA have provisions to address the governance situation of Indigenous Peoples aimed at upgrading their socio-economic development, the provision of adequate educational and health services, as well as guarantee their physical security and welfare.
94. Respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples/ Indigenous Cultural Communities during armed conflict is specifically provided in Section 22 of IPRA. Tapping authentic and recognized IP leaders and respecting existing leadership structures and peace building mechanisms in peace efforts before, during and after armed conflict as well as the active involvement of Indigenous Peoples in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement with the Government have minimized the impact of armed conflict on Indigenous Peoples/Indigenous Cultural Communities.
95. The major challenges faced by the Indigenous Peoples and other stakeholders are associated with their institutional capacities and sustainability of traditional institutions, domains, and cultural well-being in the face of modernization brought about by economic development.

96. To overcome these challenges, key interventions are required, notably, the integration of Indigenous Knowledge, Systems and Practices (IKSPs) into the local and national development framework; utilization of existing IKSPs and Indigenous People leadership structures in government interventions; enhancement of cultural sensitivity and responsive interventions based from IP perspectives and worldview; and, heightened information, education and advocacy on the collective and individual rights of Indigenous Peoples.

CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

97. The Bill of Rights, contained in Art. III of the Constitution occupies a position of primacy in the fundamental law. The guarantees enumerated in the Bill of Rights include the due process and equal protection clause, the right against unwarranted searches and seizures, the right to free speech and the free exercise of religion, the right against self-incrimination, and the right to habeas corpus. The scope and limitations of these rights have been determined largely by the decisions of the Supreme Court, which also has exclusive rule-making jurisdiction, under Art. VIII Sec. 5(5) of the Constitution, to promulgate rules concerning the protection and enforcement of constitutional rights.
98. Outside of the Bill of Rights, the Constitution also contains provisions on citizenship, right to suffrage, accountability of public officers, national economy and patrimony. Specific attention has been given in the Constitution to social justice, family, women, youth, labor, private sector, non-governmental, community-based and sectoral organizations, right to health, right to a balanced ecology, rural development and agrarian reform, indigenous cultural communities and human rights, *inter alia*.
99. For complaints of human rights violations, effective remedies are available through judicial, administrative and legislative processes, including inquiries in aid of legislation, internal administrative disciplinary procedures in executive agencies, the police, and armed forces. Independent bodies such as the Ombudsman and CHRP also provide alternative procedures for complaints and redress.
100. The Office of the Ombudsman is an independent and fiscally-autonomous body created by the Constitution as the “people’s champion” responsible for the investigation and prosecution of graft and corruption cases against those holding public office, including men in uniform.
101. The CHRP is a vigilant and vocal guardian of human rights including civil and political rights, holding public hearings, conducting investigations and issuing advisories on specific cases and national issues such as the protection of human rights even during a state of national emergency. It provides assistance to victims, recommends cases for prosecution, and monitors the progress of cases through the criminal justice system. The CHRP also conducts visitation of jails to inspect the conditions of detention and treatment of prisoners. Specific complaints are looked into including medical examinations by the CHRP and its reports are made available to the public. President Arroyo allocated 25-million pesos to augment CHRP’s budget to ensure the exercise of its independent mandate in addressing activist and media killings.
102. The Supreme Court has, through the *Guidelines on the Selection and Designation of Executive Judges and Defining their Powers, Prerogatives and Duties*, added jail visitations among the tasks of the executive judges.
103. For those who cannot afford legal counsel, the Public Attorney’s Office under the DOJ provides a wide range of legal services including prosecution and defense. Prosecution is the responsibility of the prosecution pillar which comprises primarily of two national government agencies, namely, the National Prosecution Service, an organic unit of the Department of Justice (DOJ), and the Office of the Ombudsman.

104. **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).** In consonance with promotion of the right to life, the Philippine Government has condemned all forms of killings. In testimony of its firm commitment to the value and sanctity of human life and in the belief that the defense of life is strengthened by eliminating the exercise of judicial authorization to take life, the Philippines abolished the Death Penalty²⁸ ratified the 2nd Optional Protocol of the International Covenant on Civil and Political rights (ICCPR). To sustain this commitment, the Philippines co-sponsored and co-authored the Resolution calling for a Moratorium on Executions, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 18 December 2007.
105. The Philippine government has taken firm measures to address the problem of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances. Addressing this most urgent concern, by bringing their perpetrators to justice and preventing such killings in future, remains a priority of Government. Due to a coordinated, multi-agency approach that gathered momentum in 2007, both government and civil society have indicated a significant drop in incidents for the past year. The PNP reported that the incidence of killings of activists and media dramatically declined from 2006 to 2007.
106. The President of the Philippines established the independent Melo Commission in 2006 to investigate activist and media killings. The recommendations of the Melo Commission and other measures, were adopted and operationalized by the Executive Branch as well as the Legislature and the Judiciary, notably:
- Task Force *Usig* (Task Force Prosecution) was formed on 13 May 2006 under the PNP to immediately investigate unexplained killings. As reported, the police already filed 80 cases against suspects in the murders of 141 political activists and journalists;
 - The President issued A.O. 181 Creating a Task Force on Extrajudicial Killings, a special team of prosecutors from the DOJ;
 - Issuance of Administrative Order No. 181 (July 2007) strengthening the coordination between the National Prosecution Service and other concerned agencies of government for the successful investigation and prosecution of political and media killings;
 - In October 2007, the President of the Philippines ordered the PNP and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to take active steps to prevent human rights violations by men in uniform. This includes instructions and training designed to reiterate to all PNP and AFP personnel that human rights abuses will not be tolerated;
 - The President issued A.O. 211 creating a multi-agency Task Force against Political Violence, *Task Force 211*, (November 2007) to increase coordination between the Department of Justice, the Department of National Defense, the Presidential Human Rights Committee, investigative and national security agencies, and civil society for speedier solutions to such violence²⁹.
107. In strengthening the witness protection program and creating a team of prosecutors to handle such cases, President Arroyo has certified as urgent before Congress legislation to strengthen the Witness Protection Program. Other legislation that the President has certified as urgent includes the imposition of harsher penalties on persons who commit political killings, and imposing the harshest penalties on persons in uniform who commit such killings.
108. As part of the peace process, OPAPP convened the Inter-Agency Technical Working Group on alleged Extrajudicial Killings to review the different lists of incidents drawn up by groups in and out of the country. This working group is composed of representatives chosen by Government and those chosen by the Communist Party of the Philippines/National Democratic

