

COMPILATION PREPARED BY THE UNCT IN THE PHILIPPINES

UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

I. BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK

A. Scope of international obligations (international human rights legal obligations, etc)

The Philippines is a party to the eight core international instruments on human rights: (1) CAT -Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; 2) CCPR – International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; 3) CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; 4) CERD – International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; 5) CESC – International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; 6) CMW – International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families; 7) CPD – Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and 8) CRC – Convention on the Rights of the Child. It has also signed, ratified or acceded to several human rights-related international treaties/instruments, inter alia: a) Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons; b) Convention relating to the Status of Refugees; c) Geneva Conventions and its Additional Protocol; d) Convention on the Political Rights of Women; e) Convention on the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others; f) Optional Protocol to the CRC on involvement of children in armed conflict; g) Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography; and h) Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour. Country-level follow through actions have been pursued in relation to these commitments.

B. Constitutional and legislative framework (charters, laws and regulations, etc)

The protection of human rights is enshrined in the Philippine Constitution. The Philippine Government (GPH) has provided an extensive protective and developmental policy environment for children and women, monitored through the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC). The country was one of the first to ratify CRC and the GPH is committed to its full implementation as well as the CEDAW.

Important laws for children are already in place, such as those covering early childhood care and development (2002), anti-trafficking in persons (2003), anti-violence against women and their children (2004) and the Juvenile Justice Welfare Act (2006). In the period since the first UPR, the following legislation with provisions for the protection of women and children has been passed, but is not yet consistently nor effectively enforced: Republic Act (RA) 9710 Magna Carta of Women (2009), RA 9745 Anti-Torture (2009), RA 9775 Anti child pornography law (2009), RA 9851 IHL Law (2009), and the Expanded Breastfeeding Promotion Act (2010).

While improvements in policy and legal environment are evident, there are gaps between the existence and the implementation of the laws and policies and the reality of life for many children, especially for those coming from disadvantaged and poorer families, urban dwellers and indigenous peoples. Implementation of laws and policies is mainly reliant upon compliance by the highly decentralized provinces, municipalities, cities and barangays (villages).¹

Some of the 2005 legislative recommendations of the CRC² remain unmet, in particular the proposed legislation on the Special Protection of Children in Situations of Armed Conflict and the Positive and Non-violent Forms of Discipline Bill, both passed by the lower house in 2011. House Bill No. 681 and 3049 on raising the Age of Statutory Rape and Acts of Sexual Abuse Act has been pending before the House of Representatives (HOR) since the Q3 of 2010.

The existing Special Protection of Children against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act (RA 7610) declare children as 'zones of peace' and entitles them to special protection. The new draft bill on the special protection of children in situations of armed conflict prohibits the recruitment and use of minors into armed

¹ GPH-UNICEF Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) for CPC VII 2012-2016, pp 15 (point 42)

² Ibid

forces or groups, along with five other grave child rights violations (GCRV). This bill would complement other instruments such as: the Indigenous People's Rights Act (IPRA or RA 8371) which provides for the non-recruitment of children of indigenous cultural communities into the armed forces; ILO Convention 182 concerning the worst forms of child labour; the Paris Principles and Guidelines on CAAFAG, the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, the UN Security Council Resolutions related to children affected by armed conflict.

C. Institutional and human rights structure (institutions, bodies and committees, etc)

The Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines (CHRP), a Status A accredited NHRI, has produced a Strategic Plan for 2011-2015 that includes special provisions to address significant shortcomings in terms of mandate, methodology and resources. This document cites the "almost zero prosecution of human rights cases" and proposes a series of institutional changes to strengthen monitoring and service provision. The ratification of Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT) and the Convention Against Enforced Disappearances are mentioned as goals in this road map. The CHRP is also an active member of the Protection Cluster since January 2011. Under the Magna Carta of Women, the CHRP is the woman Ombudsman that will handle cases on women rights violations. In terms of structure, there is a pending priority bill in Congress for the new Charter of CHRP, which was based on an organizational and change management study funded by UNDP.

Despite these measures, the CHRP remains an institutionally weak body facing numerous challenges. Cases involving children, especially in conflict areas, routinely remain unresolved. Delays in processing cases and the lack of a functional witness protection program present serious obstacles for the securing of sworn testimony, especially when the case implicates state security forces. CHRP has no power to prosecute cases and a severely limited operating budget; the entity's lack of credibility threatens its continued relevance in the Philippines.

The GPH and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) created the International Monitoring Team – Humanitarian, Rehabilitation and Development Component (IMT-HRDC) to monitor the commitments of two parties in the implementation of humanitarian, rehabilitation and development in the conflict affected areas. HRDC carries out its tasks through information gathering, analysis and assessments, reporting and recommendations.

The CWC has been designated as the focal GPH agency for the implementation of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) in the Philippines. A parallel government mechanism, the Monitoring and Response System (MRS) is being developed in coordination with the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) which will emphasize building response capacity for CAAC.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has taken steps to broaden and strengthen the mandate of its Human Rights Office (HRO). The AFP HRO coordinates with the CTFMR on issues related to CAAC and has oversight of the mainstreaming of the human rights and IHL curricula for all enlisted personnel. The AFP HRO has proved to have limited capacity to address on-going violations, sanction accused personnel, or prevent grave child rights violations from happening. CHRP together with UNDP and other donor agencies has supported the training of Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Philippine Army on human rights. As part of the transformation programme supported by UNDP, the PNP was able to set up a Human Rights Office with support of CHRP and funding from UNDP. Security Reform Index has also been developed with the Office of the Presidential Adviser for the Peace Process (OPAPP) and ISDS and support from UNDP.

Since 2009, the UNICEF-supported Child Protection Working Group (CPWG) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) sub cluster have both become permanent mechanisms mainstreamed in government institutional structures. The CPWG and GBV sub cluster are mandated to mainstream prevention and risk reduction measures as well as provide a forum for raising child rights issues in the context of emergencies. Since January 2011, the UNHCR has also engaged CHRP in strengthening protection monitoring in conflict affected areas.

