



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL  
ORGANIZATIONS, GENEVA**

**NV-CDS-422-2023**

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and has the honor to convey the attached additional responses by the Philippine Delegation to the questions raised during the Constructive Dialogue on the Philippines' Ninth Periodic Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women held on 11 October 2023.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.



Geneva, 12 October 2023

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**  
***Attention: The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women***  
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**PH Additional Responses to Issues and Questions During the Constructive Dialogue with  
the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on its 9th  
Compliance Report**

11 October 2023

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**Article 5**

***Participation of civil society and the media in eliminating gender stereotypes***

The State engages civil society and media organizations in awareness-raising and educational campaigns to eliminate gender stereotypes. The Gender-Fair Media Guidebook was developed by the government's Media and Gender Equality Committee through co-creation and validation workshops with key media organizations and communication-focused civil society organizations.

A weekly radio program, "*Tinig Ng Kababaihan*" (Voice of Women), airs in Metro Manila and 29 provincial stations of *Radyo Pilipinas*, with simulcast television airing. The radio program serves as a venue for sharing inspiring stories on women, featuring various government projects and services, and educating people to eliminate gender stereotyping and discrimination.

**Article 6**

***Funding and operation of the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) for the protection of trafficked women***

The State allocated an initial US\$278 million to the DMW for 2023 for major programs, as follows: Overseas Employment and Welfare Program, Overseas Employment Regulatory Program, Labor Migration Policy and International Cooperation Program, Maritime Research and Skills Competency Program, and Overseas Filipino Workers Hospital and Diagnostic Center.

The law creating the DMW, also created the *Agarang Kalinga at Saklolo para sa mga OFW na Nangangailangan* ("Immediate Rescue Fund for Overseas Filipino Workers in Distress"), which covers legal and humanitarian assistance to distressed Filipino migrant workers, including those affected by human trafficking, exploitation, and gender-based violence.

The DMW is also authorized to investigate, initiate legal proceedings, prosecute, and collaborate with the Department of Justice and the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking in addressing cases related to illegal recruitment and human trafficking.

The DMW has 1,728 human resource positions, which is 94% higher than the 891 positions previously allocated separately to each of the agencies that were integrated and now form the agency. Most of the new hires will be assigned to the 16 DMW Regional Offices.

### ***Age restriction to prevent trafficking***

Raising the minimum age requirement for deploying household service workers (HSW) for overseas domestic work to 24 years old is in line with the State's commitment, as stated in Section 2 of the Anti-Trafficking Law, to prioritize measures that uphold human dignity, protect against violence and exploitation, combat human trafficking, and mitigate factors leading to involuntary migration and servitude.

This age qualification enhances the protection of the State's female overseas HSWs who face heightened vulnerability due to work-related risks.

### **Article 9**

#### ***On women's choice of nationality***

Commonwealth Act 473 sets the procedure for judicial naturalization of aliens to become Filipino citizens automatically confers Philippine citizenship to the wife.

The Administrative Naturalization Law of 2000 facilitates faster proceedings for the naturalization of aliens and provides the alien wife a choice to retain her citizenship or to follow her spouse's Philippine citizenship.

### **Article 11**

#### ***Increasing the number of women in full-time employment and reducing the wage gap***

The State implemented employment facilitation programs and labor market interventions to link jobseekers with the available job market. Employment facilitation (2020-2021) resulted in increased female workers recruited and hired by private employment agencies. 1.35M female job applicants were referred for placement, 157,821 job applicants registered, and 28,345 hired on the spot through the 1048 job fairs conducted in 2022.

To reduce the wage gap, the two-tiered wage system, as a policy reform measure, aims to minimize the unintended outcomes of mandated minimum wage, improving the coverage of the vulnerable sectors, and promoting productivity improvement and gain-sharing.

#### ***Participation of women in trade unions***

The Magna Carta of Women upholds union membership regardless of employment status or workplace.

In the case of *Liberty Flour Mills Employees v. Liberty Flour Mills*, the Supreme Court highlighted the State's policy to promote unionism, underlining how this empowers workers to negotiate with

management on equal footing and with greater persuasiveness than if they were to bargain individually and independently to improve their respective conditions.

The Labor and Employment Plan 2023-2028 provides strategies towards equipping labor unions with knowledge and understanding of the technical aspects of labor-management relations. This includes, among others, the implementation of updated labor education programs for tripartite partners. The State likewise aims to complete and implement the Tripartite Roadmap on Freedom of Association consistent with the recommendations of ILO supervisory bodies.

