

SENATE'S CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
COMMENTS ON THE 7TH WEEKLY REPORT
OF THE PRESIDENT DATED 11 MAY 2020

I. PROVIDE EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO ALL AFFECTED SECTORS

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

- This week's data showed that as of May 8, the government has failed again in fully implementing the SAPs. We must be reminded that this has been the 7th week of the ECQ and yet the agencies are underperforming in its implementation of the programs which were primarily created to assist the beneficiaries during the first month of ECQ. What is the timeline to complete the distribution?¹
- Based on the Report, only 714 out of 1,634 LGUs have accomplished 100% payout in their respective localities. What are the action plans of the DILG and LGUs to complete the distribution?²
- In the interest of transparency and accountability, the DILG should post in its website the list of specific LGUs which were not able to complete the distribution of the first tranche of Social Amelioration Program Emergency Subsidy.³
- The next report should provide an update on regional or sectoral distribution of food packs.⁴
- DSWD should include strict security measures in implementing the ReliefAgad System. Guidelines should include protective measures that would prevent hacking, phishing, and other cybercrime methods or scams that would illegally gather personal identifiable information of individual beneficiaries of the program.⁵
- Why is there no additional distribution of emergency subsidy for Transport Network Vehicle Services (TNVS) and Public Utility Vehicle (PUV) sector? The distribution stopped at 40,418 while there were 90,000 target beneficiaries.⁶
- Include in the next report the number of tricycle and pedicab drivers who were provided aid under the Emergency Subsidy Program.⁷
- May we be clarified on the discrepancy in an official poster from concerned agencies announcing that there are 22,796 drivers of PUVs that have received

¹ Sen. Lacson (Annex C, p. 2-3) and Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 1)

² Sen. Cayetano

³ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex A, p. 2)

⁴ Sen. Villanueva (Annex E, p. 3)

⁵ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex A, p. 2)

⁶ Sen. Angara (Annex C, p. 1) and Sen. Villanueva (Annex E, p. 6)

⁷ Sen. Villanueva (Annex E, p. 3)

SAP assistance, which is different from the data in the past reports showing that the actual beneficiaries under SAP for Drivers is 40,418?⁸

- Is the DSWD standing firm on the findings stated in the previous weekly reports that the inability to meet the deadline for the distribution of the 1st tranche of cash aid was mainly due to reasons attributable to the LGUs? What has the DSWD, DILG, DOJ and/or any other agency taken by way of corrective actions, i.e. initiating formal investigation, and filing of administrative and criminal cases against those LGU officials and employees?⁹
- For the 2nd tranche of cash aid distribution, DSWD itself will directly handle the subsidy payouts, in partnership with the DND and the AFP, as directed by the President. What then will be the role of the LGUs this time? Isn't the DSWD understaffed to service all 1,634 LGUs across the country and finish the job in a little more than two weeks to go before the end of May, the deadline for the 2nd tranche of cash aid?¹⁰
- 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.¹¹
- What adjustments will be made in terms of capacitating our soldiers, as assistants of DSWD employees, in directly dealing with civilians who will be lining up en masse during the payouts?¹²
- DSWD should consider adopting several proposals for expedited payouts, from such civil society groups as the Philippine COVID-19 Action Network (PHCAN), that suggested to the IATF the employment of the following: (a) the relaxation of documentary requirements; (b) the adoption of a vouching system in the community or barangay; (c) the issuance of an advisory or notice well ahead of time that will schedule claimants' attendance based, for instance, on their last names, to avoid congestion in payout centers; and (d) if time permits, the convening of relevant stakeholders, such as banks, finance technology companies, remittance centers and telecommunication companies to run alternative distribution channels for cash distribution, such as cash cards, load and e-money.¹³
- The 2nd tranche of cash aid for poor families will be limited only to those in areas still under ECQ, i.e., the National Capital Region (NCR), Laguna and Cebu City. As there are just around 2.5 million families under the subsidy program in these 3 areas, this means that, of the 18 million total beneficiaries nationwide who were targeted in the 1st tranche, there will be around 15.5 million poor families in the rest of the country who will now be left out as they

