

SENATE'S CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
COMMENTS ON THE 6TH WEEKLY REPORT
OF THE PRESIDENT DATED 4 MAY 2020

I. PROVIDING EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO ALL AFFECTED SECTORS

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

- We reiterate our concern regarding the slow distribution of emergency cash subsidy, unclear and slow communication of programs to the public, insufficient allocation of beneficiaries, and inconsistent reporting and monitoring of SAP distribution. We are already in the extension period of the ECQ but as of 01 May 2020, out of the 13,556,093 non-4Ps target beneficiaries, only 6,445,906 were served. May we be apprised of the developments in the DSWD's creation of a Monitoring Team that will work closely with LGUs in the distribution of SAP.¹
- DSWD has given information worthy of congressional inquiry regarding its explanation on the reasons for the slow distribution of emergency subsidy and logistical problems experienced in the implementation of SAP. Deeper probe should be conducted, and the DSWD should be ready to present evidence on its allegations that: (1) target-recipients themselves have not taken preventive measures during distribution [and thus practically sabotaging their own aid program]; (2) there were threats against DSWD personnel from some LGU officials; (3) there has been slow processing at the barangay level because of politicizing or inaccurate lists of qualified beneficiaries; (4) lack of necessary manpower for the distribution based on reports that there are only 4 social workers per municipality; and (5) discrepancies in the lists of beneficiaries.²
- DSWD might have missed looking into the difficulty to comply with the stringent conditions or guidelines on the SAP implementation, as one of the reasons for the slow distribution. Hence, we request DSWD and the DILG to work on addressing the factors for the delay in the distribution of the assistance, especially considering the upcoming implementation of the second tranche. Also, it may not be possible for LGUs to meet the DILG's deadline. Will the DSWD impose sanctions on LGUs? If so, what are these?³
- The DSWD should immediately conduct a house-to-house survey to update the records of the beneficiaries of SAP and to validate the eligible recipients of the program while ensuring the safety and protection of those who will be tasked to do the validation.⁴

¹ Sen. Cayetano, Sen. Gatchalian (Annex A, p.1), Sen. Revilla (Annex C, p. 1), Sen. De Lima (Annex E, p.1), Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 1), and Sen. Villanueva (Annex G, p. 2)

² Sen. De Lima (Annex E, pp. 1-2) and Sen. Lacson (Annex F, pp. 3-4)

³ Sen. Villanueva (Annex G, p. 4) and Sen. Pangilinan (Annex H, p. 2)

⁴ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex B, p. 1)

- The next report should contain details on the distribution of food packs and other non-cash assistance, which are also part of the SAP for 18 million families in need. LGUs should also regularly update the auditing report of cash and non-cash subsidies and disseminate information to constituents by posting in their social media platforms or in areas within their jurisdiction, as to who among the intended beneficiaries did not receive subsidies and the reasons thereof.⁵
- In the Report, DOF recommended that the total spending for ESP be kept within the original Php 205B allotment citing the existence of other SAPs that run parallel to the emergency subsidy project. Does this mean that the commitment in the 3rd weekly Report to supposedly raise more than Php 60B to accommodate lower-middle income families is now abandoned?⁶
- DOLE's CAMP and TUPAD programs and DA's Financial Subsidy for Rice Farmers and Rice Farmers Financial Assistance Program are not enough to provide financial assistance to affected workers or individuals from the formal and informal sectors as well as rice farmers in various regions.⁷
- We reiterate our call for DBM to augment the funds available for the implementation of crucial DOLE Programs.⁸
- DOLE should still provide the list of LGUs which applied to avail of the TUPAD program, as well as the actual list of LGUs which qualified for the program.⁹
- DOLE's CAMP-AKAP for displaced OFWs has low utilization of 30.60%. What accounts for the low utilization?¹⁰
- Provide an update on the launch of DOLE's online monitoring system, which provides real-time updates on the distribution of financial assistance to formal and informal workers and OFWs.¹¹
- What actions have the DOF, SSS, and other agencies undertaken to finally grant assistance to unserved CAMP applicants? The next report should also include steps the DOLE and DOF have taken to ensure that there is no duplication in terms of beneficiaries.¹²
- Based on the Report, out of 90,000 targeted driver-beneficiaries, only 40,418 drivers have been served. What is the timeline for the distribution of the SAP financial assistance to intended beneficiaries in NCR? What are the reasons why there was no distribution of subsidy for TNVS and PUV sectors and how do we address this delay?¹³

⁵ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex B, p. 1) and Sen. Villanueva (Annex G, p. 3)

⁶ Sen. De Lima (Annex E, p. 2)

⁷ Sen. Gatchalian (Annex A, p. 3) and Sen. Villanueva (Annex G, p. 5)

⁸ Sen. Villanueva (Annex G, p. 5)

⁹ Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 2)

¹⁰ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 1) and Sen. Pangilinan (Annex H, p. 3)

¹¹ Sen. Villanueva (Annex G, p. 10)

