DSWD
Department of Social Welfare and Development

Administrative Order No. ___01___
Series of 2021

SUBJECT: Adopting the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Policy Agenda 2020-2025 "Investing in people for reshaping Philippine society to a more inclusive, empowered and humane community"

I. RATIONALE

In line with its mandate to protect the social welfare of Filipinos and to promote social development in the country, the DSWD has championed public actions on the promotion and protection of the rights of everyone, especially the socially or economically disadvantaged. The Department also formulates and coordinates policies that provide direction to itself, its attached agencies, partners and intermediaries in implementing and delivering SWD services to different sectors and clients.

Emerging and evolving social welfare and development (SWD) conditions are influenced by numerous contexts including the presence of the DSWD, LGUs and other SWD partner-agencies and institutions and their respective social and political roles. With the enactment in 1991 of Republic Act (RA) 7160, also known as the Local Government Code, local government units (LGUs) have been empowered to deliver basic social protection and social welfare services. LGUs have shared this responsibility with the Department. In advancing SWD in the country, the Department has exercised both a steering role, i.e., working closely with LGUs to lead, stir and enable them to fulfill their mandates on local service delivery, as well as a rowing function, i.e., implementing some statutory and specialized programs which are directly lodged with DSWD and/or not yet devolved to the LGUs. The rowing role is meant as a mechanism to strengthen the SWD system for improving well-being of individuals, households and communities in the country.

In line with this and in the wake of the Supreme Court ruling on the Mandanas vs. Ochoa case (Manasan 2020), the Department needs to make adjustments to its SWD role not only because of emerging and growing demands among stakeholders on SWD, but also on account of the likely changed setting in the government bureaucracy.

Another major factor influencing the current policy landscape in the country is the COVID-19 pandemic. While the crisis has brought about numerous adverse health and socio-economic impacts, it has also highlighted the long existing problems on the implementation of social protection programs in the country.

In view of the foregoing, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has come up with a Policy Agenda for the period 2020 to 2025 to enable the Department to prioritize issues affecting the SWD conditions in the country.

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The Department's Administrative Order (AO) No. 13, s. 2015 defines the DSWD Policy Agenda as "a document that outlines the priority SWD issues and concerns that need appropriate policy responses from DSWD". Further, AO No. 10, s. 2018 states that

"the policy agenda is envisioned to guide the Department in operationalizing its mandate and mission in line with the formulation of policies that will address the needs and emerging issues of various vulnerable and marginalized sectors. This emphasizes the contribution of DSWD in the whole-of-government approach as the lead agency in the development of SWD policies."

Consequently, the Policy Agenda provides a structured blueprint for addressing cross-sectoral social issues that considers prevailing social issues in of the country, international commitments to SWD, as well as mechanisms for effective social policy formulation and implementation of transformative policy actions.

The DSWD Policy Agenda can inform, advance and focus social work practices, including social protection, with the ultimate goal of promoting SWD. While the scope to protect people, their families, and communities and consequently help everyone lead a fulfilling life can be daunting and complex, various statistics have shown progress in SWD, together with challenges, bottlenecks and constraints. Furthermore, the DSWD cannot be expected to respond to all the challenges of SWD: partnerships are key to translating the Policy Agenda into policy actions that can result in better SWD outcomes. Having this Policy Agenda in place will allow the Department to strengthen the quality of social policies especially as the country seeks to build inclusive, empowered, and resilient communities. The Agenda takes account not only of requirements of policymakers, clients and other SWD stakeholders, but also of its organizational competencies, the scope and extent of responsibilities of units in the Department in attaining results. The Policy Agenda can help the DSWD to work on identifying its core responsibilities, prioritizing what needs to be addressed, improving its human resources and processes for SWD service delivery, and strengthening partnerships for attaining current and future social services required by Filipinos.

The title of the DSWD Policy Agenda, "Investing in people for reshaping Philippine society to a more inclusive, empowered and humane community," signals SWD stakeholders, including the Department's staff, attached and supervised agencies, for SWD to be transformative in the wake of existing and emerging opportunities and constraints in the entire SWD ecosystem. The Policy Agenda is at sync with the Department's **vision** of

"*all Filipinos free from hunger and poverty, having equal access to opportunities, enabled by a fair, just, and peaceful society*"

and its **mission**

"*to lead in the formulation, implementation and coordination of social welfare and development policies and programs for and with the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged*".

II. LEGAL BASES

1. **Republic Act No. 7160. Local Government Code of 1991**. Transferring control and responsibility of delivering basic services to the hands of local government units (LGU)

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2. **Executive Order No. 15, S. 1998.** Redirecting the Functions and Operations of the Department of Social Welfare And Development – redirects the mandate of DSWD from a direct service deliver to a technical assistance provider as a result of the devolution of basic services which further iterates the role of DSWD as monitor and evaluator of SWD policies, programs and projects

3. **Executive Order No. 221, s. 2003.** Amending EO 15, s. 1998

4. **NEDA We Heal as One Report 2020.** Country's strategy in responding and mitigating the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and transitioning to the new normal

5. **DSWD Administrative Order No. 05, s. 2020.** "Adoption of PGS Pathways, DSWD Strategy Map 2028 and DSWD Governance Scorecards

6. **DSWD Administrative Order 13, s. 2015.** Outlines the process and strategies of developing policy issuances

7. **RECHARGE PH.** Recovery phase action plan of the Government

8. **Mandanas Doctrine[1].** Stipulates that the "just share" of Local Government Units (LGUs) must be computed from all national taxes and not limited to the national internal revenue taxes based on the Section 6 Article X of the 1987 Constitution and contradictory to the Section 284 of the Local Government Code

Note: Other relevant documents reviewed can be found on Annex A (Long version of the Policy Agenda)

III. OBJECTIVES

This Administrative Order aims to officially adopt the DSWD Policy Agenda 2020-2025 as the Department's guide in operationalizing its mandate and mission in line with the formulation of policies that will address the needs and emerging issues of various vulnerable and marginalized sectors. Specifically, it aims to:

1. Serve as a blueprint for addressing persisting as well as emerging cross-sectoral social welfare and development issues in the country;
2. Guide the DSWD offices, bureaus, services and units (OBSUs) in crafting policy issuances and programs.
3. Provide evidence-based list of SWD issues needing appropriate interventions.

IV. SCOPE AND COVERAGE

All DSWD Offices, Bureaus, Services and Units including the Field Offices are covered by the provisions of this Administrative Order.

V. ANALYTICAL REVIEW OF POLICY ECOSYSTEM

In preparing the Policy Agenda, the Department has undertaken an analytical review of key DSWD policy and policy-related documents, to identify the themes that have received policy

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[1] Mandanas vs. Executive Secretary (G.R. No. 199802, July 3, 2018)

attention through the years, especially since 2010, and examine the evolution of these themes. The review has also led to an examination of the ecosystem behind the formulation of SWD policies, as well as an identification of emerging SWD issues and/or policy gaps. The development of the Policy Agenda, including the review of the SWD policy ecosystem, has also involved a participative, consultation process within and outside of DSWD. Consultation meetings have been held with stakeholders, including:

- past and present legislators, past DSWD secretaries, local chief executives (LCEs), and other officials in the Executive Branch,
- policy researchers,
- representatives of DSWD attached agencies, national government agencies aside from DSWD, and development partners, and
- DSWD personnel, including MOA workers from the central office and field offices.

The formulation of the Policy Agenda and the implementation of concomitant policy actions do not sit in a vacuum; they are driven by the complex interactions in the policy ecosystem, i.e., the community of actors involved in policy discussions (Figure 1). SWD actors influence, formulate or execute the country's policies for addressing social concerns and social service needs of Filipinos; their interactions should be harnessed in the period 2020 to 2025 to yield better SWD outcomes. The Policy Agenda covers an array of prevailing and emerging issues that need to be addressed by DSWD together with its SWD partners in both the public and private sectors. Selecting policy alternatives are critical processes of policy development. The interactions of institutions explain policy choices and policy actions, including why progress is made on some policy issues, and why other issues have persisted. Thus, institutions are central to the Policy Agenda. At the micro-level, the family, plays a key role in access to emotional and physical security, as well as in the level of economic well-being of an individual. Each family lives in a community governed by local government units (LGUs), that have been empowered to deliver basic SWD services to people, families and communities with the enactment of the Local Government Code in 1991. The Department has worked closely with LGUs to steer and capacitate them for fulfilling their mandates on local service delivery, but many programs have been either directly lodged with DSWD and/or not yet devolved to the LGUs. When the national government implements the Mandanas ruling, this will effectively empower LGUs to do more with the resources made available to them. National government agencies, including the Department, will have to transfer some of its current functions to the LGUs (Manasan 2020). As regards SWD services, the DSWD needs to redefine itself through the Policy Agenda, by strengthening its steering role over its rowing role in SWD as the myriad of expectations in SWD cannot be solved by DSWD alone. Further, with EO No. 67, s. 2018, effectively transferring the supervision of three national government agencies to the DSWD from the Office of the President, Department can use this increased clout in government and society to steer SWD services more effectively using a whole-of-government framework. The Policy Agenda should be supportive of the Department's strategy map and its strategic focuses, viz., (1) Increase capacity of LGUs to improve the delivery of social protection and social welfare services; (2) Improve well-being of Beneficiaries and 4Ps households through strengthened social welfare system. (AO 5, s. 2020).

The Policy Agenda is transformative, and it is also linked to several policy documents on national socio-economic objectives and aspirations that consider prevailing conditions, namely, *AmBisyon Natin* 2040, Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022 (NEDA 2016, NEDA

2017), We Recover as One (NEDA 2020), RECHARGE PH, DSWD COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan 2020-2022, and the DSWD Strategy Map 2028. Themes, elements and sub-elements of the Policy Agenda also consider international commitments to SWD, e.g., the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint 2025 (ASEAN 2016, UN 2015). Goals 1 to 5, 10, 11, and 16 of the SDGs, in particular, seek to strengthen the social dimension of sustainable development. Implementation of policies and policy actions needs to consider inter-linkages within the social sector, as well as among the various (social, economic and environmental) dimensions of sustainable development to effect desirable SWD outcomes.

