

SENATE'S CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
COMMENTS ON THE 8TH WEEKLY REPORT
OF THE PRESIDENT DATED 18 MAY 2020

I. PROVIDE EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO ALL AFFECTED SECTORS

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

- 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 the ECQ.¹
- From the 4.4 million target 4Ps beneficiaries expected to receive expanded cash assistance in previous weekly reports of the President, there has been an adjusted target of 4.2 million households in the 8th weekly report of the President. This resulted in the exclusion of more than 156,231 target beneficiaries from the original 18 million households targeted in the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act. Can the DSWD clarify this?²
- Both TUPAD and CAMP have increased their number of estimated beneficiaries. May we be informed on the reason for the increase or decrease in the estimated number of beneficiaries?³
- We reiterate our call to DBM to augment the funds for the assistance programs of DOLE to be able to provide assistance to those who have not been granted under DSWD's SAP or DOF's SBWS program.⁴
- Earlier, the LTFRB identified 435,619 drivers of PUVs who will receive financial support under the SAP. 380,508 of which are drivers of four-wheeled PUVs while 55,111 are drivers of motorcycle taxis. However, during the May 11 public hearing of the Senate Committee on Public Services, LTFRB admitted that the distribution of such aid under this program was "slow" and said that many of the target beneficiaries have yet to receive the subsidy. What is the update on this? What is being done to address the delay? We also want to know why only driver-beneficiaries from NCR were included in the 90,000 target beneficiaries of the SAP for drivers.⁵
- How many LGUs have liquidated its payouts as this will determine the delivery of the 2nd tranche of emergency subsidy?⁶
- There seems to be unclear policy pronouncements from the agencies regarding the 2nd tranche of cash aid distribution. In several press briefings, the Presidential Spokesperson announced that the 2nd tranche of cash aid for poor

¹ Sen. Lacson (Annex G, p. 1) and Sen. De Lima (Annex D, p. 1)

² Sen. De Lima (Annex D, p. 1)

³ Sen. Lacson, Annex G, p. 2)

⁴ Sen. Villanueva (Annex F, p. 5)

⁵ Sen. Revilla (Annex A, p. 1) and Sen. Villanueva (Annex F, p. 5)

⁶ Sen. Villanueva (Annex F, p. 4)

families would be limited only to those in areas still under ECQ. On 14 May 2020, he claimed that due to limited budget, the IATF has decided to exclude families within the GCQ areas from SAP. However, based on the *Bayanihan to Heal as One Act* and other related issuances, the qualified beneficiaries of SAP which continues to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, regardless being under ECQ or GCQ, are legally entitled to this assistance.⁷

- Based on reports from the ground, some barangays are distributing SAP forms again. Will there be another application and verification process for the distribution of the 2nd tranche of cash aid? How will the DSWD ensure 100% distribution at the soonest possible time?⁸
- What will be the role of the LGUs in the distribution of the 2nd tranche? Will the DSWD take over the distribution for LGUs who failed to liquidate on time?⁹
- Can we get an update if DSWD proceeded with directly handling the distribution of subsidy payouts, in partnership with the DND and the AFP? Isn't the DSWD understaffed to service all LGUs in the country to distribute the 2nd tranche of cash aid?¹⁰
- Can we distribute the SAP cash aid through reloadable cash cards, which are cheaper in terms of administrative cost and appear to be a more sustainable platform and mechanism for channeling cash aid from the government?¹¹
- The government will provide cash aid under the SAP to an additional 5 million qualified recipients on top of the initial 18 million beneficiaries. Is it possible to have a manual and online application process for the additional beneficiaries?¹²

SAP for Small Businesses (p. 4)

- We reiterate our request for clarification on whether educational institutions, community-based cooperatives, and family-run shops are qualified to apply under the SBWS Program.¹³
- What is the government's plan on how to give assistance to the rest of the 750,000 target beneficiaries of the SBWS Program? How will the government support and revive the economic activity of MSMEs?¹⁴
- As previously commented, in a Memorandum dated April 30, 2020 issued by the BIR, it was ordered that all requests for appeal of taxpayers for pre-qualification to SBWS program shall be issued a denial letter. The pro-forma denial letter means that those who are not in the original list will not be included regardless if their present situation necessitates their inclusion

⁷ Sen. De Lima (Annex D, p. 2)

⁸ Sen. De Lima (Annex D, p. 2) and Sen. Villanueva (Annex F, p. 4)