D. Policy measures (national action plans, strategies and human rights education, etc)

Further to the 2009 CRC recommendation to mainstream the Philippines National Plan of Action for Children (NPAC), the 2nd NPAC coordinated by CWC with the support of UNICEF is currently in the process of

developing a comprehensive and integrated National Child Protection Strategy. This will provide the common roadmap to guarantee the right of the child to be free from all forms of abuse, exploitation and violence.³

The Department of National Defense (DND) and the AFP launched Internal Peace and Security Plan *Bayanihan* in December 2010. It promises a paradigm shift, moving the AFP away from combat operations and towards civil-military cooperation aimed at addressing the issues of underdevelopment and injustice which drive the multiple insurgencies.

II. PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ON THE GROUND

A. Cooperation with international human rights mechanisms

GPH facilitated the first UPR and noted the concluding observations in its WG report dated 31 March 2008. The Philippines currently sits on the UN Human Rights Council and is expected to uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights. On 30 August 2011 ratified the Rome Statute of the ICC.

Children's Rights. GPH reported to the CRC and noted the concluding observations of its report issued on 2 October 2009. In response to the recommendations of the SRSG CAAC, the Permanent Representative of the Philippines reiterated GPH commitment to the protection of CAAC, highlighting its new Comprehensive Programme on Children Involved in Armed Conflict, the appointment of the CWC as a focal agency for MRM, a resource mapping study, and the intention to establish a quick response team for the purposes of responding to, verifying and documenting reports of violations and abuses committed against children⁴.

Request to undertake an inquiry pursuant to Article 8 of the Optional Protocol to CEDAW in the Philippines: Manila City Executive Order No. 003. The Philippine-based Task Force CEDAW Inquiry⁵ have submitted a total of three official requests⁶ for inquiry for consideration of CEDAW Committee to investigate discrimination and other treaty violations resulting from the *Executive Order No. 003: Declaring Total Commitment and Support to the Responsible Parenthood Movement in the City of Manila and Enunciating Policy Declarations in Pursuit Thereof* by former Manila Mayor Jose "Lito" Atienza, Jr. in 2000. The GPH has not expressed its consent to the visit of the CEDAW Committee.

The CHRP, in its Advisory (A2010-005) "adopts the evaluation that the City of Manila's liability for a discriminatory act before the anti-discrimination law, issues from the Philippines' treaty commitment under the CEDAW, and its liability under the Magna Carta of Women, commences on the entry into force of the latter. It recommended that the City of Manila immediately revoke EO 003 and ensure that artificial birth control devices, including birth control pills and injectables be made available to all adult citizens who are residents within its jurisdiction. As of present, the EO has not been revoked yet.

In January 2008, a group of men and women filed a lawsuit (Lourdes Osil v. Mayor of Manila) against the Office of the Mayor of Manila. Their lawsuit, filed in the Court of Appeals, asked that the court declare EO 003 unconstitutional and also demanded its revocation. The petitioners, using the findings of *Imposing Misery*⁷, claimed that EO 003 has severely and irreparably damaged their lives and health and that it has affected many more low-income women and families in Manila City. The case was dismissed in May 2008. The petitioners filed an appeal with the Supreme Court in September 2008, which was dismissed the following month. A motion for reconsideration was filed in November 2008 and the Supreme Court dismissed the motion in February 2009.

³ CPAP

⁴ United Nations Security Council Working Group on children and armed conflict in the Philippines S/AC.51/2010/5

⁵ Led by EnGendeRights and WomenLead, the Center for Reproductive Rights and International Women's Rights Action Watch, Asia-Pacific

⁶ The initial request for inquiry, dated June 2, 2008, asserted that the EO violates Articles 2, 3, 5, 10, 11, 12, and 16, and that the state is responsible for such violations. The subsequent requests, also sent by the Task Force CEDAW Inquiry, dated October 27, 2008, and April 22, 2009, highlight further violations by the GPH. In addition, the subsequent requests for inquiry discuss the controversial RH Bill, which present Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim does not support.

⁷ Linangan ng Kababaihan, Inc. (LIKHAAN), Reproductive Health, Rights and Ethics Center for Studies and Training (ReproCen), and Center for Reproductive Rights. *Imposing Misery: The Impact of Manila's Contraception Ban on Women and Families*. N.p.: n.p., 2007. Center for Reproductive Rights. Web. 29 Nov. 2011. <http://reproductiverights.org/sites/crr.civicaactions.net/files/documents/imposingmiseryupdated.pdf>.

Vertido v Philippines. At its 46th session held in July 2010, the CEDAW adopted its Views on Communication 18/2008 Vertido v Philippines. The Committee found a violation of article 2 (c) and (f) and article 5 (a), read in conjunction with article 1 of the Convention and general recommendation 19 (on violence against women) of the Committee. It noted that, as a State party to the CEDAW, the State is obliged not only to take appropriate measures to modify laws and regulations, but also customs and practices that constitute discrimination against women.⁸ The State party shall give due consideration to the views of the Committee, together with its recommendations, and shall submit to the Committee, within six months, a written response, including any information on any action taken in the light of the views and recommendations of the Committee.

Government Response: In April 2011, the GPH official response to the View of the UN CEDAW in Communication No. 18/2008⁹ cites that the State Party: a) welcomes the views of the committee and has given its recommendations careful consideration, reaffirms its commitments under the Convention and its Optional Protocol as part of a constructive dialogue between State Party and the committee; and considers the recommendations of the committee as part of a constructive dialogue between State Party and the committee; b) wishes to draw the committee's kind attention to the failure of the author (Karen Vertido) to exhaust domestic remedies; c) points out that the committee's recommendation for the provision of adequate compensation is not based on an explicit obligation of the State Party; and d) upholds the independence of its judiciary.