Figure 1: Social Welfare and Development (SWD) Policies and Ecosystem
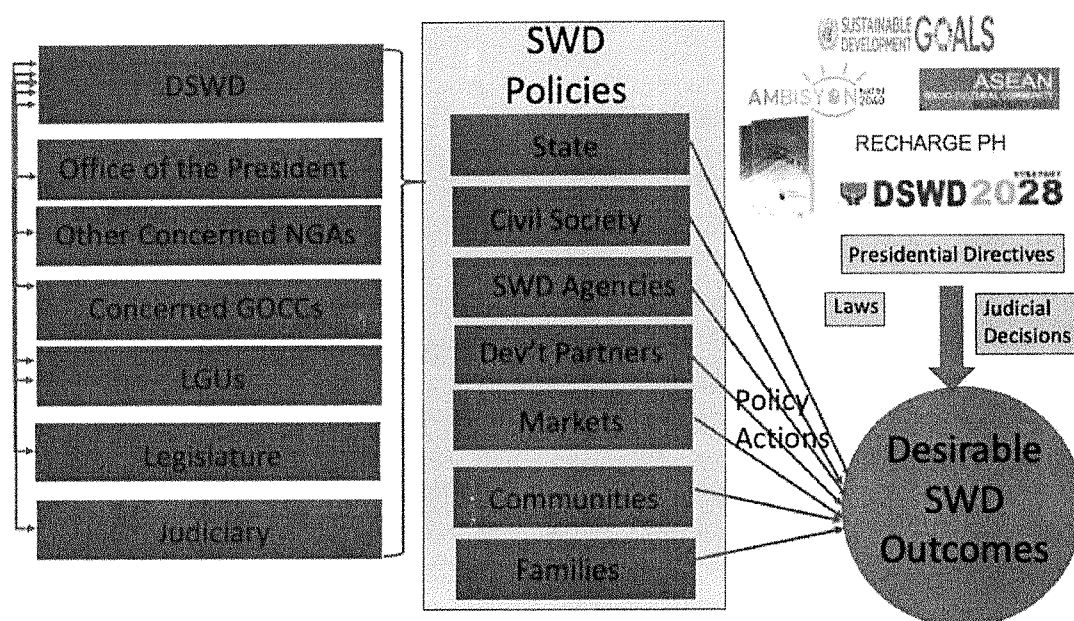
VI.   Key Impacts of COVID-19

Since the onset of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), the impact of the pandemic has been felt in the Philippines, not just on the health sector but also across various socio-economic dimensions. To manage the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), the goverment imposed an Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) in 16 March 2020, and has regularly updated protocols on movements of people. This first policy measure of choice involved the, temporary closure of many establishments, but this put a severe toll on the economy, resulting in a huge number of displaced workers. According to the Department of Labor and Employment, a total of 1.19 million workers have been affected by the pandemic (as of April 12)[2]. Besides the toll on the agriculture and fisheries sector where poverty tends to be concentrated, there is also massive losses of jobs from to the closure of micro-, small- and medium-enterprises (MSMEs), especially in the services sector. The Philippine Statistics Authority reported unemployment rate at 17.7 percent and 10.0 percent of the country's work

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[2] We Recover as One, 2020.

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force, as of April and July 2020, respectively. These figures are far higher than the unemployment rates in the country prior to COVID-19, and they are equivalent to 7.3 million and 4.6 million unemployed Filipinos in the labor force for the said periods. Lower labor force participation rates and higher undemployment rates than pre-COVID-19 times have also been reported by the PSA during these periods. The increase of repatriated and stranded Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) due to termination of contracts, as well as the drop in overseas remittances, are also pressing impacts of the pandemic on family income. All these reduced economic activities amid the pandemic, without social protection interventions to the poor and vulnerable would likely have increased poverty (Albert *et al.* 2020).

Through the enhancement of Republic Act (RA) No. 11469 or the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act of 2020, the DSWD has been mandated to implement social amelioration measures to provide subsidy for basic necessities and ways for the recovery of most affected families and individuals. Social amelioration measures of the DSWD include the Emergency Subsidy Program (ESP), Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS), Augmentation of Food and Non-Food Items, Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP), Social Pension for Indigent Senior Citizens and Supplementary Feeding ProgramDue to the identified need for an effective strategy to address the COVID19 spread, broad-based engagement to get individuals to adhere to non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs), and a package of technical and financial assistance for businesses to transition to the new normal, We Recover as One was issued presenting recommended policies and strategies in order to address the loss of consumer and business confidence.

To operationalize these recommendations, ReChargePH was further developed using a whole-of-nation approach in addressing the problem at hand. Task Group Recovery (TG Recovery) was consequently formed whose functions are to formulate action plans - and monitor the same- that will facilitate the restarting of social and economic activities, while engaging all of society in preventing the spread and mitigating the ill effects of the COVID19 pandemic. It is chaired by the NEDA, with DBM and DOF as co-Chairs. It consists of three sub-Task Groups (sTG): sTG on Economic Recovery chaired by DTI, sTG on Social Recovery chaired by DSWD, and sTG on Governance chaired by DILG.

VII.   The DSWD Policy Agenda 2020-2025

The DSWD Policy Agenda identifies three themes linked to the overall strategic outcomes of *Ambisyon Natin 2040* (Advancing Social Equity and Social Justice; Promoting People-Centered Sustainable Development; Developing Sustained Institutional Capacity for Effecting SWD) with a fourth theme (Enhancing governance by harnessing whole-of-government and partnerships to support the three themes. These themes are responses to social issues and conditions in the country. Specific elements and sub-elements for each of the themes in the Policy Agenda are guides for the process of implementation, but are by no means exhaustive.

Themes	Elements	Sub-elements
A. Advancing Social Equity and Social Justice	A1. Protection of Human Rights and Safety especially of	• Advocating for Rights of All Children to Quality Education and Health Services
		• Promoting Lifelong Learning Systems, Skills Development Opportunities, and

Themes	Elements	Sub-elements
	Vulnerable and Marginalized	Quality Health and Psycho-social Care at all Life Stages for Everyone
		• Achieving Gender Equality, Social Cohesion and Inclusion
	A2. Reducing, if not eradicating, hunger and malnutrition	• Securing Right to Access Adequate Food and Healthy Diets for Individuals and Families
		• Ensuring Food Security for All
B. Promoting People-Centered Sustainable Development	B1. Social Protection	• Enhancing Well-being and Empowering of Needy with Social Assistance, Case Management and Graduation Programs
		• Increasing Resilience Mechanisms, including Labor Market Interventions, Safety Nets and Social Insurance for targeted underserved areas & disadvantaged sectors
	B2. Community and Rural Development	• Enabling Basic Sectors, People's Organizations, Cooperatives, and Rural Institutions to be Effective Social Organizations
		• Supporting People's Participation in Planning, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation
C. Developing Sustained Institutional Capacity for Effecting SWD	C1. Technical Assistance and Resource Augmentation (TARA) for LGUs	• Assessing Situations, Needs and Capacities of LGUs
		• Conducting TARA interventions
		• Strengthening the SWD Learning Network
	C2. Standard Setting for SWD agencies (SWDAs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)	• Reducing regulatory burdens
		• Improving regulatory quality and coherence
	C3. Professional Learning & Development for DSWD Personnel including MOA workers	• Intensifying Technical Skills on Social Work, Public Policy and Data Analytics
		• Improving Soft Skills for Active Listening and Communication, Critical Thinking, as well as Organization, Negotiations and Partnership-Building
		• Caring for Carers and Monitoring Career Paths
D. Enhancing governance by harnessing whole-of-government	D1. Research and Data	• Conducting Relevant Policy Studies
		• Integrating Data Systems within DSWD and Exploring Wealth of Data, including Innovative Data Sources
		• Utilizing M&E Reports and Research Findings

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Themes	Elements	Sub-elements
and partnerships	D2. Technology	• Developing Systems for Improving Administrative and Support Processes
		• Making Technology Work for Decision Makers
	D3. Resources	• Utilizing All Resources Effectively and Efficiently
		• Developing Partnerships for Societal Change

Complete details of each theme, element, and sub-element are discussed on the attached full version of the Policy Agenda (See Annex 1).

A. Theme 1: Advancing Social Equity and Social Justice

Ambisyon 2040 and the PDP have mainstreamed the quest for social equity and social justice (NEDA 2016, NEDA 2017). These visions and plans have been formulated with the recognition that some segments of society are vulnerable to risks, marginalized and excluded from opportunities, even from the right to access food. Remedying fundamental social inequalities and social injustices is a matter of respect for people's universal human rights, as mentioned in Article XIII on Social Justice and Human Rights of the Philippine Constitution. Two elements – (i) the protection of human rights and safety especially of the vulnerable and marginalized; as well as (ii) the reduction, if not eradication of hunger and malnutrition – are part of Policy Agenda Theme 1 on "Advancing Social Equity and Social Justice". Based on respect for the inherent worth and dignity of all Filipinos, SWD policy and practice should promote the rights to individual self-actualization and participation in development processes. What is distinctive about SWD is that it locates the person in the context of his or her life as a whole.

A1. Protection of Human Rights and Safety especially of Vulnerable and Marginalized

The Department's mandate includes protection of human rights and of the safety of all, particularly the underserved and underrepresented who are not given the opportunity to fully participate in development processes. Every Filipino is entitled to the realization of economic, social and cultural rights within the limits of the resources of the state. The current national development plans as well as country's international commitments to SWD, as embodied in several SDGs and the ASCC 2025 Blueprint, are all unequivocally anchored in human rights, with SWD targets meant to realize the human rights of all (NEDA 2016; NEDA 2017; UN 2015; ASEAN 2016). The national and international SWD agenda are explicitly grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international human rights treaties and other instruments including the Declaration on the Right to Development. In committing to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the SDGs (UN 2015), the Philippines, together with 192 other UN member states, have pledged to leave no one behind (LNOB).

