

SENATE'S CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
COMMENTS ON THE 13TH WEEKLY REPORT
OF THE PRESIDENT DATED 22 JUNE 2020

I. PROVIDING EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO ALL AFFECTED SECTORS

Approaches Taken by the Department of Social and Welfare Development (DSWD)
in the Identification of Beneficiaries of the Social Amelioration Programs (SAPs)

(p. 1)

- The DSWD has initiated the provision of emergency subsidy to an additional 5 million waitlisted beneficiaries. How do we monitor the distribution of assistance for the waitlisted individuals? Do we have demographic information as to the areas where the majority of these individuals or families are located? This information is necessary in order to guide and monitor the LGUs where these individuals/families are located in order to speed up the provision for assistance.¹
- Why is there a significant number of duplicated beneficiaries considering that the DSWD is already utilizing the *ReliefAgad* System? Can the DSWD elaborate further steps they will take to avoid duplication of benefits under SAP? Is there a timeframe to resolve the duplicates and ensure that all eligible individuals will be included as SAP beneficiaries?²
- Are the LGUs concerned strictly following the eligibility criteria set forth by the DSWD in the determination of the qualified SAP beneficiaries? Given that adequate control and discretion in identifying and in listing beneficiaries, DSWD must thoroughly examine the list of beneficiaries as provided in the Registry of Barangay Inhabitants and Migrants (RBIM) to avoid duplication of beneficiaries.³
- The DSWD has signed agreements with electronic cash transfer solution providers to accelerate and facilitate the distribution of cash assistance. Have they considered the influx of the government cash grants beneficiaries' long queues at the cash transfer establishments? This may lead to possible spread of the COVID-19 if health protocols will not be observed properly.⁴
- Per our previous request, the following information and data related to the distribution of the 2nd tranche of the SAP-AICS should be included in the report:
 - Approved target number of beneficiaries for the 2nd tranche;
 - Total budget for the adjusted target of beneficiaries;
 - Target completion date of the second tranche; and

¹ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex A, p. 1)

² Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 1)

³ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 1)

⁴ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 1)

- Information showing how many of the targeted beneficiaries will receive the cash aid through ATM cards and other digital platforms, door-to-door, and physical claiming in the LGU offices.⁵

Causes of Delay in the Distribution of Assistance under the SAPs (p. 2)

- The Report indicated five major factors that contributed to the delay of the distribution of the cash subsidy, which mostly involve LGUs. We would like to point out the following equally significant factors that added to the unsatisfactory distribution of the SAP-AICS:
 - Highly cumbersome process which accounts to 30 steps, as revealed in a hearing in the House of Representatives last 22 June 2020;
 - Perennial changing of the policies and guidelines which have caused widespread confusion among the LGUs and the targeted recipients;
 - Failure of implementing agencies in setting the deadline before the implementation of the program; and
 - Failure in fixing a reliable number of target beneficiaries of the program, and, worse, setting a “quota system” for pre-determined yet almost arbitrarily pegged number of recipients per LGU, without the benefit of updated databases nationally and per locality.⁶

Timeline for Completion of Distribution of Assistance under the SAPs (p. 2)

- The lead implementers of the SAP, particularly the AICS, failed to answer this representation’s repeated queries, some of which were also asked by my colleagues in the Senate:
 - What is the deadline for the full implementation of the 1st tranche of cash aid?
 - What is the agency’s plan of action regarding the 291,722 targeted households which are still not served by the DSWD in the 1st tranche, as reported in the 12th Weekly Report?
 - What is the total number of beneficiaries who have returned their cash aid due to duplication, with a breakdown of the amounts and their respective areas?
 - What are the results of the validation and cross checking processes by the DSWD and other relevant agencies as regards the distribution of 1st tranche of cash assistance?⁷
- The table on the summary of implementation of SAP has been removed in the latest report, unlike in the previous weekly reports. What is the reason for the removal of the said table in this latest submission?⁸

⁵ Sen. De Lima (Annex C, p. 2) and Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 1)

⁶ Sen. De Lima (Annex C, p. 2)

⁷ Sen. De Lima (Annex C, p. 1)

⁸ Sen. De Lima (Annex C, p. 1)

Inclusion of Public Utility Vehicle (PUV) Drivers outside the National Capital Region (NCR) in the SAPs (p. 3)

