

SENATE'S CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
COMMENTS ON THE 12TH WEEKLY REPORT
OF THE PRESIDENT DATED 15 JUNE 2020

I. PROVIDING EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO ALL AFFECTED SECTORS

Update on the Social Amelioration Programs (SAPs) (p. 1)

- As previously commented, the results of a special SWS survey revealed that the number of Filipino families who are hungry due to lack of food almost doubled amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the survey, hunger rate rose in all areas, with the highest in Metro Manila, where 20.8% or 693,000 families increased from the 9.3% or 307,000 families in December 2019; and Mindanao where 24.2% or 1.4 million families rose from 12.7 percent or 709,000 families. This could have been prevented, if the distribution of the SAP has been fully implemented. What programs are in place to address this?¹
- Based on the Report, as of June 15, 2020, the DSWD was able to disburse P100.988 billion or 99.51% of the P101.484 billion total allotment received. It can be observed that the amount of disbursement reported in the 12th report is lower by P14.024 million compared to the P101.002 billion disbursements reported under the 11th report. What is the reason for this variance?²
- Despite the lapse of more than three months from the effectivity of the “Bayanihan to Heal as One Act” and having expended so much government time and resources, the DSWD still failed to reach 291,722 poor families, thereby missing its own adjusted target of 17,938,647 impoverished households. Did the DOF and DSWD merely peg a wrong target, or are there more serious problems here?³
- After 3 months of lockdown, 48,551 4Ps families remain without the promised cash aid. How is this possible considering that there is supposedly a well established distribution scheme for cash grants under the 4Ps system? Why are these families included in the list of 4Ps households if they cannot be reached? Were they not receiving aid before, i.e., during the pre-pandemic period? What is DSWD’s plan for them and their aid allocation?⁴
- The DSWD should provide the following data and information in the next report:
 - Target deadline for the full implementation of the 1st tranche of cash aid;
 - DSWD’s plan of action regarding the 291,722 targeted households which are still not served in the 1st tranche;
 - Total number of beneficiaries who have returned their cash aid due to duplication, with a breakdown of the amounts and their respective areas; and

¹ Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 2)

² Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 1)

³ Sen. De Lima (Annex A, p. 1)

⁴ Sen. De Lima (Annex A, p. 1)

- The results of the validation and cross checking processes by the DSWD and other concerned agencies conducted on the 1st tranche.⁵
- According to previous official and media reports, it is DSWD's conclusion that its failure to meet the deadline for the distribution of the 1st tranche of cash aid was mainly because of the problems with the LGUs. What has the DSWD and other relevant agencies done so far by way of legal actions, such as initiating formal investigation, and filing of administrative and criminal cases against those concerned LGU officials and employees?⁶
- As per our previous comment, it was reported that 11 DSWD employees tested positive for COVID-19 and that over 900 social workers were also quarantined during the 1st tranche of the SAP distribution. How will these affect the distribution of the 2nd tranche, especially since the DSWD is the lead implementer of the said program? What are the measures in place to protect our frontliners during the SAP distribution?⁷
- The Joint Memorandum Circular No. 2 (s. 2020), specified the areas under ECQ and the additional 3.5 million families that are entitled to receive the 2nd tranche of SAP. However, the total number of beneficiaries for the 2nd tranche and the regional distribution of the households remain to be unclear. The concerned agencies should submit in the next report the final target number of beneficiaries for the 2nd tranche, and the total budget to be spent for the said subsidy. The DSWD should also determine the target completion date of the 2nd tranche.⁸
- The distribution scheme of the SAP in the Joint Memorandum Circular 2 (s. 2020) and the DSWD Memorandum Circular 12 (s. 2020) failed to consider the conditions of the vulnerable sectors, especially the senior citizens, PWDs and pregnant women. Is the DSWD open to the proposal of door-to-door delivery of cash aid for these disadvantaged persons?⁹
- What kind of data sharing agreement is being finalized by PhilHealth, DICT, DOH, DOST, and DSWD and how will this improve the reporting processes and the reliability of information? What measures will be implemented to prevent cyber intruders from hacking the system?¹⁰
- The *Relief Agad* online application was designed to aid the concerned departments in distributing cash during emergencies as well as for the distribution of the second batch of the Social Amelioration Program. How does the system work? Why was this mode of payment not considered in the guidelines issued under JMC No. 2, s. 2020?¹¹

⁵ Sen. De Lima (Annex A, p. 2)

⁶ Sen. De Lima (Annex A, p. 3)

⁷ Sen. Cayetano

⁸ Sen. De Lima (Annex A, p. 2) and Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex B, p. 1)

⁹ Sen. De Lima (Annex A, p. 3)

¹⁰ Sen. Cayetano and Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 1)

¹¹ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 1)