⁹ Sen. De Lima (Annex D, p. 2)

¹⁰ Sen. Cayetano

¹¹ Sen. De Lima (Annex D, p. 3)

¹² Sen. De Lima (Annex D, p. 3)

¹³ Sen. Cayetano

¹⁴ Sen. Villanueva (Annex F, p. 6)

therein. Thus, we must be clarified as to what are the bases/criteria in determining who falls under the “most vulnerable of our countrymen”. It seems that the national government merely responds to a limited number of beneficiaries without considering the actual number of affected people.¹⁵

- There is a need to put into writing and report to Congress the validation and cross-checking process of qualified beneficiaries of the SBWS program and assure us and the public that there will be no duplication of cash aid given by the government under other forms of SAP, such as the AICS / ESP, CAMP and TUPAD, among others.¹⁶

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

- Some LGUs under MECQ have started operating tricycles. Does the IATF have guidelines for transportation under MECQ? We have to ensure clear and consistent implementation of the precautions that LGUs have to take.¹⁷
- As of 14 May 2020, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) reported that up to 18,000 OFWs are stranded in Metro Manila as their respective LGUs refuse to accept them due to possible infection fears. Thus, DOLE and OWWA should coordinate with the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP) on the issue of LGUs denying entry to returning OFWs.¹⁸
- Returning OFWs should be guided on which agency they should coordinate with before, during, and after undergoing the 14-day mandatory quarantine.¹⁹

Other Assistance to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and Productive Sectors (p. 5)

- According to the Report, from the 40,000 target beneficiaries of the zero-interest loans to marginalized and small farmers and fisherfolk (MSFFs) only a meager 4,751 were served. In the previous President’s Report, we were informed that modifications were made on the lending process but it seemed like no substantial changes happened. What should be done in order to expedite the disbursement of loans to MSFFs?²⁰
- The DA should partner with social enterprises in the distribution of agricultural products from indigenous communities who are also affected by the lockdown. They must also be included in the food logistics plan that the DA is crafting.²¹

¹⁵ Sen. Lacson (Annex G, p. 4)

¹⁶ Sen. De Lima (Annex D, p. 3)

¹⁷ Sen. Cayetano and Sen. Revilla (Annex A, p. 2)

¹⁸ Sen. Angara (Annex E, p. 1)

¹⁹ Sen. Villaneuva (Annex F, p. 9)

²⁰ Sen. Cayetano, Sen. Revilla (Annex A, p. 2), and Sen. Angara (Annex E, p. 1)

²¹ Sen. De Lima (Annex D, p. 3)

- Aside from the assistance and training being extended to MSMEs, the DTI, DICT, and TESDA could establish a digitization/digital skills program for the MSMEs and provide them seed money, as a loan or financial assistance, to help them transition into the new normal and to prepare them for the new normal of work, which not only includes the COVID-19 pandemic but also disruptive technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI).²²

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.²³
- Two months into the lockdown, there is a need for more cold storage facilities, processing facilities located near major farm production areas, trading centers, livestock slaughterhouses and poultry dressing facilities, fishing grounds, and municipal fish ports. The DA should provide an update on its efforts to improve storage facilities across the country in the light of the pandemic. This is not just a concern during this pandemic. It must be addressed for the long term for the sustainable production of our local produce.²⁴
- What steps has the DA and other entities concerned taken in order to ensure that there is adequate supply of affordable varieties of rice, vegetables, and fish in the market given that the purchasing power of Filipinos in ECQ areas has been significantly reduced?²⁵
- Does the DA have the logistics required to sustain their programs and efforts even after the lockdown? Can these pop-up markets and partnerships be sustained and who will bear the costs, if ever?²⁶

Assistance to Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) (p.7)

- On the issue of protecting PDLs, 9,731 PDLs were released from 17 March to 29 April 2020, as announced by Chief Justice Diosdado Peralta. This figure is different from the number published in the report. From 16 March to 5 May 2020, the PAO was able to secure the release of a total of 4,348 PDLs. There seems to be unclear reporting with the number of PDLs released. Can the BJMP clarify this?²⁷

²² Sen. Angara (Annex E, p. 1)

²³ Sen. Cayetano

²⁴ Sen. Angara (Annex E, p. 2) and Sen. Cayetano

²⁵ Sen. Angara (Annex E, p. 2)