¹² Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 3)

¹³ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 1), Sen. Revilla (Annex C, p. 1), and Sen. Villanueva (Annex G, p. 2)

- The government may want to consider expanding its list of beneficiaries under SAP for drivers, and perhaps include tricycle and pedicab drivers, whose members are easily identifiable through their transport associations.¹⁴
- In view of the need for physical distancing and the issuance of the National ID, moving forward, the government could consider incorporating fund transfer and payment mechanism in the ID card or the government could issue a top-up card, for easy transfer of cash-aid to all qualified beneficiaries.¹⁵
- We reiterate the need for a comprehensive report on the delivery of financial support from agencies tasked to do so, such as the DSWD and the DOLE, which reflects (1) the scope of the assistance provided, whether or not the budget allocated was enough for every qualified person; (2) the turnover time or the average waiting time before the financial assistance reached the beneficiaries; (3) an assessment of the adequacy of the assistance given to support the household beneficiaries during the lockdown; and more importantly, (4) the bottlenecks in the implementation and possible modifications to improve the delivery of support to the public.¹⁶
- We urge the government to continue the distribution of the second tranche of assistance to beneficiaries residing in areas under GCQ. Their areas of residence do not guarantee their ability to immediately bring back normalcy in their livelihood and sources of income, especially if they are unemployed in the first place.¹⁷
- Presidential Spokesperson Roque announced the increase in the number of SAP beneficiaries from 18M to 23M, what are the details on the additional 5M beneficiaries?¹⁸

Implementation of the SAP for Small Businesses (p. 4)

- Based on the 4th Report, SBWS replaced DOLE's CAMP. To avoid duplication of benefits, all pending DOLE CAMP activities should have been subsumed by SBWS and no additional performance should have been reported. With this in mind, provide clarification or explanation on why the 6th Report still includes updates on the implementation of CAMP, and why SBWS Program was crafted when there is already an existing program that could have just been improved and expanded.¹⁹
- According to the Report, there are 3.4M target beneficiaries for the SBWS. Does the 3.4M target beneficiaries take into account the 522,825 beneficiaries already

¹⁴ Sen. Villanueva (Annex G, p. 2)

¹⁵ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 3)

¹⁶ Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 14)

¹⁷ Sen. Pangilinan (Annex H, p. 3)

¹⁸ Sen. Pangilinan (Annex H, p. 3)

¹⁹ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 2) and Sen. Lacson (Annex F, pp. 4-5)

served by DOLE's CAMP? What is the timeline to complete the distribution of the wage subsidy to all targeted beneficiaries?²⁰

- Since the deadline on the SBWS application is on 8 May 2020, we hope to see an update on the total number of employers who have completed the application, out of the 199,377 pre-qualified businesses.²¹
- We must be informed as to what the basis/criteria is in determining who falls under the “most vulnerable of our countrymen” in order to be included in the list of beneficiaries. What are the reasons for granting them wage subsidy and for the denial of all requests for appeals?²²
- Do beneficiaries have to pay for the bank processing fees or charges considering that the subsidies will be remitted to the MLhuillier remittance system and other nominated bank accounts? To really help the affected small businesses, banks and other financial institutions should waive the bank charges due from the SBWS beneficiaries.²³
- The DOF should provide a revised number of small businesses and employees covered by ECQ for the second tranche considering that there are areas previously under ECQ that have been downgraded to GCQ, and accordingly revisit the funding requirement.²⁴
- Continue the implementation of the DOLE programs (TUPAD-BKBK and CAMP), alongside the recently launched SBWS Program.²⁵

Continued Transportation, Repatriation, and Mobility Assistance to Healthworkers, Frontliners, OFWs, Stranded Passengers, Foreign Nationals in the Country, and Other Entities or Individuals (p.4)

- To reiterate, considering that GCQ will be implemented in some areas, we must assess the impact on social distancing before we allow transportation services to operate, especially during rush hours, and formulate directives and guidelines on the resumption of the mass transportation system.²⁶
- As previously commented, safe travel using public transportation will continue to be an issue. Emergency pathways or bike lanes should be created in preparation for the “new normal”. Many people are already walking or biking since it is free and accessible, while also promoting good physical and mental health. Biking is also an eco-friendly and sustainable form of transportation with no harmful emission. Social distancing is likewise easier to maintain while on bike or on foot.