- We would like to request for the aggregate data on the number of driver-beneficiaries of SAP in the country including the status of distribution.⁹
- What is the completion rate of the distribution of SAP funds to drivers of public utility vehicles nationwide? What are the viable alternative livelihood programs for these affected drivers?¹⁰

Causes of Delay in the Disbursement of Financial Assistance under the COVID-19 Adjustment Measures Program - Abot Kamay ang Pagtulong (CAMP-AKAP) for Displaced Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) (p. 3)

- Why does it take more than a week for DOLE to release additional funds to Philippine Overseas Labor Offices (POLOs) and its regional offices given the urgency of the matter? The 2nd tranche of P1 billion for CAMP-AKAP was released to DOLE on May 14, 2020 and was only released to POLOs and DOLE Regional Offices on May 25, 2020.¹¹

Transportation Assistance to Returning OFWs and Locally Stranded Individuals (LSIs) (p. 4)

- We ask the DSWD, DILG, DOTR, and other relevant agencies to carefully study the steps being taken during the return travel of Filipinos to their provinces for there may be lapses in testing or duration of their stay in quarantine facilities. Strict implementation of isolating individuals must be followed to prevent outbreaks in the provinces.¹²
- It was reported in May that about 24,000 OFWs were trapped in quarantine for over a month. How many of them were already sent home? How many are still in quarantine? How many OFWs have tested positive of COVID-19 and what assistance did our government provide? What measures are being undertaken to avoid a repeat of this unfortunate incident for OFWs who have yet to arrive?¹³
- DILG has issued guidelines directing LGUs to establish a “one-stop-shop” station for assisting LSIs. How many LGUs have already complied with this directive? Are LGUs ready to implement the prescribed health standards in accepting the returning OFWs and LSIs?¹⁴

⁹ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 1)

¹⁰ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex A, p. 2)

¹¹ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 2)

¹² Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 2)

¹³ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 2)

¹⁴ Sen. Angara (Annex B, pp. 2-3)

- Is it true that the processing for the Hatid-Probinsya Program for the LSIs was temporarily stopped to give way to the processing of the returning OFWs? If so, why?¹⁵
- If strict quarantine protocols are being observed by returning OFWs and LSIs, then why are some local executives complaining of the spike in COVID-19 cases in their localities, pointing to the Hatid-Probinsya Program as the culprit?¹⁶
- What is DILG's reaction to the news reports that the unplanned returns of LSIs to the provinces have resulted in the spike of COVID-19 cases in the countryside? Thus, Dr. Rotgene Solante, former president of the Philippine Society for Microbiology and Infectious Diseases, has urged the government to review its screening of people who want to avail of the Balik Probinsya program following a surge of COVID-19 infections in the Eastern Visayas region, making it the third most infected region in the country.¹⁷

OFWs Awaiting Repatriation (p. 4)

- According to the latest Report, due to the continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of repatriated Filipinos could reach 100,000 or even higher in the coming months. What is the plan of action of DOLE, OWWA, and other concerned agencies in the foreseen influx of repatriated Filipinos in the country? Are we ready to provide assistance to such a number of OFWs once they arrived in the country? How can DOLE help those non-OWWA members who were repatriated?¹⁸
- Per our previous comment, the DFA should come up with a definite plan to solve the lack of commercial flights for our returning OFWs.¹⁹
- While we welcome the efforts to provide our OFWs with food and financial assistance, we still urge DOLE to look into the welfare of overseas Filipinos awaiting repatriation. We hope that on top of the immediate repatriation, they should also be given the utmost support in terms of food, accommodation, and telehealth services.²⁰
- What assistance did our POLOs provide those OFWs reportedly scavenging for food after being displaced due to the pandemic? Did DOLE verify these reports?²¹
- Can the DOLE or OWWA confirm that infected OFWs are being discriminated against and denied admission to hospitals abroad? If so, what steps are being taken by the DOLE and POLOs to assist COVID-infected OFWs? We

¹⁵ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 2)

¹⁶ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 2)

¹⁷ Sen. De Lima (Annex C, p. 4)

¹⁸ Sen. Cayetano, Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex A, p. 2) and Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 3)

¹⁹ Sen. De Lima (Annex C, p. 3)

²⁰ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 3)

²¹ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 3)

recommend that the POLOs conduct proper coordination with hospitals and other health facilities to ensure that the needs of infected-OFWs are addressed.²²

Accounting of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) (p. 4)