- Advocating for Rights of All Children to Quality Education and Health Services

  Even though a lot fewer children are excluded from basic education, out of school children still persist on account of poverty, gender, disability, ethnicity and other conditions that people are born into (David *et al.* 2018b; Reyes *et al.* 2017). Children

with disabilities, and other children with special needs face specific challenges in the pursuit of their right to education, resulting in reduced access to mainstream education, especially quality education. IP children, street children, and children from other marginalized families and communities are deprived of access to education because of their background or the cultural or economic barriers to education that they constantly face. Amid the pandemic, schools have made use of television and radio broadcasts in combination with the internet as communication channels between educators and learners, but likely, more gaps in quality of learning have resulted from digital divides between the poor and the non-poor segments of society.

The Philippine Constitution also guarantees the right of children to health and psycho-social services. However, not all children (and their mothers) are able to access their rights to health services, especially quality health and psycho-social care, due to social, economic and geographical barriers. The marginalized and vulnerable segments of society are often located in rural areas, especially GIDAs, where quality health care is not accessible, thus making these social groups more likely to have worse health outcomes than the rest of the population.

- Promoting Lifelong Learning Systems, Skills Development Opportunities, and Quality Health and Psycho-social Care at all Life Stages for Everyone

Every Filipino has a right to attain a decent standard of living, and the state, within the limits of its resources, should find mechanisms to promote dreams of social mobility. Data from the Labor Force Survey (LFS), conducted quarterly by the PSA, suggests that in pre-pandemic times, nearly two out of five workers are less likely to have formal work arrangements and access to social protection; these workers are thus more at risk to suffer from a crisis or shock. Labor informality is also a major barrier to improving social mobility and to increasing the size of the middle class. Lifelong learning systems are vastly needed to account for the needs for tooling and retooling of the labor force across the entire life cycle, from infancy and childhood, to youth, to working age and to old age. Across various periods of life, individuals can encounter challenging life transitions (e.g. puberty and adolescence, leaving home, having a baby, getting married or separated) and traumatic life events (e.g. death of a loved one, loss of a job, occurrence of extreme natural disaster), environmental pressures (e.g. lack of financial resources and social provisions), and dysfunctional transactions in family, group, and community life.

While the DepEd, TESDA and CHED are mandated to serve the entire education sector, and the DOH together with LGUs manage the health sector, the regular review of public policies in human capacity investments using the lens of SWD is important. DSWD has a function to champion SWD policies that look into the varying needs of individuals for learning and quality care, and the risks they face across their life cycle.

- Achieving Gender Equality, Social Cohesion and Inclusion

Despite the passage of many legal instruments, including the Magna Carta for Women, to eliminate violence against women and children (VAWC), implementation deficits in

key policies and practices have been observed (David *et al.* 2018a). The devolved nature of core social services for VAWC also require policies to coordinate holistic responses to VAWC, especially in poorer locales where the prevalence of VAWC appears to be higher. Children need particular protection: it is important to have key policies on safeguarding them from violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect. Proposed bills on gender equality and equal protection under the law, as well as the repeal of laws and provisions that are harmful for women and children should be pushed by DSWD, in cooperation with the Philippine Commission on Women, the Council for the Welfare of Children, and other advocates of gender equality and child protection.

A2. Reducing, if not eradicating, hunger and malnutrition

The Department is being expected by SWD stakeholders to actively steer policies in the efforts to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, which are problems of the poorest of the poor. While not all the poor suffer from hunger, but all those suffering from hunger and malnutrition are poor, and among the poorest of the poor. Hunger and malnutrition has dire consequences especially for children, whose lifelong development from the moment they go to school, up to the time they eventually join the work force, is put at risk given their developmental disadvantages.

- Securing Right to Access Adequate Food and Healthy Diets for Individuals and Families

    Malnutrition, especially undernutrition of infants and children, has been a perennial problem in the country; and this problem not only impacts on health outcomes, but also on education attainment and economic productivity. As of 2015, a third (33.4%) of children under five years old were found stunted or too short for their age. This prevalence rate is a significant reduction from nine in twenty children (44.7% in 1989) two and a half decades ago, but reductions have been rather modest in recent years, despite investments to improve children's health and nutrition over the years.

    A further concern is disparities in stunting across socio-economic groups. In 2015, stunting among children below five is higher among children from the rural population than their urban counterparts (38.1% vs 28.3%). Across the country, nearly half (49.7%) of children from the poorest quintile are stunted as of 2015: this rate is thrice that of the richest (14.7%). Other forms of child malnutrition are due to micronutrient deficiency and hunger and food insecurity with two thirds (68.3%) of Filipino households, mostly among the poorest families, not meeting their caloric requirements. There are also concerns on maternal nutrition: adolescent pregnant women with low educational attainment, coming from the poorest families, and are employed are found to have relatively higher levels of undernutrition which could consequences to the nutrition of the growing fetus, and to the resulting infant.

- Ensuring Food Security for All

    Food insecurity is defined as "the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in

socially acceptable ways" (Life Sciences Research Office, 1990). Food-insecurity and malnutrition are related though the relationship is not one-to-one as there are also children from food-secure households that experience growth faltering on account of factors such as inappropriate feeding practices, poor access to health services, and poor sanitation. Still, poorer households face greater risk of food insecurity than nonpoor households. Poverty limits a household's capacity to earn a regular income, access to education and health services. Income has effects on the capacity of the household to ensure food security.

B. Theme 2: Promoting People-Centered Sustainable Development

Attaining the Department's vision that the country eradicates poverty requires policies that are people-focused, and at sync with sustainable development. People-centered sustainable development has multiple overlapping aspects that entail self-supporting social, economic and environmental systems. People face various risks that can turn into crises. In its 2014 World Development Report, the World Bank contends that responsibly and effectively managing risks to welfare has the potential to save lives, avert damages, prevent development setbacks, and unleash opportunities (WB 2013).

In line with its aspirations to reduce poverty and risks to welfare, the country has adopted a framework for social protection, which includes an official definition of social protection that is consistent with international usage, as well as an action plan (DSWD and NEDA-SC-SP 2019). The Department would need to steer government away from "one size fits all" policies and strategies on social protection as well as on community and rural development in recognition of varying risks faced by people and communities.

B.1. Social Protection

Effective social protection policies, programs and projects are imperative for SWD (NEDA 2017, ASEAN 2018, ADB 2018). They promote social cohesion given the multiple overlapping risks faced by vulnerable groups in society, and they help bring about inclusive and sustainable development. With the adoption of the Philippine Social Protection Operational Framework and Strategy (PSPOFS), the country has made more efforts to synchronize, expand, and meld social protection interventions through the establishment of new institutional arrangements for coordinating social protection (DSWD PDPB 2019). The primary goal and specific objectives of social protection encompasses both themes 1 and 2 of the Policy Agenda. The last decade has also seen significant strides in social protection in the country, with the development and use of objective targeting mechanisms, the implementation of a conditional cash transfer that currently covers one-fifth of the household population, stronger coordination. Social protection has also had a rising prominence in the country's recent development plans and long-term development vision. The PDP 2017-2022 (NEDA 2017) has identified adopting and institutionalizing the social protection floor as a strategy to achieve universal social protection for building resilience of individuals, families and communities. Specific strategies include enhancing social protection for the informal sector, improving the pension system, strengthening mechanisms to ensure enrolment in the social security system, expanding health insurance packages, establishing an unemployment

insurance system, among others. Further, the PDP highlights the requirements to address implementation issues on planning, mainstreaming and harmonizing of social protection at the local level, including better M&E, collection and use of data (NEDA 2017).

While social protection is already in the priorities of the Department, the relevance of mainstreaming social protection and ensuring that social protection is shock-responsive has even been more recognized amid COVID-19. For the next two years, the LGUs must come up with their respective SP policies and programs that are responsive to the current pandemic, and to future health emergencies and natural disasters for the remaining three years. It should be noted however, that this is possible only with a clear guidance from the DSWD and relevant national policies.

- Enhancing Well-being and Empowering of Needy with Social Assistance, Case Management and Graduation Programs

  Data on the SWDI are clearly vital inputs to action plans in the DSWD FOs, but they have not been regularly collected, although at the moment of writing of this report, some activities on gathering SWDI data are being undertaken. While SWDI is a useful data-driven tool to assess the needs and to identify gaps and interventions, it needs to be complemented with other information obtained from qualitative assessments including feasibility studies, immersions, and consultations. Further, hitherto, clear policies and strategies have yet to be firmly in place regarding the graduation of *Pantawid* beneficiaries. Policies on exiting *Pantawid* currently cover only program exit, i.e., when the beneficiary household no longer meets the eligibility criteria as established by Pantawid. However, the pilot implementation of Kilos-Unlad under the *Pantawid* program, which aims for the graduation of beneficiaries after a 7-year program towards self-sufficiency, has the potential to provide evidence for what works (and what does not) on capacitating beneficiaries with mind-sets and skills that can facilitate a transition into productive activities so that the beneficiary families may have a better and sustainable future for themselves. Data on the SWDI, or from the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction could be also used to build evidence on what can help beneficiaries transition out of the program, but the lack of data interoperability in the Department has been a barrier to the development of policies.

- Increasing Resilience Mechanisms, including Labor Market Interventions, Safety Nets and Social Insurance for targeted underserved areas & disadvantaged sectors

  SWD should be seen not as a mechanistic operation but as a process which involves people and their modes of life. The country implements four core program social protection instruments, viz., (i) social insurance (including mandated occupational or personal pension plans; voluntary occupational or personal pension plans and supplementary non-contributory schemes); (ii) labor market interventions; (iii) social safety nets; and (iv) social welfare/assistance programs. These diverse instruments aim for building risk resilience, as well as promoting human capital, ensuring the rights of the needy segments of society, and improving equity. Resilience ensures that individuals, families, and communities can withstand crisis — whether effects of a natural disaster, a job loss or a food price shock — and bounce back with limited long-

term damage, and be better prepared for the next crisis. Strengthening risk resilience among undeserved areas and disadvantaged sectors ultimately builds the capacity of people and communities to move progressively and sustainably into improved living conditions. Resilience increasing measures should be adaptive to various risks :

(i)   individual and life-cycle risks (such as hunger, illness or injury, disability, pregnancy, childbirth, old age, or death);

(ii)   economic risks (such as unemployment, underemployment, sudden end of source of livelihood, price instability of basic commodities, economic crisis, lack of local opportunities, or weak agricultural production) ;

(iii)   environment and natural risks (such as drought, rains and floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruption, landslides, or storm surge) ;

(iv)   social and governance risks (such as shelter insecurity, corruption, crime, domestic violence, political instability, armed conflict, or social exclusion).