²⁰ Sen. Cayetano, Sen. Gatchalian (Annex A, p. 4), Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 3), Sen. De Lima (Annex E, p. 2), Sen. Lacson (Annex F, pp. 4-5), and Sen. Villanueva (Annex G, p. 5)

²¹ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 3), Sen. De Lima (Annex E, p. 2), Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 7), and Sen. Villanueva (Annex G, p. 5)

²² Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 7)

²³ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 3)

²⁴ Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 5)

²⁵ Sen. Villanueva (Annex G, p. 9)

²⁶ Sen. Cayetano, Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex B, p. 2), and Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 9)

A network of emergency pathways will provide an immediate way for medical staff, grocery attendants, security guards, and others to commute to work.²⁷

Other Assistance to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and Productive Sectors (p. 6)

- As of 28 April 2020, only 1,376 of the target 40,000 marginalized and small farmers and fisherfolk (MSFFs) were served by the DA's zero-interest loan program. We reiterate our concern regarding the low availment of the said program. How will DA reach out to more MSFFs through this program?²⁸
- Based on the 4th Report, there are 259 target beneficiaries for Agri-based MSEs, while the 6th Report only mentioned a target of 150. What is the reason behind the decrease in the target beneficiaries?²⁹
- The DILG should coordinate with DA, LBP, DBP, and concerned government financial institutions to address the bottlenecks and fast track the distribution of subsidies to rice farmers.³⁰
- The DA should seriously consider overhauling the programs for MSFFs and MSEs and/or its strategies. Can the DA just convert the lending programs into straight subsidy projects akin to its ongoing financial assistance effort of giving a one-time P5,000.00 each to small rice farmers?³¹
- Are Credit Surety Fund (CSF) cooperatives still eligible to avail of the PhilGuarantee Credit Guarantee Program for MSMEs which provides guarantee coverage of 50% of the principal loan?³²

Access to Agri-Fishery Products and Ensuring an Uninterrupted Supply Chain (p.6)

- Is any agency monitoring whether in fact people are being fed nutritious food? It is high time that we put into place nutrition guidelines during times of calamities and emergencies.³³
- More updates should be provided on the implementation of the Rapidpass system. We have heard cases wherein military or police personnel in the checkpoints do not have QR Code scanners or special devices to detect the authenticity of Rapidpasses.³⁴

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

- Will the relevant stakeholders/parties be notified during the processing of the parole/executive clemency of these PDLs? Upon securing a release order, will

²⁷ Sen. Cayetano

²⁸ Sen. Cayetano, Sen. Revilla (Annex C, p. 2), and Sen. Villanueva (Annex G, p. 5)

²⁹ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 2)

³⁰ Sen. Pangilinan (Annex H, p. 4)

³¹ Sen. De Lima (Annex E, pp. 2-3)

³² Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 4)

³³ Sen. Cayetano and Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 4)

³⁴ Sen. Villanueva (Annex G, p. 6)

the PDLs be required to undergo a 14-day quarantine? Will these PDLs be tested before their reintegration to society?³⁵

- Section 5 of the Board of Pardons and Parole Board Resolution No. OT-04-15-2020 dated 15 April 2020 removes the reporting requirement to the Parole and Probation Office while the State of Emergency is in effect. It appears that such period is quite long. Perhaps, it should be limited to the ECQ or GCQ period?³⁶
- Increase the number of test kits and facilities provided to PDLs in the highly affected areas of ECQ.³⁷
- The BCDA and DPWH should also start establishing quarantine facilities for PDLs as an outbreak may occur in a very congested penal system.³⁸
- The Report is silent on any development related to the findings made by the BJMP last week that 1,927 elderly PDLs have existing medical conditions and 804 are non-recidivists, making them all qualified for early release. A subsequent report containing updates on this matter will be appreciated.³⁹
- Chief Justice Peralta recently announced that about 9,700 PDLs were ordered released by the Supreme Court within the period of March 17 to April 29, as a measure of decongesting the jails amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. May we know the actual participation, if any, of PAO in this development? Likewise, what steps, if any, has PAO taken to utilize the other issuances of the Supreme Court to benefit qualified and low-risk PDLs.⁴⁰

Other Forms of Assistance and Partnership with LGUs (p. 8)

- In the Report, PNP has recorded 763 cases of crimes against women and 521 cases of crimes against children. Is this an increase or a decrease in the usual number of cases considering the implementation of the ECQ? What are the actions being taken to combat domestic violence and provide protection to women and children?⁴¹
- What efforts are being made to promote food self-sufficiency in the communities?⁴²
- The DA should set guidelines for vertical gardening to all LGUs as an alternative source of vegetables and crops for their constituents.⁴³

³⁵ Sen. Pangilinan (Annex H, p. 4)

³⁶ Sen. Pangilinan (Annex H, p. 4)

³⁷ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex B, p. 2)

³⁸ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 4)

³⁹ Sen. De Lima (Annex E, p. 3)

⁴⁰ Sen. De Lima (Annex E, p. 3)

⁴¹ Sen. Cayetano and Sen. Pangilinan (Annex H, p. 6)

⁴² Sen. Cayetano

⁴³ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex B, p. 1) and Sen. Cayetano

Assistance to Students, Educators, and Educational Institutions (p. 9)