²⁶ Sen. Angara (Annex E, p. 2)

²⁷ Sen. De Lima (Annex D, p. 4)

- The 8th weekly report is consistently silent on any development related to the findings made by the BJMP in the 5th weekly report that 1,927 elderly PDLs have existing medical conditions and 804 are non-recidivists, making them all qualified for early release. I find it essential to include pertinent updates on this matter in the next weekly report.²⁸

Ensuring Water and Energy Supply (p. 7)

- In terms of our water and energy reserve, at what rate is our supply decreasing? Are there reminders to the public to conserve water and energy?²⁹
- Despite the claim of the DOE that there is excess capacity over peak demand in electricity in Luzon, there have been recorded incidents of power interruptions during community quarantine. The DOE should explain the reason for these power outages. Further, the DOE should ensure the adequate supply of energy for the entire year.³⁰
- Many consumers complained that their recent electricity bills are beyond their average consumption. In fact, most of them claim that their electric bill is three times higher than their regular consumption. Others claim that they did not use any electricity in some of their properties during community quarantine and yet they were billed higher than what they usually pay for a month. The Energy Regulation Commission and MERALCO should address these concerns. In addition, MERALCO should explain clearly to its customers their policy on deferred payment of electricity bills while under MECQ.³¹

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

- To recognize the efforts of compliant LGUs, we call on the DBM to release in advance their IRA share. This initiative may encourage the remaining LGUs to help the national government in its fight against COVID-19.³²
- To reiterate, the DILG should create a scoreboard and incentive system for LGUs vis-a-vis their compliance with quarantine measures and other special duties. Perhaps the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) program could be refashioned to include COVID-19 response as part of the metrics.³³
- Aside from the financial aid granted to displaced artists and cultural workers, what other assistance were extended to them by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA)?³⁴

²⁸ Sen. De Lima (Annex D, p. 4)

²⁹ Sen. Cayetano

³⁰ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex C, p. 2)

³¹ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex C, p. 2)

³² Sen. Angara (Annex E, p. 3)

³³ Sen. Angara (Annex E, p. 3)

³⁴ Sen. Angara (Annex E, p. 3)

- Do we have an existing database of human resources in arts and culture? Has the NCCA started crafting recovery plans for this sector?³⁵
- The NCCA, its affiliated cultural agencies and other cultural government agencies should reallocate their budget, e.g. travel funds, to address the needs of freelancers in the arts and culture sector.³⁶

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

- We reiterate our query on the summer activities/programs of DepEd now that classes have been suspended. Are these being implemented?³⁷
- As previously commented, 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.³⁸
- DepEd should provide its plans, including the timeline, to ensure that issues with alternative learning systems, such as lack of access to internet and computers by some students would not hamper the delivery and effectiveness of education.³⁹
- We call on DBM to reconsider the discontinuation of appropriations for capital outlays of all State Universities and Colleges (amounting to Php17.93 billion), since doing so would be detrimental to their goal of improving the quality and culture of research and development in SUCs.⁴⁰
- As previously commented, CHED should fast track the disbursement of the TES funds and assist higher education institutions that have difficulty completing the submission of their documents due to the ongoing lockdown.⁴¹

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

Human Resources for Health (HRH) (p.9)

- The DOH should determine the number of health workers needed to support our health care system. What is the timeline in the *emergency* hiring and filling up of slots as requested by health facilities, hospitals and quarantine centers?⁴²

³⁵ Sen. Angara (Annex E, p. 3)

³⁶ Sen. Angara (Annex E, p. 3)

³⁷ Sen. Cayetano

³⁸ Sen. Cayetano

³⁹ Sen. Villanueva (Annex F, p. 12) and Sen. Cayetano

⁴⁰ Sen. Villanueva (Annex F, p. 9) and Sen. Cayetano

⁴¹ Sen. Villanueva (Annex F, p. 12) and Sen. Cayetano

⁴² Sen. Revilla (Annex A, p. 3), Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex C, p. 3), Sen. De Lima (Annex D, p. 4), Sen. Lacson (Annex G, p. 11-12) and Sen. Villanueva (Annex F, p. 8)