Front/National Peoples Army (CPP/NPA/NDF). OPAPP also provides immediate humanitarian support to victims and families of human rights violations such as extrajudicial killings.

109. As a concrete manifestation of the Philippines' willingness to cooperate with the international human rights system, it invited UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions, Professor Philip Alston, in February 2007. Professor Alston thanked the government for engaging with him on this key human rights issue when he addressed the UN General Assembly last year. He has also acknowledged that the country has taken a significant number of initiatives since his visit.
110. The unwavering commitment of the Executive Branch of government to address this concern has been complemented by the Judiciary. The Supreme Court has instructed all courts to prioritize such cases now pending in Philippine courts. It also convened the *National Consultative Summit on EKJ and Enforced Disappearances (Summit)*, and the recommendations generated during the Summit resulted in proposed legislation in congress and the promulgation of the *Rule on the Writ of Amparo*³⁰, and the *Rule on the Writ of Habeas Data*³¹. Since the promulgation of the rule on the Writ of Amparo, 25 petitions have been filed, with 20 writs issued.
111. Both chambers of Congress have also included in their respective legislative agenda proposed laws designed to further improve the procedure in addressing complaints against public officials including those suspected of committing acts which may constitute torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment and extrajudicial killings.
112. The creation of the inter-agency task force on the pillars of justice is a concrete mechanism that provides a venue to improve inter-pillar coordination both at the policy and operational levels.
113. All the pillars of the criminal justice system, together with the CHRP, are promoting rights-based system of criminal justice. These are undertaken through key interventions, including jail visits and evaluation, independent fact-finding investigation, human rights advocacy and education in coordination with the Department of Education.
114. To place greater emphasis on human rights training, education and information, Memorandum Order No. 258 was issued to institutionalize human rights education and training of law enforcement, police, and military and prison personnel.
115. Although the Philippine ratification process on Protocol I of the 1949 Geneva Conventions is ongoing, measures to implement its provisions are already included in AFP manuals and directives particularly those pertaining to the Standing Rules of Engagement and Civil Military Operations.
116. The Human Rights Offices of the AFP and PNP, apart from their pursuit of continuing education programs and planning for human rights, are likewise tasked among others, to receive formal complaints on alleged violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, and to undertake the appropriate investigation. The human rights desk of the NBI is also tasked mainly to monitor cases of human rights violations, receive complaints of the violations, receive intelligence reports of human rights violations, and coordinate with the CHRP.
117. All military and law enforcement units of the government human rights components are included in the training programs, in close collaboration with the CHRP³². The prohibition of torture is in fact included in the PNP's training courses.

118. The Office of the Ombudsman is also initiating its own teaching and community awareness programs on corruption.
119. The Philippines repealed several years ago the Anti-Subversion Law and legitimized the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). Organizations of all political persuasions and sectoral interest groups have the opportunity to secure congressional representation and participation in mainstream elections through the party list system. *BantayBayan* (“Nation Watch”), a civil society organization with members previously belonging to the communist insurgency movement, noted during the consultations for this Report that this was a major improvement from the pre-1987 Constitution period.
120. GRP, in its efforts to counteract the menace of terrorism, ensured that the protection of the constitutionally guaranteed rights of the individual is not compromised. The Human Security Act, enacted in 2007, provides sufficient safeguards to protect the rights of an individual against possible abuses by law enforcement agencies.
121. The right of suffrage of the Filipino people has been broadened to include the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and other Filipino nationals abroad, allowing them to participate in elections under R.A. No. 9189, the “Overseas Absentee Voting (OAV) Act of 2003”. To complement the OAV Act, the Dual Citizenship Law was also subsequently passed by the Philippine Legislature.
122. In response to public advocacy, the Government will also take steps to ensure that persons with disabilities are provided with physical access and other facilities at polling centers.
123. In keeping with the Constitution, the Philippine Labor Code expressly mandates the protection of all peaceful concerted activities, including strikes³³ that are conducted in accordance with law.³⁴ While the exercise of labor rights has been accorded primacy in the Philippines, the law, in consonance with international standards, draws the line between the valid exercise of such rights as against the patent violation of laws.
124. As protected by the Constitution, all faiths are freely and openly practiced in the Philippines. To secure long-term peace in the region of Mindanao, the Government has also been actively fostered an enabling environment to promote interfaith dialogue. At the national level, it has (1) promoted laws to safeguard individual rights to freedom of religion and worship and (2) promoted various programs, such as the National Peace Plan, the Sixteen Point Counter-Terrorism Program, and more recently, Executive Order No. 626 creating a National Committee on Interfaith Cooperation (NCIC). On the international level, the Philippines is at the forefront of interfaith initiatives. It advocates increased support for a resolution on the promotion of interfaith dialogue for peace at the United Nations General Assembly and has spearheaded the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace (TFICP).
125. The Constitution guarantees the right of free expression. The Supreme Court has repeatedly upheld them in landmark cases³⁵ in relation to Articles 19, 21, and 22 of the ICCPR.
126. The Philippines has one of the freest presses in the world. The country has a proliferation of numerous publications, broadcast programs and internet news sites. Remedies³⁶ and complaints mechanisms are available to the media to ensure their freedom and independence. While Congress deliberates a bill to possibly decriminalize libel, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court recently encouraged all courts to impose fines instead of imprisonment, as allowed by law, for those convicted of libel.
127. There are growing initiatives in civil society to organize the community into a powerful and constructive force, both in demanding appropriate justice remedies and in contributing to the provision of justice remedies to strengthen human rights.