⁸ Sen. Villanueva (Annex E, p. 2)

⁹ Sen. De Lima (Annex B, p. 1)

¹⁰ Sen. De Lima (Annex B, p. 2) and Sen. Cayetano

¹¹ Sen. Lacson (Annex C, p. 3)

¹² Sen. De Lima (Annex B, p. 2)

¹³ Sen. De Lima (Annex B, p. 2)

are no longer entitled to receive cash assistance from the national government for the month of May. Isn't this decision illegal and unfair?¹⁴

- What are the measures that are being done by the DSWD to validate the payouts made and to ensure that only those who are qualified will benefit from the program, and that no similar complaints/reports will be received in the distribution of the 2nd tranche?¹⁵
- What explains the low utilization of the DOLE's CAMP-AKAP for displaced OFWs? While there is an increase in the number of OFW beneficiaries served, the 73,352 OFW beneficiaries accounts for only 28.90% of its target beneficiaries.¹⁶
- Actual beneficiaries of TUPAD for Informal Workers of DOLE exceeded the target beneficiaries by 20,128. Who are these workers considered as additional beneficiaries of the program? Since the allotment for the program was not increased, where did the funds to cover them come from? How much was allocated? Did the additional beneficiaries receive the same benefit as the original target beneficiaries?¹⁷
- As we have raised this for several weeks now, we hope that DOLE will be able to launch as soon as possible, its online monitoring system, which provides real-time updates on Financial Assistance to Formal and Informal Workers, and OFWs.¹⁸
- Under the DA's Financial Subsidy to Rice Farmers program, the report stated that Php 2.956B has been transferred to the GFIs. How much of this amount has been actually received by the rice farmers? Other than the grant of loans, does the DA have subsidy programs similar to FSRF but for other crop farmers and fisherfolk? What is the reason for the incomplete report on Marginalized and Small Farmers and Fisherfolk and Agri-based MSEs?¹⁹
- We hope to see in the government's COVID-19 information portal a comprehensive list of available loans or financial assistance relevant to COVID-19 crisis adaptation, to centralize information and reach as many potential beneficiaries.²⁰

SAP for Small Businesses (p. 4)

- What will happen to those that applied for DOLE's CAMP but were not served, and also failed to make another application under SBWS? Can their initial application under DOLE's CAMP be considered?²¹

¹⁴ Sen. De Lima (Annex B, p. 2)

¹⁵ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 2)

¹⁶ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 2)

¹⁷ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 2)

¹⁸ Sen. Villanueva (Annex E, p. 4)

¹⁹ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 3)

²⁰ Sen. Villanueva (Annex E, p. 4)

²¹ Sen. Cayetano

- How do we ensure that no double payments will be made to employees who already received subsidies under the discontinued DOLE program for formal workers, the CAMP?²²
- Does SBWS cover enterprises such as small private schools, community-based cooperatives, and family-run shops?²³
- With only a 35% approval rate of SBWS beneficiaries (*1.2 million out of 3.4 million target*) as of 30 April 2020, does the DOF still intend to cover all targeted 3.4 million workers considering the modified ECQ and GCQ to be implemented after May 15? If the DOF will discontinue the program due, allegedly, to limited budget and possible lifting of ECQ, will this not amount to abandonment of the program because the people already suffered and are still suffering due to the crisis? What will then happen to the amount that was already appropriated for the program?²⁴
- Transparency must be made with regard to the list of pre-qualified small businesses. It is very ridiculous to think that the SSS, in coordination with DOF and BIR, have accepted applications from April 16, 2020 to May 8, 2020 and yet, they issued a memorandum which orders that all requests for appeal of taxpayers for pre-qualification to SBWS should be denied.²⁵
- We acknowledge the efforts of DOF and SSS in doubling the number of approved applications under the SBWS program. If possible, may we suggest that the concerned agencies engage additional money remittance centers to reinforce cash distribution in order to prevent overcrowding?²⁶