- Around 70% of LGUs have submitted partial or complete liquidation reports for the 1st tranche of the emergency cash subsidy payment. To ensure the uninterrupted delivery of public services, what actions are being done to compel LGUs to submit complete liquidation reports? Is the second tranche subject to the submission of complete liquidation reports on the first tranche?¹²
- When is the expected distribution of the 2nd tranche of the emergency subsidy and the payout of those on the waitlist? Will there be any changes in the manner of distribution of the second tranche? Are online payment and remittance services considered?¹³
- As the second tranche of financial assistance is about to be rolled out, we look forward to seeing a national database system of qualified beneficiaries in order to ensure that the implementation of future programs of this kind will be smoother and more efficient.¹⁴
- We reiterate our comment that before considering the distribution of the 2nd tranche, it is imperative that the full implementation of the 1st tranche be made first. In addition, there must be proper liquidation and recording of the first tranche of SAPs. Considering that we are already talking about having a second tranche of SAPs, when will the 1st tranche be fully implemented?¹⁵
- Of the P2.5 billion allotment for CAMP-AKAP, the DOLE has utilized only P1.568 billion or 62.72% which benefitted 153,322 affected OFWs or 61.33% of the target. The amount utilized is higher by P116 million compared to the reported figures in the 11th report while the number of beneficiaries increased by 11,283. Based on the 12th report, the program still had P932 million unutilized balance to cover 96,678 OFWs. What is the reason behind the slow disbursement to the target beneficiaries? What is the breakdown of the remaining 96,678 target beneficiaries?¹⁶
- Despite having regularly raised the issue of the seemingly geographically- limited target beneficiaries of the SAP for Drivers, none of the Bayanihan Reports confirmed nor provided any information whether drivers outside of NCR are also included in the program. Considering that most, if not all, PUV and TNVS drivers remain to be affected by the General Community Quarantine, it is unfortunate that the DSWD and the LTFRB still have not responded to our request. On June 9, a transport group lamented that 90% of jeepney drivers and operators in the country are already starving.¹⁷
- We call the DSWD, LTFRB, AFP, PNP, and other concerned agencies to issue clear guidelines on how our public transport drivers can avail the second tranche

¹² Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 1)

¹³ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 1)

¹⁴ Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 13)

¹⁵ Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 2)

¹⁶ Sen. Angara (Annex C, pp. 1-2) and Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 5)

¹⁷ Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 9)

of SAP. Can public transport drivers including pedicab drivers with expired licenses avail of the SAP?¹⁸

SAP for Small Business (p. 2)

- Considering that the unemployment rate reached 17.7% in April 2020, which is equivalent to 7 million unemployed Filipinos, we reiterate our recommendation for the continuation of the CAMP wage subsidy alongside the SWBS Program to cover a wider population in the labor sector.¹⁹
- The SBWS Task Force should provide a detailed report of the preliminary matching they conducted between DOLE's CAMP and SBWS program lists showing that around 193,000 out of 680,000 CAMP recipients are also SBWS beneficiaries. What has been done regarding this finding? What corrective measures have been put in place to avoid a recurrence of leakage or waste of resources?²⁰
- Will the DOF retain the original target of serving 3.4 million MSME workers under the SBWS Program? Based on the Report, the DOF has completed the payout to only 2.96 million employees, a few days before the set payout deadline of June 17, 2020.²¹
- Based on the Report, PhP 40,913,546.00 or 20.15% of the PhP203 Million downloaded to the provincial offices by the DTI has already been utilized. The said amount was used for some preliminary tasks devoted to the "soft" aspect of the project, which ostensibly should not cost too much. The DTI should submit a detailed expense report on this initial phase of Livelihood Seeding Program-Negosyo Serbisyo sa Barangay.²²
- Under the COVID-19 Assistance to Restart Enterprises (CARES) Program of the DTI, a total of 9,817 inquiries from June 5 to 11, 2020 have been received, while the Small Business Corporation's online application that was launched on June 8, 2020 received a total of 753 loan applications. The Small Business Corporation should speed up the processing of its online loan applications without sacrificing integrity and rigor.²³

Transportation, Repatriation, and Mobility Assistance to Healthworkers, Frontliners, OFWs, Stranded Passengers, Foreign Nationals in the Country, and Other Entities or Individuals (p. 3)

- We appeal to the DPWH, DOTr, MMDA, and other concerned agencies to fast track the construction of bicycle lanes for national and local roads. Also, guidelines on the use of bicycles, including the creation of safe pathways and

¹⁸ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 3)

¹⁹ Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 13)

²⁰ Sen. De Lima (Annex A, p. 3)

²¹ Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 5)

²² Sen. De Lima (Annex A, p. 3) and Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 2)

²³ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 2)

related facilities, as well as the necessary safety precaution of cyclists should immediately be crafted.²⁴

- We hope to see a more reasonable transportation plan for workers in light of the limited operations of our mass transport systems. Our transport regulators should be able to make adjustments in their plans and strategies so that our workers will not have to worry about getting to work while maintaining physical distancing.²⁵
- There should be a strict implementation of the “no-backride policy”, especially since government officials have been caught on camera violating the said policy.²⁶
- The IATF should consider the resumption of jeepney (modern and traditional) operations subject to required public health standards and guidelines, especially since thousands of jeepney drivers have been out of work and some have even resorted to begging on the streets for money to buy food and other necessities.²⁷
- Based on the Report, 24,069 locally stranded individuals (LSIs) have successfully returned to their respective provinces. Does this group of assisted LSIs pertain only to those persons covered by 2 June 2020 referral to the DILG field offices, as stated in the 11th weekly report? Or, does it also include later referrals, plus those persons who recently camped out below the NAIA Expressway because they apparently did not have booked flights? Please provide updates on their status and the efforts taken to assist them.²⁸
- DILG should expand sweeper flights to more LGUs to fast track the return of LSIs and stranded OFWs. Further, DILG and DSWD should also assign personnel in major bus terminals and airports in Metro Manila to assist individuals and OFWs while waiting for their transportation.²⁹
- Moreover, we note that there has been an increasing number of confirmed cases in provinces, like Marawi City, as a result of the Balik Probinsya Program. We hope that the government will have a concrete plan to ensure that those returning to the provinces are properly isolated and tested prior to going home to protect the local citizens from potential transmission of the virus. There must also be thorough coordination between the national government agencies and the LGUs on the quarantine and testing of the Balik Probinsya beneficiaries.³⁰
- DFA and DOLE should also include the total number of OFWs waiting for repatriation in the report.³¹