128. Civil society groups provide a variety of services affecting human rights, including community based legal services (through the Barangay Justice System, FLAG or Free Legal Assistance Group, Catholic Lawyers Guild, and St. Tomas Moore and Associates, among others); and community policing (through the Federation of PNP-Accredited NGOs or FAN under their community policing programs along specialized areas of interest such as drugs, pornography, violence against women, etc). The role of an organized community is primarily that of providing assistance to demand justice remedies, restorative justice, community information and education, and community-based alternative dispute resolution.
129. Many of the challenges in promoting and protecting economic and social rights, which had been previously discussed, also confront the promotion and protection of civil and political rights.
130. The pillars of the criminal justice system as well as independent bodies such as the CHRP and the Ombudsman, suffer from major resource constraints. The Government is cognizant of the need to provide mechanisms for strengthening the independence of criminal justice institutions particularly in the provision and management of budget, skilled human resources, and physical resources, *inter alia*.
131. The determination of the overall performance of the criminal justice system in providing remedies is ultimately established by the performance statistics of the courts. The pace and quality of the litigation process is influenced by several factors that are outside of the judicial institutions – the ability to produce the right witness and present evidence and to arrest the suspect by the law enforcement agencies; the quality and pace of case preparation and preliminary investigation and leads to the establishment of a probable cause by the prosecution; the competence of prosecutors and defenders; the availability, quality and cooperation of witnesses; and other relevant factors. The performance of the courts therefore would serve to synthesize to a large extent the overall performance of the criminal justice system.
132. The assessment of the performance of the police in meaningfully contributing to providing appropriate justice remedies is constrained by the deficiency of modern crime and performance information capabilities within the PNP and NBI. Strengthening the witness protection program and upgrading the forensic capability of the PNP and NBI, *inter alia*, are imperative.
133. **Convention Against Torture (CAT).** In addition to the abovementioned mentioned actions and policies on civil and political rights that also encompass the rights against torture, and cruel and unusual treatment or punishment, GRP has also taken actions and adopted policies to fulfill its obligations under the convention.
134. The Constitution of the Philippines prohibits the use of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment.
135. The Revised Penal Code criminalizes all acts of torture with corresponding penalties. Laws have also been passed to prevent acts which could be considered as torture, or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment notably, Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act, the Anti-Sexual Harassment , and the Anti-Hazing Law.
136. The Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) has issued Administrative Disciplinary Machinery (2003) to penalize employees for “maltreatment and abuse of any prisoner under one’s custody” as well as for efforts to harass, intimidate, coerce, or unduly influence a complainant or any of his/her vital witnesses into withdrawing his/her complaint or retracting his/her sworn statement.

137. The Philippines has also strengthened domestic support for the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (CAT) and has taken note of the pro-active stance of multi-sectoral groups. As such, the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), as the lead agency for the Philippines' treaty compliance to the CAT, has activated an inter-agency working group on CAT implementation and monitoring.
138. Currently, legislative measures to specifically criminalize torture have been introduced in the Philippine Legislature.
139. With the strengthening of the PHRC and the designation of the DILG to lead the working group on compliance to the CAT, GRP has strengthened its institutions for fuller compliance and implementation of the CAT.