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

- The use of bicycles is gaining recognition all over the world as a safer alternative to public transportation. As proposed in Senate Bill No. 1518 or the “Safe Pathways Act”, there is a need to create a network of pop-up bicycle lanes and emergency pathways that are people-oriented and pedestrian-friendly, which shall connect users to essential destinations such as work, school, medical facilities, and other similar places that may be identified. This network may then be adopted permanently even after COVID-19 as a solution to congested roads and pollution plaguing the country.²⁷
- In addition to the transport and mobility assistance given to OFWs, we recommend DOLE, POEA, OWWA, and other concerned agencies to ensure that OFWs quarantined in Metro Manila have adequate communication with

²² Sen. De Lima (Annex B, p. 3)

²³ Sen. De Lima (Annex B, p. 3) and Sen. Cayetano

²⁴ Sen. Lacson (Annex C, p. 5) and Sen. Villanueva (Annex E, p. 6)

²⁵ Sen. Lacson (Annex C, p. 7)

²⁶ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 3)

²⁷ Sen. Cayetano

their families following reports that some are unable to reach their relatives in the province.²⁸

- How many quarantine officials are there? Is there one assigned to every airport/port of entry and in every quarantine facility? If there is a shortage, how will this be addressed?²⁹

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

- Regarding the modifications made on the lending process under the Expanded SURE Aid and Recovery Project, what changes were made and how will these expedite the disbursement of loans to marginalized and small farmers and fisherfolk? Upon implementation of the said modification, how many target beneficiaries were served?³⁰
- As previously suggested, it might be a better approach to convert the whole lending program into a simplified subsidy project, akin to that being offered to small rice farmers, or to small businesses under the SBWS program.³¹
- How much of the Php 200M fund for the Livelihood Seeding Program-Negosyo Serbisyo sa Barangay Program has been utilized and how many beneficiaries were served?³²
- The DA should consider expanding its Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita (KAK) project, especially the KAK- online, to other areas that are still under ECQ. Per report, KAK-online has served 5 cities in NCR and 22 municipalities in Regions 4B and 6, while KAK-on wheels has been rolled out to only 208 barangays and 44 subdivisions nationwide. Is KAK limited to agricultural products that have undergone a value-added process or with product complexities?³³

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

- As previously commented, since packed and canned foods are the default relief products, more effort should be given towards the delivery of fresh and nutrient-rich food. Is there any agency monitoring whether in fact people are being fed nutritious food? Did the National Nutrition Council issue guidelines on nutritional requirements for relief products? It is high time that we put into place nutrition guidelines during times of calamities and emergencies.³⁴
- In addition, we reiterate our request for the government to study the digitization of the supply chain of businesses engaged in the delivery of essential goods given that IATF has already approved the use of the Supply Chain Analysis

²⁸ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 4)

²⁹ Sen. Cayetano

³⁰ Sen. Cayetano

³¹ Sen. De Lima (Annex B, p. 3)

³² Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 3)

³³ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 4)

³⁴ Sen. Cayetano

(SCAN) Report Mobile App and SCAN Dashboard to address bottlenecks in the supply chain.³⁵

- How will the country pay for food imports as access to foreign currency will be restricted given the decline in export revenues and of OFW remittances? Will food become more expensive as we struggle to secure foreign currency to pay for imports?³⁶
- How will the government address mismatches between supply and demand? For instance, demand for agricultural and aquatic produce has been affected because of reduced restaurant demand. There is also excess pork in Visayas and Mindanao. Are there plans to bring such produce into ECQ areas?³⁷
- How is the government clearing logistics bottlenecks in both domestic and international value chains, so that food can move freely between and within countries should also be given? This is important considering the supermarkets are running out of butter, cheese, and other common staples. On a related note, are there any plans to develop regional and local logistics hubs?³⁸