²⁴ Sen. Cayetano, Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 4), and Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 11)

²⁵ Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 11)

²⁶ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex B, p. 2)

²⁷ Sen. Binay (Annex E, p. 2)

²⁸ Sen. De Lima (Annex A, p. 4) and Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 5)

²⁹ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 2)

³⁰ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 10)

³¹ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 2)

Protection of Consumers and Related Measures (p. 4)

- Consistent with the continuing efforts to enhance the Price Act, the task force of the DA continues to conduct price monitoring operations in 12 regions nationwide. The BFAR monitored 123 markets while the FDA inspected 137 establishments. What concrete actions are being undertaken to deter hoarding, profiteering, and price manipulation?³²
- We reiterate our question on the basis for setting a price ceiling in Department Order No. 2020-0058 when there has been no declaration of state of emergency during the time it was issued.³³
- In addition, as previously asked, what has been the reason for the huge increase in the price of some medical supplies such as face masks despite the existence of a price ceiling as early as 31 January 2020?³⁴
- How do we determine the ceiling price? What have been the considerations/grounds used by the DOH? Now that the price of face masks is dropping, is the DOH mulling on setting a new price ceiling for the same? When will this happen?³⁵
- The BOC and DILG should work together to control the illegal sale of donated PPEs and other medical supplies whether smuggled or online.³⁶
- There are still no updates concerning the NBI's earlier report two weeks ago about the discovery of an underground medical facility in Fontana Leisure Park in Pampanga, and the arrest of two Chinese nationals allegedly running an illegal pharmacy in Angeles City, Pampanga. Progress reports should be provided on these incidents, as well as the discovery of another underground hospital for POGO workers in Makati City.³⁷

Other Assistance to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), and Productive Sector (p. 4)

- We laud the DTI's plans to boost local products and industries, and launch a national media campaign to encourage Filipinos to "Shop Local. Eat Local. Travel Local. Buy Local." We also take note of the partnership with Lazada on having "Go Lokal!" products available on the platform for orders and delivery. We urge the DTI to build on this partnership and help more MSMEs sell their products and conduct their business online.³⁸

³² Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 3)

³³ Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 4)

³⁴ Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 5)

³⁵ Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 5)

³⁶ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex B, p. 1)

³⁷ Sen. De Lima (Annex A, p. 4)

³⁸ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 8) and Sen. Cayetano

Access to Agri-Fishery Products and Ensuring an Uninterrupted Supply Chain (p. 5)

- We repeat our observation about the low turn out of beneficiaries in the lending programs of the DA. After three months of rolling out the programs, there are only 17,682 beneficiaries served from the targeted number of 40,000 for MSFFs, and only 70 recipients out of the target 150 agri-fishery MSEs. As consistently pointed out in our comments on previous reports, maybe it will be better to convert them into simple subsidy projects, like the SBWS program and the cash aids for poor households and small rice farmers.³⁹
- The DA or the Agricultural Credit Policy Council should reconcile its figures and explain the discrepancy in the indicated utilized amount from the budget for the lending program for MSFFs. In the 11th weekly report, it was already stated that PhP863.93 million, or more than 80% of the PhP 1 billion budget, was already utilized. However, in the 12th weekly report, the amount utilized was only PhP 386.29. The older tally has a much bigger figure – more than almost half a billion – compared with the amount reported in the recent submission.⁴⁰
- We also seek clarification as to the limited coverage of the DA’s assistance to Agri-fishery based Micro and Small Entrepreneurs under the Expanded SURE Aid and Recovery Project.⁴¹
- There are media reports of overpricing in the procurement of urea fertilizer worth P1.8 billion in DA’s “Ahon Lahat, Pagkaing Sapat Kontra COVID-19”. This should be addressed by the DA and looked into by Congress and investigative agencies of the government.⁴²
- It was mentioned that technical assistance was provided to 1,360 Agri-based MSMEs and Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) through joint collaborative efforts of DA, DAR, and DTI. Is there any assistance from government agencies in making sure that their products are available online? How many of these MSMEs are linked to the DA’s Kadiwa Online Program? Is online selling part of the technical assistance provided by agencies to our agri-based enterprises?⁴³
- The Report does not answer any of the questions previously raised particularly with regard to the provision of storage facilities for crops and grains, the lack of which has resulted in significant amounts of food spoilage and a big drop in farmgate prices.⁴⁴
- One concern that should be raised and perhaps addressed in the next report is the status of the export industry and the safety measures being taken vis-a-vis COVID-19. It is a given that the mass repatriation of OFWs has resulted in the decrease in foreign exchange reserves of the country. This is all the more reason to protect the influx of dollars from Philippine exports such as bananas which was

³⁹ Sen. De Lima (Annex A, p. 5)

⁴⁰ Sen. De Lima (Annex A, p. 5)

⁴¹ Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 13)

⁴² Sen. De Lima (Annex A, p. 5)

⁴³ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 3)

⁴⁴ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 3)

valued at nearly USD 2 billion in 2019 according to the figures from the PSA but the production of which may be impacted because of the Panama disease and drought that is plaguing Mindanao.⁴⁵

- The Report should also contain a listing of the countries which have lifted import restrictions and those which still have them in place. Also, what measures are being taken to protect agricultural workers in these plantations?⁴⁶