- The May 16, 2020 COVID-19 report of the DOH shows that 19% or 2,281 of confirmed positive cases are healthcare workers. What are we doing to ensure their safety?⁴³
- DOH should intensify its information dissemination protocols to properly inform the healthcare workers of the correct protocols to be followed after their duty, and to provide lodging to healthcare workers to avoid community transmission. In any case, DOH should also ensure that PPEs are delivered promptly to healthcare facilities, as there are reports that hospitals are already resorting to recycling their PPEs due to lack of supply.⁴⁴
- As previously commented, 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. 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.⁴⁵

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

- DOH should provide a detailed breakdown of the occupancy rate of the 13,408 dedicated beds for COVID-19, including the list of hospitals, actual number of occupied and vacant beds.⁴⁶

Quarantine Facilities (p. 10)

- Due to reports that some repatriated OFWs with COVID-19 managed to leave the quarantine facilities without authorization, we reiterate our call for the DOH and LGUs to strengthen security measures in quarantine facilities by deploying more security personnel, installing additional CCTVs, and by utilizing digital tracking schemes.⁴⁷
- Reiterating the question, 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?⁴⁸
- The DOH and LGUs must also ensure that psychosocial services are being provided to individuals who need the intervention, especially COVID-19 patients and suspected cases residing in quarantine facilities. Patients should also be given the opportunity to communicate with their families, friends, and social networks.⁴⁹

⁴³ Sen. Dela Rosa Annex C, p. 3)

⁴⁴ Sen. Villanueva (Annex F, p. 8)

⁴⁵ Sen. Lacson (Annex G, p. 12-13)

⁴⁶ Sen. Cayetano

⁴⁷ Sen. De Lima (Annex D, p. 3), Sen. Angara (Annex E, p. 4), and Sen. Villanueva (Annex F, p. 9)

⁴⁸ Sen. Cayetano

⁴⁹ Sen. Angara (Annex E, p. 4)

- We urge all LGUs to establish their own quarantine facilities in preparation for the transition to a more relaxed community quarantine.⁵⁰
- How could LGUs, DILG, NDRRMC, and other relevant agencies prepare for upcoming typhoons if evacuation centers are being used as quarantine facilities?⁵¹
- Republic Act 10821 or the Children's Emergency Relief and Protection Act calls for limited use of school facilities as evacuation centers, to wit: "only in cases where there is no other available place or structure which can be used as general evacuation center may a school or child development center be used as an evacuation center." Given that students will not be going back to the school premises soon, there may be no urgency now. However, this must still be addressed because teachers may have to access materials in their classroom at some point.⁵²

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

- Is the DOH on track to achieve the target of 30,000 tests per day by the end of May? If so, who will be included in the qualified individuals to be tested? Would it include essential workers from the private sector?⁵³
- Based on an independent website *covid19stats.ph*, which uses data from the DOH data drop, 23,104 tests were conducted on 14 May 2020. Can the DOH confirm and/or explain this?⁵⁴
- How many personnel from the DOH Epidemiology Bureau are validating the cases reported by the testing centers? Does the DOH have a timeline on when the backlog can be addressed?⁵⁵
- Is there a contingency plan for testing labs to sustain their capacities in case of unforeseen disruptions?⁵⁶
- It is necessary for the IATF to resolve whether the national government will continue to cover the full cost of COVID-19 testing. It is important for the government to have a clear policy on the provision of free COVID-19 testing. The public needs to know whether the government will provide free mass testing for COVID-19. If testing is not free, how much of the testing cost will be shouldered or subsidized by the government?⁵⁷
- In the 8th report, it was stated that 15,899 tests done by the Philippine Red Cross amounting to P55.65 million were covered by Philhealth. May we know how many of the 189,469 tests conducted as reported by the DOH were

⁵⁰ Sen. Angara (Annex E, p. 3)

⁵¹ Sen. Angara (Annex E, p. 4)

⁵² Sen. Cayetano

⁵³ Sen. Angara (Annex E, p. 5)

⁵⁴ Sen. Angara (Annex E, p. 5)

⁵⁵ Sen. Angara (Annex E, p. 5)

⁵⁶ Sen. Angara (Annex E, p. 5)

⁵⁷ Sen. Binay (Annex B, p. 2)

covered by Philhealth? Is there any policy on COVID-19 tests sponsored by the government but the cost will not be passed on to Philhealth?⁵⁸

Strengthening Contact Tracing Measures (p. 12)