- What is the plan of CHED in helping the students and educational institution personnel who are in need of repatriation overseas, and those that are stranded in dormitories/schools across the country?⁴⁴
- Based on the Report, CHED already processed the TES of 120,798 grantees in public educational institutions, and also the TES of 33 SUCs and 18 LUCs amounting to P480 million. How many of these grantees have already received the said subsidy? CHED should fast track the disbursement of the said funds and assist higher education institutions that have difficulty completing the submission of their documents due to the ongoing lockdown.⁴⁵
- DepEd and CHED should explore and study the possibility of using tv stations, especially government tv stations and radio-based solutions as part of our national education response to ensure the continuity of learning amidst the pandemic school closures.⁴⁶
- DICT and NTC should create action plans in coordination with CHED and DepEd for possible online education systems and work from home arrangements, and provide viable alternative options to online education since not all students have access to internet connection.⁴⁷
- What is the status of preparedness of DepEd and HEIs, students and faculty to shift to online modes of learning in light of the continuing threat of COVID-19?⁴⁸
- CHED can step in to give guidance to all private and public higher education institutions to end the current semester or equivalent academic period by April 2020 (or as soon as possible) and to adopt a “pass” or “drop” grading system.⁴⁹
- With the opening of classes on 24 August 2020, DepEd should provide an update on their preparation in the integration of blended learning in the curriculum, as it is not as simple as using the internet. It includes time in school, provided it is safe to return to school, and social distancing measures are put into place- such as having a smaller number of students attend a few days a week on a rotational basis for interaction with their teachers. It also means giving the students certain elements of control, and to that extent, parents need to be aware of how this will work and how they can support the students at home.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Sen. Cayetano

⁴⁵ Sen. Cayetano and Sen. Villanueva (Annex G, p. 6)

⁴⁶ Sen. Cayetano and Sen. Gatchalian (Annex A, p. 9)

⁴⁷ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex B, p. 1)

⁴⁸ Sen. Villanueva (annex G, p. 11)

⁴⁹ Sen. Villanueva (Annex G, p. 11)

⁵⁰ Sen. Cayetano

II. SECURE FACILITIES AND RESOURCES FOR THE HEALTH SECTOR AND OTHER FRONTLINERS (p.9)

Human Resources for Health (p.9)

- As of May 3, the total number of healthcare workers infected with the virus is 1,722 and at least 34 health care workers have died. The infected healthcare workers account for nearly 20% of the country's total number of COVID-19 cases. It should be noted that WHO called attention to this “worrisome” trend and considered the Philippines as an “outlier” compared to the regional average of 2% to 3%. What are the reasons for this unacceptable high rate and what are the steps being done to address this situation?⁵¹
- How can the DOH speed up the emergency hiring of healthcare personnel? Maybe the DOH can relax some documentary requirements to accelerate the hiring process.⁵²
- According to the DOH, the HRH projections evolve along with the COVID-19 cases projections. May we know of any changes in these projections? In the event of a worst-case scenario, are there enough human resources in the country to supply the projected requirement?⁵³
- DOH should expand the duration of engagement of temporary healthcare frontliners from 3 months to a period between 5 to 10 months.⁵⁴
- A perusal of AO 28, which authorizes the grant of Special Risk Allowance (SRA) to frontline public health workers, would show that the Executive went beyond the mandate of Congress as provided under RA 11469. The Congress did not intend the SRA to be a one-time grant. The intention was to provide such benefit so long as there exists a state of emergency because of their continued exposure to the risk of COVID-19. Thus, AO 28 should be properly amended to remove such unnecessary qualifications.⁵⁵
- No data was mentioned on the compensation of health workers/frontliners who are severely affected, and those who died fighting COVID-19 in the line of duty. What is the procedure for the claim? How many have filed their applications for the claim and how many of those who filed have been paid? Would it be possible that a health worker or his/her beneficiary receive the compensation without filing any claim, just the inclusion of the health worker in the list of those severely affected or those who died fighting COVID-19 will suffice?⁵⁶

⁵¹ Sen. Angara (Annex D, pp. 4-5)

⁵² Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 5) and Sen. De Lima (Annex E, p. 3)

⁵³ Sen. Pangilinan (Annex H, p. 5)

⁵⁴ Sen. Villanueva (Annex G, p. 9)

⁵⁵ Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 12)

⁵⁶ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 5)

Referral Hospitals, COVID-19 Bed Capacity and Equipment (p.10)

- As proposed under Senate Bill No. 1442 or “An Act Providing for the Establishment and Operation of Additional Quarantine Stations, Grounds and Anchorages in All Strategic Areas throughout the Country”, additional quarantine facilities under DOH must be established but they need to be strategically located and have the necessary equipment that is not only specific to COVID-19 but also for other infectious diseases.⁵⁷
- Although the 5th Report stated that there is at least 1 COVID-referral hospital in every region, the aim should be to have at least one Level 2 hospital in every province (only level 2 and 3 hospitals can care for COVID-19 patients as these have ICUs; Level 1 hospitals do not require ICUs).⁵⁸
- According to the Report, 37.57% of the 9,932 dedicated beds for COVID-19 is occupied. We hope to seek further validation/confirmation with regard to this figure, especially in light of the accounts given by citizens and hospitals who mention that hospitals have continuously rejected the admission of suspected COVID-19 patients due to lack of space. A breakdown of active and discharged patients must be provided to know if there is an overcapacity in the facilities.⁵⁹