Elaboration of most salient features of the government response as follows:

- **On the right to remedy and provision of compensation** – “Assuming that the right to remedy could be inferred from the text of the Convention, its implementation must be in accordance with the State Party's legal system... Philippine law permits a victim of unjust imprisonment or detention or a victim of a violent crime (including rape) to seek compensation before the Board of Claims pursuant to RA 7309. Compensation however is not automatic. A claim must be filed with the Board within six months from the date the victim suffered damage or injury otherwise the claim is deemed to have been waived. There was no showing that the author had filed a claim within the required period.”
- **On measures taken to ensure court proceedings involving rape allegations are pursued without undue delay** – The GPH has undertaken measures in the form of the Speedy Trial Act of 1998 (RA 8493)
- **On measures to ensure that legal procedures in rape cases and other sexual offenses are fair, not affected by prejudices or gender stereotypes** – The Philippines has immediately launched a campaign through the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) to review and fine-tune the current penal definition of rape to specify the lack of consent as the essential element of the crime. Amendment of the Anti-Rape law is seen as another legal mechanism for such action. Gender Sensitivity Trainings to familiarize and promote gender sensitization among judges, lawyers and court personnel were conducted by the Philippine Judicial Academy and the Supreme Court's Committee on Gender Responsiveness in the Judiciary.
- **On measures to assist and protect victims of rape** – Passage of the Rape Victim Assistance and Protection Act in 1998 provides necessary assistance and protection of rape victims like psychological counseling, medical and health services, free legal assistance, training for law enforcers, social workers.
- **On wide circulation of views and responses of the government to the Vertido case** – The document was made available through PCW. Materials aimed at popularizing the provisions of the Convention were also made available, both in English and Filipino languages.

Deaf rape-victim. The graduate class of Women and Law of the University of the Philippines College of Social Work and Community Development (UP CSWCD) filed the communication for the victim under the supervision of Atty. Evalyn Ursua. The communication stated that after five years of prosecution and trial marked by a lack of sign language interpreting, insensitivity to the needs of the deaf rape-victim as a woman with disability, the Court acquitted her perpetrator, basing its decision largely on gender myths and stereotypes.

B. Implementation of international human rights obligations

1. Equality and non-discrimination

⁸ United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. "CEDAW orders compensation and review of laws in rape case: Vertido v Philippines." *OHCHR Human Rights Treaties Division* 10 (Oct.-Nov. 2010): 14. *United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner*. Web. 29 Nov. 2011. <<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/treaty/docs/HRTDNewsletterNo10.pdf>>.

⁹ See attached copy of the official response for further reference

Equality and non-discrimination are principles enshrined in the Philippines Constitution and in its commitment to fulfill all of its CRC and CEDAW obligations. The CRC expressed concern for the situations of children living in poverty, indigenous and minority children, including Muslim children living in Mindanao, migrant children, street children, children living rural areas and conflict areas. It recommended the adoption of a comprehensive plan addressing all forms of discrimination, ensuring equal treatment for girls, and offering specific protections to child born out of wedlock. Such a comprehensive strategy has yet to be adopted. In 2008, GPH ratified the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPD).

2. Right to life, liberty and security of the person

Children affected by armed conflict/Grave Child Rights Violations (GCRV). The SG report on children and armed conflict in the Philippines (21 January 2010) details how children suffer disproportionately from the effects of armed conflict. Children continue to be killed and maimed as well as recruited into armed forces and groups. The state military apparatus has been repeatedly accused of using disproportionate force against insurgent groups and of not observing the principle of distinction. Aerial bombings and use of artillery have serious consequences for civilians and especially children. The military rarely conducts clearing operations after using these munitions, and UXOs remain a protection concern in many areas, especially in relocation/return sites. The CTFMR recorded 6 UXO incidents in 2010-2011 which left 2 children dead and 4 injured.

The CTFMR monitors GCRVs, recording progressively more incidents as MRM coverage improves. In 2010, twelve incidents of children being recruited into armed forces and groups were recorded, as well as 38 children recorded killed and 40 maimed as a result of armed conflict. In the same period, 11 children were reported abducted with many being held without legal justification for interrogation or for other military or strategic purposes. The CTFMR verified 4 incidents of abduction affecting 4 girls aged six, eight, and fifteen (x2) years-old, and a 13 year-old boy which were all perpetrated by state forces.

GPH must immediately address the issue of arbitrary arrest and detention of minors. Habeas corpus is often ignored in remote conflict affected areas; children are targeted, illegally detained and threatened or coerced by parties to the conflict for military intelligence gathering, spying, acting as guides and for other auxiliary roles. On at least two occasions in the past year, the CTFMR has investigated cases of soldiers targeting special needs children to exploit them for information gathering. Children are also being forced to attend “seminars” to promote good citizenry; during the discourse they are asked to identify members of their community in possession of firearms or involved with rebel groups. Children are also employed by soldiers in remote areas to provide information on enemy movements and community activities. Sources note how young boys in their communities suddenly own cell phones, spend money freely, and occupy areas where cellular reception is good.

Such prohibited practices must be more vigilantly monitored and punished as the AFP shifts towards *Oplan Bayanihan* and away from a combat focused approach. The success of this counter-insurgency strategy depends on the AFP guaranteeing the rights of citizens while engaging with populations in conflict-affected communities to promote peaceful, sustainable development. Special precautions must be taken and enforced to prevent troops from freely engaging with children. A clear zero tolerance policy for engaging with children without parental consent should be adopted.

Extrajudicial killings (EJK) and enforced disappearances. At present, no national legislation exists to penalize enforced disappearance and EJK. Despite the commitments made by the current administration to address these violations, little has been done to curb this trend or to bring perpetrators to justice. Civil society groups, including student and teacher organizations, have been labelled as rebel sympathizers and have been targeted. At least 10 teachers have been victims of EJK in 2010-2011; some were killed by masked assailants in front of their students.

The Supreme Court through UNDP convened the first top level summit on EJK to tackle related policy issues. Key recommendations include the ratification of the Geneva Protocol relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflict, the Protocol on the Convention against Torture, and the Convention on Forced Disappearance. Likewise, the CHRP and Libertas (alternative lawyers group) developed a set of guidelines among security oversight agencies in investigating extrajudicial killings using the Maguindanao Massacre as case. This document is being finalized. UNDP also supported the Medium-Term Plan for the Pillars of Justice, which provides for specific action on the passage of the bill on stiffer penalties for EJK, designation of special

courts on international humanitarian law, expansion of the powers of the CHRP and the passage of a bill on command responsibility.