- The Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) has reported a total of 4,188 released PDLs. BJMP clarified that the said figure reflects only the released PDLs from BJMP facilities. What is the progress in the number of releases from other jails and prisons under the control and management of provincial governments and the Bureau of Corrections?²³
- As in the previous reports, the Board of Pardons and Parole should also provide an update on the number of PDLs that were granted parole.²⁴

Expanded SURE Aid and Recovery Project (p. 4)

- The DA and the Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC) failed to explain the discrepancy that was pointed out in our comment last week. In the 11th weekly report, it was already stated that PhP863.93 million, or more than 80% of the PhP 1 billion budget, was already utilized for MSFFs. However, in the 12th weekly report, the amount utilized was only PhP 386.29. The older report has a much bigger figure – almost half a billion – compared with the amount reported in the 12th Weekly Report.²⁵
- The ACPC has attributed the low turnout of beneficiaries in DA’s lending programs to the difficulties in identifying beneficiaries, and lack of updated database of MSFFs. How was it possible that government programs with budgets running in the billions were approved and implemented without the aid of baseline data, i.e, database of intended clientele, and mapping and identification of program beneficiaries?²⁶
- As consistently pointed out in our comments on previous reports, instead of DA’s loan projects, a subsidy program will be more beneficial to marginalized farmers and fisherfolks. Is it not the main point of the “Bayanihan to Heal as One Act”, to empower the President to realign budget items and reallocate existing program funds of any agency for any suitable purpose in response to the pandemic?²⁷
- Will the supply of meat products be affected due to the presence of the African Swine Fever (ASF) in the country?²⁸

²² Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 3)

²³ Sen. De Lima (Annex C, p. 4)

²⁴ Sen. De Lima (Annex C, p. 4)

²⁵ Sen. De Lima (Annex C, p. 4)

²⁶ Sen. De Lima (Annex C, p. 4)

²⁷ Sen. De Lima (Annex C, p. 5)

²⁸ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 3)

- What is the response of the DA on the allegations of former DAR Secretary Rafael Mariano that (1) its fertilizer supply under its COVID-19 response program is overpriced and (2) distribution of two free bags of fertilizers to farmers can only be availed of by recipients of palay seeds under the rice resiliency project, and after buying at least two sacks of fertilizer?²⁹

Efforts of the DA to Improve Storage Facilities for Crops and Grains (p. 5)

- It was reported that the DA is proposing a project that will provide Agri-fishery groups with financial grants to construct packing and storage facilities and provide technical support in information and logistics management. We recommend the DA to harmonize the aforementioned effort with the DTI's Shared Service Facilities (SSF) program.³⁰
- It is not only the agricultural workers that need to be protected. Due to the spate of infections among meat processing and slaughterhouse workers, which forced a closure of many meat processing plants and slaughterhouses in the United States, there is also concern over COVID-19 outbreaks in local meat processing plants, and slaughterhouses.³¹

Implementation of the Livelihood Seeding Program - Negosyo Serbisyo sa Barangay (LSP-NSB) (p. 5)

- We recommend that the DTI assist MSMEs in migrating to online business, including the utilization of digital payments and other relevant technologies to enable them to competently run their business in the new normal.³²

Scholarships and Digital Skills Training Programs (p. 6)

- We call on the DepEd, CHED, and TESDA, in consultation with other agencies such as DTI and the DICT, to collaborate towards establishing a Digital Skills Framework, where digital literacy as a basic life skill is incorporated in the basic curriculum.³³
- We also call on CHED and TESDA to align some of our academic courses to the demands of the digital economy and Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) industries utilizing advanced technologies.³⁴
- About 69,294 TESDA scholars enrolled in the alternative online or blended learning system were given training allowances totalling to PhP 342,451,058. Can we have a breakdown of the 69,294 scholars? How many are from TWSP or STEP or UAQTEA or the Tulong Trabaho Act? How does TESDA

²⁹ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 3)

³⁰ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 4) and Sen. Cayetano

³¹ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 4)

³² Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 3) and Sen. Cayetano

³³ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 4)

³⁴ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 4)

reach out to our repatriated OFWs who are severely impacted by the pandemic?³⁵

- In addition, with so many OFWs coming home, many of them highly skilled, we recommend that DOLE and the OWWA should make an inventory of their competencies. The said inventory will provide an idea of the know-how that's been transferred back to the Philippines because of the pandemic.³⁶
- The national government, particularly DepEd, should look into the possibility of providing personal computers (PCs) to teachers in public schools who need such equipment as general teaching instruments, instead of having them avail loans from GSIS?³⁷
- While the DOST's onestore.ph website and OneStore City app are commendable, they should intensify promotion to reach more customers.³⁸