CEDAW, CRC and CERD

140. The Philippine criminal justice system has legal mechanisms for the protection of women, migrant workers, youth, indigenous peoples, and other vulnerable groups. At least 15 laws have been passed during the last decade on the protection of their rights. The PNP and NBI have established mechanisms for dealing with women, youth and children. The PNP operates Women and Children Protection Desks in police stations staffed by accordingly-trained policemen/policewomen. As mentioned earlier, the DSWD and civil society also maintain institutions to address needs of women and children in conflict with the law or victims of crimes.
141. As of 2007, all children in conflict with the law below 15 years of age have been relocated to more appropriate facilities. The challenge remains to establish more detention homes and rehabilitation centers at the local level.
142. In cognizance of the provisions of the CRC, legislative gaps and issues requiring review, reform and enactment have been identified in the 2005 UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Concluding Observations. The issues include a) minimum age of criminal responsibility, b) minimum age of sexual consent, c) prohibition of torture, d) lack of comprehensive juvenile justice system, e) discrimination against children born out of wedlock, f) use of children for pornography, and g) corporal punishment, among others.
143. The Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006 is expected to benefit close to 10,000 children in conflict with the law annually. Its provisions were adopted from key international instruments, such as the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice, UN Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency, and the UN Rules for the Protection of Juvenile Deprived of Liberty. Concerns on cases of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of children, particularly of children in detention had also been addressed legally through the enactment of this law.
144. During the period 2004-2006, some other laws were passed such as: a) Republic Act 9255, An Act Allowing Illegitimate Children to Use the Surname of their Father; b) Republic Act 9262 or Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004, An Act protecting women and their children from physical, emotional, sexual, psychological and economic abuses; and c) Republic Act 9288 or the Newborn Screening Act of 2004, promulgating a comprehensive policy and a national system for ensuring newborn screening.
145. The Supreme Court has also promulgated rules focusing on children's rights, specifically the *Rule on the Examination of a Child Witness* (2000), *Rule on Juveniles in Conflict with the Law* (2002), *Rule on Violence Against Women and their Children* (2004), and *Rule on Children Charged Under the Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002* (2007).

146. In 2007 a building was erected which now houses 154 Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL). Three jail facilities were built in the national capital region as well as Region IV-A and Region 7.
147. As of December 2007, all CICLs who are 15 years old and below have been released from jails and detention homes. Some 10.2 million pesos was allotted to repair city, district, and municipal jail facilities nationwide. The adoption of the 'Restorative Justice' approach has also been an effective means for inmates' reformation, rehabilitation, and integration into the mainstream of society.

IV. ROADMAP AND EXPECTATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

148. GRP has begun multi-sector consultations to formulate the 2nd national human rights action plan and program. With commitments from various stakeholders, this will set the course for human rights protection and promotion and cooperation between government and civil society for the next five (5) years.
149. The government will continue to intensify its efforts to meet the basic needs of the poor and vulnerable groups. Protective, inclusive, and progressive policies and programs in the areas of poverty alleviation and social protection will be deepened.
150. GRP will implement policies which will strengthen the economy and help people's self-reliance by: (a) mobilizing domestic resources; (b) improving employment opportunities; (c) increasing the foreign exchange earning capacity; and (d) equitable sharing of income and wealth. Fiscal reforms have to be expeditiously implemented and budgetary reform initiatives must favor basic social services. The government will remain vigilant in delivering its services in the most cost-effective way.
151. The key national priorities for housing are: (a) continuation of urban land proclamations; (b) adopt the localization scheme and accessing innovative sources of income; (c) simplify the shelter subsidy system; (d) expand private sector participation in housing finance and construction; (e) encourage private developers to construct more housing units and ensure that their investments are adequately covered; (f) Partnership with multi-lateral donor agencies.
152. For 2008-2010, GRP, in partnership with labor and management and the civil society, shall intensify its efforts towards the achievement of its vision of "full, decent and productive employment for every Filipino worker" through the delivery of services that will contribute to achieving its four strategic goals: (a) a gainfully employed workforce; (b) a globally competitive workforce; (c) a secure workforce; and (d) a safe and healthy workforce.
153. GRP will also continue to strengthen its current programs to address health issues confronting it. Key national priorities will focus on Health Financing, Health Regulation, Health Service Delivery and Health Governance.
154. **CEDAW** - GRP, with the support of the UN Joint Programme to facilitate implementation of the CEDAW concluding comments, will continue to pursue the following: (1) clarify the status of CEDAW in the national legal system through the passage of the Magna Carta of Women; (2) review and initiate revision of discriminatory provisions in national laws such as those on marital infidelity, the Code of Muslim Personal Laws (addressing polygamy, early and forced marriage), and prostitution; (3) increase awareness and conduct public education campaigns on elimination of gender stereotyping; (4) enhance the situation of women in the informal economy and create an entrepreneurial environment for women to engage in micro and small businesses; (5) provide integrated women's health packages to reduce maternal mortality rates;