Child labour and children living and/or working the streets. Four million children between the ages of 5 and 17 work at least 4 hours a day, many for no pay and more than half (2.4 million) work in a hazardous environment¹⁰. It is estimated that 12% of children between the ages of 5-14 are engaged in child labour.¹¹ The GPH is currently in the process of conducting the follow-up survey and data will be available in 2012.

Poverty and peer influence combined with stresses in family life push children to leave home and find solace, protection and support from their peers on the street. Some 246,000 children live on the streets of the Philippines. In a 2000 UNICEF-assisted study, over 11,000 children were living in the streets of Metro Manila alone, with an estimated 46,000 highly visible street children in 22 cities in the country. The study defined children living and working on the streets as “children who stay on the streets and in public areas at least four hours and above¹² every day, are engaging in varied types of activities in the streets and public places such as playing with friends as well as peers, sleeping, and earning a living”.

Violence against children (VAC). VAC data is derived mainly from cases reported to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and PNP. No national data collection system currently exists which can reflect the scale of the problem. A 2007 Sub-Regional Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (SR-MICS) which reached 4.2 million households showed that 60% of women reported using at least one form of psychological or physical punishment to punish or discipline their children, with 13% reporting that they used some severe physical punishment on their children.¹³

As a follow-up to the recommendations of the UNSG Study on VAC, the GPH with support from UNICEF Philippines, UNICEF EAPRO and the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is preparing to undertake a National Baseline Research on VAC/Child Maltreatment. The research aims to determine VAC prevalence in the Philippines, identify potential risk and protective factors for VAC/Child Maltreatment and assess the knowledge and utilization of health, legal and welfare services available. GPH expressed commitment but financial support has not yet materialized. The estimated cost of the study is \$300,000.

Violence against women. Laws on gender-based violence¹⁴ were passed and gender-sensitive rules and guidelines by the police, investigation bodies, and state prosecutors were implemented but gender-based crimes continue to be underreported. Broader social structures and practices still sustain cultural acceptance of gendered violence. The drawn-out trial process, which can cause survivors emotional trauma and economic damage, acts as disincentive to filing a case and seeking justice.¹⁵

According to the National Demographic and Health Survey (2008), one in five women (20%) experienced physical violence since the age of 15.¹⁶ In the case of sexual violence, 9% of women age 15-49 have ever experienced sexual violence.¹⁷ Among VAW survivors, 12% reported to the police; 9% went to social workers; and only 2% sought the help of doctor/medical personnel.

The Philippines' Report for the 2008 UPR stated that the Department of Health (DOH), through its Women and Children Protection Units (WCPUs) in government hospitals provide holistic, gender responsive health care to VAW survivors. As of 2011, there are 38 working WCPUs in 25 provinces of the country with varying degree of functionality. The DOH identified key challenges in implementing the 2007 Administrative Order 1-B, “Establishment of a Women and Children Protection Unit in All DOH Hospitals” such as 1) the source of budget

¹⁰ UNICEF CPD

¹¹ UNICEF CPAP

¹² Ours to Protect and Nurture 2002

¹³ In the SR-MICS, severe physical punishment/discipline includes to hit or slap a child on the face, head or ear, and to beat a child with an implement

¹⁴ The Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995 (RA 7877), the Anti-Rape Law of 1997 (RA 8353), the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 (RA 9208), and the Anti-Violence against Women and Their Children of 2004 (RA 9262)

¹⁵ ADB, CIDA, EC, NCRFW, UNICEF, UNIFEM, and UNFPA. *Paradox and Promise in the Philippines: A Joint Country Gender Assessment*. Manila: Asian Development Bank, 2008. *Asian Development Bank*. Web. 8 Nov. 2011. <<http://www.adb.org/Documents/Reports/Country-Gender-Assessments/phi-2008.asp>>

¹⁶ Women in SOCCSKSARGEN (South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and General Santos City) are the most likely to have experienced physical violence since the age of 15 (35 percent), followed by women in Central Visayas¹⁶ and Northern Mindanao (28 percent).

¹⁷ By region, the proportion of women who have ever experienced sexual violence ranges from 3% in CALABARZON (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) to 18% in MIMAROPA (Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan), SOCCSKSARGEN, and Caraga regions.

cited in AO is subjected to multiple interpretations and is dependent on the priorities of the local chief executive and/or the healthcare facility management; 2) lack of standard quality of service; 3) reluctance from doctors and social workers take on the task due to heavy workload of women and child protection work, lack of training and feeling of inadequacy, and the nature of work, which among others requires responding to subpoenas and appearing in court; 4) all the WCPUs are being managed by part-time personnel who are given add-on responsibilities and their appointments are not classified as regular plantilla positions; and 5) women and child protection work is a new field and a pool of professionals must be recruited and trained to sustain the work.

RA 9262 is the most punitive domestic violence law in Asia and the Pacific but its enforcement is facing many issues such as lack of gender-responsiveness of judges; reluctance of judges to use power of contempt; delay in issuance or non-issuance of protection orders; and inadequate legal aid services for VAW survivors.¹⁸ The PCW is currently conducting a national assessment of the implementation of the said act in coordination with the Women's Legal Education, Advocacy and Defense Foundation, Inc. (WOMENLEAD).

3. Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law

Following the first UPR, the GPH accepted the recommendation of New Zealand to continue to develop a gender-sensitive approach to issues of violence and build a supportive environment for women and children within the judicial system, taking into account the special needs of women and children in vulnerable situations. Despite the relatively advanced legal framework for the protection women and of children, the administration of justice in the Philippines remains an area of priority concern.

Juvenile Justice/Children in conflict with the law. The passage of the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006 (RA 9344) was lauded as one of the Philippines greatest advances in the administration of juvenile justice. The law unequivocally addressed the points raised in the Concluding Observations of the CRC (CRC/C/15/Add.258) regarding the very low minimum age of criminal responsibility in the Philippines, then 9 years old. Section 6 of RA 9344 raised and set the minimum age of criminal responsibility and exempts a child 15 years of age or under at the time of the offense from criminal liability. Also, a child above 15 but below 18 is also exempt from criminal liability, unless the child is proven to have acted with discernment. RA 9344 recognizes that children who are 15 or under at the time of the offense may not be held criminally liable but can be held liable for civil damages and must also undergo an intervention to lessen the probability of re-offending.