Monitoring of Availability of Cremation Services for Bodies Arising from COVID-19 Related Deaths (p. 6)

- According to DOLE Sec. Bello, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia wants the Philippine government to bring home the remains of 282 OFWs, including the 50, who died due to COVID-19. The IATF decided that the remains of those who were COVID-19 positive will be buried in Saudi Arabia while three charter flights will return the remaining bodies to the Philippines. What is the plan of IATF upon the arrival of more than 200 remains? Are there clear guidelines as to the processing of the remains, such as identifying designated morgues and crematoriums? What is the procedure for family members who want to bring the remains of their relative to the province?³⁹

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

Policy on the Conduct of "Mass Testing" or Expanded Targeted Testing (p. 7)

- What are the parameters that the DOH is looking into in determining adequate testing? How does the DOH measure the accessibility of testing to individuals in need?⁴⁰
- We suggest the DOH to monitor and to assist private entities and businesses that are conducting testing through rapid test kits to ensure that these follow

³⁵ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 4)

³⁶ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 4) and Sen. Cayetano

³⁷ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 4)

³⁸ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 4)

³⁹ Sen. Cayetano

⁴⁰ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 5)

related guidelines and comply with health standards promulgated by the IATF and DOH.⁴¹

- Does the DOH have a timeline on when the “challenges” listed will be addressed such as the procurement and delivery of testing equipment and supplies and the additional hiring of laboratory personnel? If so, given the timeline set, when can we expect the country to fully maximize the reported maximum testing capacity of 42,000 tests per day?⁴²
- Will the DOH come up with newer guidelines to include workers in more densely occupied areas such as grocery stores and supermarkets, PUVs, and other service oriented establishments?⁴³

Efforts to Further Increase Testing Capacity and Expedite Accreditation Process of COVID-19 Testing Laboratories (p. 7)

- This is the third time wherein it is mentioned that one of the reasons why we are unable to reach our goal for expanded testing is the lack of supplies. What is the DOH doing about this and when do we hope to get these supplies?⁴⁴
- The current Report disregarded its regular disclosure on the number of laboratories that has been accredited on a weekly basis and reported a monthly summary.⁴⁵

Process for Validation of COVID-19 Test Results and Cases (p. 8)

- The DOH is prompted to present new confirmed cases daily as either “fresh” cases (results released to patient within the last 3 days) or “late” cases (4 days or more after result released to patient). When will the DOH be able to validate all the 12,000 or so cases in its backlogs? How many have been validated to date? When can we expect that reported cases are all “fresh” and not more than 3 days delayed?⁴⁶
- Is the DOH planning to tie up with DICT to DOST to come up with a software to hasten the process of validation and reporting of cases?⁴⁷

Contact Tracing Efforts and Current Policies Thereon (p. 9)

- Based on the Report, there are currently 54,042 members of the contact tracing teams, however, only 21,341 are trained. What is the DOH’s plan to be able to train the remaining 32,701 members as soon as possible?⁴⁸
- There is a failure to meet the ideal contact tracers per population ratio, which should be 1 contact tracer for 800 people, in order to further curb the

⁴¹ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 5) and Sen. Cayetano

⁴² Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 5) and Sen. De Lima (Annex C, p. 5)

⁴³ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 5) and Sen. Cayetano

⁴⁴ Sen. Cayetano, Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 5) and Sen. De Lima (Annex C, p. 5)

⁴⁵ Sen. De Lima (Annex C, p. 6)

⁴⁶ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 6)

⁴⁷ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 6)

⁴⁸ Sen. Cayetano and Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 6)

transmission of the virus. As such, the DOH and/or DILG must heed the suggestion of tapping barangay health workers (BHWs) and 4Ps parent leaders to carry out our contact tracing efforts.⁴⁹