Ensuring Water and Energy Supply (p. 5)

- The MWSS directed their water concessionaires to reflect the actual water consumption of consumers, verify the consumers' consumption patterns, and withhold the statement of account with significant deviation for further investigation. Have the water concessionaires complied with this directive? What about the period during the 3-month lock down? What was the basis for the charges when there was no actual meter reading done? May we know the terms offered by the 2 concessionaires regarding grace period and payment schemes for unpaid bills during the lockdown?⁴⁷
- Why is MERALCO still charging a convenience fee despite reports that it will shoulder the convenience fee charged to consumers during the ECQ?⁴⁸

Other Forms of Assistance and Partnership with LGUs (p. 6)

- According to the NHA manager, the "Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-Asa Program was temporarily suspended. May we know the reason for the suspension of the project?⁴⁹

Assistance to Students, Educators, and Educational Institutions (p. 7)

- We would like to reiterate our comment regarding the 264 private colleges and universities that have not submitted the required documents for the release of the Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES), which will affect the stipend of about 6,628 qualified student-grantees. What will happen to these students if those higher education institutions (HEIs) will not submit the requirements? Can the CHED make some kind of arrangement to already provide the stipend of these students, especially since some colleges and universities may open in August, but still make the HEIs accountable to provide the requirements?⁵⁰
- According to the survey conducted by DepEd on 700,000 teachers,⁵¹ 87% have computers at home while 13% have none. Among those with gadgets, 41% have

⁴⁵ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 3)

⁴⁶ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 4)

⁴⁷ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 4)

⁴⁸ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 4)

⁴⁹ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 4) and Sen. De Lima (Annex A, pp. 4-5)

⁵⁰ Sen. Cayetano and Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 10)

⁵¹<https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/06/16/20/thousands-of-teachers-lack-gadgets-internet-to-cope-with-pan-demic-deped>

internet connection, 49% have an internet signal in their area but no connection of their own, and 10% lack both. How is the DepEd addressing these gaps?⁵²

- The DepEd should also present a clear plan on the use of radio and television as part of its strategy to deliver education under the New Normal. We recognize that radio and television can be a cost-effective and cheap medium of primary and secondary education especially for public school students who cannot buy laptops and/or tablets.⁵³
- DepEd should provide a concrete plan and the relevant timelines with regard to the preparation and dissemination of the distance learning curriculum before the opening of schools in August.⁵⁴
- Given the shift to blended learning, we wish to reiterate our call for financial and other forms of support to all institutions of learning to ensure that their faculty, students, and other staff have the appropriate ICT equipment, program, and required software to be able to continue learning in the new normal.⁵⁵
- To reiterate, considering that there is much uncertainty on the enrollment of students, which would consequently affect the ability of many private schools to sustain themselves, teachers, part-time faculty, and non-teaching personnel in private educational institutions should also be given assistance to help them cope with the effects of the pandemic.⁵⁶
- Under LBP's ACADEME lending program interest rate, a 3% per annum is fixed up to the maturity date under a normal circumstance. Would this still be applicable to eligible borrowers given the pandemic?⁵⁷
- A loan worth PhP 250 million was granted under the ACADEME lending program. Which institution availed of this loan? Who are the other 30 institutions outside Metro Manila that have expressed their interest to apply?⁵⁸
- The ACADEME lending program is a “study now, pay later” scheme for its students. How is this supposed to help the teachers in the current situation?⁵⁹

Assistance to Women, Children and Other Vulnerable Groups (p. 7)

- We would like to reiterate our request for updates on the government’s efforts in cracking down cybercrime activities, especially those that adversely affect women, children and other vulnerable groups? What are the status of the cases and actions taken by concerned agencies on reported violations on women and children rights?⁶⁰

⁵² Sen. Cayetano and Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 6)

⁵³ Sen. Cayetano and Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 6)

⁵⁴ Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 11)

⁵⁵ Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 12)

⁵⁶ Sen. Cayetano

⁵⁷ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 4)

⁵⁸ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 4)

⁵⁹ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 4)

⁶⁰ Sen. Cayetano and Sen. De Lima (Annex A, pp. 5-6)

- Women and children’s desks are not technically in the frontline of the government response to the pandemic. The DILG should elaborate on how the women and children’s desks are functioning in this current crisis. What are the mechanisms in place to activate the desks? How can they work seamlessly with our law enforcement agencies?⁶¹
- WHO has published guidelines for health facilities on maintaining essential services during the pandemic, including for newborn care, as experts have also investigated the risk of COVID-19 being transmitted to babies during breastfeeding. Has DOH been able to monitor whether public and private hospitals and other health facilities are following the said guidelines? What other measures are in place to ensure maternal and child care during this pandemic?⁶²
- As previously commented, DOH stated that even before the COVID-19 pandemic started, we already have enough supply of vaccine for the expanded program on immunization. However, due to the pandemic, parents are scared to bring their children to health centers for vaccination. What is the DOH doing in order to continue the immunization program despite the scare brought by COVID-19? How many children were vaccinated during the start of the quarantine period? How much is the decrease as compared to the percentage of children vaccinated before the lockdown started?⁶³

Protection of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) (p. 7)

- There are no more updates on any other elderly PDLs who may have been released, in addition to the 90 who have been ordered released by the courts, as of 22 May 2020. The next report should provide updates on this matter, especially since the 5th weekly report has indicated that 1,927 elderly PDLs have existing medical conditions and 804 are non-recidivists, making them all qualified for early release.⁶⁴
- We commend the report from the Board of Pardons and Parole that 165 PDLs were granted parole, 21 were recommended to the DOJ for conditional pardon without parole conditions and 24 with parole conditions, while 46 have been recommended for sentence commutations. Further progress on this matter should be included in subsequent reports.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Sen. De Lima (Annex A, p. 6)