Unfortunately, efforts to lower the age of criminal responsibility to 9 years of age have been initiated in Congress, following PNP intelligence reports attributing an increase on criminality involving children to the passage of RA 9344. UNICEF has made efforts to avoid this regression through advocacy with GPH partners and bringing forward evidence of good practice. The full implementation of the law is further challenged by local government units (LGUs) which are unable and/or unwilling to allocate sufficient human and financial resources to establish a comprehensive community-based juvenile delinquency prevention program.

Access to justice and rule of law. The prevailing climate of insecurity, corruption and lack of accountability has led to a lack of trust in both the security and law enforcement sectors. The CHRP cites lack of evidence, in part due to the lack of witness protections services, as the single greatest obstacle in prosecuting human rights violations with women and children being most affected by ineffective and discriminatory judicial processes. The combination of lack of access and inefficient implementation creates an environment where alternative paths to justice and resolution are favoured. Amicable settlements involving the exchange of money or property for the life of a child have been documented. Also, in communities where the justice system is perceived as corrupt or ineffective, de facto capital punishment is a reality. The New People's Army (NPA) continues to "sentence" individuals it deems guilty of crimes against the people to death. This absence of rule of law is best evidenced in the example of *rido*, or clan conflict, which promotes retributive justice and continues to be one of the key causal factors of conflict displacement in the country.

UNDP supported the development of the 1) rule of law curriculum for secondary level and 2) writ of kalikasan to ensure that the right of people to the environment is protected and they can seek remedies when needed.

¹⁸ Guanzon, Ma. Rowena Amelia V., and Marie Arcie Anne M. Sercado. "Issues and Problems in the Enforcement of the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004 (Republic Act No. 9262)." *Philippine Law Journal* 83.2 (2008): n. pag. Print.

Impunity. State forces and non-state armed groups (NSAG) continue to commit violations against children in the Philippines without facing formal charges. In support of UNSCR 1612 (2005), the CTFMR has documented numerous cases of killing and maiming of children as well as other grave child rights violations committed by the AFP. These cases are rarely tried. Non-state forces continue to commit violations against civilians including children, as noted in the increased frequency of IED attacks and other armed encounters in civilian areas. The climate of fear and the frequency of reprisal have created a situation of distrust in the judicial system that the GPH must take immediate measures to address.

4. Right to privacy, marriage and family life

AFP counterinsurgency campaigns have been accused of routinely violating the privacy of homes and conducting unofficial census in conflict affected communities. Information gathering is often conducted by combat ready soldiers and census forms include questions about family members, their past/present involvement in insurgency groups, and community members sympathetic to insurgent groups. This profiling creates divisions within communities and undermines existing local government structures.

5. Freedom of religion or belief, expression, association and peaceful assembly, and right to participate in public and political life

Vilification. The Philippines enjoys a vibrant civil society environment. However, groups deemed opposed to the GPH security agenda are often vilified publicly and without recourse. Members of NGOs and national media report being harassed by agents of the security forces. The same tactic is applied to individuals and families – including children - who are witnesses or who vocally oppose state security operations, mining projects, development projects, or the actions of regional and local politicians. The current Department of Justice guidelines¹⁹ for dealing with children and the media are largely disregarded by state security forces; children's names, personal details, and in some cases photos, are routinely released to the media. The CTFMR has documented multiple cases in 2010-2011 involving AFP vilification of minors, in several cases causing their displacement. The future security of these children and their families is a priority concern. Strong legislation prohibiting this practice and imposing criminal penalties should be enacted.

Human rights of journalists. UNDP supported the Freedom of Information (FOI) advocacy through an alliance of journalists, development practitioners and anti-corruption groups. UNESCO and UNESCO National Commission supported the Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication (AIJC) on the conduct of series of RTDs on Multidisciplinary Inquiry on the Culture of Impunity in the Killing of Filipino Journalists from September 2009 to December 2010. UNESCO Paris supported researches which are due for completion in May 2012: a) Experts' papers which examines the root causes of impunity from diverse social science disciplines; b) Five case studies of murdered journalists (3 broadcast and 2 print) using a multidisciplinary approach; and c) Synthesis report integrating experts' papers and case studies.

6. Right to social security and to an adequate standard of living

Sexual reproductive health and rights. A Guttmacher Institute study showed that there are 3.4 million pregnancies annually; 1.9 million (54%) of these are unplanned and unwanted, of which 560,000 end in induced abortion. Only 51% of married women have access to contraceptives to space their pregnancies (NDHS 2008).²⁰ This includes 34% who are using a modern method and 17% who are using a traditional method. The Reproductive Health Bill, which will ensure budgetary allocations for modern family planning commodities and comprehensive sexuality education for young people, has not been enacted.

The DOH Administrative Order 34-A series of 2000 (Adolescent and Youth Health and Development Program - AYHDP) aimed to address sexual and reproductive health concerns of young people.²¹ Despite this AO, Filipino adolescents/youth do not receive evidence-based information and education on sexuality and RH services.²²

¹⁹ Guide for Media Practitioners on the Reporting and coverage of Children, Philippines Department of Justice

²⁰ Women with better access to contraceptives have two children on the average, which is their desired number. Those who have the least or without access have six children – two children more than they desired.

²¹ The framework covers service provision; education and information; building skills; safe and supportive environment; monitoring and evaluation; and resource mobilization in prevention, control and management of health risks such as HIV and AIDS, premarital sex, early childbearing, substance use, abortion, violence against women and children, malnutrition, mental health, accidents and disabilities.

²² See CRR and ARROW, WOW--East and Southeast Asia, 2005, *supra* note 12, at 143.

Adolescents have been subjected to outright discrimination by the government, an example being the Makati City Policy. The Makati Health Program Guidelines provide free treatment in local public facilities to residents with a monthly gross income of P8,000 or less. Beneficiaries are issued yellow cards for this purpose. In 2001, Makati City issued a memorandum stating that “only registered voter[s] and Makati residents can avail [of] the ‘yellow card’ and all teen-age pregnancies are excluded to avail [of] a yellow card since they are not registered voter[s].” This policy discriminates against adolescents’ right to access reproductive health services and unnecessarily puts them at risk.