- The government should heighten its information dissemination campaign to encourage the general public to take part in contact tracing. The government should encourage everyone to take note of the places they have been for easier contact tracing. The *StaySafe* application should also be further promoted in order for more Filipinos to join this community-driven contact tracing and health condition reporting system.⁵⁹
- 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.⁶⁰
- Recently, Sec. Domingo mentioned that the government should do mass hiring for the purpose of contact tracing. According to him, we are giving jobs for those displaced workers and at the same time helping in the fight against COVID-19. May we know how many contact tracers we plan to hire? How much are we currently paying them? We should fast track our hiring process to ensure the ideal 1:800 contact tracer to population ratio.⁶¹
- What is the progress of the contact tracing efforts in Cebu City for each confirmed case? Have authorities been able to pinpoint the source of the outbreaks in highly congested areas?⁶²
- Which agency is the final aggregator of information/data on cases that are coming from all over the country? Who checks that institutions regularly transmit information and ensures that tracers are regularly updating? Is it the DOH, DILG or IATF? Contact tracing must be done based as much as possible on real-time information to be effective. How fast is the flow of information from testing centers? How is the validity of this information checked?⁶³
- Will all other accredited testing laboratories be equipped to use/access the COVID-19 information system? Will the use of the COVID-19 information system speed up the process of validation of positive cases and lessen the backlog of tested cases versus reported cases?⁶⁴

⁵⁸ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex C, p. 3)

⁵⁹ Sen. Cayetano

⁶⁰ Sen. Cayetano

⁶¹ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex C, pp. 3-4)

⁶² Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 6)

⁶³ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 5)

⁶⁴ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 6)

- Is FASSSTER platform data now being used by the IATFs in NCR, Laguna and Cebu? What contact tracing technologies are being utilized in the three hotspot areas that are in ECQ/MECQ? Are the covered LGUs using a single platform or are they using different systems?⁶⁵
- In the previous President's Report, it 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?⁶⁶
- Aside from the digitized passenger arrival cards / forms being used by the Bureau of Immigration and Airline Companies, are there other technologies being used to monitor the movement of individuals who arrive in our ports/airports - i.e. repatriated OFWs, etc.?⁶⁷
- The government should consider the use of a mobile app which can track the movement of COVID-19 patients and persons under mandatory quarantine.⁶⁸

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

- Given the figures on the number of testing kits, accredited laboratories, procured protective equipment, converted quarantine facilities, among others, how does the DOH appreciate all these data in relation to their set targets, strategies and overall objectives? What is the gap between the existing assets against the ideal and target inventory? How far are we in achieving these targets? How soon can these resources be gathered? How much funding is required to fully support our health care systems?⁶⁹
- As previously commented, 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 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.⁷⁰
- 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.⁷¹
- We would also like to seek assurance from the government that the quality of the PPEs it has bought has been tested properly, and that the FDA has

⁶⁵ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 6)

⁶⁶ Sen. Cayetano

⁶⁷ Sen. Angara (Annex D, p. 6)

⁶⁸ Sen. Binay (Annex B, p. 2)

⁶⁹ Sen. Revilla (Annex A, p. 3)

⁷⁰ Sen. Cayetano

⁷¹ Sen. Cayetano

properly tested and certified all PPEs that come into the country. We have received reports that some of the PPEs given to hospitals have poor quality.⁷²

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

Budgetary Measures to Fund COVID-19 Effort (p. 15)

- The Executive Branch should put up a transparency portal that will show complete and accurate data on public funds realigned and spent in the government's response to this pandemic. The portal should also show the loan contracts and financing agreements entered into by the government for the sake of transparency and accountability to the public.⁷³
- The DBM should clarify why only P30.9 Billion was utilized out of the P76.9 billion (exclusive of 220 million from Legislative, Judicial and Constitutional Fiscal Authority Group) Unreleased Appropriations under the FY 2019 GAA. The details of the remaining amount should be disclosed and explained.⁷⁴
- The DBM should explain the details of the P96.717 Billion that was sourced from the Unprogrammed Appropriations of FY 2020 GAA. The report should include the revenue source of the fund, as indicated in the 2020 BESF, which must be certified by the Bureau of the Treasury.⁷⁵
- Considering that under the Unprogrammed Appropriations there are specific items that are to be funded, the DBM should identify those items for which the funding was initially directed.⁷⁶
- DBM and DOH should also provide the breakdown of the P45 Billion released to DOH, including a list of the PAPs funded. This is due to the reason that the justification for the fund is vague and broad as it only states that it will cover funding requirements for efficient implementation of RA No. 11469...programs of the DOH.⁷⁷