- (6) pay particular attention to rural, indigenous and Muslim women and their social, economic and health needs; (7) expand and strengthen the capacity of law-enforcers, service providers, and the Judiciary in gender-sensitive and rights-based provision of anti-VAW services. LGUs will also continue their crucial role in making women's health services available.
155. The Department of Health (DOH), through its Women and Children Protection units (WCPU) in government hospitals, provide holistic, gender-responsive health care to women survivors.
 156. **CRC** - In compliance with the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006, which (1) prohibits cruel and inhuman treatment and punishment; (2) introduces restorative justice; (3) provides for diversion programs for children in conflict with the law (CICL); and (4) prohibits detention of youth offenders aged 15 years old and below in jails, the Government will train service providers in handling CICLs. Facilities will be built to separate children from adults in all detention centers in the country.
 157. To provide universal access to primary education, GRP will continue to accord the highest priority to education in its national budget and will scale up effective learning strategies including alternative learning systems (ALS) to reach out-of-school youths, children in armed conflict and IP children.
 158. Campaigns in schools, media and communities on child rights through BRIGHT CHILD as a brand name for programs and services for children particularly against on AIDS awareness and against child abuse, corporal punishment, exploitation, substance abuse will be intensified.
 159. Interventions to reduce infant and child mortality such as immunization, micronutrient supplementation proper nutrition, de-worming and clean water will be adequately funded by government through LGUs especially for disparity areas.
 160. The government will continue to monitor and ensure the proper implementation of the laws that uphold the Rights of the Child and will pursue passage of legislation addressing (1) the minimum age of sexual consent/ increasing the age of statutory rape; (2) child pornography; (3) corporal punishment and other forms of violence in the home, school and the community; (4) foster care and (5) legitimization of children born of underage parents.
 161. Together with CSOs, faith based communities, and the academe, the Government will train and capacitate service providers to handle victims of child abuse, neglect, mistreatment, violence and sexual exploitation.
 162. The Government is also advocating for LGUs to establish detention homes for children in conflict with the law aged 15 to 17 years old, separate from adult offenders. The DSWD has targeted for 2008 the upgrading of existing youth rehabilitation centers as well as the construction of new centers. Another target is to establish centers in each province and city to cater to the psycho-social needs of children in conflict with the law.
 163. GRP will enhance domestic support and mechanisms and continue consultations among relevant stakeholders to uphold the rights of persons with disabilities as respected and dignified members of society.
 164. The Government aims to attain social justice and human development towards alleviating the general condition of the IPs nationwide. It shall empower the IPs through the recognition, protection and promotion of both their collective and individual human rights. In carrying out these societal and sectoral goals, the NCIP, will enhance partnerships forged with other agencies and offices of government, civil society as well as international bodies, specifically the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII).

165. NCIP will fast track its delineation and titling services to ensure IP rights over their ancestral domains/lands. Advocacy will be strengthened among government agencies and civil society in the efficient and effective implementation of peace process and human rights initiatives, socio-economic, health, educational, cultural, and the Indigenous Peoples' active participation in governance through self-governance and interfacing of traditional and mainstream governance.
166. To enhance development services, GRP will facilitate leadership capability building, community organizing, constitution of the Indigenous Peoples Consultative Body (IPCB), formulation of Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan (ADSDPP), and ensure implementation of the Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) process.
167. GRP, particularly through the NCIP, will continue to provide access to legal services through quasi-judicial services, alternative dispute resolutions, exercise of traditional justice system and the interfacing of national and customary laws. Efforts will be continued in the formulation, enhancement and harmonization of laws and policy guidelines, plans and programs to include socio-cultural mapping to arrive at disaggregated data for Indigenous Peoples.
168. The DOH and the PNAC plans to scale-up Universal Access to comprehensive prevention, treatment, care and support including Voluntary HIV Counseling and Testing (VCT), and strengthening more programs to fight stigma and discrimination for PLWHA
169. Human rights promotion and protection shall remain at the forefront of GRP foreign policy.
170. In furtherance of its constitutional policy to promote the right to effective and reasonable participation in governance, GRP shall continue its engagement of civil society and other relevant parties to actively utilize the various United Nations human rights mechanisms and will endeavor to submit timely replies to communications filed under these mechanisms.
171. At the regional level, the Philippines shall continue to pursue its task as the ASEAN's focal point in the efforts to fight human trafficking and in promoting the rights of women, children, migrant workers among others, while simultaneously integrating human-rights issues in international terrorism and transnational crimes, migration and HIV/AIDS.
172. Having successfully steered the 12th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit and the 40th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in 2007, and after actively participating in the 13th ASEAN Summit in Singapore, where the importance of the creation of an ASEAN human rights body was recognized, the Philippines intends and is prepared to play an active role in the establishment and operation of the body.
173. As the Philippines strengthens its mechanisms at home and abroad to promote and protect the rights of migrant workers and their families, cooperation from receiving countries in the form of ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families and the establishment of assistance and service institutions locally would be a major achievement.
174. Having contributed to the improvement of the working methods and rules of procedure of the Human Rights Council, the Philippines shall continue to participate and promote constructive dialogue and cooperation within the Council. Bearing in mind the recent adoption of the Code of Conduct for Special Procedure mandate-holders, cooperation with the system of special procedures shall be pursued with the view to ensuring that the Council becomes a partner of States, particularly those requesting international assistance in enhancing capacities in promoting and protecting human rights.

ENDNOTES

¹Executive agencies, judiciary, legislature, Ombudsman, independent Commission on Human Rights, non-government organizations, faith-based groups, media, and the academe.

² Last 08 December 2006, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo signed Administrative Order No. 163, entitled, “*Strengthening and Increasing the Membership of the Presidential Human Rights Committee, and Expanding further the Functions of Said Committee.*”

³ The seven core international treaties on human rights are: International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD); International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); Convention on the Elimination of All Forms Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT); Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); and, International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICMW).

The National Report also took into consideration the Convention on Persons with Disabilities albeit the fact that it has yet to enter into force.

⁴ The seven core international treaties on human rights are: International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD); International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Executive agencies, judiciary, legislature, independent government bodies, non-government organizations, faith-based groups, media, and academia Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT); Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); and, International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICMW).