According to the country's Social Protection Plan 2020-2022 (DSWD and NEDA-SC-SP 2019), four program response planning groups (PRPG) are led by certain institutions on the various social protection instruments:

a.	Labor Market	- DOLE
b.	Social Assistance	- DSWD
c.	Social Insurance	- PhilHealth
d.	Social Safety Nets	- National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) and/or DILG

Active labor market programs are meant to assist disadvantaged groups find employment opportunities and/or develop sustainable livelihoods for improving their level of economic sufficiency. The DSWD's SLP targets poor, vulnerable and marginalized households and communities through two tracks of livelihood support: (i) the Microenterprise Development track, which provides microcredit services to the poorest residents of SLP beneficiary communities for establishing microenterprises and for providing business support to them; and (ii) the Employment Facilitation track, which facilitates the employment of program participants through job matchings and skills training courses (Ballesteros *et al.* 2017). The Department may need to re-examine whether it should be having policies regarding establishing partnerships, especially among LGUs, for implementing the SLP in GIDAs and other underserved areas.

Social insurance is meant to cushion the risks associated with poor health, disability, unemployment, work injury, and old age. One of the current policies on social insurance is health care for all Filipinos by way of the Universal Health Care law. Transitioning into universal health care should target and account for the immediate needs of the underserved. While all Filipinos are granted "immediate eligibility" and access to a full spectrum of health care which includes preventive, promotive, restorative, rehabilitative, and palliative care, some Filipinos, especially the poor, and those in GIDA, are given priority in access to basic health services. Another social

insurance policy that DSWD is chiefly undertaking is the implementation of the Social Pension (SocPen). The SocPen targets the provision of some financial assistance to indigent elderly who are not part of any pension systems (Reyes *et al.* 2019b; Reyes et al. 2018; and Velarde and Albert 2018).The Department should keep calling attention to finding data that will help identify the extent to which social insurance coverage is improving, particularly among the poor, and to make policy adjustments, as need be, including differentiated interventions for improving social insurance coverage of disadvantaged sectors of society.

A specific area that the country has focused on is managing disaster resilience with the development of legislative frameworks and/or regulatory provisions. The Philippine DRRM Act of 2010 provides a comprehensive, all-hazard, multi-sectoral, interagency, and community-based approach to DRRM. Although this law mandated the crafting and implementation of the National Disaster Risk Management Framework and the NDRRM Plan, institutional issues hamper the law's effective implementation (Domingo and Olaguera 2017).

The provision of early response and social safety nets during emergencies, such as natural disaster and the pandemic, is critical. Safety nets are temporary in nature; they play a vital role in helping people to meet their immediate needs, and protecting them against falling back into irreparable long-term harm in welfare. The impact of assistance and social safety nets to victims of emergencies can be dependent on the design and implementation of these interventions. The challenge for safety nets is to design these so that they are targeted to those in greatest need, and to do so cost-effectively and sustainably. The ability to make relief and emergency decisions and communicate them with haste to the involved parties is also important. The effectiveness of response and recovery is largely dependent on the mutual trust of individuals and institutions in the affected area.

Strengthening resilience also includes providing people and communities the means to support themselves and to restore their livelihoods. Unconditional cash transfers have proven especially helpful during super-typhoon Yolanda, with people using the cash support for buying food and for addressing some of their other needs such as medicines, housing repair, livelihood and education-related expenses (Reyes *et al.* 2018).

Current efforts are underway in the legislature for the establishment of a Department of Disaster Resilience. Since LGUs are first responders, policies are needed for assessing and enhancing the capacity of LGUs to handle disaster relief efforts and develop reinforced social safety nets in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which among other issues calls for strengthening a community's ability to reduce disaster risk at the local level. The Department will have to develop policies in the exercise of its rowing functions in risk management for disasters and other emergency events.

Among the legislations that the DSWD could prioritize are the passage of a comprehensive law strengthening the national response and preparedness for health emergencies and pandemics (similar to Senate Bill No. 1573 filed by the late Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago); and revisiting salient provisions of the NDRRM Act (RA

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10121) on increasing contingency budget for the management of health-related concerns.

B.2 Community and Rural Development

Another important component of people-centered and sustainable development is community and rural development with a focus on establishing a system to enhance people's organizations, facilitate community participation, increase the community's social capital and the effective use of local resources. SWD should entail both economic betterment as well as greater social transformation, especially in rural areas, where poverty is concentrated. Policy setting, planning, and decision-making on community and rural development should be made through a process of dialogue in which all those involved express their needs and views. This process requires more time and resources than a top-down approach. Increased participation of people from rural communities in the social policy planning process are envisaged for providing the rural people with better prospects for their general quality of life. Community development also needs increased tolerance, respect for diversity, non-violence, trust in society, and contribution to the community. This requires policies on investing in information campaigns and advocacy material to inform people of their rights, deal with all forms of discrimination, especially with social technology.

Further, government efforts cannot be merely top-down approaches, but adequately supplemented by direct and indirect involvement of people at the grass roots. Community-driven development (CDD) approaches and strategies enable barangays to: (a) participate in identifying, prioritizing, planning and budgeting community development interventions; (b) implement community projects; and (c) practice transparency and accountability in resource allocation and implementation of sub-projects by having project grants directly managed by community volunteers without passing through the local government units (ADB 2016). These strategies build and strengthen social capital by generating the appropriate environment and opportunities for people to collaborate in designing and implementing development programs and projects. The Department has implemented CDD through the *Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan* Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services - National Community Driven Development Program (KC-NCDDP). At present, Guidelines on the Implementation of Harmonized CDD Process in Specialized Programs is being initiated by KC-NCDDP. Its objectives are the following: (i) to standardize the social preparation process across all programs; (ii) ensure internal and external convergence, whenever relevant; and (iii) facilitate access of beneficiaries to other complementary social protection services.

- Enabling Basic Sectors, People's Organizations, Cooperatives, and Rural Institutions to be Effective Social Organizations

  The basic sectors, people's organizations, cooperative and rural institutions are key to effective and sustained rural development. Enabling basic sectors, people's organizations, cooperatives, and rural institutions to be effective social organizations alleviates the vulnerability of impoverished groups and can enhance the impact of interventions. Through community organization, impoverished people and communities can be empowered as active beneficiaries of development. The basic sectors, people's organizations, cooperatives, and rural institutions are also preferable partners of development organizations from the perspective of efficiency, compared to assistance of individuals. CDD may be able to rehabilitate roads where individuals

cannot. However, the success of CDD depends on effective leaders, organized communities and cultural factors (ADB 2016).

- Supporting People's Participation in Planning, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

  The promotion of the development of human and physical resources in rural areas requires recognizing the fact that local people themselves are the main beneficiaries of policies and projects, and participatory approaches can be effective to the extent that they provide a means of incorporating local realities into the intervention (ADB 2004).

  Community organization is of great consequence to rural development. For example, when a water system or an irrigation system is constructed, it is often managed by the community because it is difficult to dig wells for each household. Cooperatives for product distribution, material purchases, or community organizations for schools, health facilities, and preservation of the natural environment are likewise important. People's organizations are necessary when individuals or LGUs with limited budgets are involved in forestry conservation or riverbank protection works. Policies are required to facilitate ownership among community organizations that ensuring that the voices and needs of local people are heard and taken into account in SWD processes.

Theme 3: Developing Sustained Institutional Capacity for Effecting SWD

Effecting SWD entails address root causes of inequalities, as well as reforming intergovernmental relations through capacity building, focusing on weakest localities and regions. As earlier pointed out, decentralization is a factor for deepening and widening community and rural development. Although the Local Government Code has devolved many powers to LGUs, there continue to be SWD services that are shared by national and local governments. Further, there are cases where LGUs lack policy-making and planning capabilities, or human resources. Social protection measures have both a restorative function (i.e., directing support towards those who are already vulnerable) and a preventive function (*viz.*, strengthening risk-reducing mechanisms that help prevent households from falling into that trap to begin with). Appropriate policies are required in social protection and rural development activities, including capacity development of both the national government and LGUs.

C1. Technical Assistance and Resource Augmentation (TARA) for LGUs

The Department has been providing Technical Assistance and Resource Augmentation (TARA) for LGUs to enable them perform the tasks associated with the achievement of SWD. While the Local Government Code provided a mechanism for decentralization, but development gaps have persisted, and in some cases even widened between high- and low-performing LGUs (Diokno-Sicat *et al.*, 2020). This highlights the need for special, multi-faceted capacity building policies for the LGUs, especially in the rural sector, as well as a steering role for DSWD in establishing a more supportive framework for effective decentralization of SWD services. This could also include policies on the Department's provision of technical assistance to the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), at least

in the area of standard setting, and sharing of good practices in policy research. Moreover, there is a need to harmonize efforts of the Department on TARA provision. The Department should direct its TARA interventions to priority needs of LGUs through the LSWDOs based on the result of the assessment and aligning to the Philippine Development Plan. In the wake of COVID-19, the Department also needs to provide TARA to LGUs on the formulation of response/recovery policies, plans and actions (RECHARGE PH).

- Collaboratively assessing Situations, Needs and Capacities of LGUs

  The substantive requirements for effective SWD, particularly social protection and rural development, are predicated on strong institutions and good governance. The low coverage of social services and the lack of outcomes on rural development in the country is often related not only to low resource availability, but to poor administrative capacity. As effective policies and practices require the incorporation of local views, community participation, and utilization of existing local resources, the management capabilities of local chief executives must be improved, aside from officers in charge of local development planning, as well as members of LGU councils.

  Additionally, there is a need to revisit and update the LSWDO Service Delivery Capacity and Competency Assessment (SDCCA) guide, and include indicators on LGU's resilience on delivering its SWD Programs and Services amidst different risks, shocks, and political crises.