⁶² Sen. Cayetano

⁶³ Sen. Cayetano and Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 10)

⁶⁴ Sen. De Lima (Annex A, p. 6)

⁶⁵ Sen. De Lima (Annex A, p. 6)

II. SECURING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES FOR THE HEALTH SECTOR AND OTHER FRONTLINERS

Human Resources for Health (HRH) (p. 8)

- Three months have lapsed and only 3,541 HRH have been hired out of the DOH-approved 8,494 slots and the DBM-allotted positions for 15,757 for temporary health workers. This problem has to be decisively addressed as it hampers the operations of our testing centers, laboratories and hospitals.⁶⁶
- The DOH, together with its 3,471 public health associates should work with other government agencies to promote their emergency hiring program nationwide, through social media platforms to increase the number of applicants as soon as possible.⁶⁷
- While the DOH has provided the number of healthcare workers needed, it has not provided the total number of available health care workers in the country. This is crucial in determining whether the deployment ban of health care workers (and the consequent impacts to their lives and livelihood) is prudent. Based on an article published in Business World, allowing the deployment of the 643 health care workers affected by the deployment ban will not adversely impact the supply of medical workers in the country, as there are still more than 300,000 available licensed nurses.⁶⁸
- In addition, DOLE and DOH must provide the affected healthcare workers (i) assistance, which could come in the form of DOLE's CAMP-AKAP, and (ii) local employment options in healthcare facilities while the deployment ban is in place, and estimate the number of workers who do not benefit from any of these two.¹⁶ They must also coordinate information and protocols on HCW- OFWs and ensure that returning OFW-HCWs and stranded HCWs are integrated into the DOH health human resource hiring.⁶⁹
- The WHO sounded the alarm on the Philippine health system, which they consider as an “outlier”. The DOH should include in the report a sub-section that provides us with the number of active cases of health care workers with COVID-19 and those who were able to recover, including our fatalities.⁷⁰
- We reiterate our comment that with the expected increase in cases (partly due to the gradual easing of restrictions), we hope to see a more concrete plan to reduce such risks to our healthcare workers by providing them with adequate PPEs and informing them on the correct protocols to avoid community transmission.⁷¹
- What is the response of DOH on the claim of the health workers' group that the hazard pay for government workers is “deceptive” and “divisive”? Some of the

⁶⁶ Sen. De Lima (Annex A, p. 6) and Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 12)

⁶⁷ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex B, p. 2)

⁶⁸ Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 8)

⁶⁹ Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 8)

⁷⁰ Sen. De Lima (Annex A, p. 7)

⁷¹ Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 9)

issues raised by these groups are the following: (1) the amount of COVID-19 hazard pay received by a nurse on duty for 12 hours per shift for four days a week is smaller compared to an office personnel who report for 8 hours a day for 5 days a week since the hazard pay is computed based on the number of days the worker reported for work; (2) the possibility of receiving an amount lower than P500/day because Administrative Order No. 26 allows a lower but uniform rate to qualified personnel if the government agency has insufficient funds in their PS or MOOE allotments or their approved COB; and (3) grant of the hazard pay is authorized only during the period of implementation of the ECQ.⁷²

- Administrative Order No. 28 authorizes the grant of a one-time COVID-19 Special Risk Allowance (SRA) to all public health workers who have great exposure to health risks pursuant to the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act. The amount of the special risk allowance is equivalent to a maximum of 25% of the monthly basic salary/pay. Has DBM or DOH established a monitoring scheme to ensure that all public health workers receive the COVID-19 special risk allowance?⁷³
- As previously commented, there have been reports that there are health workers who have yet to receive their SRA. We would like to be informed as to how much has already been released and the reason why there has been a delay in the implementation of the SRA.⁷⁴

Referral Hospitals, COVID-19 Bed Capacity, and Equipment (p. 8)

- Based on an *ABSCBN News* article, Dr. Gap Legaspi confirmed that PGH might have to reopen Ward 2, which was previously closed due to low occupancy, because there are more patient admissions and less discharges now.⁷⁵ What are the preemptive measures being taken by DOH to prepare for the possible increase of COVID-19 cases?⁷⁶
- As of June 10, 2020, there are 13,794 dedicated beds for COVID-19 patients nationwide with 33.90% occupancy. And yet a number of people in Cebu City have complained about the shortage in hospital beds for COVID-19 patients or those suspected to have contracted the virus. What is the current bed capacity and occupancy rate in Cebu City?⁷⁷
- As reported, the occupancy rate nationwide of COVID-19 beds in referral hospitals is 33.90% and the total bed capacity of quarantine facilities is 51,488. Given that there seems to be enough bed capacity for COVID-19 patients, the DOH should consider isolating patients who are asymptomatic or those with mild

⁷² Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 5)

⁷³ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 5)

⁷⁴ Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 9)

⁷⁵ <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/06/15/20/doh-denies-pgh-running-out-of-beds-for-covid-19-patients-despite-leaked-info>

⁷⁶ Sen. Cayetano and Sen. Villaneuva (Annex D, p. 3)

⁷⁷ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 6) and Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 3)

symptoms in designated quarantine and isolation facilities rather than having them on home quarantine or isolation, particularly in cases where physical distancing is not possible, i.e., there is no separate bedroom where they can recover without sharing an immediate space with others.⁷⁸