Child and infant mortality. The national U5 Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) is 33/1000 live births. In many parts of Mindanao, the child health and nutrition situation is worse off compared to other parts of the Philippines. IMR is highest in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) at 56 per 1,000 live births and under-five mortality rate (U5MR) is 94 per 1,000 live births. Among the 0-5 years old, 33.9% are underweight in Region 9 placing them second highest nationwide, next to ARMM with 38%.²³

Birth registration. The National Statistics Office (NSO) revealed that in 2005 there were 2.6 million unregistered children in the Philippines and most of them are Muslim and indigenous children.²⁴ The percentage of under 5 children registered at birth is 83% (83% male/83%female, 87% urban/78 rural)²⁵. UNHCR estimates that 50% of the population of Mindanao does not have a birth certificate²⁶. This may deprive them of the legal basis for claiming various rights, such as education, social services, health care and protection, which contributes to their social, economic and political exclusion.²⁷ The NSO, together with DOH has conducted a vital registration assessment and confirmed system and operational gaps which are contributory to delayed or under-reporting or non-reported births and/or deaths. From the assessment, corresponding recommendations and plan of action were developed to address the gaps and weaknesses of the system.

7. Right to education and to participate in the cultural life of the community

The UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report warned that the Philippines could miss its target of universal primary education by 2015 due to lack of political will and inadequate budgetary allocation to basic education. The Asia Pacific MDG Report (September 2010) identified the Philippines as one of five countries of 32 that registered “regressing or no progress” status in reaching the universal primary education target²⁸.

Attacks on education. An observable trend of attacks on education facilities and teachers significantly impacts children’s access to education in the Philippines. The AFP routinely uses school structures in remote conflict affected areas as temporary barracks and supply depots in contravention of RA 7610 and IHL. Non-state armed groups also occupy, use and cause physical damage to schools during their operations. Schools are also increasingly targeted by kidnapers and extortionists, depriving children of safe access to education. In April 2011, 16 people, mostly teachers and students, were abducted from a school by armed men and held hostage for 5 days. The hostage takers were using the civilians to negotiate the release of a family member from prison. GPH needs to develop a comprehensive plan to protect students and teachers from attacks.

8. Minorities and indigenous peoples (IP)

The International Crisis Group flagged in a recent report the lack of consultation with IP communities in the on-going GPH-MILF peace talks.²⁹ Of the total estimated population of 12 to 15 million IPs in the Philippines, 61% live in Mindanao³⁰. Their exclusion from this peace process greatly decreases the probability of achieving a lasting peace.

Disputes related to natural resources expropriation fuel regional conflicts across the Philippines, affecting indigenous people’s livelihoods and their claims to Ancestral Domain. The Philippine Mining Act of 1995 (RA 7942) contains provisions that are clearly in contradiction with the Indigenous People’s Rights Act of 1997 (RA

²³ Child Poverty Study, Philippine Institute for Development Studies, 2008

²⁴ Government of the Philippines: Third and Fourth Periodic Reports on the Implementation of the UNCRC. 19 September 2007

²⁵ Country Program Document, UNICEF

²⁶ Briefing note, Mindanao Protection Cluster, 17 November 2011

²⁷ CPAP

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ The Philippines: Indigenous Rights and MILF Peace Process. International Crisis Group, 22 November 2011

³⁰ Briefing note, Mindanao Protection Cluster, 17 November 2011

8371). The guarantees of free, prior informed consent have been manipulated by GPH agencies to fast track approval for development projects. The grievances that result from this poorly harmonized legislation have prolonged low intensity warfare in many parts of the country, drawing children into conflict and insecurity. The Aquino administration went on record in 2011 saying that the AFP and CAFGU units would be deployed to protect mining projects. An estimated 20% of all recorded GCRVs in 2010-2011 could be linked to conflict areas where IP groups oppose development projects such as mining.

The UN Inter-agency Technical Working Group on Indigenous Peoples, supported, among others, the inclusion of the ethnicity variable in the national census on population and household, the development of the IP Master Plan, the advocacy for the ratification of ILO Convention 169, the capacity of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) as quasi-judicial entity and the development of new programme focused on women. Members of the UN IATWG IP have also taken the lead in planning and implementing inclusive and multisectoral activities for the three-month IP Solidarity co-convened by the NCIP and the House of the Representative Office of the Committee on National Cultural Communities.

9. Internally displaced persons

IDMC reports that close to 6 million people were displaced by natural disaster from 2008-2010, and that up to 3 million people were displaced by conflict and human rights abuses between 2000-2009³¹. In 2008 alone, approximately 750,000 people were displaced by conflict in Central Mindanao. Prolonged displacement and continued insecurity are causing severe stress to the families, affecting women and children disproportionately. The Mindanao Protection Cluster estimates that nearly 80% of the displaced population are women and children.³² Parents are increasingly unable to provide for their children because of loss of income and livelihood. The lack of durable solutions for this cycle, especially in the province of Maguindanao, is a concern that requires full and comprehensive GPH commitment³³.

13. Right to development

The UNCT, through the MDG-Fund, contributed to the accelerated achievement of the MDGs with the implementation of the following four joint programmes: Strengthening the Philippines' Institutional Capacity to Adapt to Climate Change; Alternatives to Migration: Decent Jobs for Filipino Youth; Enhancing Access to and Provision of Water Services with the Active Participation of the Poor; and Ensuring Food Security and Nutrition for Children 0-24 months. Through the DGTTF funds from 2006-2009, UNDP supported governance project initiatives that were focused on how to fast-track the implementation and delivery of basic needs or MDGs by ensuring that natural disasters are considered in planning, communities are able to track their progress, procurement is effectively carried out and families are directly involved in the whole process from planning to delivery and evaluation.

14. Situation in specific regions or territories

Protracted ethnic and political conflict in Mindanao has resulted in widespread poverty as indicated by the results of the 2009 NSCB study on poverty and well-being. It shows that 66.3% of the children and 58.9% of the women in the provinces of ARMM are poor³⁴, compared to the poverty incidence among families in Mindanao which is at 38.8% in 2006 or to the national poverty incidence of 26.9%. Poor families in ARMM account for 19.8% of total poor in Mindanao. The 2008/09 HDR placed Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Maguindanao, Lanao Del Sur, and Basilan among the 10 bottom provinces in HDI. Poor governance and lack of security exacerbate this situation.