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

- The DICT should provide stable internet connections to all the courts to allow the latter to resume court hearings through teleconference, video or other electronic means, that would not require the physical presence of party litigants, detention prisoners and even counsels on record.³⁹
- The BJMP reported that it has provided paralegal assistance to PDLs that resulted in the expedited release of 4,188 PDLs from 17 March to 30 April 2020. May this figure be clarified vis-à-vis the 9,731 PDLs that were released by the Supreme Court from 17 March to 29 April 2020, as announced by Chief Justice Peralta? Does this mean that the remainder could refer to PDLs previously under the custody of provincial and sub-provincial jails under the 4 provincial government, and other detention centers outside the BJMP jurisdiction?⁴⁰
- We reiterate our recommendation for DOH to also distribute medical supplies such as face masks and face shields to PDLs. It is worth noting that prisoners from all over the country are equally vulnerable to COVID-19 when a positive case comes into contact.⁴¹

³⁵ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 4)

³⁶ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 4)

³⁷ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 5)

³⁸ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 5)

³⁹ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex A, pp. 1-2)

⁴⁰ Sen. De Lima (Annex B, pp. 3-4)

⁴¹ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 5)

Ensuring Water and Energy Supply (p. 8)

- It was reported that the water level at Angat Dam dropped below 190 meters above sea level. Ipo and La Mesa Dams also reflected dwindling water levels. What are the contingency plans of the government in case the water level reaches its critical level? What actions are taken to ensure that the water level would not reach that point?⁴²
- Based on the Report, major island grids exhibited excess capacity over the peak demand, but why are there reports of brownouts? How many power interruptions were recorded during the ECQ? Which areas were affected by these power interruptions?⁴³

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

- We reiterate our request for corresponding data on the increase or decrease in the usual number of cases of crimes against women and children considering the implementation of the ECQ? What are the actions being taken to combat domestic violence and provide protection to women?⁴⁴
- As pointed out in previous comments, according to the UN, reports from countries suggest that restrictions in movement and social isolation as well as other factors are leading to an increase in domestic violence. DSWD, PCW, PNP, and other concerned agencies should explore ways wherein women are able to report abuse or violence. In France, for example, victims use a codeword to pharmacists to let them know about their abuse. We can adopt similar initiatives to make it easier for women to report domestic violence during this pandemic.⁴⁵
- How many beneficiaries is the National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCCA) targeting with its assistance program? May we get the geographical profile of the beneficiaries? Do we have data as to the numbers of DOT-accredited regional and local tour guides?⁴⁶
- What assistance are we extending to other Filipino professionals in the cultural and creative industry, *i.e.*, designers, writers, video editors, artists, and cultural workers who have been adversely affected by COVID-19 or have lost their jobs?⁴⁷

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

- May we inquire again on CHED's plan to help the students and educational institution personnel who are in need of repatriation overseas, and those that are stranded in dormitories/schools across the country?⁴⁸

⁴² Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 6)

⁴³ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 6)

⁴⁴ Sen. Cayetano

⁴⁵ Sen. Cayetano

⁴⁶ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 5)

⁴⁷ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 5)

⁴⁸ Sen. Cayetano

- We would like an update on our previous comment regarding the status of TES grantees who should receive subsidy. How many beneficiaries of TES were served? 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.⁴⁹
- DepEd may consider qualified parents, as HomeSchool Partners for their children, as the latter's alternative mode of distance learning.⁵⁰
- What are the summer activities/programs of DepEd now that classes have been suspended? Are these being implemented?⁵¹
- Since DepEd has announced that talks are ongoing with PTV 4, is there any plan to start airing programs immediately? Children and young adults have been on an “extended” summer break, and educational programs now would be welcome. Cartoons and other programs in English will also be a good way to strengthen our English advantage.⁵²

Health Waste Disposal (p. 9)

- As previously commented, we are still awaiting the guidelines from DENR on the proper waste management and segregation for communities and households. This is crucial if we hope to educate the public on containment of the virus at the level of their households and communities.⁵³

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

Human Resources for Health (p.9)