- We reiterate our queries to the DILG on the following: (1) are there guidelines/standards for ensuring that contact tracers do their job well? And (2) how will the DILG/LGUs ensure that contact tracers send their reports in a timely manner?⁵⁰
- Is it true that the DOH will be hiring 136,000 contact tracers of possible COVID-19 positive individuals? How will these be apportioned to the regions in the country? What will happen to these contact tracers after the pandemic?⁵¹
- What are the compensation packages available for those who responded to the call of DOH to be contact tracers?⁵²
- How is the contact tracing data collected by the DILG and transmitted to the DOH? Is the DILG maintaining a database separate from the DOH?⁵³
- Are cases reported in *staysafe.ph* reflected in COVID kaya? If this is the case, can other contact tracing applications be linked to COVID kaya?⁵⁴
- Have the digital tools for contact tracing been successful in achieving disease prevention and quick response? If so, can success stories be included in succeeding Bayanihan Reports along with figures per technology used—StaySafe, COVID Tanod, Fassster, COVID Kaya?⁵⁵

Efforts to Increase Human Resource for Health (HRH) Hiring (p. 9)

- Based on the Report, the government is unable to reach its target of 16,490 healthcare workers because of (1) low uptake for some positions; (2) some applicants are in private practice; (3) applicants backed out because of the distance from the facility from their residence, lack of transportation and accommodation, and family concerns; and (4) delays in screening. How is the DOH addressing these? Did DOH endorse these to the IATF for possible solutions?⁵⁶
- We would like to reiterate our previous comments regarding reports of increasing cases of healthcare workers getting infected with the COVID-19. The DOH should include in the report a sub-section that provides the number of the active cases of healthcare workers with COVID-19, those who are able to recover, and those who have succumbed to the illness?⁵⁷

⁴⁹ Sen. De Lima (Annex C, pp. 5-6)

⁵⁰ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 6)

⁵¹ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 7)

⁵² Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex A, p. 2)

⁵³ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 6)

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

⁵⁵ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 6)

⁵⁶ Sen. Cayetano and Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 7)

⁵⁷ Sen. De Lima (Annex C, p. 6)

III. RESPONSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY PLAN

Plans and Strategies with respect to the Mass Transportation System (p. 11)

- One of the innovations of the DOTr for commuting public and private motorists is the scheme involving digital transaction and cashless payment. While this is commendable and adds protective measures that avoid human to human contact, adequate security standards should be in place in order to avoid digital or online payment scam.⁵⁸
- Will digital transactions be made available to other regions? What is the timeline to roll-out this program nationwide?⁵⁹
- Considering the rationalization of bus routes in Metro Manila, and the prioritization of buses as land-based means of transportation, regular and strict-monitoring on the road-worthiness of buses should be adopted.⁶⁰
- What will happen to the jeepney/van drivers and operators, if the government will prioritize the buses? Are there other plans/programs that will help the jeepney/van drivers and operators to transition to the new normal?⁶¹
- We likewise call DOTr and DPWH to fast-track the evaluation, approval, and implementation of the Open Road Tolling plan in our expressways including NLEX and Subic Clark Tarlac Expressway in Luzon.⁶²

Programs for Bicycle Riders (p. 12)

- When will the bike lanes be fully operational?⁶³
- Move As One, a coalition of transport advocates, earlier appealed for wider protected bike lanes that are set up away from sidewalks, as it tagged MMDA's lane width proposal "dangerous to cyclists and pedestrians". Has the MMDA considered the appeal?⁶⁴

IV. OTHER CONCERNS / COMMENTS

Small Business Wage Subsidy (SBWS)

- We note the failure of the Report to provide information on our previous request for a detailed explanation on the results of the SBWS Task Force's preliminary matching between DOLE's CAMP and SBWS program lists. The lists showed that around 193,000 out of 680,000 CAMP recipients are also SBWS

⁵⁸ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex A, p. 2)

⁵⁹ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 7)

⁶⁰ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex A, p. 2)

⁶¹ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 7) and Sen. De Lima (Annex C, p. 6)

⁶² Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 7)

⁶³ Sen. Cayetano and Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 7)

⁶⁴ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 7) and Sen. Cayetano

beneficiaries. What has been done with respect to this matter? What corrective measures, if any, have been adopted to avoid further leakage or waste of resources?⁶⁵