Quarantine Facilities (p. 10)

- The government should consider the practicality of using the DOH Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers (TRCs) which are not being used as drug treatment facilities like the Mega TRC in Fort Magsaysay, Nueva Ecija as quarantine facilities for the suspected and probable COVID infected patients.⁶⁰
- The government should consider the viability of converting the hotels managed by TIEZA into quarantine facilities.⁶¹

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

- Medical supplies must also be distributed to work forces manning other areas of hospitals and quarantine facilities such as security personnel, janitorial crew and police members, and to workers transferring the remains of COVID patients because they are also at high-risk in contracting the virus.⁶²
- Since farmers are also frontliners, we request that the government set aside a portion of the procured and donated face masks to be distributed to the agriculture industry, through the DA and the DILG.⁶³

⁵⁷ Sen. Cayetano

⁵⁸ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 4)

⁵⁹ Sen. Villanueva (Annex G, p. 5) and Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 5)

⁶⁰ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 5)

⁶¹ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 9)

⁶² Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 5)

⁶³ Sen. Pangilinan (Annex H, p. 6)

- Are the contact tracing teams and LGU personnel included in the equipment and healthcare supplies projections of the DOH?⁶⁴
- It is recommended that the national government, in coordination with the LGUs, should ensure the availability of masks suitable to prevent transmission and infection.⁶⁵
- The government should have a system wherein they prioritize the distribution of medical supplies and PPEs to health facilities in the areas with the highest prevalence of COVID positive or suspected cases; that would be Metro Manila followed by Central Visayas. But it should also ensure that the entire country has PPEs as every health personnel needs to take extra precautions at this time.⁶⁶
- The next report should provide a weekly or monthly target number of PPEs required by facilities, which is to be compared to the actual PPEs dispatched to them. Such is needed to better assess the shortage of PPEs.⁶⁷
- As previously commented, PhilHealth should provide the breakdown of the Php 10.075B it released to healthcare institutions, specifying the amount released per hospital, the date disbursed, the basis for the release, and other relevant information.⁶⁸

Updates of Test Kits, Testing Centers, and Expanded Testing (p.15)

- The DOH should be mindful of its pronouncements. There has been no mass testing of such magnitude that could represent the growth rate of the virus in the country. There are only a few tests conducted in comparison to the actual population. The number of unique individuals tested and the 2015 Census NCR population ratio only amounts to 0.88%. This is considering that the infected area is only within NCR and that data shown is from the 2015 Census. This data shows that at the current scenario, we are still barely scratching the surface.⁶⁹
- We reiterate that the sample size should indicate the base number (denominator) to be broken down into whether the patient tested is SUSPECT, PROBABLE, or CONFIRMED, instead of just the number of persons tested. In addition, we suggest that the DOH also release, on a daily basis, the number of positive cases that have yet to be validated. Releasing the number of positive individuals yet to be confirmed would allow the public to gauge if the ECQ is effective.⁷⁰
- Based on the Report, National Task Force Against COVID-19 reported that as of April 29, our daily testing capacity is 6,170, which means that we missed our April 30 target of 8,000 daily testing capacity. However, DOH reported that we

⁶⁴ Sen. Angara (Annex D, pp. 6-7)

⁶⁵ Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 13)

⁶⁶ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 5) and Sen. Cayetano

⁶⁷ Sen. Villanueva (Annex G, p. 1) and Sen. Cayetano

⁶⁸ Sen. Cayetano and Sen. Villanueva (Annex G, p. 9)

⁶⁹ Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 9)

⁷⁰ Sen. Lacson (Annex F, pp. 9-10) and Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 6)

already exceeded our 8,000 daily testing capacity. Therefore, DOH should clarify our current maximum daily testing capacity. Did we actually reach the 8,000 testing capacity?⁷¹

- The mass testing effort should be matched by a massive sequencing of the genetics of COVID-19 so that we can map its spread and detect mutations accurately. It is therefore recommended that the government should make massive genome sequencing of COVID-19 as one of the top priorities and as a parallel strategy of mass testing. The government should appropriate the needed amount in order to carry out the massive genome sequencing by providing sufficient funding to the Philippine Genome Center (PGC), the RITM, and other research centers/laboratories.⁷²
- DOH should provide rapid test facilities near workplaces in preparation for the upcoming resumption of operation of the mass transportation systems and various offices.⁷³
- DOH announced that it would prioritize testing individuals with suspected and probable cases (those that show symptoms). While some regional offices of DOH release their own estimates on suspected and probable cases, to this date, the DOH Central has not provided a national total and comprehensive distribution of the same. Such information is also not available in the Report.⁷⁴
- DOH should identify and address the usual sources of inconsistencies in COVID-19 data reporting both in the national and local levels. For example, we have noticed a discrepancy of 732 between the total confirmed COVID-19 cases published in the DOH tracker for the region of NCR (5,466) and the figure released by DOH NCR regional office in their own social media platform (4,714) as of April 28, 2020.⁷⁵
- DOLE should coordinate and monitor all establishments, especially those that recorded poor compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Standards in the most recent DOLE inspections, and ensure that they are aware of the proposed protocol for screening employees and visitors. DOLE should provide a clearer set of guidelines on the safety and health protocols that must be adhered to at this time.⁷⁶