- DOH should be required to explain why it has only approved the emergency hiring of 3,042 HRH, when DBM has already given the go-ahead to hire 15,757 temporary health workers. Worse, even with the already small number of slots approved by the DOH, only 968 HRH were hired. What is the reason for the slow hiring of HRH?⁵⁴
- As of May 10, 2020, Cebu City has the highest number of coronavirus cases in the country. What is the plan for deployment of additional DOH personnel to said area?⁵⁵
- As previously commented, a perusal of AO 28, which authorizes the grant of Special Risk Allowance (SRA) to frontline public health workers, would show

⁴⁹ Sen. Cayetano and Sen. Villanueva (Annex E, p. 11)

⁵⁰ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex A, p. 3) and Sen. Cayetano

⁵¹ Sen. Cayetano

⁵² Sen. Cayetano

⁵³ Sen. Cayetano

⁵⁴ Sen. De Lima (Annex B, p. 4) and Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 6)

⁵⁵ Sen. Angara (Annex D, [6)

that the Executive went beyond the mandate of Congress as provided under RA 11469. 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 due to their continued exposure to the risk of COVID-19. Thus, AO 28 should be properly amended to remove such unnecessary qualifications.⁵⁶

- Also, as previously commented, 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?⁵⁷

Quarantine Facilities (p. 10)

- How many quarantine personnel are needed for all our quarantine centers?⁵⁸

Update on Test Kits, Testing Centers, and Expanded Testing (p. 11)

- DOH should respond to the statement of the UP COVID-19 Pandemic Response Team that there are alarming errors in patient-level data reported by DOH, such as: (1) 45 cases have changed sex from male to female or vice-versa; (2) 75 patients became either older or younger overnight; (3) 516 cases were reclassified either to another city or a completely imaginary city like what happened to patients from the City of Manila; and (4) 1 patient who reportedly died on April 24 is no longer dead the following day.⁵⁹
- Based on the Report, the conversion of the Clark Civil Aviation Complex to a Molecular Laboratory for the Philippine Red Cross (PRC) is at 98% completion, how many tests can this laboratory conduct/process?⁶⁰
- The 6th Report mentioned that the Philippines has 19 fully functional COVID-19 accredited laboratories. Are all these laboratories working on their maximum capacity? How will the DOH achieve its target of maximum testing per day if COVID-19 testing centers are scaling down?⁶¹
- We reiterate our request for updated figures and a list of mass testing facilities or centers established by the LGUs (such as Marikina's testing center and

⁵⁶ Sen. Lacson (Annex C, p. 17)

⁵⁷ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 8)

⁵⁸ Sen. Cayetano

⁵⁹ Sen. Cayetano, Sen. Lacson (Annex C, p. 11), and Sen. Villanueva (Annex E, p. 2)

⁶⁰ Sen. Cayetano

⁶¹ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 7)

Taguig's drive-thru testing center) that are accredited, rejected, and those that still have pending requirements.⁶²

- Has the DOH and IATF looked into the possibility of instituting expedited means of accreditation?⁶³
- The contents of the Memorandum of Agreement with PRC for expanded targeted mass testing should be included in the next report together with the details as to the manner of implementation. The Senate should be provided with data with regard to the costs of the testing kits and services provided by the PRC. We must also be clarified on the issue pertaining to the advance payment made by Philhealth to PRC. It seems to be out of the ordinary considering that the protocol with accredited testing laboratories, as seen in Philhealth Circular 2020- 0010, lays down the need for the filing of claims for reimbursement of the cost for COVID-19 testing.⁶⁴
- Furthermore, the Senate should also be provided with the mechanics on how the monitoring of the actual test conducted by the PRC should be made and reported. What are the measures in place by the Philhealth in monitoring the implementation of this agreement? Does the Php 100M interim financing correspond to the number of successful tests? Does it pertain solely on the expenditures pertaining specifically to testing or does it also involve other miscellaneous expenses? Therefore, it is submitted that the Congress should be provided with the breakdown of the Php 100M interim financing.⁶⁵
- As previously commented, 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. The DOH should provide its concrete plan including the timeline for COVID-19 mass testing.⁶⁶
- We likewise 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.⁶⁷

⁶² Sen. Villanueva (Annex E, p. 1)

⁶³ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 7)

⁶⁴ Sen. Lacson (Annex C, p. 9)