Assistance to Women, Children and Other Vulnerable Groups

- We would like to reiterate our request for updates on the government's efforts in cracking down cybercrime activities, especially those that adversely affect women, children and other vulnerable groups? What are the status of the cases and actions taken by concerned agencies on reported violations on women and children rights?⁶⁶
- In view of the increasing number of cases of violence committed against women and children, there is a need to accelerate the corresponding action from the Government. The call to create a Joint Task Force composed of the officials of DSWD, DOJ, and the PNP is hereby reiterated.⁶⁷
- As mentioned in our last submission, WHO has published guidelines for health facilities on maintaining essential services during the pandemic, including for newborn care, as experts have also investigated the risk of COVID-19 being transmitted to babies during breastfeeding. Has DOH been able to monitor whether public and private hospitals and other health facilities are following the said guidelines? What other measures are in place to ensure maternal and child care during this pandemic?⁶⁸
- As previously commented, DOH stated that even before the COVID-19 pandemic started, we already have enough supply of vaccine for the expanded program on immunization. However, due to the pandemic, parents are scared to bring their children to health centers for vaccination. What is the DOH doing in order to continue the immunization program despite the scare brought by COVID-19? How many children were vaccinated during the start of the quarantine period? How much is the decrease as compared to the percentage of children vaccinated before the lockdown started?⁶⁹

Assistance to Students, Educators, and Educational Institutions

- Has there been an assessment made by DepEd on the effectiveness of blended learning that does not include face-to-face classes? Given that many households have multiple young children, parents are not trained in teaching nor supervising their children when it comes to their education, and many parents will need to make a living, have all these been weighed versus the down side of limited face-to-face classes in specific low-risk areas?⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Sen. De Lima (Annex C, p. 3)

⁶⁶ Sen. Cayetano and Sen. De Lima (Annex C, p. 5)

⁶⁷ Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex A, p. 1)

⁶⁸ Sen. Cayetano

⁶⁹ Sen. Cayetano

⁷⁰ Sen. Cayetano

- DepEd has indicated that pursuant to the general directive of the President, as recommended by the IATF, they are preparing for school resumption without face-to-face classes until a vaccine for COVID-19 becomes available. However, recognizing there is no real replacement for face-to-face learning, DepEd should still be preparing for blended learning/flexible learning modes of delivery that could include smaller classroom sizes or students attending class on a rotational basis and other models, in areas that may be deemed safe. For example, in the case of rotational attendance, what model is being used? If in fact there are also preparations for this, can we get the details? When face-to-face interaction is allowed, most likely it will be done in phases. Thus, the need for DepEd to already include it in their plans.⁷¹

Quarantine Facilities and Covid-19 Bed Capacity

- We call on the DOH and the DPWH to consider establishing several mega quarantine facilities in Region VII especially in Cebu in response to the rising number of COVID-19 cases in the region.⁷²
- With the growing number of COVID-19 cases in Cebu, what are the plans of the government to expand the hospitals' COVID-19 ward capacities and to increase staffing?⁷³
- As of June 22, the country's bed occupancy rate is at 35.9%, while 55.5% for NCR. Have we obtained our ideal capacity in terms of health facilities or are we still in the process of building up the same? With the continuous increase in the number of COVID-19 cases after the ECQ was lifted, is the government confident that its health facilities can handle a possible second wave?⁷⁴

PhilHealth and other DOH matters

- May we request for updates on PhilHealth Interim Reimbursement Mechanism (IRM)?⁷⁵
- We reiterate that Philhealth should also provide a breakdown of the funds it released to healthcare institutions, specifying the amount released per hospital, the date disbursed, the basis for the release, and other relevant information.⁷⁶
- What are the reasons for the delay in the payout to health workers who contracted the disease including the beneficiaries of health workers who died of COVID-19?⁷⁷
- Why is it that more cadaver bags were acquired/purchased for children than for adults?⁷⁸

⁷¹ Sen. Cayetano

⁷² Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 8)

⁷³ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 8)

⁷⁴ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 8)

⁷⁵ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 8)

⁷⁶ Sen. Cayetano

⁷⁷ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 9)

⁷⁸ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 9)

Health Reforms

- The crisis has revealed not just vulnerabilities in our systems but also transformative opportunities to improve healthcare. Considering that budget deliberations are forthcoming, have our health experts and leaders reexamined the reforms necessary to ensure that Filipinos are protected against a similar crisis in the future?⁷⁹