Cumulative data in 2023 show that 18,418 enterprises have registered unions, with some 331,957 female union members. For registered enterprise-based unions operating in economic zones and as of the same period, there are 661 registered unions, with some 114,569 members, of whom 49,909 are females.

### ***Provision of social insurance benefits and access to social benefits and pensions for women workers in the informal economy***

The State carries out the social pension for indigent senior citizens in the form of a monthly allowance of P500.00. RA 11916 enacted in 2022 increased the monthly pension from P500 to P1,000 for indigent senior citizens. In 2023, the program serves 3,942,175 beneficiaries, where 2,366,375 are women and 242,697 are Indigenous Peoples.

The DOLE Integrated Livelihood Program (DILP) and Emergency Employment Program also include enrollment in micro-insurance in the package of assistance for its beneficiaries who are disadvantaged workers to reduce their vulnerability to risks.

## **Article 12**

### ***Decriminalization of Abortion***

There are two bills pending in the House of Representatives seeking to establish a national program that will provide pregnant women with alternatives to abortion.

## **Article 13**

### ***Assistance to (returning) nationals***

The State assisted returning Filipino nationals through its Assistance-to-Nationals (ATN) Fund, which covers repatriation, welfare assistance, medical assistance; and arrangements for the return of nationals to their provinces/cities. For fiscal year 2022, the State utilized 92.09% of its ATN Fund.

The State embarked on a rapid assessment of its *Balik Pinas! Balik Hanapbuhay!* Program – a package of livelihood assistance intended to provide immediate relief to returning member-overseas Filipino workers (distressed/displaced) amounting to a maximum of 352 USD as start-up

or additional capital for the livelihood project. The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), in collaboration with the International Labour Organization and Yale University, has an ongoing study on the impact of migration on the educational performance of children left behind.

Moreover, the recently-created Institute for Advanced and Strategic Studies on Migration and Development conducts specialized research and comprehensive studies on migrant workers and members of their families.

The DOLE Institute for Labor Studies in previous years conducted in-depth research on the kind of life and work of overseas Filipino workers and their families.

### ***Social insurance for women workers in the informal sector***

The AlkanSSSy Program provides affordable social insurance for the self-employed and informal sector workers by allowing them to set aside a portion of their daily earnings for their social security contributions. The program is designed to fit the informal sector workers' way of life and make saving for their SSS premiums affordable.

### ***Promotion of financial inclusion of Moro women***

The State conducts financial literacy programs to enhance financial inclusion of underserved female entrepreneurs. It also provides financing programs, such as microfinancing and Murabaha financing. In 2022, the program benefited 397 individuals, with 301 female participants.

## **Article 15**

### ***Implementation of national laws in the BARMM***

The codification of Muslim laws in the Philippines ensures that Muslim laws, customs, practices, and traditions are observed and respected. To harmonize the Code of Muslim Personal Laws with the national legislations, the Bangsamoro Government, through the Bangsamoro Attorney Office, formulated the Tri-Justice Framework for the development of a Tri-Justice System "where all citizens have equal access to justice and can live in harmony". The initiative ensures that the BARMM's justice system is fair and compatible with existing national legal systems and internationally accepted principles on human rights.

Under the Bangsamoro Organic Law, the provisions of the Bangsamoro Justice System give premium to the unique cultural and historical heritage of the Bangsamoro, emphasizing that the dispensation of justice in the region shall be in consonance with relevant laws.

### ***WPS on BARMM***

The Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (RAPWPS) 2020-2022 protected communities from conflicts, pandemics, and natural disasters. Recognizing the need for broader conflict prevention and transformation efforts, it included clan feud (*rido*) mediation, addressing violence, post-conflict recovery, transitional justice, and peace education.

The current RAPWPS emphasizes a collective approach, integrating traditional and emerging women, peace, and security issues, demonstrating forward-thinking governance by addressing climate security, cybersecurity, and mental health, and involving men and boys.

To address emerging issues, the RAPWPS 2023-2028 will prioritize climate change, youth engagement, cybersecurity, men and boys' involvement, support for diverse populations, and persons with disabilities. This cycle introduces new impact statements on women and girls in governance and emphasizes post-conflict recovery and women's economic empowerment. It includes new entry points like peace education, peace and order, public safety plans, youth, peace and security, and men and boys' engagement.