III. ACHIEVEMENT, BEST PRACTICES, CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS

Achievements. The Action Plan between the MILF and the UN in the Philippines on the issue of the recruitment and use of child soldiers in the armed conflict in Mindanao came into effect on 1st August 2009, representing a concrete, time-bound commitment by the MILF and Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF) to refrain from

³¹ IDMC

³² Briefing note, Mindanao Protection Cluster, 17 November 2011

³³ Humanitarian Action Plan for the Conflict-Affected Provinces of Mindanao, 2011

³⁴ Children in the Philippines: Poverty and Well-Being, National Statistical Coordination Board, 2009

involving children in the armed agenda. The Action Plan, inter alia: 1) aims to promote respect for children's rights and increase accountability for violations across the full extent of MILF influence in Mindanao; 2) facilitates supportive interventions for children associated with the MILF-BIAF, within an inclusive, community-based framework; and 3) is a valuable entry-point for UN agencies and other organizations to build the capacity of communities to develop a protective environment for children while recognizing the need for multi-sector support in bringing opportunity and alternatives to young people in conflict affected areas.

In addition to this UN collaboration, the 20 January 2010 MILF *Supplemental General Order (SGO) for General Order Nos. 1 & 2; and in support of the Action Plan* [sic] reaffirms the MILF position on the non-recruitment and use of all children under 18, and sets out punitive sanctions for non-compliance. The SGO has a grace period of 180 days from the day after orientation on the Action Plan, and provides for the establishment of Child Protection Units within the 21 Base Commands and four Fronts.

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), the political front of the NPA, agreed on 7 April 2011 to meet for talks on the development of a concrete time-bound action plan to halt the recruitment and use of children. One of the strategic aims of the recently concluded SRSG mission to the Philippines, engaging the NDFP was also a recommendation of the 2nd Philippine Country Report on MRM (S/2010/36) and SC Working Group Conclusions (S/AC.51/2010/Notes.3). In consultation with UNICEF NY and OSRSG, the UNICEF Philippines team is now preparing for the consultations in Utrecht, Netherlands.

Furthermore, the official visit to the Philippines of the SRSG included a meeting on 6 April 2011 on the Action Plan on the issue of the recruitment and use of child soldiers in Mindanao. The meeting focused on the timeline of the Action Plan with the MILF, exchanging insights for increasing the speed of implementation, as well as calling for better compliance measures in respect of the MILF's SGO. It was agreed that the registration of children across the 21 Base Commands will be completed within nine months, while more realistic criteria would be applied to the definition and identification of children associated within the armed agenda through the community dynamic prevalent in the region. The MILF reaffirmed their position that no child under the age of 18 will be recruited or used in the armed conflict, yet acknowledged the potential for children to become involved through the community fabric.

Extension of the UN-MILF Action Plan on the issue of the recruitment and use of minors in the armed conflict in Mindanao remains pending the concurrence and signature of the MILF Leadership. The expiry of the Action Plan in July 2011 after two years of implementation coincided with the MILF's withdrawal from peace talks, and an escalation in armed skirmishes between the MILF, AFP and the breakaway Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement. While communication between the UN and the MILF Five-Person Panel continues by telephone, and while a spirit of the compliance remains in principle, the MILF has not yet committed to meeting the UN on the proposed addendum on extension.

Meanwhile, in response to the recommendations from the Second Philippine Country Report on MRM (S/2010/36) and SC WG Conclusions (S/AC.51/2010/Notes.3) on strengthening the capacity of military and police forces to protect the children in conflict areas, the SRSG mission was able to gain the concurrence of the DND and the AFP to develop a strategic plan for the protection of children affected by armed conflict. This strategic plan would aim to address concerns of children's association with AFP paramilitary units, particularly the Citizen Armed Force Geographical Units (CAFGUs) by devising activities that would address these issues conclusively. The strategic plan will also ensure the establishment of vetting procedures at the local level, child protection training for AFP personnel, and the secondment of specialized staff to the AFP Human Rights Office.

Significant progress has been reached with the intent of GPH to harmonize international standards with national legislations, particularly with the proposed legislation to ensure a more systematic process of handling children affected by armed conflict, and organize response on grave violations, as recommended in the Philippine country reports dated 24 April 2008 (S/2008/272) and 21 January 2010(S/2010/36). The proposed bill on the protection of children in situations of armed conflict has been approved on 10 March 2011 by the House Committee on the Welfare of Children and endorsed to the Committee on Appropriations. Meanwhile, the first hearing of the Philippine Senate on the proposed legislation to ensure a more systematic process of handling and organize response for CAAC, was held last 28 September 2011. The meeting affirmed the need for the passage of this legislation, and generated support for the creation of a TWG to harmonise the five Senate bills for subsequent convening of a bi-cameral meeting. This bill also aims to codify the requirements of UN Security Council Resolutions on MRM.

With regards UN contribution to UPR Recommendations, through the UN Civil Society Advisory Committee (UN CSAC) mechanism and CHRP support, civil society organizations are involved in the UPR process in almost all the UN Conventions and are coming up with a tracking monitoring system. The CHRP with UNDP support also had opportunity to interact with international business agencies on economic, social and cultural rights issues – this allowed CHRP to share its experiences with other countries.

Following are the major achievements of the CHRP with support from UNDP: GO-NGO consultations on some of the eight UN conventions; support to the NHRAP process; development of a human rights legislative agenda for the 15th Congress; capacity building for the police and army; and HR advocacy for IP women and other marginalized sectors.

Best Practice. The UNCT in the Philippines emphasized the need for greater attention to human rights as well as the MDGs and human development through the creation of more opportunities for inclusive growth. The GPH mainstreamed HRBA in its development process and strengthened the capacities of the many development actors at both national and local levels to apply a rights-based approach to development planning and programming, making the Philippines a global pioneer in this undertaking. Support for this project was initiated by a UNDP governance project but soon came to be supported jointly by many UN agencies such as UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, UNIFEM, UNAIDS and ILO in order to assist in spreading the product and message across all line agencies and more civil society partners.