⁵ The CHR has the power to (1) investigate, on its own or on complaint by any party, all forms of human rights violations involving civil and political rights; (2) provide appropriate legal measures for the protection of human rights of all persons and provide for preventive measure and legal aid services to the underprivileged whose human rights have been violated or need protection; (3) Exercise visitatorial powers over jails, prisons, or detention facilities; (4) Establish a continuing program of research, education, and information to enhance respect for the primacy of human rights; (5) Recommend to the Congress effective measures to promote human rights and to provide for compensation to victims of violations of human rights, or their families; (6) monitor the Philippine Government's compliance with international treaty on human rights

⁶ The Legislature, known as Congress is composed of two separate chambers, the House of Representatives (lower house) and the Senate (upper house)

⁷ The Barangay is the smallest geo-political unit, similar to a village

⁸ The law enforcement pillar consists of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI). Local government units perform law enforcement as mandated in the local government code. The prosecution pillar consists of two national government agencies, namely, the National Prosecution Service (NPS), an organic unit of the Department of Justice (DOJ), and the Office of the Ombudsman, an independent agency responsible for graft and corruption cases. The judiciary pillar, which adjudicates cases and renders judgment, consists of a four-tiered court system including the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, Sandiganbayan (a special court, with jurisdiction over criminal and civil cases involving graft and corrupt practices and such other offenses committed by public officers and employees. Family courts are now well-established within the judicial system. The correction pillar is composed of two (2) major components: the institution-based and the community-based corrections systems. The institution-based corrections comprised of prisons and jails administered by the Bureau of Corrections of the DOJ, by the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology of the DILG, and by the local government units. The PNP likewise maintains detention facilities police stations. Community-based corrections pertain to probation and parole, which are being managed by the Parole and Probation Administration (PPA) of the DOJ.

⁹ The law enforcement pillar consists of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI).

¹⁰ The prosecution pillar consists of two national government agencies, namely, the National Prosecution Service (NPS), an organic unit of the Department of Justice (DOJ), and the Office of the Ombudsman, an independent agency created under the Constitution as the “peoples champion” to prosecute responsible for graft and corruption cases against public officials and personnel, including men in uniform.

¹¹ The judiciary pillar consists of a four-tiered court system including the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, Sandiganbayan (a special court, with jurisdiction over criminal and civil cases involving graft and corrupt practices and such other offenses committed by public officers and employees) and regional, metropolitan and municipal courts. Family courts are now well-established within the judicial system.

¹² The correction pillar is composed of two (2) major components: the institution-based, comprised of prisons and jails administered by the Bureau of Corrections of the DOJ, by the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology of the DILG, and by the local government units, and the community-based corrections system, i.e. probation and parole, which are being managed by the Parole and Probation Administration (PPA) of the DOJ. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) is responsible for the restorative part of the correction system. It maintains centers for the care and restoration of youth and women who are in conflict with the law. In the Philippines, the community is recognized as a pillar of the criminal justice system and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) play an increasingly active role in the criminal justice system.

¹³ The law likewise directs the active promotion on the use of ADR as an important means to achieve speedy and impartial justice and de-clog court dockets. The law defines ADR as any process or procedure used to resolve a dispute or controversy, other than by adjudication of a presiding judge of a court or an officer of a government agency, in which a neutral third party participates to assist in the resolution of issues. ADR includes arbitration, mediation, conciliation, early neutral evaluation, mini-trial, or any combination of these schemes.

¹⁴ Muslim justice is based on religion. Muslim tradition involves strong roles played by religious leaders in informally settling disputes. Justice is guaranteed to all regardless of any social and political biases. Among Muslim Filipinos, informal settlements particularly on cases involving family and property matters are preferred over the formal (court) processes. Shari'a court judges themselves have assumed the role of customary elders that citizens can seek help to resolve conflicts, an indication of the pervasive informal nature of Muslim dispute resolution traditions that are deeply imbedded in practice.

¹⁵ the Human Security Act (Anti-Terrorism Law), Abolition of the Death Penalty Act, Speedy Trial Act, Certain Rights of Persons Arrested, Detained and Under Custodial Investigation, Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act, Elimination of the Worst Form of Child Labor, Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children, Anti-Sexual Harassment Law, Migrant Workers Act, Anti-Trafficking of Persons Act, Indigenous Peoples Rights Act, Public Assembly Act, Anti-Wiretapping Law, Urban Development and Housing Act, among others. RA 7309 An Act Creating a Board of Claims Under the Department of Justice for Victims of Unjust Imprisonment or Detention and Victims of Violent Crimes and for Other Purposes -- For victims of unjust imprisonment/ detention and victims of crimes; RA 7438 Defining Certain Rights of Persons, Arrested, Detained or Under Custodial Investigation as well as the Duties of the Arresting, Detaining and Investigating Officers and Providing Penalties for Violations Thereof – For arrested persons/detainees; RA 9257 Expanded Senior Citizen's Act of 2003 – For Senior citizens; RA 7877 Declaring Sexual Harassment Unlawful in the Employment, Education, or Training Environment and for Other Purposes (Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995); RA 6725 An Act Strengthening the Prohibition on Discrimination Against Women with Respect to Terms and Conditions of Employment, Amending for the Purpose Article One Hundred Thirty-Five of the Labor Code, as Amended; RA 6955 An Act to Declare Unlawful the Practice of Matching for Marriage to Foreign Nationals on a Mail-Order Basis and for Other Similar Practices, Including the Advertisement, Publication, Printing or Distribution of Brochures, Fliers and Other Propaganda Materials in Furtherance Thereof and Providing Penalty Therefor; RA 7192 An Act Promoting the Integration of Women as Full and Equal Partners of Men in Development and Nation- Building and for Other Purposes; RA 7322 An Act Increasing Maternity Benefits in Favor of Women Workers in the Private Sector, Amending for the Purpose Section 14-A of Republic Act 1161, as Amended, and for Other Purposes; RA 8353 An Act Expanding the Definition of the Crime of Rape, Reclassifying the same as a Crime Against Persons, Amending for the Purpose Act No. 3815, as Amended, Otherwise Known as the Revised Penal Code, and for Other Purposes; RA 9208 Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 – For Women and children; RA 7277 An Act Providing for the Rehabilitation, Self-Development and Self-Reliance of Disabled Persons and their Integration into the Mainstream of Society and for Other Purposes (Magna Carta for Disabled Persons) – for persons with disabilities; RA 7279 An Act to Provide for a Comprehensive and Continuing Urban Development and Housing Program, Establishing the Mechanism for its Implementation and for Other Purposes (Urban Development Housing Act of 1992) — for urban poor; RA 8371 An Act to Recognize, Protect and Promote the Rights of Indigenous Cultural Minorities/Indigenous Peoples, Establishing the Implementing Mechanisms, Appropriating Funds Therefor and for Other Purposes (Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997)– for indigenous peoples; RA 8042 An Act to Institute the Policies of Overseas Employment and Establish a Higher Standard of Protection and Promotion of the Welfare of the Migrant Workers, Their Families and Overseas Filipinos in Distress, and for Other Purposes – for migrant workers; RA 9344, An Act Establishing a Comprehensive Juvenile Justice and Welfare System, Creating the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council under the Department of Justice, Appropriating Funds Therefore and For Other Purposes, (Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006) – For children in conflict with the law; RA 9231 Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor Act of 2003 – For children; RA 9255 An Act Allowing Illegitimate Children to Use the Surname of their Father – For children; RA 9262 Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004 – For women and children.