Strengthening Contact Tracing Measures (p.16)

- What happens once a contact has been traced? How soon are these individuals subjected to testing? Are the movements of the traced contacts monitored more

⁷¹ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 6) and Sen. Pangilinan (Annex H, pp. 1 and 5)

⁷² Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 10)

⁷³ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex B, p. 2)

⁷⁴ Sen. Villanueva (Annex G, p. 8)

⁷⁵ Sen. Villanueva (Annex G, p. 9)

⁷⁶ Sen. Villanueva (Annex G, p. 6)

closely once they have been identified? In the next report, the DOH and the DILG should include an explanation of the process, possibly a flow chart.⁷⁷

- What is the number of LGUs that have organized their own contact tracing teams and the overall progress of DOH, PNP, and these LGU teams in tracing COVID-19 contacts?⁷⁸
- There should be updates on the implementation of the enhanced COVID-19 Information System. Will the people who will use this system be provided with these smartphones and tablets? Is this information system readily available to the public? Or will users have to pay?⁷⁹
- While staysafe.ph, FASSSTER and TanodCOVID all use different technologies for its contact tracing and data management functions, can the DOST, the DICT, and their respective partners harmonize these so that there is a single app for contact tracing? For better decision support and tracing capacity, can these two systems collaborate to arrive upon a much larger database which provides for a more powerful and effective tracing system?⁸⁰

III. ESTABLISHING SOUND FISCAL AND MONETARY ACTIONS THAT ARE RESPONSIVE TO ALL STAKEHOLDERS (p. 16)

Extension of Submission of Documents, Deadlines, and Renewal of Permits (p. 17)

- The government should design a policy that would be able to support the direct provision of resources to support its SSS members. With this, the government should further extend the payment of contributions up to 1 year.⁸¹
- To ensure that Philippine registered ships in the international trade shall not be out of operations, the MARINA should further extend the validity of the statutory certificates up to three (3) months.⁸²
- What monitoring is being done to determine the compliance of certain institutions, especially the private ones like banks on the grant of extension of deadlines/due dates?⁸³

Budgetary Measures to Fund COVID-19 Effort (p. 17)

- More detailed information on the funding source, referring to programs /activities/projects (P/A/Ps) that were discontinued must be disclosed.⁸⁴

⁷⁷ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 6) and Sen. Villanueva (Annex G, p. 1)

⁷⁸ Sen. Villanueva (Annex G, p. 1)

⁷⁹ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 7)

⁸⁰ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 7) and Sen. Cayetano

⁸¹ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 7)

⁸² Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 7)

⁸³ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 8)

⁸⁴ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 8), Sen. De Lima (Annex E, p. 4), Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 9), and Sen. Pangilinan (Annex H, p. 1)

- Before any supplemental appropriations are considered, the DBM must report on the total appropriations in the 2019 and 2020 budgets that have been utilized for COVID-19 to warrant a supplemental budget.⁸⁵
- From the Statement of Appropriations, Allotments, Obligations, Disbursements, and Balances (SAAODB), the Unobligated Balance is Php 450.56B. However, DBM's Report of the Status of the FY 2019 and 2020 GAAs dated 27 April 2020 provided that the Unobligated Balances as of 31 December 2019 was Php 248.74B. What are the details of the Php 201.8B difference between the preliminary SAAODB and DBM's recent status report? Of the Php 248.74B, how much has been further obligated as of March 2020?⁸⁶
- There must be a report on the current fiscal position of the government and its whole year projection for 2020 in the next report.⁸⁷
- How much funding is still required to support our healthcare system?⁸⁸

IV. RESPONSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY PLAN (p. 19)

Recovery Plan

- There must be a responsive and sustainable means of support and recovery plan which will involve a bottom-up approach to create a convergence with the national policies.⁸⁹
- What is the government's plan to address the potential economic and social impact of the 'new normal'? It is then imperative that a plan be made to adapt to the 'new normal' after the lifting of the extended ECQ.⁹⁰
- We recommend that the first draft of the *We Recover As One* be circulated publicly so that stakeholders in government and the private sector can already craft their inputs. This also ensures much wider stakeholder acceptance and buy-in for the recovery plan the government eventually adopts.⁹¹
- Similarly, results of the simulations done by PIDS, in terms of COVID-19 cases and deaths given different policy scenarios, should also be made public.⁹²
- We reiterate our recommendation of creating an Economic Risk Assessment Plan that would tackle the consequences or effects to the economy and recovery measures.⁹³
- In addition, there should also be a futures thinking group, to be headed by NEDA, with DOST, DAP, DepEd, DOTr and other relevant agencies, whose sole task is to plan for the future, taking into consideration strategic foresight to