- We hope to see in the next report a breakdown of the total quarantine beds available per region in order to see if the capacity is enough to isolate returning individuals and repatriated OFWs.⁷⁹

Quarantine Facilities (p. 9)

- As previously pointed out, there should be a clear delineation of duties among OWWA, DOH, BOQ, DOT, and other government agencies in the management of privately commissioned quarantine facilities.⁸⁰

Update on Test Kits, Testing Centers, and Expanded Testing (p. 9)

- We note that according to the DOH, the daily testing capacity of the country has already exceeded 30,000 per day. However, the actual number of tests conducted per day has not reached the maximum capacity. Does the DOH/IATF have a new timeline set for actually reaching the set objective of 30,000 tests conducted per day? If so, when can the country reach the desired 30,000 tests per day? And more importantly, when can we expand testing to include workers not covered by the DOH guidelines on testing?⁸¹
- Does the DOH or the IATF have a plan for testing in COVID-19 epicenters? Are there enough test supplies, materials, and personnel in these areas to achieve the testing target?⁸²
- In reporting COVID-19 cases, the DOH classifies confirmed cases into two categories: (1) fresh cases and (2) late cases. It appears that there is a backlog of unreported cases and, as such, the DOH is not reporting COVID-19 cases timely and accurately. Thus, it is necessary: (1) that the actual number of COVID-19 tests conducted daily be reported by the DOH and included in the President's weekly reports; and (2) for the DOH to clear its backlog in reporting COVID-19 cases beginning with setting a timeline for clearing its backlog. Considering that our testing capacity has already reached more than 8,000 daily in recent days, what is the status on our backlogs as of date? These will help resolve any discrepancy and inaccuracy in DOH data.⁸³

⁷⁸ Sen. Binay (Annex E, p. 2)

⁷⁹ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 6) and Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 3)

⁸⁰ Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 10)

⁸¹ Sen. Angara (Annex C, pp. 6-7), Sen. De Lima (Annex A, p. 7), and Sen. Binay (Annex E, p. 1)

⁸² Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 6)

⁸³ Sen. Binay (Annex E, pp. 1-2) and Sen. Lacson (Annex F, pp. 5-6)

- How many of the over 19,000 active COVID-19 cases in the country are currently admitted in hospitals and how are they broken down into direct and indirect contributors of PhilHealth?⁸⁴
- As suggested before, in order to detect potential underreporting of COVID-19 deaths, DOH should include regular updates on the number of individuals tagged as suspected and probable cases who died without being tested for COVID-19.⁸⁵
- Experts from the University of the Philippines projected that the number of people infected with COVID-19 in the country could hit 40,000 by the end of June, given the current rate of community transmission. However, DOH remains unable to accredit more laboratories, and to scale up testing and tracing, which is reportedly one of the weakest in the region.⁸⁶

Clinical Trials (p. 10)

- There are various clinical trials being held in the Philippines for medicines and vaccines for COVID-19. Do we have an update on the trials being conducted by various groups? Does DOH already have preliminary results or observations of some of these trials?⁸⁷

Strengthening Contact Tracing Measures (p. 10)

- We reiterate our comment on the need to heighten information dissemination campaigns to encourage the general public to take part in contact tracing. There was a recent report on how Germany is using an effective yet very low tech approach. Germany's tracing method is centered on calling recently diagnosed patients and asking for their movements and the people they had close contact with, which contact scouts record in a central database. Our government should consider doing the same. But in addition, require everyone to record every place they have been to for easier contact tracing. We also suggest that instead of just 1, there should be at least 3 to 5 trainers on contact tracing in each RESU. This is to ensure that multiple training sessions can be conducted, which in turn would speed up the growth of the country's pool of trained contact tracers.⁸⁸
- We hope to know the regional and local distribution of contact tracers nationwide, by type of facility of designation and type of work.⁸⁹
- As previously pointed out, the DOH indicated the need for 94,000 more contact tracers at P30,000/contact tracer. Given that many LGUs are using their local personnel who are familiar with the community, DOH can improve contact tracing by funding LGUs instead. But P30,000/contact tracer seems quite excessive, unless this amount is meant for data analysts or other professionals who will run

⁸⁴ Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 1)

⁸⁵ Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, 9) and Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 6)

⁸⁶ Sen. De Lima (Annex A, p. 7)

⁸⁷ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 7)

⁸⁸ Sen. Cayetano

⁸⁹ Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 11)

the system. Please clarify what is the system in place and how DOH intends to address the slow pace tracing and reporting of data. What is the process of hiring contact tracers and the minimum qualifications for one to be a contact tracer? Are there guidelines/standards to ensure that contact tracers do their job properly?⁹⁰

- There is still no update in the 12th Weekly Report regarding the status of hiring or tapping around 94,000 contact tracers, which can be sourced from our barangay health workers and parent-leaders in the 4Ps program who are spread all around the country.⁹¹
- We seek to clarify the main reason behind DOH's recent public dissemination efforts calling for recovered COVID-19 patients (as of May 1) to self-report their status. Is this not part of the ongoing contact tracing efforts? Are there issues such as loss or alteration of information that make it difficult or impossible for DOH to reach out to these patients on its own?⁹²
- We also take note that the DOH is now using COVID Kaya, a case and contact tracing reporting system developed jointly by the WHO and the DOH's Epidemiology Bureau. Does this mean the DOH is maintaining a database of cases separate from that which is managed under StaySafe.ph? Or do cases reported in StaySafe.ph reflect in COVID Kaya? If this is the case, can other contact tracing applications be linked to COVID Kaya?⁹³
- There is a need to further promote the StaySafe Contact Tracing App nationwide through social media platforms for the local people in their respective communities to be updated on the number of people infected with the COVID-19, especially in ECQ / high risk areas.⁹⁴
- Have the digital tools for contact tracing been successful in achieving disease prevention and quick response? If so, can success stories be included in succeeding Bayanihan Reports along with figures per technology used—StaySafe, COVID Tanod, Fassster, endcov.ph, and COVID Kaya?⁹⁵