- Conducting TARA interventions

  Future demands placed upon LSWDOs will be much higher given the volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA) environment; they will have more challenging duties placed on them by local chief executives, and higher levels of accountability will be demanded of LSWDOs from SWD clients. Results of assessments are supposed to have a corresponding TARA strategy for improving functionality of LSWDOs. Further, FOs should be regularly conducting program reviews of TARA strategies. As per AO No. 44, s. 2002, AO No. 26, s. 2004, AO No. 1, s. 2005, MC No. 10, s. 2018, technical assistance to LGUs, FOs and other instrumentalities is in the form of training activities, orientation, consultation meetings, demonstration sessions, workshops, fora, conferences, informal capacity building activities (such as coaching and mentoring), and even conduct of surveys and studies. On the other hand, resource augmentation involves the provision of manpower, funding and supplies. Specific policies on deployment of DSWD Personnel including MOA workers to LGUs have largely been focused on disaster response and related-functions. Policies could be developed on staff deployment for addressing human resource gaps in GIDAs, IP communities and other national priority areas for poverty reduction. Policies on technical assistance and knowledge diffusion could also be enhanced, e.g., with use of e-learning modalities that can promote the reuse, remixing TARA can also be provided to LGUs in the area of local poverty reduction plans and strategies, especially in the wake of the new normal.of knowledge resources and information capital, aside from developing standards for implementing multi-modal approaches on providing learning and development interventions for LSWDOs. The

Department can provide LSWDOs various opportunities to avail the learning and development interventions (LDI), including online, blended or distance learning. The Service Delivery Capacity and Competency Assessment (SDCCA) and the TARA Plans of the FO have prioritized case management under program management. One support they have been requesting from the Department is in the implementation of the Magna Carta Law for Public Social Workers. So in terms of policy, the Department needs to develop policies or guidelines that will further support them on this.

- Strengthening the SWD Learning Network

As early as one and a half decades ago, the Department recognized the importance of using learning networks as a means of building capabilities of intermediaries to ensure quality service delivery. By virtue of AO No. 20, s. 2005, the Department established the SWD Learning Network (SWD L-Net) as part of a strategy for shifting the DSWD mandate from rowing to steering functions, and for developing partnerships at locale level on knowledge sharing. The SWD L-Net can improve access to, and exchange of, information and expertise in SWD, and can help network members to maximize their impact on SWD through synergies that come from knowledge sharing and greater cooperation. Networks can, however, be dysfunctional. Problems faced by networks include disparate membership, lack of resources and the difficulty of monitoring and evaluating impact of activities.

To date, there exists MC 21, s. 2020 titled "Guidelines on the establishment and Management of the Social Welfare and Development Learning Network at the Central and Field Offices" which has a provision on assessing five areas of functionalities namely: Network Building and Formation, information and expertise exchange, KEC/RLRC partnership, capability services augmentation, capability building standards/ quality assurance and research and development. A separate policy on partnership framework that will serve as a guide in forging meaningful partnership agreements with LGUs and Local Service Providers (LSPs) could be issued to support the said MC.

C2. Standard Setting for SWD agencies (SWDAs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

The provision of SWD services is a formidable task that needs constant capability building for maximum policy effectiveness, especially given the increasing demands amidst the VUCA world. As reflected in EO No. 15, s. 1998 on "Redirecting the Functions and Operations of the DSWD", the Department is mandated to conduct SWD policies and program development, TARA to LGUs, and standard setting for SWD agencies (SWDAs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). The regulatory function of DSWD is meant to ensure the promotion and protection of the rights of individuals, groups, families and communities as SWD clients when they are provided services by SWDAs. SWDAs give direct service to individuals or groups in a community through such methods as social case work and social group work; they may also provide SWD services to communities through community organization. SWD services maybe targeted for particular clientele, e.g. day-care, marriage counselling, VAWC assistance, counselling for drug dependents.
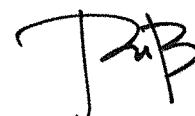
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- Improving regulatory quality and coherence

  Understanding the relationships of SWDAs and their clients is a core task for policy makers. While SWDAs should be regulated, there ought to be policies meant regarding regulatory reform. One focus of policy is on improving on ensuring the quality of regulation through more effective alignment of regulatory means to achieve SWD policy goals. Policy issues requiring quality improvement should be identified and implemented at regular time frames. Policies on quality improvement activities should be developed and reviewed. It can be helpful also to develop policies on regulatory oversight as well as on the conduct of process evaluations by third party assessors for examining DSWD's regulatory function, particularly its exercise of regulatory quality and coherence, as a means of organizational learning. It is also important to recognize that incentives drive quality services, thus policies need to be developed to provide recognition to exceptionally performing SWDAs.

C3. Professional Learning & Development for DSWD Personnel including MOA workers

The Department should work systematically in caring for its carers by keeping to heart the Latin maxim *"Nemo dat quod non habet"* (i.e., "no one can give what they do not have"). The DSWD needs a learning and development strategy for each of its staff and management, as their strengths and weaknesses reflect upon the institution. DSWD workers are working as agents of social change; their work is critically important today and for the nation's future. Individuals and units within DSWD should constantly be provided with professional learning and development activities. These can help them gain technical and soft skills to mobilize personal and environmental resources, as well as to influence social and physical environmental forces to be responsive to needs of people and communities. In using a life cycle model of DSWD clients (from infancy and childhood, to youth, to working age, to ageing), the management and staff of the Department can holistically assess clients for life stressors, as well as how the clients' respective environments are helping or obstructing in alleviating the stress and using resilient adaptive practices. SWD interventions may then subsequently involve working with the clients to change the ways in which they view themselves and the world, intervening in the environment to improve relationships and interactions, and/or intervening in the environment to remove or minimize obstructive resources, or mobilize the environment to create new resources. Preferably, the Department should be having internal policies pertinent to career pathing of each staff, as well as succession planning and management.

- Intensifying Technical Skills on Social Work, Public Policy and Data Analytics

  Actions of DSWD management and staff should be well-though through. Owing to their diverse educational background and previous work, management and staff may have gaps in technical skills, particularly either in Social Work, Public Policy and Data Analytics, that are cornerstones for SWD work. As regards leadership, empirical research (see e.g, Artz *et al*. 2015; Goodall 2016) suggests that what makes leaders successful in a management role is not only soft skills but also their technical competence. While the Department provides mechanisms for training of staff as well as seminars for senior and junior managers, policies have not been in place regarding the development of assessment tools, nor on the specific annual training hours

required for tooling and re-tooling. Neither are there policies and practices on the use of e-learning modalities for staff learning.

- Improving Soft Skills for Active Listening and Communication, Critical Thinking, as well as Organization, Negotiations and Partnership-Building

Work at DSWD requires a diverse range of technical as well as soft skills. While many social workers have a natural aptitude for soft skills, it is crucial for management and staff to continuous improve on these skills especially, now that becoming a life-long learner is a requirement of professional SWD workers. A few qualities and skills required to be a social worker include active listening and communication, critical thinking as well as organization, negotiations and partnership-building. By developing active listening and communication skills, DSWD management and staff can be better at collaborating on policies, programs and projects, as well as on sharing knowledge effectively, and negotiating with peers, clients or other SWD stakeholders.

- Caring for Carers and Monitoring Career Paths

The most important resources of any organization are its human resources. Thus, the Department must be providing its staff opportunities for career development pathways. The lack of human resource development strategies can have negative effects on employee motivation and engagement. The Department should ensure a conducive, healthy working environment, making full use of its pool human resources who want to make a positive difference in the lives of others. The DSWD should be examining its current policies on human resources, from recruitment, to staff engagement and retention, to staff development, to succession planning, to preserving institutional memory. While training activities of staff and management on technical and soft skills are crucial, they are not the only mechanism for human resource development. The Department should have in place policies for actively monitoring career paths of staff and management, and strategies on caring for its carers, including wellness strategies given the pressures that the Department constantly face. Further, the Department should also work toward policies on succession planning and management as well as on managing staff turnover, particularly developing transition processes whenever an employee resigns or retires from the service.

The declaration of State of Public Health Emergency, which has placed Luzon and some areas in Visayas and Mindanao under lockdown, paved way to new working arrangements that would not have been explored under normal circumstances. The DSWD for one imposed a work-from-home arrangement to its offices whose functions can be accomplished remotely, thus avoiding risk exposure to employees. It has also been covering the cost of services of contractual and MOA personnel since the imposition of the ECQ without requiring physical attendance to work, and providing shuttle services and subsidized meals to personnel physically reporting to the office. These are some key areas that could be considered and further studied by the Department with or without the pandemic since they could revolutionize the government functioning and at the same time ensure the wellness of personnel.

Theme 4: Enhancing governance by harnessing whole-of-government and partnerships

Whole-of-government involves the alignment of a common client-centric vision in the public sector and public services with objectives, outcomes, information and process flows (Christensen, and Lægreid, 2007). In different government organizations, key factors involved in the drive to execute whole-of-government include

- building visible leadership at a strategic level,
- setting common goals (service standards) supported by integrated objectives, outcomes, information and process flows,
- focusing on the front end (where services are actually delivered),
- breaking down intra-agency silos as well as interagency silos thru greater cross-governmental collaboration, project-based task management, as well as internal and external knowledge sharing
- putting in place an enabling policy and legal framework.

Thus a whole-of-government approach is aimed to build connected government, i.e. joining up various agencies to provide services which are aligned to offering consolidated service delivery and thus ultimately, improve development effectiveness, making intended outcomes more impactful.

The DSWD has instituted coordination mechanisms through its framework on "convergence", i.e., "pooling of expertise and resources, and systematically channeling efforts in pursuit of a commonly agreed goal or objective; a common understanding of [the] what and how of a program, a common commitment and institutional support, and a common resolve for joint action" (Albert and Dacuycuy 2017). However, convergence has been limited to the Department's three major social protection programs: (a) *Pantawid*; (b) Kapit-bisig Laban sa Kahirapan Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services National Community-Driven Development Project (KALAHI-CIDSS NCDDP), and the (c) Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP).