⁸⁵ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 8) and Sen. De Lima (Annex E, p. 4)

⁸⁶ Sen. Lacson (Annex F, 8)

⁸⁷ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 8) and Sen. Pangilinan (Annex H, p.1)

⁸⁸ Sen. Revilla (Annex C, p. 3)

⁸⁹ Sen. Cayetano and Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 18)

⁹⁰ Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 19) and Sen. Cayetano

⁹¹ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 8)

⁹² Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 8)

⁹³ Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 17)

analyze possible futures and how we can prepare and adopt to these possible outcomes in the New Normal and a post-COVID-19 society, using currently available knowledge and intelligence.⁹⁴

Reopening of businesses and other institutions

- The government should establish a national framework on how businesses should operate, including protocols for the New Normal.⁹⁵
- The government, in coordination with LGUs, may set out policies and solutions which would allow the operation of various sectors, even in a limited capacity, while employing safety measures such as social distancing and mass testing. Also, sectors that should operate (even on a limited capacity) must be identified considering their vital role in the supply chain or in the national economy in general.⁹⁶
- A careful study of what industries are vital to economic growth, including job creation weighed against the risks of infection, should be made in determining what businesses can open, when and where.⁹⁷

V. OTHER CONCERNS/COMMENTS

Modified/Extended ECQ

- The national government should provide clear cut national guidelines and regulations to help the affected LGUs in its implementation of the extended ECQ within their respective areas. Also, the national government should publicly provide the criteria or threshold to be met in order to lift or modify the ECQ. Transparency on the criteria will allow the public to anticipate possible scenarios in the future that will allow them to better prepare.⁹⁸
- A staggered opening of the economy is highly recommended as we will in all likelihood overburden our current transportation system and break most, if not all social distancing protocols, if the re-opening of the economy is not done in a calibrated manner.⁹⁹
- The DILG has issued a directive that all LGUs must seek clearance with regard to their respective implementations of the ECQ. It would seem like additional red tape for LGUs to seek clearance from the DILG in their implementation of the ECQ given that guidelines are already in place. Instead, the DILG should just review the ECQ implementation of LGUs to ensure compliance with the directives of the national government. Foregoing the clearance application will

⁹⁴ Sen. Cayetano

⁹⁵ Sen. Cayetano

⁹⁶ Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 18) and Sen. Cayetano

⁹⁷ Sen. Cayetano

⁹⁸ Sen. Lacson (Annex F, pp. 13-14)

⁹⁹ Sen. Cayetano

also allow LGUs to respond faster, especially since they are more knowledgeable about the needs of their constituents.¹⁰⁰

- In relation to the said directive, what are the measures set by the National Government in the case of non-compliant LGUs? Are they sanctioned? If in the affirmative, what are the imposable penalties?¹⁰¹
- Include updates and quick assessment of the implementation of the various types of community quarantine implemented by various LGUs nationwide.¹⁰²

General Community Quarantine (GCQ)

- We reiterate our previous comment on how we can be assured that GCQ guidelines will be strictly complied? Will it not be overwhelming for the PNP and the AFP to control and regulate an increased number of the population allowed to leave the premises of their homes? There should be available data as to the estimated number of people who will be allowed to go out in provinces downgraded to GCQ and its ratio to the available PNP and AFP personnel in charge.¹⁰³
- As previously commented, we would want to know the position of DOH and the IATF with respect to the study of UP professors Guido David and Ranjit Singh Rye with research associate Ma. Patricia Agbulos released on April 22 which provides that government officials must only relax quarantine measures if the following have been achieved: (1) access to mass testing facilities with enough capacity and reasonable turnaround time; (2) establishment of an effective and efficient contact tracing system; (3) adequate number of hospital beds, ventilators, health workers, personal protective equipment, and quarantine facilities to accommodate COVID-19 patients; and (4) a declining trend of new cases for a period of 2 weeks, even with mass testing. Were these parameters considered in the previous decision to downgrade several provinces from ECQ to GCQ?¹⁰⁴

Energy Sector

- It is imperative for DOE to ensure that LGUs receive the Energy Regulation (ER) 1-94 Funds, more commonly known as Benefits to Host Communities, for COVID-19 efforts such as mass testing, acquisition of personal protection equipment, and provision of additional medical facilities. However, there have been reports from some local government units of delay in the release of the funds from DOE.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ Sen. Cayetano

¹⁰¹ Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 13)

¹⁰² Sen. Villanueva (Annex G, p. 6)

¹⁰³ Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 15)

¹⁰⁴ Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 15-16) and Sen. Cayetano

¹⁰⁵ Sen. Gatchalian (Annex A, p. 13)