Challenges. The security environment in the southern Philippines continues to present serious challenges for protecting children from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. In particular, in the highly conflict affected areas of Zamboanga, Basilan, Sulu and Central Mindanao, armed conflict and absence of rule of law has created a child protection crisis. Parties to the conflict and other criminal organizations are known to fund their operations with human trafficking, kidnap for ransom, and smuggling. Children displaced by conflict or disaster are especially vulnerable to these risks. Challenges shared with the Mindanao Humanitarian Team in Human Rights/International Humanitarian Law (HR/IHL) monitoring include insufficient understanding of state and non-state agents' on HR/IHL, impunity and culture of silence, institutional framework remains.

IV. KEY NATIONAL PRIORITIES, INITIATIVES AND COMMITMENTS

The Philippines is an active UN member and has provided an enabling policy and institutional environment for the attainment of its various commitments. For instance, the MDGs were adopted as a framework in the formulation of the 2004-2010 Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) and its 2008 Update and follow-on guidelines were issued by the DBM and DILG to mainstream MDG related programs and projects in national and local agency plans and budgets. Policies have also been formulated by the NEDA, DILG, and NSCB to institutionalize and improve the monitoring of the MDGs, and a Special Committee on the MDGs was created by the HOR to which the NEDA has reported. The current Philippine Development Plan 2011-2016 has an inclusive growth framework, with MDGs as one of its major targets. More broadly, government and civil society have worked and cooperated with human rights treaty bodies to address concluding observations based on the major treaties and a National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP) for 2010-2014, which was completed in 2009, is in fact pending the final approval of the President.³⁵

With the Philippines prioritized in 2007 for implementation of the MRM for the recruitment and use of minors by the NPA, the MILF and the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG); as well as concerns of other violations committed by the AFP and its paramilitary groups; there is increasing global attention on grave child rights violations in the country. This is intensified with the issuance of UN Security Council Resolution 1882 (2009) and Resolution 1998 (2011), which give UNCTs the mandate to engage in Action Plans parties listed for the killing and maiming; rape and sexual violence; and attacks on schools and hospitals.

The OPAPP has engaged openly with the UN in allowing a degree of flexibility in pursuing and implementing Action Plans with non-state actors, particularly the MILF and latterly with the NDF for the NPA. The OPAPP Secretary has also concurred with GPH commitments to work with the UN to develop a 'strategic plan' with the AFP, which would outline similar actions to protect children in conflict situations. GPH is also striving to

³⁵ UN Synthesis Document, Nov 2010: basis for UNDAF discussions with partners

strengthen its legislative framework for the protection of children to ensure that children associated with armed forces and groups are not prosecuted. This will be enforced through a MOA on the treatment and handling of children involved in armed conflict.

The Peace-building goal will be realized by having in place five key preconditions: that (1) MRM is made fully functional and sustained by the UN in the Philippines; that (2) MRM Action Plans are developed and implemented by the UN and NSAGs; that (3) MRM Strategic Plan be developed and implemented by the UN and the AFP; that (4) the GPH MRS for GCRV is developed and implemented; and that (5) child welfare and protection are integrated in peace agreements.

The DOH has launched its “Aquino Health Agenda”, which aims to ensure equitable access to quality health services especially by the poorest families. Ongoing reforms to protect the lowest income quintile groups from financial risk due to health are being undertaken. These include membership of the poorest of the poor families in the social health insurance program (with full subsidy by the national government), no balance billing policy for in-patient care, strengthening household level health promotion and prevention, among others.

The UNCT in the Philippines, through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2012-2018, is focusing collaboration on four Outcome Areas – Universal access to quality social services with focus on the MDGs; Decent and productive employment for sustained, greener growth; Democratic governance; and Resilience toward disasters and climate change. Under the overall theme “Supporting inclusive, sustainable and resilient development,” UN support will be anchored on principles of human rights, gender equality, environmental sustainability, and culture and development with strategic emphases on equity, localization, institution building and governance.

V. CAPACITY BUILDING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The UN will contribute to the achievement of Philippine national goals by focusing on developing capacities required by the PDP and its corresponding sectoral, sub-sectoral, thematic and geographic programmes and strategies. It will also help the GPH fulfill its commitments with respect to the Millennium Declaration, various human rights instruments and Plans of Action adopted in UN conventions. Capacity development will be the central thrust and main benefit of UN cooperation. Consistent with a human rights-based approach, the UNDAF will pursue capacity development in policy analysis and design, in coordination and consensus building, in results-based management, and in knowledge acquisition and networking to help rights holders claim their rights and duty bearers meet their obligations.

Strengthening the capacities of claimholders and duty-bearers on the implementation of the Magna Carta of Women (MCW). The Philippines enacted the Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710) on 14 August 2009, which is a single piece of national legislation that reflects the norms of CEDAW. With the UNDAF 2012-2018, the UNCT will strengthen the capacities of national government agencies and local government units to implement the provisions of the law; increase capacities of civil society organizations to advocate the full implementation of the MCW and strengthen the MCW monitoring and evaluation system. The salient provisions of the law has been distributed to the other UNDAF sub-outcomes such as food and nutrition security, reproductive, maternal and neonatal health, education, decent work mechanisms, conflict prevention and peace-building and disaster risk reduction and management.

Strengthening the Health Sector's Role in Responding to violence against women and girls. Health care providers play a crucial role in detecting, referring and caring for women living with violence. A woman's visit to a health center (Rural Health Units, Barangay health stations, hospitals) may be her only chance to receive support, care and information related to her options and rights as a VAW survivor. There is a need to strengthen the health sector response to VAW as an integral part of sexual and reproductive health and HIV and AIDS services. The DOH is reviving its efforts to institutionalize and standardize the quality of service and training of all women and children protection units. Support for this will be lodged under the UNDAF sub-outcome on reproductive, maternal and neonatal health.

Support to the implementation of the National Action Plan on 1325 and 1820. With funding support from UNDP, the latest NHRAP 92010-20140 is now treaty-based. The write up is based on the eight UN treaties as recommended in the UPR.