Another principle underlying governance reform at DSWD is refocusing on steering over rowing functions. The Department is recognizing a need to shift the overall policy directions in which SWD is to proceed (the overall legal framework and guiding strategy): let LGUs, and other public and private institutions, as well as market forces provide the services, but under the direction (and regulatory control in the case of SWDAs) from the Department. Further, communities, including LGUs, must be empowered rather than simply deliver services. SWDs partners of the Department should be mission-driven rather than rule-driven; they should be making plans based on the outcomes desired. The Department and its partners in SWD should meet the needs of sectors and clients, and help government come up with policies on investing in the prevention of social problems rather than their cure. The DSWD should be solving social problems by harnessing whole-of-government and partnerships with NGAs, LGUs, and SWDAs rather than assuming that the establishment of DSWD public programs to be the only feasible solution for social problems.

D1. Research and Data

SWD is ultimately about putting people first in development processes, promoting social inclusion of the poor and vulnerable. This process, however, is not simple and requires public

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interventions and investments. Research as well as M&E activities, including the collection of data, should play a critical role in DSWD operational and strategic policy decisions. In recent years, the volume of data collected within the Department has increased dramatically, especially with the advent of activities on *Listahanan*, the SWDI, and various administrative data systems for a growing number of DSWD programs. Further data from the Department's administrative systems should be triangulated with information obtained from surveys and other data sources. The Department should apply insights from research and data to policy, with the aim of ultimately enhancing the wellbeing of people and their families, and communities.

- Conducting Relevant Policy Studies

  As per MC No. 9, s. 2019, the Department is updating its research and evaluation agenda to make it responsive to the emerging concerns of the SWD sector, framed along DSWD Strategic Plan 2018-2022. The growing recognition that the Department needs to work with its partners to deliver effective SWD policies has led to a discussion of the role of DSWD vis a vis other SWD actors, particularly NGAs, LGUs, SWDAs, communities and families in the policy landscape. The identified research priorities, however, may need reexamination in the wake of the policy agenda thrusts identified; further, they will need validation particularly from major stakeholders of the Department (identified through a stakeholder analysis in the same section in Annex A).

- Integrating Data Systems within DSWD and Exploring Wealth of Data, including Innovative Data Sources

  Improving governance for SWD policy involves considering data as a strategic asset. The whole of government approach in setting SWD policy should be a mechanism for the sharing of data, information capital and expertise. Successful M&E of SWD programs and services are not possible without good quality data and statistics, regardless of how clearly the policy questions of interest are delineated. Data are useful for policy analysis, for general scoping and diagnosis of conditions and needs, and for general M&E of progress. There is often, however, a gap between what is desirable for policy questions because of the availability and quality of data, and, in practice, data will be a mix of quantitative and qualitative information. Inadequate data is always a problem in planning for SWD. In the case of local development planning, data needed may be available but not in a form suitable for use at the local level because the data has been collected for national planning purposes. In the case of social planning, qualitative data may be available, but analysis is constrained since definitive conclusions from such data cannot be drawn.

- Utilizing M&E Reports and Research Findings

  Findings from research and M&E reports should propel the DSWD to improve processes for fulfilling its overall mission on SWD and for achieving its vision of a country free from hunger and poverty, having equal access to opportunities, enabled by a fair, just, and peaceful society. M&E and research reports should be providing practical lessons to be learned and actionable matters within and across programs.

They should feed into strategic and operational planning giving inputs about current practices and the need for changes in policies and processes. These also contribute to institutional memory and knowledge, especially given staff turnovers experienced at the Department. Communication of results is essential: no matter how good the evidence and analysis obtained in M&E and research reports, they will not inform and influence if they are not well written, presented, and communicated.

D2. Technology

The term technology broadly connotes materials, tools and equipment, knowledge and skills, as well as organization and products. The diffusion of technology is not automatic: technologies must be promoted and their users must have the necessary resources to obtain them, and the skills to utilize them. Technology is also constantly in flux, it can be used for good, but results of technology use are not always positive. The internet, the huge growth in mobile telephone use and the wide use of social media have greatly facilitated connectivity in communications, but they also have created a digital divide.

Information and communication technologies, in particular, can now be deployed to improve the efficacy of SWD programs and services, accelerate the pace of social discovery, and transform social work to respond in faster ways that ensure technology is ethically used to reduce social inequalities existing today. Social workers can now use social technologies, i.e., online resources to communicate with clients, to track their information and needs, and to research information and issues. Online support groups could be created for at-risk groups and remote communities, assuming that these subpopulations have access to cyberspace.

- Developing Systems for Improving Administrative and Support Processes

   An important factor for successful implementation of SWD programs and services is the Department's administrative and support systems, including management information systems (MIS), legal, procurement, project management and the like. Competence of management capabilities is closely linked to the concept of administrative capacity. Better organizational management of administrative and support systems promotes efficiency. Administrative and support processes are structured to assist policy makers, program managers and service providers within the Department in creating, sharing, and using knowledge. MIS support not only program supervision, M&E but also the transparency of the program through dissemination of knowledge in various formats and for different audiences. Periodic reports from MIS, legal, procurement and other administrative support systems help reduce fraud, error, and corruption by ensuring that eligibility rules are met, particularly through automatic crosschecks of the information provided by beneficiaries.

   Policies are needed to constantly improve administrative and support systems for reinforcing the strategic and operational priorities of the Department. Support processes and systems should be regularly evaluated, and updated as these are crucial to support storage and cataloguing of documents, work planning and programming and various knowledge tools, including research studies and M&E, that in turn, improve overall governance within the Department. Viewing governance as the set of incentives and accountability relationships implies that, efforts to improve governance fall into three broad areas: first, the rules of the game which define the

context for accountability relationships; second, the roles and responsibilities of SWD actors involved; and third, the controls and accountability processes and mechanisms which enforce accountability. All these areas require corresponding policies for regular improvements in administrative and support processes.

- Making Technology Work for Decision Makers

    Technology also offers immense possibilities for the reduction of administrative burdens as it improves knowledge management, dissemination and transactions. The capacity to deal with and analyze enormous volumes of data even from administrative processes such as procurement can improve responsiveness of the Department to external demands. The use of social technologies can multiply information dissemination exponentially. The electronic exchange of data within the Department (instead of the traditional paperwork transactions) can a powerful tool for leaders to make quick decisions. The Department should be having policies toward digitizing administrative systems. The use of emerging technologies should be accompanied by a parallel review and reengineering of existing administrative processes and systems to avoid wastes and inefficiencies resulting from the automation of support processes. Innovative uses of technology also provide powerful tools to enhance accountability and transform the way public services are delivered to citizens.

    Innovative uses of technology also provide powerful tools to enhance accountability and transform the way public services are delivered to citizens. Technology can empower citizens to communicate directly with government and service providers. The value of these modern avenues for registering grievances is that they can establish accessible, alternative channels to the standard means by which people complain.

D3. Resources

Resources are of paramount importance for the Department to ensure that SWD services are impacting upon the lives of the Filipino citizenry, but competing development issues also place increasing demands on limited public resources. Although the Department is expected to ensure that delivery of SWD services are enhanced, yet it should also exercise financial prudence and leverage the available resources as it does so. Thus, careful management of funding resources are required. The DSWD will also need to leverage partnerships for mobilizing sufficient funding resources, as well as technical, technological and other resources, for emerging needs.

- Utilizing All Resources Effectively and Efficiently

    In SWD, resources need to be utilized effectively and efficiently (Moore 1995). Leaders should take decisive action when resources are not being used well; they should also be actively making use of social capital for resource acquisition. Leadership successions at the DSWD have undoubtedly had an effect on SWD policy development, and implementation, and on resource use. Institutional arrangements for financing, organizing and delivery of SWD services are typically a reflection of

ideologies and management priorities. In the past three and a half years, the Department has been led by four persons, two in an acting capacity; each of these leaders have had different thrusts and management styles. In the last administration, SWD policies and programs have been more focused around targeted interventions, but at the onset of the current administration, policies and programs have shifted toward the use of more universal, rights-based approaches. With the advent of a new administration in 2022, there will be another turnover of leadership, who will have to learn on the job. Policies and strategies must be developed to mobilize the support of external resource providers (i.e. budget managers and the legislature) around the criterion of service effectiveness. Leaders should also be managing resources to meet current and future demands as well as changing expectations, both from within the Department and at a wider policy level.

- Developing Partnerships for Societal Change

Social protection and rural development should involve multisectoral partnerships, enabling organizations in the public and private sector to share ideas, work coherently, and deliver interventions more effectively. A whole-of-government approach to SWD involves considering and including various government actors, and multilevel governance perspectives (the relation between national, sub-national levels of government). Institutional linkages, networking, coordination and accountability are the main elements of identifying common priorities and of working on outcomes for better governance. The whole-of-government approach is necessary to ensure coherence of public policies and maximize development effectiveness of interventions.

VIII.   Implementation Instruments

In recent years, SWD services have been expanding in the country; concomitantly, SWD policies have been generally viewed in terms of social services. In the Policy Agenda for 2020-2025, the SWD policies are being re-oriented toward social goals of enhancing opportunities for all, strengthening resilience for the vulnerable, and improving equity for the poor. The Department's Policy Development and Planning Bureau (PDPB) should develop a communication plan (for DSWD staff and the Department's major stakeholders), preferably summarizing the Agenda in a one-pager and infographics, as well as make use of implementation instruments for the Policy Agenda. The primary instrument for the Agenda are the Department's research and evaluation studies. In consequence, the priority topics in the Research and Evaluation Agenda, though officially approved, will need some reexamination in the wake of how they fit into the four Policy Agenda thrusts, on (i) Advancing Social Equity and Social Justice; (ii) Promoting People-Centered Sustainable Development; (iii) Developing Sustained Institutional Capacity for Effecting SWD; and, (iv) Enhancing governance by harnessing whole-of-government and partnerships. While some policies may not need new research, but a mapping of what has been done in the past five years and the intended research/evaluation studies, vis-à-vis the Policy Agenda will be helpful to the Department.