Provision of Healthcare Resources, Supplies, and Equipment (p. 11)

- PhilHealth should disclose the average percentage of COVID-19 hospital charges it is able to shoulder (i.e. the support value of the COVID-19 package). In addition, there must be regular updates on how much COVID-19 patients pay in excess of the case rates determined by PhilHealth and how many of the admitted COVID-19 patients have been assessed to have no capacity to pay the excess of the case rates.⁹⁶

⁹⁰ Sen. Cayetano and Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 7)

⁹¹ Sen. De Lima (Annex A, p. 7)

⁹² Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 2)

⁹³ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 7) and Sen. De Lima (Annex A, p. 7)

⁹⁴ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex B, p. 1)

⁹⁵ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 7) and Sen. Cayetano

⁹⁶ Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 1)

- We reiterate that Philhealth should also provide a breakdown of the funds it released to healthcare institutions, specifying the amount released per hospital, the date disbursed, the basis for the release, and other relevant information.⁹⁷

III. ESTABLISHING SOUND FISCAL AND MONETARY ACTIONS THAT ARE RESPONSIVE TO ALL STAKEHOLDERS

Budgetary Measures to Fund COVID-19 Efforts (p. 12)

- In the previous weekly reports, a table on the budget allocated and spent per agency was included, however, this was removed in the current report. What is the reason why the table was omitted in the latest submission?⁹⁸
- As previously commented, Section 5 of the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act directs the President to include in the weekly reports not only the amounts used and augmentation but also those that were "reprogrammed, reallocated and realigned". In addition, a detailed list of unreleased appropriations and unobligated allotments of each department should also be included. We therefore expect an attachment with this detailed list in succeeding reports.⁹⁹
- In the Report, the DOF stated that the government has signed a US\$750 million loan agreement with the Asian Infrastructure Development Bank (AIDB), and budgetary support financing that totals US\$6.4 Billion from the ADB, World Bank and AIDB. May we be provided with a comprehensive report on the total number of loans and the aggregate sums being borrowed from foreign banks in response to the current pandemic? May we also be given copies of the loan contracts, financing agreements and related papers for purposes of transparency and the right to public information?¹⁰⁰

IV. OTHER COMMENTS / CONCERNS

General Community Quarantine

- In a study made by UP-OCTA, Professor Guido David suggested that there should be an extension of the MECQ. According to him, the cases decreased just a little bit but the decrease was not enough for us to recommend moving into GCQ based on the numbers alone. The real danger is the highly likely non-reporting of asymptomatic cases.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Sen. Cayetano

⁹⁸ Sen. De Lima (Annex A, p. 7)

⁹⁹ Sen. De Lima (Annex A, pp. 7-8)

¹⁰⁰ Sen. De Lima (Annex A, p. 8)

¹⁰¹ Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 7)

Asymptomatic Individuals

- To reiterate, we hope that the official DOH portal and the Bayanihan Report also include updates on the current number of asymptomatic patients with confirmed COVID-19 cases and the number of confirmed COVID-19 patients who are currently recovering. Among others, such information can help assess potential shortage in the available facilities.¹⁰²
- It is important to note the population demographics of the country. The Philippines is considered to have a young population with the majority aged between 0 and 24. Data from other countries would suggest that most of the asymptomatic individuals come from this age group. The problem with these asymptomatic individuals is that there is no other way to detect whether they are infected other than having them tested. Hence, it is vital that we zero in on these asymptomatic individuals to prevent further spread of the virus. Our solutions must not simply be to copy the methodology employed by other countries as there are also variations in every nation's demographics. It is important that we design our solutions in accordance to the profile of our country. With this said, the asymptomatic or the PUMs should merit focus from the government or at the very least, a classification of its own.¹⁰³

Health Protocols

- We join the experts from the University of the Philippines in their call to immediately review the government's strategies for social distancing and other health protocols, as well as the continued easing of restrictions in the NCR and the Province of Cebu.¹⁰⁴
- How could the IATF reassure the public that while the virus is still out there, they should not be too fearful in consuming goods and services, in malls, commercial centers, and elsewhere?¹⁰⁵]
- In light of reports that halls of justice have become unsafe due to the proliferation of the virus. Government should adopt measures in our judicial system to minimize the spread COVID-19. An important step towards this direction is the use of technology, and the fast-tracking of the purchase of the same, to enable first-level courts to conduct hearings and other court processes with minimum contact between persons.¹⁰⁶

TB Patients

- DOH has authorized the use of GeneXpert machines for COVID-19 tests. These machines are traditionally used for TB diagnosis. How can we ensure that TB

¹⁰² Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 1)

¹⁰³ Sen. Lacson (Annex F, pp. 7-8)

¹⁰⁴ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 7)

¹⁰⁵ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 8)

¹⁰⁶ Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 7)

patients needing these machines are not necessarily displaced as more GeneXpert machines are used for COVID-19 diagnosis?¹⁰⁷