IV. RESPONSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY PLAN

- The Senate Committee on Sustainable Development Goals, Innovation, and Futures Thinking is looking forward to working with NEDA-TWG on Anticipatory Forward Planning, in crafting the necessary legislation and policy in the

⁷² Sen. Villanueva (Annex F, p. 6)

⁷³ Sen. De Lima (Annex D, p. 5)

⁷⁴ Sen. Lacson (Annex G, p. 6)

⁷⁵ Sen. Lacson (Annex G, p. 6)

⁷⁶ Sen. Lacson (Annex G, p. 7)

⁷⁷ Sen. Lacson (Annex G, p. 7)

implementation of a New Normal and integrating the SDGs even further in our economic and social recovery.⁷⁸

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.⁷⁹

Water Security

- To reiterate, 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?⁸⁰

Food Security

- What are foreseen trends and changes in the production of the agriculture sector and the food industry? How will this affect food security in the country?⁸¹
- Moving forward, what are the plans of the DA in reshaping the agriculture industry in light of the new normal?⁸²
- The University of the Philippines - Los Banos has been engaging in edible landscaping as a way of augmenting local food supplies while supporting environmental efforts. How can this program and other related activities be replicated in local communities and even in the household levels?⁸³

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

- As previously commented, 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.⁸⁴

⁷⁸ Sen. Cayetano

⁷⁹ Sen. Cayetano

⁸⁰ Sen. Cayetano

⁸¹ Sen. Cayetano

⁸² Sen. Cayetano

⁸³ Sen. Cayetano

⁸⁴ Sen. Lacson (Annex G, p. 11)

- To reiterate, 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 2030.⁸⁵
- As previously commented, 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.⁸⁶
- This pandemic reveals our weaknesses but also presents new opportunities such as the realization that farm to market can actually happen. As we grapple with the reality that we are dependent on imports for much of our food products, the DA should create a futures thinking group that is solely dedicated to studying the alternative futures we will be confronted with and what we will need to do to feed our people.⁸⁷

V. OTHER CONCERNS / COMMENTS

Data Management and Disclosure

- We reiterate our request for accurate presentation of comparable key indicators in the Bayanihan Reports as these are critical in assessing the weekly progress of the implementation of the Bayanihan Act and in guiding policymakers in adopting appropriate policies and actions.⁸⁸
- Likewise, there are some key data on the government's efforts that are still not included in the 8th Bayanihan Report such as: (1) the total and distribution of suspected and probable cases; (2) number of LGUs with contact tracing teams; (3) number and distribution of tricycle and pedicab drivers who were provided aid under the Emergency Subsidy Program; and (4) weekly target PPEs required by facilities.⁸⁹
- The Report should also include the following: (1) data on financial assistance to formal and informal workers, and OFWs through the DOLE Online Monitoring System; (2) One-stop website for All COVID-19 loans and Non-SAP assistance; (3) granulated data on expanded testing; and (4) analysis or tracking of COVID-19 deaths.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ Sen. Cayetano

⁸⁶ Sen. Cayetano

⁸⁷ Sen. Cayetano

⁸⁸ Sen. Villanueva (Annex F, p. 1)

⁸⁹ Sen. Villanueva (Annex F, pp. 1-2)

⁹⁰ Sen. Villanueva (Annex F, p. 3-4)

Modified ECQ and General Community Quarantine

- When shopping malls reopened in Metro Manila last weekend, huge crowds flocked to these areas ignoring health and safety protocols. This requires the government to issue new health warnings.⁹¹
- The national government should develop a public health communication plan on the “new normal” which will help people know and understand the current situation as well as encourage them to practice protective measures to protect their health, their families, and the larger community. Also, the concerned government agencies should roll-out multi-platform information campaigns on the dos and don’ts in preventing the further spread of COVID-19.⁹²
- As previously commented, 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.⁹³
- The PNP in coordination with LGUs concerned and commercial establishment operators should ensure that proper physical/social distancing protocols are followed. Commercial establishments that failed to follow physical/social distancing protocols should be closed temporarily and its operators should be penalized and will only be allowed to reopen until they can ensure compliance to health protective protocols imposed by the government.⁹⁴