Another implementing instrument for the Agenda are policy notes. For several years, the PDPB has already been producing policy notes but for its internal use. Existing SWD policies in place (as documented in laws, or the MCs and AOs of the Department) are described and/or

evaluated in these policy notes. The policy notes use a number of approaches: (a) informal evaluations, such as case studies, anecdotes and stories; (b) results of formal research and M&E reports in the Department that can provide empirical evidence on the effectiveness of current policies. The quality of these policy notes could, however, be enhanced given the wealth of knowledge materials developed in the past five years (and beyond) from research and evaluation studies in the Department, as well as policy research studies conducted by individual researchers, think tanks and the development community. It would be important for the policy notes to be crisp (i.e., having a length not more than four pages) and yet insightful. Faulty SWD policies can be a result of an insufficient understanding of the situation, deficient knowledge of the implementation context, unclear, or even contradictory goals, poor quality evidence, and/or an absence of political support for a policy. Improving the PDPB policy notes should involve retooling activities for PDPB staff on policy analysis and on data analytics. This way, PDPB staff can learn how to make full use of both quantitative and qualitative data for situational analysis of issues even for those where policies are currently not in place.

The PDPB could target a tri-monthly release of at least one policy note starting middle of 2020. Initially the policy notes could be written by PDPB staff, either with the assistance of other DSWD staff, or guided by external expert advisers. Past policy notes still undergo consultations with OBS and FOs before being released, which stretches the process. These consultative processes should be continued, but with definitive targets for comments on draft policy notes. The Department could also get into partnerships with training and research institutes especially in government through a memorandum of agreement for them to supply experts as external advisers for these policy notes. The Department can also make use of the advice of some members of the DSWD Multisectoral Governance Council, or former officials of the Department in the identification of specific policy gaps and areas to be examined in the Policy Agenda.

The PDPB should prepare to disseminate the policy notes to senior and junior managers in the Department, at least in the period 2020 to 2022, and then work to have them published with peer-refereeing processes starting 2023, or earlier, if possible. Once the policy notes are made public, their dissemination should involve a communication plan, e.g. use of infographics and social media, and dissemination mechanisms to major SWD policy stakeholders.

From 2020 to 2025, the PDPB should be identifying at least a dozen specific policy concerns/issues annually that could focus on concerns across the four policy thrusts. These concerns could be specific to or cut-across vulnerable sectors, such as the (a) poor, (b) homeless, (c) youth, (d) elderly (e) women, (f) differently-abled, (g) individuals in crisis situations and victims of challenging circumstances (the drug war, insurgencies, natural disasters, epidemics and emergencies, mental illness, violence), (h) rural sector / GIDA areas, (i) IPs, and other marginalized/disadvantaged groups in the country. These concerns could be updated quarterly to be responsive to the evolving policy environment. For the identification of policy issues under each theme, the PDPB could rank according to importance per year with a set of criteria to be determined. The identified policy issues shall then be presented to OBSUs and FOs for consultation.

The Department will also need to translate its knowledge capital for more extensive advocacy/lobbying of pertinent laws on SWD, including revisions of past laws that have implementation deficits and those that run contrary to social equity and social justice. Advocacy activities should be strengthened through stakeholder analysis that identifies the various SWD actors and their respective roles in the SWD landscape.

The three main implementation instruments of the Policy Agenda, i.e. research and evaluation studies, as well as the policy notes series, and advocacy/lobbying activities should include a resource framework with explicit estimates of budgets and a resource mobilization strategy. This will ensure that needed resources (including for costs pertaining to policy advisers, capacity building and communication activities) are available across the period 2020-2025. After the first year of implementation, capacity building activities and incentives could be extended to DSWD FO staff for them to co-author policy notes with PDPB staff. This can help ensure that resulting SWD policy reforms are relevant, and that the country can work to ensure that as the country moves along its social development path, no Filipino is left behind.

IX. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

The **Policy Development & Planning Bureau (PDPB)** shall take the lead role in the implementation of these Agenda and carry out the following tasks:

1. Develop a communication plan, with the assistance of the Social Marketing Service, as well as make use of implementation instruments for the Policy Agenda;
2. Ensure the approval and issuance of the DSWD Policy Agenda;
3. Identify and monitor policy issues and guarantee that corresponding policy papers are written and shared with concerned bodies;
4. Make certain that policy papers e.g. guidelines, position papers, policy notes, etc. and programs are anchored on the Policy Agenda;
5. Advocate the importance of the Policy Agenda in crafting DSWD policy papers and programs;
6. Translate the Department's wealth of knowledge capital for use in more extensive advocacy/lobbying of pertinent laws on SWD, including revisions of past laws that have implementation deficits and those that run contrary to social equity and social justice;
7. Engage with training and research institutes especially in government for the conduct of studies, and to supply experts as external advisers for policy notes; and
8. Conduct capacity building activities to enhance the skills of DSWD personnel including MOA workers with regard to policy development.

Social Marketing Service (SMS) shall help in the dissemination of the Policy Agenda and assist the PDPB in the development of appropriate communication materials.

Social Welfare Institutional Development Bureau (SWIDB) shall assist the PDPB in the conduct of capacity building activities related to the dissemination of the Policy Agenda.

Insofar as it is the responsibilities of the above mentioned OBSUs to disseminate and monitor the Policy Agenda, operationalization of its contents requires all offices in the Central and Field Offices, as bounded by their respective mandates.

X. EFFECTIVITY

The Administrative Order shall take effect immediately upon issuance and shall supersede previous circulars inconsistent herewith.

Issued in Quezon City, this _5th_ day of _February_ 2021.

ROLANDO JOSELITO D. BAUTISTA
Secretary

Proposed DSWD POLICY AGENDA:

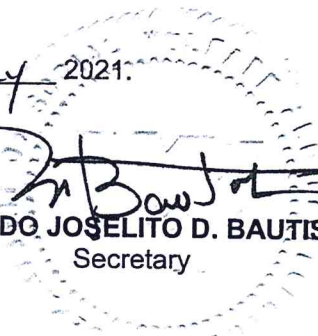## *"Investing in people for reshaping Philippine society into a more inclusive, empowered and humane community"*

Executive Summary

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has formulated a Policy Agenda for the period 2020 to 2025 to address cross-sectoral social welfare and development (SWD) concerns in the country. The blueprint draws from an examination of the wealth of data describing prevailing and emerging social conditions, international commitments to SWD, as well as mechanisms for effective social policy formulation and implementation. The Policy Agenda accounts for the requirements of policymakers, clients and other SWD stakeholders, the changing governance structures, as well as the organizational competencies of the Department. The DSWD Policy Agenda can provide a means and an opportunity for the Department to review the last social reform agenda, the achievements in the social sector, and the emerging conditions. It can help the DSWD to work on identifying its core responsibilities, prioritizing what needs to be addressed, improving its human resources and processes for SWD service delivery, and strengthening partnerships for attaining current and future social services required by Filipinos. The Agenda is "envisioned to guide the Department in operationalizing its mandate and mission in line with the formulation of policies that will address the needs and emerging issues of various vulnerable and marginalized sectors. This emphasizes the contribution of DSWD in the whole-of-government approach as the lead agency in the development of SWD policies" (DSWD AO No. 10, s. 2018).

Developed out of a participative process of consultations with SWD stakeholders and a scrutiny of the social context described in data and statistics, and in various policy studies, the Policy Agenda covers an array of prevailing and emerging issues that need to be thoroughly addressed by DSWD as well as its SWD partners in both the public and private sectors. Since human and financial resources at DSWD are limited to adequately cover all SWD issues, the Department should be more strategic by developing and maintaining effective partnerships, overcoming siloes and rigid structures across institutions, working together using existing resources with a common, holistic, and coherent perspective of and solution for key challenges confronting the country's social sector in the next six years. The Policy Agenda espouses that the Department redefine itself in advancing SWD by focusing more on its steering rather than rowing functions, on account of the changing SWD landscape, especially the government bureaucracy, spurred by recent legislative, executive, and judicial actions. The Agenda covers four themes, viz.,
  i.   Advancing Social Equity and Social Justice
  ii. Promoting People-Centered Sustainable Development
  iii. Developing Sustained Institutional Capacity for Effecting SWD
  iv. Enhancing governance by harnessing whole-of-government and partnerships
with major elements under each of the themes. The elements and sub-elements across the four themes are meant to guide the process of implementation of the Policy Agenda, but are by no means exhaustive. Implementation instruments for the Agenda include the conduct of research and evaluation studies, the regular release of policy notes by the Department's PDPB, as well as the conduct of advocacy/lobbying campaigns for relevant laws, and reviews of past laws. These instruments will need requisite resources for the Policy Agenda to be effectively executed in the period 2020 to 2025.

1. Introduction

The main objective in crafting the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Policy Agenda for the period 2020 to 2025 is to enable the Department to prioritize issues affecting the social welfare and development (SWD) conditions in the country. SWD policies[1] are instruments of government to influence social relations and regulate social structures and

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[1] According to Anderson (1974), A policy is "relatively stable, purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern", while public policies are any actions taken by government that involves decisions, laws, regulations put forth by governmental bodies and officials.

institutions with universal social services (cognizant of social rights of everyone), as well as with redistributive benefits to vulnerable populations (NEDA 2017; NAPC 2017). According to the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), "Social policy is about bringing people into the centre of policy-making, not by providing residual welfare, but by mainstreaming their needs and voice across sectors, generating stability and social cohesion" (UNDESA 2007). Reviews of existing SWD policies and formulating new policies in the country present opportunities for the nature, scope, and coverage of social welfare and protection services to protect people, their families, and communities and consequently help everyone lead a fulfilling life. In particular, policy interventions can be more responsive and work on addressing the needs of all Filipinos, but most especially those in dire need, i.e., the poorest of the poor, the underserved and often neglected groups in Filipino society.

The Department's Administrative Order (AO) No. 13, s. 2015 defines the DSWD Policy Agenda as "a document that outlines the priority SWD issues and concerns that need appropriate policy responses from DSWD". Further, AO No. 10, s. 2018 states that

> "the policy agenda is envisioned to guide the Department in operationalizing its mandate and mission in line with the formulation of policies that will address the needs and emerging issues of various vulnerable and marginalized sectors. This emphasizes the contribution of DSWD in the whole-of-government approach as the lead agency in the development of SWD policies."