National Action Plan

- We would like to follow-up on the submission of the “National Action Plan” to the Senate, which was promised during the Committee of the Whole Hearing, as well as the revisions made on the said plan in light of the lifting of lockdowns.¹⁰⁸

Telehealth

- How many telehealth companies are able to provide free primary care consultations on COVID-19? In the past month, how many patients or calls have these telehealth partners, including DOH’s hotlines, accommodated in total? Is the total capacity of these hotlines adequate?¹⁰⁹

Mental Health

- Considering the fear and anxiety associated with the pandemic, we hope to know how the National Center for Mental Health (NCMH) Crisis Hotline has been effectively utilized. Specifically, we hope to know the number of confirmed COVID-19 patients, suspected and probable cases, and persons under monitoring provided with psychological first aid and processing to address their mental health needs.¹¹⁰

Tourism

- To update all tourism stakeholders and the public, we request the DOT to partner with NTC, to tap the assistance of all public telecom companies and content providers to disseminate important information on how to cope and adapt to the circumstances brought by COVID-19 pandemic, and start promoting the local tourist destinations to the public through broadcast messaging service which allows one to send same SMS/MMS messages to a large number of mobile phones.¹¹¹
- We call the DOT in consultation with DOH, DOTr, and ULAP to seriously consider adopting “travel bubbles” in the country to help the tourism industry recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. The DOT raised the possibility of opening Bohol and Boracay to tourists. In doing this, the government should ensure improvement of hospital facilities and medical services in these areas.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 7)

¹⁰⁸ Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 12)

¹⁰⁹ Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 4)

¹¹⁰ Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 13)

¹¹¹ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 5)

¹¹² Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 5)

- We urge the DOT to finalize capacity programs for health and wellness tourism to help the tourism industry.¹¹³
- As the country prepares to revive and reopen tourism in the country once areas are classified under Modified General Community Quarantine, the IATF should consider the reopening of museums subject to required public health standards and guidelines.¹¹⁴

Testing of Employees

- As previously commented, the government should provide assurance to employers and employees that proper government assistance, with regard to testing of employees, will be given, especially as most of the country shifts to GCQ.¹¹⁵
- Also, to reiterate, relevant government offices should clarify their guidelines on the testing of employees, stating that only a sample of the returning employees needs to be tested. In this regard, we note that while the Guidelines on Workplace Prevention and Control of COVID-19 issued by DTI and DOLE provides that “[e]mployers may test workers for COVID-19,” the guidelines issued by DPWH provides that “[c]onstruction personnel shall be required to undergo any available COVID-19 test.”¹¹⁶

Occupational Safety and Health Standards (OSHS)

- To reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 upon implementation of GCQ, we recommend that DOLE coordinate and monitor all establishments, especially those that recorded poor compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Standards (OSHS) in the most recent DOLE inspections, and ensure that they are aware of the proposed protocol for screening employees and visitors. We also hope that DOLE will provide a clearer set of guidelines on the safety and health protocols that must be adhered to at this time.¹¹⁷

Online Government Services

- As previously commented, DICT, in coordination with executive agencies, should provide a concrete plan on how to digitize their frontline processes and services for stakeholders and constituents. Likewise, the DOH must assist these agencies to refine their protocols to protect the health and occupational safety of their employees.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 5)

¹¹⁴ Sen. Binay (Annex E, p. 2)

¹¹⁵ Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 9)

¹¹⁶ Sen. Villanueva (Annex E, p. 9)

¹¹⁷ Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 10)

¹¹⁸ Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 12)

Partnering with Online Delivery Companies

- Considering that GCQ is extended over Metro Manila until June 30 and with the possibility of further extension, DOTR, DICT, DOST, and DTI should work together with online delivery companies such as Lalamove, Grab etc., to introduce a new way to generate income for jeepney drivers, such as the new online program of Lalamove named LalaJeep which offers an online delivery system through Jeepneys.¹¹⁹

Restructuring the Supply Chain

- Globally, a massive restructuring of supply chains is underway. Such an unraveling is a threat to our economy, and even to our way of life, as some goods and services that are widely available may not be as accessible later on. However, it also presents a unique opportunity for us to pursue a massive and fundamental reshaping of our supply chains, to make it deeper, more participatory for Filipino SMEs, and more equitable. Does the government have any plans to seize this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity in fundamentally reshaping our supply chains?¹²⁰

Taxation

- There are proposals for additional taxes on sugary beverages as well as junk food. Any tax measure must consider the demand elasticity of the goods and services that will be affected. What are your latest estimates on the demand elasticity of sugary beverages and junk food? Do these estimates already reflect consumer sentiments and fears in light of the pandemic? Are the revenue estimates from these taxes realistic considering tepid consumer sentiments these days and in the foreseeable future?¹²¹
- The government should relax stringent regulations to enforce taxation laws on small businesses, such as online sellers during the height of the pandemic. Instead, it should look into the strict enforcement of tax laws against potential large taxpayers such as POGOs.¹²²

Government Loans

- We recommend disclosing more details on the various loans obtained by the government to address the impacts of COVID-19. Specifically, we hope to see a list of the amounts and terms of the loans, the status of disbursements and utilization of the funds, the beneficiaries, and such other relevant information as may be appropriate to properly apprise the public of the government's efforts to combat COVID-19.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex B, p. 1)

¹²⁰ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 8)

¹²¹ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 8)

¹²² Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 5)

¹²³ Sen. Villanueva (Annex D, p. 5)