Social and Physical Distancing

- To address the reported non-observance of social distancing measures in public markets, the IAFT-EID has created a Joint Social Distancing Teams (JSDT) composed of members of the AFP and PNP who will enforce strict protocol on social distancing in public markets. Do we have a situational report from the JSDT, particularly in 9,111 remaining non-complaint LGUs with ECQ guidelines?⁹⁵
- What will be the healthy physical distancing policy for our elderly and PWDs? Can we also exempt them from the required physical distance, especially those who need assistance from caregivers?⁹⁶
- We recommend that the government look into the guidelines crafted by the Philippine Institute of Interior Designers (PIID), which is based on the

⁹¹ Sen. Binay (Annex B, p. 1)

⁹² Sen. Binay (Annex B, p.1)

⁹³ Sen. Villanueva (Annex F, p. 12)

⁹⁴ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex C, p. 2)

⁹⁵ Sen. Angara (Annex E, p. 6)

⁹⁶ Sen. Angara (Annex E, p. 7)

recommendations by the WHO and CDC, but adjusted to Southeast Asian physiology, ergonomics, and Philippine space/interior design standards.⁹⁷

Testing and PPEs for Employees

- DOLE recently issued Labor Advisory No. 18 series of 2020 entitled “Guidelines on the Cost of COVID-19 Prevention and Control Measures”. It requires the employer to shoulder the cost of COVID-19 tests and other protective equipment and prohibits them to charge the same, directly or indirectly, to the workers. May we know if we have consulted the private sectors on this policy? What will happen if they fail to conduct tests and other protective measures? Would the government provide assistance to small and medium enterprises that lack financial capacity to shoulder the costs?⁹⁸
- We reiterate our recommendation that a sectoral approach policy in the gradual lifting of lockdown should be coupled with regular random testing. Further, the government should clarify their guidelines on the testing of employees and step in to provide sufficient assistance to the employers for the cost of testing.⁹⁹
- As part of the assistance to MSMEs, we appeal to the DBM to allocate funds for the testing of essential workers so that the cost of the testing will not be shouldered alone by small businesses.¹⁰⁰

Telecommuting

- May we request an update on the implementation of RA 11165 or the Telecommuting Act which institutionalizes work-from-home arrangements in the private sector?¹⁰¹

Wage Reduction Schemes

- DOLE should review and reconsider Section 5 of Labor Advisory No. 17, which allows employers and employees to temporarily agree on adjusting wage and wage-related benefits for a maximum period of six months, but subject to review and renewal.¹⁰²

Digital Infrastructure and Governance

- We reiterate that 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

⁹⁷ Sen. Angara (Annex E, p. 7)

⁹⁸ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex C, p. 4)

⁹⁹ Sen. Villanueva (Annex F, p. 7)

¹⁰⁰ Sen. Angara (Annex E, p. 2)

¹⁰¹ Sen. Angara (Annex E, p. 8)

¹⁰² Sen. Villanueva (Annex F, p. 10)

component of effective blended learning. Connectivity is likewise important for people to be able to stay home and work from home.¹⁰³

- Can the DILG map the ICT capabilities and requirements of all LGUs? Given the need of digital governance, can the government fast-track the implementation of the e-government masterplan?¹⁰⁴

Cancer and Dialysis Patients

- 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. Treatment centers should follow and be guided by DOH Memorandum Circular 2020-0162 mandating the continuous operation of dialysis facilities throughout the Philippines during the ECQ.¹⁰⁵
- We reiterate our appeal to the local government units to assist cancer and kidney patients, especially those who live in the provinces and need to go to Manila to avail treatment, through provision of free shuttle service.¹⁰⁶

Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators (POGOs)

- We reiterate our disagreement with the decision of the IATF-EID or Task Force on classifying the POGOs as members of the BPO sector.¹⁰⁷
- Consistent with our earlier recommendation to adopt a sectoral policy in gradually lifting the lockdown, it is our humble opinion that POGOs not only do not have significant contribution to the economy, they also pose serious threat to our country's efforts to flatten the curve of transmission of SARS-COV-2. Thus, allowing them to re-open at this time, when there is still very little testing done, is ill-advised.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ Sen. Cayetano

¹⁰⁴ Sen. Angara (Annex E, p. 8)

¹⁰⁵ Sen. Revilla (Annex A, p. 2)

¹⁰⁶ Sen. Revilla (Annex A, p. 2)

¹⁰⁷ Sen. Villanueva (Annex F, p. 11)

¹⁰⁸ Sen. Villanueva (Annex F, p. 11)