- It will be a big help to all lifeline consumers if any form of electricity subsidy can be provided by the national government as part of the Social Amelioration Program.¹⁰⁶
- It is crucial for banks to consider suspension or deferral of payments of generation companies, as well as to provide for short-term loans with lower interest rates for generation companies and distribution utilities.¹⁰⁷

Digital Infrastructure

- The DICT should determine the needed ICT infrastructures and the corresponding plan for its establishment in order to improve the speed of internet connectivity and use of ICT in the country. Priority areas should be identified in developing ICT infrastructures. ICT will also play a vital role in the area of education during the New Normal, as online teaching is a key component of effective blended learning.¹⁰⁸

DSWD Feeding Program

- The DSWD issued Memorandum Circular No. 12 dated 29 April 2020 mandating the continuous implementation of the Supplementary Feeding Program during community quarantine. From the target 773,804 undernourished children, how many have been served?¹⁰⁹

Special Needs of Children

- What is the status of the implementation of the Memorandum Circular on monitoring the state of children in conflict with the law in LGU-managed facilities with suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases?¹¹⁰
- The DSWD should establish guidelines or protocols to ensure the protection of children in foster care during the pandemic, especially since the changes in their normal routine can adversely affect the mental and emotional well-being of these children. There should be online child protection services that use technologies such as video streaming for monitoring and counseling services, when necessary.¹¹¹

Online Psychological Services

- The DOH should provide an update on the implementation of its free online psychological services.¹¹²

¹⁰⁶ Sen. Gatchalian (Annex A, p. 13)

¹⁰⁷ Sen. Gatchalian (Annex A, pp. 14-15)

¹⁰⁸ Sen. Cayetano

¹⁰⁹ Sen. Pangilinan (Annex H, p. 6), Sen. Tolentino, and Sen. Cayetano

¹¹⁰ Sen. Pangilinan (Annex H, p. 6)

¹¹¹ Sen. Cayetano

¹¹² Sen. Pangilinan (Annex H, p. 6)

Health Needs of Other Vulnerable Groups

- Are there ongoing discussions between DOH and medical societies on how the health needs of vulnerable groups, who have health issues to begin with, will be addressed in the future?¹¹³
- As previously commented, given the importance of mental and physical health, IATF, DILG, and DOH, should consult cardiologists, endocrinologists, psychologists and other health specialists on safe ways to incorporate outdoor activities for individuals, such as walking, running, and biking, while observing social distancing protocols and without compromising safety. After the general guidelines are issued, LGUs could be tasked with identifying areas where these activities can be done safely.¹¹⁴
- There have been reports that cancer patients are unable to receive treatment due to the ECQ. Thus, the DOH and DILG should come up with new guidelines to ensure that cancer and dialysis patients, as well as distributors of cancer drugs, can easily pass through checkpoints. Also, LGUs should possibly provide transportation to such patients so that they can receive medical attention.¹¹⁵

Immunity Boosters for All Citizens

- The government should provide even healthy citizens immunity boosters and should be included in the relief goods handed out by LGUs.¹¹⁶

Immunization Program

- We would like to reiterate our recommendation to the DOH to conduct a nationwide Influenza Program since the flu will complicate the management of any respiratory infection such as COVID-19.¹¹⁷

Fiscal Measures of the BSP

- The 4th Report mentioned that the BSP cut its benchmark interest rate by 50 basis points on April 16, 2020 to encourage lending to various sectors, especially the most vulnerable. What is the progress of this monetary measure? What is the value of the loans that can be attributed to this measure? Was it able to reach the vulnerable which is the stated beneficiary?¹¹⁸

Donations Portal

- For transparency purposes, there should be a portal for the proper accounting of the donations received and dispensed by various government agencies.¹¹⁹

¹¹³ Sen. Cayetano

¹¹⁴ Sen. Cayetano

¹¹⁵ Sen. Revilla (Annex C, p. 2-3)

¹¹⁶ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 9)

¹¹⁷ Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 13)

¹¹⁸ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 9)

¹¹⁹ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 9)

COVID-19 as a Fortuitous Event

- It must be emphasized that there are various obligations incurred in both government and private transactions. Considering the effects of the government imposed ECQ, such as stoppage of work and prolonged closing down of businesses, the people working in some industries have difficulty in performing their respective obligations. In this regard, do we consider COVID-19 as a fortuitous event or a force majeure?¹²⁰

Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators (POGOs)

- Conveying disagreement to the decision of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID or Task Force) on classifying the POGOs as members of the BPO sector.¹²¹
- What is the basis for allowing POGOs to resume operations and classifying them as part of the BPO industry? Are the safeguards to be put in place? How many POGOs were allowed to operate? Are they tax compliant? What is the projected revenue from POGO operations? How many Filipino workers will benefit from the resumption of POGO operations?¹²²

¹²⁰ Sen. Lacson (Annex F, p. 20)

¹²¹ Sen. Villanueva (Annex G, p. 7)

¹²² Sen. Pangilinan (Annex H, p. 2)