Food Security

- Food security should be a major consideration as the cases of COVID-19 in the Philippines continue to rise and the number of infections is expected to breach 40,000 by the end of June or early July.⁸⁰
- Regions III and IV-A are considered as The Food Bowl and Rice Granary of Central Luzon. Given that the Regions III and IV-A rank 4th and 3rd, respectively, in the COVID-19 Tracker of the DOH, an update should be given on the steps taken to mitigate the spread of the infection among farm workers, as well as the food sanitation measures that are in place in order to safeguard the produce from farm to table.⁸¹
- While the COVID-19 response programs of the DA are laudable, and pre-COVID programs such as the P1-billion Kapital Access for Young Agripreneurs (KAYA) loan program and Young Farmers Academy are innovative, there is also a need to fast-track applications which do not require government funding such as applications for licenses for projects which are aimed at increasing food production, and as a consequence thereof, address the need for food security during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.⁸²
- While still awaiting for an update on the storage and cold-chain facilities relative to the food security of the country during the COVID-19 Pandemic, a report on what is being done to improve the agricultural logistics in the Philippines, particularly, the inter-island logistics would be informative.⁸³

Tourism

- We request the DOT to mandate all Philippine Tourism Offices to maintain online presence to promote the Philippines in their respective countries, and request all Philippine Tourism Attaché to submit lists of best tourism recovery plans in their respective country for consideration of DOT as it finalizes the Philippine Tourism Recovery Plans.⁸⁴
- Is there one set of guidelines being issued by DOT for the reopening of tourist sites? One of the recommendations is that safety protocols should be

⁷⁹ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 8) and Sen. Cayetano

⁸⁰ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 9)

⁸¹ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 10)

⁸² Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 10)

⁸³ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 10) and Sen. Cayetano

⁸⁴ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 9)

consistent throughout the country so that tourists know what to expect - from arrival in the country to the accommodation and use of facilities.⁸⁵

- In preparation for the opening of tourism related enterprises that have yet to complete the application process in the new normal setup, we call on the DOT to fast-track the virtual inspections and to grant certificates of provisional accreditation to all compliant establishments.⁸⁶
- We urge all LGUs where tourism is a significant industry to create a Tourism Office or appoint a Tourism Officer to help the national government with promoting domestic tourism.⁸⁷
- In European countries, domestic and regional tourism is the first step in re-opening the tourism industry. Are there plans in place to do the same in the country? Has DOT identified provinces and/or tourism sites that pose the least risks? For example, destinations that can be explored via land travel through the use of private or hired vehicles or destinations that provide for detached residential facilities to prevent mingling in common areas.⁸⁸

Labor

- Has the government provided employers and employees support with regard to COVID-19 testing especially now that most areas have shifted to GCQ?⁸⁹
- How does DOLE monitor abuses in the BPO industry arising from the flexible working arrangements, lack of sufficient support for those working from home and deprivation of separation benefits for those who were laid off?⁹⁰

Underground Medical Facility

- There are still no updates concerning the NBI's earlier report about the discovery of an underground medical facility in Fontana Leisure Park in Pampanga, and the arrest of two Chinese nationals allegedly running an illegal pharmacy in Angeles City, Pampanga. Progress reports should be provided on these two incidents, as well as the discovery of other underground hospitals for POGO workers, such as in Makati City.⁹¹

Anti-Insurgency Operations

- Concerned government agencies should intensify anti-insurgency operations in rebel-infested areas, amidst the growing number of reported cases of encounters with the rebel groups and soldiers, especially in the provinces. Amidst the COVID-19 crisis, such acts of violence, threat, intimidation and

⁸⁵ Sen. Cayetano

⁸⁶ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 9)

⁸⁷ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 9)

⁸⁸ Sen. Cayetano

⁸⁹ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 10)

⁹⁰ Sen. Angara (Annex B, p. 10)

⁹¹ Sen. De Lima (Annex C, p. 7)

harassment committed by rebel groups add more burden and sufferings to the people, and the government.⁹²

Budgetary Measures to Fund COVID-19

- The section on budgetary measures to fund COVID-19 efforts has been deleted in the current Report. The report also failed to provide updates on the budget allocated and spent per agency, in line with the clear provision under RA 11469 for the government to explain how it is sourcing and spending the budget intended for COVID-19 response. Does this mean there has been no expenditure spent by the government in the past two weeks?⁹³
- We reiterate our previous request to be provided with a comprehensive report on the total number of loans and the aggregate sums being borrowed from foreign banks in response to the current pandemic. May we also be given copies of the loan contracts, financing agreements and related papers for purposes of transparency and the right to public information?⁹⁴

⁹² Sen. Dela Rosa (Annex A, p. 1)

⁹³ Sen. De Lima (Annex C, p. 7)

⁹⁴ Sen. De Lima (Annex C, p. 7)