¹⁶ This is the first substantive agreement signed between the government and the NDF (1998).

¹⁷ The National Democratic Front is the political wing of the armed insurgent group the New People's Army.

¹⁸ Gini Index – where 0 = absolute inequality; 100 = absolute equality

¹⁹ The SEA-K (Self Employment Assistance – Kaunlaran “Progress”) Program is a capacity-building program of the DSWD and Local Government Units, which aims to enhance the socio-economic skills of poor families through the organization of community-based associations for entrepreneurial development. It is open to disadvantaged individuals and families of depressed communities nationwide.

²⁰ The **Sandiganbayan** is a special court, which has jurisdiction over criminal and civil cases involving graft and corrupt practices and such other offenses committed by public officers and employees, including those in government-owned or controlled corporations.

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²² The Gender-responsive Economic Actions for the Transformation of Women or the GREAT Women Project, with the support of the C\$6 million over five (5) years from Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is being executed by the NCRFW in partnership with national agencies and local government units to enhance the enabling environment for women to have better access to enterprise development with programs and services on credit, and training on financial management, markets and information, technology and product development, social protection, and environmental sustainability.

²³ These laws are: RA 7877 (Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995); RA 8353 (Anti-Rape Law of 1997); and RA 8505 (Rape Victim Assistance Act of 1998), RA 9208, (Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003) and RA 9262 (the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act)

²⁴ These statistics refer to reported cases.

²⁵ a) **Ligtas Buntis** (Safe Pregnancy) Campaign which provided information and counseling on the use of Family Planning (FP) services to 4 million women and men; b) “Contraceptive Self-Reliance Strategy” which aims to help local government units (LGUs) provide FP services and commodities to their clientele. This strategy includes the promotion of public and private partnerships whereby the private sector helps in procuring the needed FP commodities as well as in the provision of services to augment the public sector. It may also include commodity swapping procurement wherein the health department will procure essential health commodities to free other resources to procure FP commodities, and c) Networking with NGOs, such as the Family Planning Organization of the Philippines which provide direct FP services to clients – Philippine Legislators Committee on Population and Development, reproductive Health Advocacy Network, and Reproductive

Rights Resource Group which are in the forefront in pushing for the passage of the RH Bills in both Congress and Senate, as well as in advocacy, public awareness, and capacity-building of legislators and LGU officials, youth and other sectors.

²⁶ The strategy seeks to encourage women to give birth in strategically located facilities suitably equipped to render **Basic Emergency Obstetric and newborn Care (BEmOC)**. Complicated pregnancies and those needing caesarian sections and blood transfusions are referred to facilities rendering **Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and newborn Care (CEmOC)**. . To further this objective, DOH invests in selected facilities not only be towards their upgrading to model standards but shall also ensure their compliance with DOH licensing and PhilHealth accreditation requirements.

²⁷ No. 118 and on Equality of Treatment of nationals and Non-Nationals and ILO Convention No. 157

²⁸ Pursuant to R.A. 9346 (otherwise known as, “An Act Prohibiting the Imposition of Death Penalty in the Philippines”), the death penalty law in the country was abolished.

²⁹ Based on the report of Task Force 211, out of 144 EJK cases, 20 are pending with Prosecution Office; 58 have been filed in court; 35 were dismissed; 6 accused were convicted; 21 cases were archived; and 4 cases are pending with the Office of the Ombudsman.