⁶⁵ Sen. Lacson (Annex C, p. 9)

⁶⁶ Sen. Lacson (Annex C, p. 10) and Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 7)

⁶⁷ Sen. Lacson (Annex C, 10) and Sen. Villanueva (Annex E, p. 3)

- The President ordered the purchase of about 2,000,000 rapid antibody-based test kits, can the DOH inform this body on the status of said project? How much is the budget being allocated for it? Where are we buying said kits? How will it be distributed and who will be tested?⁶⁸
- According to Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque, we slowed down our testing efforts for COVID-19 from our testing capacity goal of 8,000. What are the reasons for the slow roll out of mass testing?⁶⁹
- There are reports that the lack of reagents needed for testing per se, and the shortage in personnel to man the accredited COVID-19 testing centers are some of the reasons for the slow implementation of mass testing. How true are these reports? If true, how do the DOH and IATF intend to immediately address these hurdles?⁷⁰
- What is our benchmark to identify the target number of people to be tested?⁷¹
- As previously commented, 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
- The DOH should look into the UP School of Economics' paper entitled "A Sectoral View of the Lifting the Lockdown and the Use of Sample-based Random Testing," where the writers argued that random testing is preferred as it is a feasible and economical way to surveil SARS-CoV-2 infections, providing an adequate level of safety and assurance within and among firms and LGUs. By definition sample-based random testing schemes by sector or industry or among neighborhood enterprises and local service providers (tricycle drivers, informal sectors), could cost a fraction of mass testing schemes yet still provide statistically reliable information.⁷³

Strengthening Contact Tracing Measures (p. 12)

- DOH, should employ a ground level contact tracing measure through the participation of law enforcement agencies. For instance, when a person has tested positive with COVID-19, contact tracing and investigation on the patient's travel history must immediately be conducted. With the data gathered, the

⁶⁸ Sen. Lacson (Annex C, p. 12)

⁶⁹ Sen. Lacson (Annex C, p. 12) and Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 7)

⁷⁰ Sen. De Lima (Annex B, p. 4)

⁷¹ Sen. Lacson (Annex C, p. 12)

⁷² Sen. Lacson (Annex C, p. 12)

⁷³ Sen. Lacson (Annex C, p. 14) and Sen. Cayetano

government should subject those contacted people to tests in order to determine whether they are infected or not.⁷⁴

- There is no update on the total number of contacts traced in the 7th Report while the 6th Report stated that the DOH has traced 32,107 cumulative close contacts. The number of LGUs that have organized their own contact tracing teams should also be reported, including the overall progress of DOH, PNP, and these LGU teams in tracing COVID-19 contacts.⁷⁵
- In the 32,000 traced individuals, how many were acted on for isolation, hospital admission, or tested positive? Have current contact tracing operations been effective to prevent the spread of infections?⁷⁶
- We would also like to inquire about the difference between the contact tracing figures included in the Bayanihan Report and the figures cited by the Regional Task Forces through the Office of Civil Defense, as included in the report by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) (dated May 12, 2020) which shows a total of 163,023 close contacts.⁷⁷
- The report mentioned that the DICT is studying the platform's interoperability with other COVID-19 related systems. Does the interoperability mentioned here pertain to other systems of government (i.e. FASSSTER, TanodCovid, Project Ramdam, etc.) mentioned or other duplicate contact tracing apps (such as those created by private startups)? Are other contact tracing apps like RC 143 of the Red Cross included in plans for interoperability?⁷⁸
- We take note of Sec. Sonny Dominguez's recent call for the government to hire more contact tracers. Have the projections been made on how much mass hiring the government has to do for effective contact tracing? We suggest that the next report include this projection, including the LGUs where these contact tracers are needed and the budgetary requirements to hire these individuals.⁷⁹
- Hiring contact tracers should be a top priority of the government. Contact tracing has helped slow down previous epidemics, such as SARS and Ebola outbreaks. It is thus critical in battling COVID-19, more so now that we are reopening some businesses. As such, DOH, in coordination with LGUs, should provide standardized training for our contact tracers to ensure that they conduct contact tracing according to established protocol.⁸⁰