³⁰ The Rule on the Writ of Amparo is a remedial rule which places the constitutional right to life, liberty, and security above violation and threats of violation thus providing the victims of extralegal killings and enforced disappearances the protection they need and the promise of vindication for their rights. The rule also empowers the courts to issue reliefs that may be granted through judicial orders of protection, production, inspection, and other reliefs to safeguard a person’s life and liberty. The writ shall hold public authorities, who took their oath to defend the Constitution and enforce laws, to a high standard of official conduct and hold them accountable to the people.

³¹ The Rule on the Writ of Habeas Data is both an independent remedy to enforce the right to informational privacy and the complementary “right to truth” as well as an additional remedy to protect the right to life, liberty, or security of a person. The writ makes available to any person whose right to privacy in life, liberty, or security is violated or threatened by an unlawful act or omission of a public official or employee, or of a private individual or entity engaged in the gathering, collecting, or storing of data or information regarding the person, family, home, and correspondence of the aggrieved party.” Reliefs include the deletion, destruction, or rectification of the erroneous data or information.

³² The CHRP has conducted five Regional Workshops on the role of medical officers and jail personnel on the recognition, documentation and reporting cases of torture from November 2005 to March 2005.

³³ A legitimate strike requires notice, a ground recognized by law, observance of the mandatory cooling-off period, a secret strike vote and submission of the results to the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). Only union members who are proven to have knowingly participated in the commission of unlawful acts during a strike can be penalized with dismissal and only after being accorded due process. Only officers of the union who knowingly participate in an illegal strike are placed in jeopardy of dismissal, but again only after the observance of due process.

³⁴ Article 264(a) of the Labor Code.

³⁵ In the case of Bayan , et al. vs. Ermita, the Supreme Court sustained the constitutionality of Batas Pambansa No. 880 (State Law) requiring a permit to peaceably assemble and nullified the use of Calibrated Preemptive Response (CPR) in lieu of maximum tolerance. In the event of public rallies and demonstrations, the police are now required to exercise “maximum tolerance” pursuant to Batas Pambansa 880.

³⁶ Members of the media have successfully filed petitions for restraining orders against the PNP and AFP against harassment when covering national security threats. When charged with libel, they are accorded all the rights of the accused including the right to bail, counsel, and humane treatment. More significantly, members routinely use the power of the free press to bring public attention to any perception of mistreatment sustained.

ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

A.O.	Administrative Order
ADR	alternative dispute resolution
ADSDPP	Ancestral Domains Sustainable Development and Protection Plans
AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
ALS	alternative learning systems
APCD	Asia Pacific Center on Disability
ARMM	Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BESRA	Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda
BJMP	Bureau of Jail Management and Penology
CADT	Certificates of Ancestral Domain Titles
CALT	Certificates of Ancestral Land Titles
CARHIHL	Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law
CAT	Convention Against Torture
CBMS	Community-Based Monitoring System
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CERD	Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
CHRP	Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines
CICL	Children in Conflict with the Law
CMW	Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families
CPCP	Comprehensive Programme on Child Protection
CPP	Communist Party of the Philippines
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CWC	Council for the Welfare of Children
DepEd	Department of Education
DESA	UN-Division on Economic and Social Affairs
DILG	Department of 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
EFA	Education for All
EJK	Extrajudicial Killings
EmOC	Emergency Obstetric Care services
ESCR	Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
FAN	Federation of PNP-Accredited NGOs
FLAG	Free Legal Assistance Group
FPIC	Free and Prior Informed Consent
GAD	Gender and Development
GDI	Gender-related Development Index
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
GPNP-CNN	GRP Negotiating Panel for Talks with the CPP/NDF/NPA
GRP	Government of the Republic of the Philippines
HDI	Human Development Index
HRE	Human Rights Education
IACAT	Inter-agency Council Against Trafficking
IAC-CIAC	Inter-agency Council on Children Involved in Armed Conflict
IAC-VAWC	Inter-agency Council on Violence Against Women and Children
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political rights

ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICT	Information & Communications Technology
IKSP	Indigenous Knowledge, Systems and Practices
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPCB	Indigenous Peoples Consultative Body
IPRA	Indigenous Peoples Rights Act
IPs/ICCs	Indigenous Peoples/Indigenous Cultural Communities
JJWC	Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council
KALAHI	<i>Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan</i> (Linking Arms Against Poverty)
LCPC	local councils for the protection of children
LGC	Local Government Code of 1991
LGU	local government units
LPMC	Local Protection Mechanism for Children
MCW	Magna Carta of Women
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NBI	National Bureau of Investigation
NCIC	National Committee on Interfaith Cooperation
NCIP	National Commission on Indigenous Peoples
NCRFW	National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women
NCWDP	National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons
NDF	National Democratic Front
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NPA	National Peoples Army
NPAC	National Plan of Action for Children
OAV	Overseas Absentee Voting
OFW	Overseas Filipino Workers
OPAPP	Office of the Presidential Adviser for the Peace Process
OWWA	Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration
PCFC	Philippine Credit and Finance Corporation
PHRC	Presidential Human Rights Committee
PLWHA	People Living with HIV/AIDS
PNAC	Philippine National AIDS Council
PNP	Philippine National Police
PNR	Philippine National Report
PPGD	Philippine Plan for Gender-responsive Development
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
RBA	rights based approach
SFI	Schools First Initiative
TFICP	Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace
TWGs	Technical Working Groups
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
UN-ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pac
UNPFII	United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
VAW	Violence Against Women
VAWC	Violence against Women and Their Children
VCT	Voluntary HIV Counseling and Testing
WFFC	World Fit for Children