Provision of Healthcare Resources, Supplies, and Equipment (p.13)

- As previously commented, the government should have a system wherein they prioritize the distribution of medical supplies and PPEs to health facilities in the

⁷⁴ Sen. Lacson (Annex C, p. 14)

⁷⁵ Sen. Villanueva (Annex E, pp. 1 and 3)

⁷⁶ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 7)

⁷⁷ Sen. Villanueva (Annex E, p. 1)

⁷⁸ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 7) and Sen. Cayetano

⁷⁹ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 7)

⁸⁰ Sen. Cayetano

areas with the highest prevalence of COVID positive or suspected cases; that would be Metro Manila and 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.⁸¹

- We reiterate our request for a clear weekly or monthly target number of PPEs required by facilities. This is to better assess the shortage of PPEs, if any.⁸²
- LGUs should intensify the implementation of wearing masks to their respective constituents especially when distributing cash and food aids from the government.⁸³
- Tax incentives or tax holidays should be extended not only to big private corporations, but also to individuals who produce medical protective products/equipment such as surgical or N95 masks, gloves, goggles, ventilators, and other personal protective equipment.⁸⁴

III. ESTABLISHING SOUND FISCAL AND MONETARY ACTIONS THAT ARE RESPONSIVE TO ALL STAKEHOLDERS (p. 14)

Budgetary Measures to Fund COVID-19 Effort (p. 14)

- We repeat our past comments on the need for more detailed information on specific programs, activities, projects were discontinued; what particular general purpose funds were abandoned; what specific GOCC-held money was taken; and, most importantly, how these government funds were actually utilized and liquidated.⁸⁵
- The Report must also include a summary of the utilization of the Bayanihan Grant to Cities and Municipalities as well as the current fiscal position of the government and its whole projection for 2020.⁸⁶
- Table 12 of the Report shows that funding sources for additional releases came from 2020 and/or 2019 GAAs. We would like to seek clarification on the funding source since said provision only refers to 2020 GAA and not 2019 GAA.⁸⁷
- DOF should be required to submit copies of the loan contracts, financing agreements and related documents relevant to the total US\$ 4.75B in budgetary support from the ADB, World bank and USD-denominated global bonds, as well as the US\$ 108M in grants and loan financing from the ADB and the World Bank.⁸⁸

⁸¹ Sen. Cayetano and Sen. Villanueva (Annex E, p. 7)

⁸² Sen. Cayetano and Sen. Villanueva (Annex E. p. 3)

⁸³ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 8)

⁸⁴ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex A, p. 2)

⁸⁵ Sen. De Lima (Annex B, pp. 4-5) and Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 8)

⁸⁶ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 8)

⁸⁷ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 8)

⁸⁸ Sen. De Lima (Annex B, p. 5)

IV. RESPONSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY PLAN

Structural Designs

- With the setting of the "new normal" in workplaces, schools, and other public areas, the DPWH should come up with a set of guidelines on structural designs that would incorporate principles of social distancing.⁸⁹
- DOTr should provide a separate, safe and efficient public transport system for qualified senior citizens, pregnant women, and persons with disabilities who may be allowed to resume employment.⁹⁰

Economic Stimulus

- As previously commented, health infrastructure must be part of the flagship projects. Senate Bill No. 63 also known as the *Priority Health Infrastructure* bill aims to establish a priority infrastructure plan for public health facilities to be determined by DOH. The said plan seeks to improve the quality of our healthcare system by carefully plotting the priority areas for building healthcare facilities.⁹¹

Water Security

- There is a need for concerned government agencies and water utilities to develop strategies and action plans about the country's water security. What programs are in place to ensure the sustainability of our water supply, not only for now but also for the future generation?⁹²

V. OTHER CONCERNS / COMMENTS

Conflict Areas

- Intensify security measures in identified rebel-infested areas to ensure the protection against harassments or acts of violence towards government personnel or even civilian volunteers who are tasked to deliver cash or non cash assistance to constituents.⁹³

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

⁸⁹ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex A, pp. 2-3)

⁹⁰ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex A, p. 3)

⁹¹ Sen. Cayetano

⁹² Sen. Cayetano

⁹³ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex A, p. 3)

area of education during the New Normal, as online teaching is a key component of effective blended learning.⁹⁴

Modified/Extended ECQ

- As previously commented, 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.⁹⁵
- As pointed out by the data on the number of tests applied and the population in the NCR alone, it shows that the number of unique individuals tested and the 2015 Census NCR population ratio only amounts to 1.22%. Despite this, the national government decided to lift ECQ in certain areas designating it as low risk. May we ask the parameters used in lifting the ECQ in some LGUs? How were the areas classified into low, moderate, or high risk?⁹⁶
- We must be clarified as to the guidelines of the national government in the event that some cities lift their ECQ, while the others maintain it. It must be noted, especially in the NCR, that the boundaries between and among barangays and cities are fluid. In other words, certain barangays, and cities, are closely knitted together. What are the guidelines with regard to two different areas having different statuses with regard to their community quarantine?⁹⁷
- In the event that there is resumption of the construction of government infrastructure projects due to the modification or lifting of the ECQ, contractors would necessarily set guidelines and protocols which would entail additional costs and expenditures. As such, could the contractors charge these expenses with the national government?⁹⁸

Mental and Physical Health

- Considering that limited exercise and recreational activities will be allowed, 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. LGUs should identify the areas where these activities can be done safely.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ Sen. Cayetano

⁹⁵ Sen. Lacson (Annex C, p. 1)

⁹⁶ Sen. Lacson (Annex C, p. 1)

⁹⁷ Sen. Lacson (Annex C, p. 2)

⁹⁸ Sen. Lacson (Annex C, p. 18)

⁹⁹ Sen. Cayetano

Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals, Investment in Research and Development, Capacity Building and Futures Thinking

- It is recommended that the Executive earmark at least 5% of the estimated Php 1.491 Trillion total funds needed to address the crisis for R&D efforts, which will help in combating COVID-19. The crisis is of medical origin and thus should be addressed from the perspective of science. It is only through genuine investment in R&D that we can be sure to effectively counter the virus. Also, it is only through R&D that medicines and vaccines against COVID-19 can be developed.¹⁰⁰
- As previously commented, NEDA should head a futures thinking group with DOST, DAP, DepEd, DOTr and other relevant agencies, whose sole task is to plan for the future, taking into consideration strategic foresight to 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.¹⁰¹
- NEDA should ensure that government agencies align their budgets and programs, activities and projects towards achieving the SDGs, adjusting targets as necessary, to adapt to the New Normal while maintaining our commitments to achieve the SDGs by 2030.¹⁰²
- Similarly, we should ensure a budget for futures thinking in Higher Education, as this is an important component in rebuilding the country after the pandemic. SUCs play an important role in generating innovative ideas that can be developed to help us prepare and adapt for all possible outcomes in the New Normal.¹⁰³

Vaccines

- What is the DOH's strategic plan with respect to WHO's recommendation that the Philippines should start reviewing regulations involved in approving and using vaccines? How does the government plan to deploy the COVID-19 vaccine in the country should it become available?¹⁰⁴

Telemedicine

- The Report cited that the DOH, DILG, and DICT shall jointly implement the Second Phase of the DOH Telemedicine Program, which implies completion of the 1st phase of the said program. We hope to see a performance report or statistics showing how many COVID-19 queries were received and attended to

¹⁰⁰ Sen. Lacson (Annex C, p. 15)

¹⁰¹ Sen. Cayetano

¹⁰² Sen. Cayetano

¹⁰³ Sen. Cayetano

¹⁰⁴ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 8)

in the past months, and the kinds of actions or assistance provided (e.g. teleconsultation, delivery of medicine to home, referral to facility, etc.).¹⁰⁵

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.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Sen. Villanueva (Annex E, p. 8)

¹⁰⁶ Sen. Villanueva (Annex G, p. 9)