Consequently, the (proposed) Policy Agenda provides a structured blueprint for addressing cross-sectoral social issues that considers prevailing social issues surrounding the affairs of the country, international commitments to SWD, as well as mechanisms for effective social policy formulation and implementation.

The DSWD Policy Agenda can inform, advance and focus social work practices with the ultimate goal of promoting SWD. Having this Policy Agenda in place will allow the Department to strengthen the quality of social policies especially as the country seeks to build inclusive, empowered, and resilient communities. The Agenda takes account not only of requirements of policymakers, clients and other SWD stakeholders, but also of its organizational competencies, the scope and extent of responsibilities of units in the Department in attaining results. The Policy Agenda can help the DSWD to work on identifying its core responsibilities, prioritizing what needs to be addressed, improving its human resources and processes for SWD service delivery, and strengthening partnerships for attaining current and future social services required by Filipinos.

In line with its mandate to protect the social welfare of Filipinos and to promote social development in the country, the DSWD has championed public actions on the promotion and protection of the rights of everyone, especially the socially or economically disadvantaged. Promotive and protective efforts on social justice and equality are principally focused on the poor, vulnerable and marginalized to enhance opportunities for all, strengthen resilience for the vulnerable, and improve equity for the poor. Various barriers and bottlenecks often prevent these socially and economically disadvantaged groups from participating in development processes on equal footing with the rest of the population, and even from attaining and exercising their basic rights. The Department also formulates and coordinates policies that provide direction to itself, its attached agencies, partners and intermediaries in implementing and delivering SWD services to different sectors and clients.

With the enactment in 1991 of Republic Act (RA) 7160, also known as the Local Government Code, local government units (LGUs) have been empowered to deliver basic social protection and social welfare services. LGUs have shared this responsibility with the Department. In advancing SWD in the country, the Department has exercised both a steering role, i.e., working closely with LGUs to lead, stir and enable them to fulfill their mandates on local service

delivery, as well as a rowing function, i.e., implementing some statutory and specialized programs which are directly lodged with DSWD and/or not yet devolved to the LGUs. The rowing role is meant as a mechanism to strengthen the SWD system for improving well-being of individuals, households and communities in the country.

The proposed Policy Agenda 2020-2025 has been crafted by the Department based on a scrutiny of social problems in the country. Developed out of a participative process of consultations with SWD stakeholders and a scrutiny of the social context described in various policy studies, the Policy Agenda covers an array of prevailing and emerging issues that need to be thoroughly addressed by DSWD as well as its SWD partners in both the public and private sectors. The Agenda is a guide for more focused and impactful social policies and practices. These SWD policies cover the wide array of work at the Department:

  (i) learning activities from research, monitoring and evaluation (M&E);
  (ii) capacity development of units within DSWD and the Department's institutional partners, and
  (iii) SWD service delivery.

Since human and financial resources at DSWD are limited to adequately cover all SWD issues, the Department can be more strategic by developing and maintaining effective partnerships, overcoming siloes and rigid structures across institutions, working together using existing resources with a common, holistic, and coherent perspective of and solution for key challenges confronting the country's social sector in the next six years.

Although the Department initially conceptualized the Policy Agenda to be implemented for merely a three year period, i.e., 2019-2022, given that the country has articulated its long term aspirations in *Ambisyon* 2040 (NEDA 2016), as well as affirmed international commitments to SWD, the Department has opted to formulate a Policy Agenda for the six year period 2020-2025.

The title of the DSWD Policy Agenda, "Investing in people for reshaping Philippine society to a more inclusive, empowered and humane community," signals SWD stakeholders, including the Department's staff, attached and supervised agencies, for SWD to be transformative in the wake of existing and emerging opportunities and constraints in the entire SWD landscape. The Policy Agenda is at sync with the Department's **vision** of

> *"all Filipinos free from hunger and poverty, having equal access to opportunities, enabled by a fair, just, and peaceful society"*

and its **mission**

> *"to lead in the formulation, implementation and coordination of social welfare and development policies and programs for and with the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged".*

In defining and discussing the Policy Agenda for 2020 to 2025, this report firstly describes in Section 2 the social conditions in the country based on various statistics. Section 2 also portrays the SWD landscape, and the country's SWD objectives laid out in development plans. In this section, an argument is made about the need for DSWD to redefine itself, and the roles of DSWD attached and supervised agencies, offices, bureaus, and services, in advancing SWD, on account of the changing SWD landscape, especially the government bureaucracy, spurred by recent legislative, executive, and judicial actions. Section 3 proposes a way of organizing the Policy Agenda. Section 4 presents the proposed DSWD Policy Agenda following the framework discussed in Section 3. Here, specific elements for each of the themes

of the Agenda are identified. Section 5 discusses instruments for carrying out the Policy Agenda.

2. Social Conditions and the SWD Enabling Landscape

The DSWD vision for all Filipinos to be free from hunger and poverty, have equal access to opportunities, enabled by a fair, just, and peaceful society is anchored on the *Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022* (NEDA 2017) and on Filipinos' long-term aspirations articulated in AmBisyon Natin 2040 (NEDA 2016) for a life that is *matatag* (strongly rooted), *maginhawa* (comfortable), and *panatag* (secure), by 2040. The President's 0+10 Point Socioeconomic Agenda, which gives focus on working toward attaining regional or subnational equality and improving the access to social services in rural areas, aligns with the DSWD vision, the country's socio-economic plans and Filipinos' aspirations, as well as international SWD commitments. Attaining these SWD goals and targets requires not only DSWD to redefine itself, but also adopt a whole-of-government approach in steering efforts to promote the dignity of every person; to foster the recognition of the value of human relationships and interconnectedness; and to attain social and economic equalities. Social policies need to address inter-linkages within the social sector as well as across other sectors, and to strengthen existing institutions or institutional mechanisms in SWD, especially given vulnerabilities, uncertainties, complexities, and ambiguities (VUCA) brought about by the vastly changing and emerging socio-economic, environmental and governance landscape. For SWD policies to be relevant, it is important to look into the actual conditions, as reflected in various official statistics generated by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), and other data producing entities of the Philippine Statistical System.

i.   Reduction of Poverty and Inequality

During recent years, the Philippines has made substantial gains in reducing poverty and inequality, particularly on account of increased investments in the social sector in the past decade. According to a report of the PSA last December 6, 2019, the poverty rate, i.e., the proportion of the population in poverty (i.e., with incomes below the national poverty line), fell from 23.3 percent in 2015 to 16.6 percent in 2018. Further, the subsistence poverty rate, which represents the proportion in extreme poverty (i.e., with incomes less than the food or subsistence threshold), reduced from 9.1% to 5.2% in the period 2015 to 2018. In its poverty assessment report for the Philippines entitled "Making Growth Work for the Poor", the World Bank attributes the reduction of poverty incidence in the Philippines in the period 2006-2015 partly to transfers from government social programs, such as the *Pantawid Pamilya Pilipino Program*, which contributed about 25 percent of the overall poverty reduction in the country (WB 2018). In the same report, the World Bank suggests that *Pantawid*, which is implemented by DSWD with the Department of Education (DepED) and the Department of Health (DOH), "reduced the national poverty rate by up to 1.5 percentage points (lifting 1.5 million people out of poverty) in 2015." The same report suggested that factors other than government transfers that led to the poverty reduction include: (a) increase in wage income and movement of employment out of agriculture, and (b) remittances from domestic and foreign sources (**Figure 1**). It is likely that the considerable reduction in income poverty rates between 2015 and 2018 reported by the PSA in December 2018[2] is also in large part due to the social protection cash transfers from *Pantawid*.

Figure 1. Contribution of income sources to poverty reduction, 2006-2015.

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[2] https://psa.gov.ph/poverty-press-releases
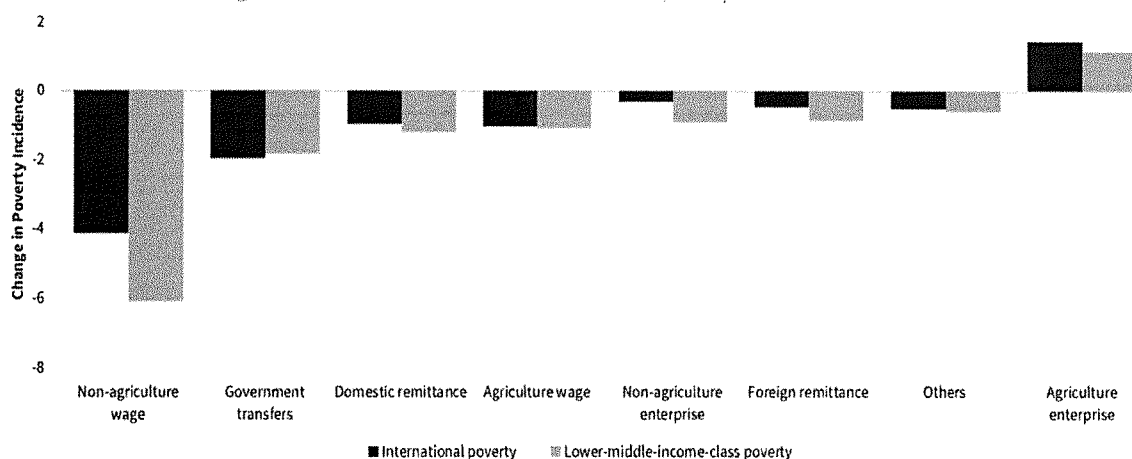
Source: Estimates using international poverty lines and various rounds of FIES. Extreme poverty is defined as household income per capita below US$1.9 a day (2011 PPP); and lower middle-income-class poverty is defined as household income per capita below US$3.2 a day.

Source: World Bank (2018)

Income inequality has also been decreasing in recent years: between 2012 and 2015, the growth rates of household income per capita among the bottom 40 per cent (at 2.4%) is faster than that (1.7%) of the total population.

In 2015, the Philippines joined 192 other countries in committing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Sustainable Development Agenda by 2030 (UN 2015). The SDGs, the successor to the Millennium Development Goals Agenda, consist of 17 goals, including the eradication of poverty (SDG1) and hunger (SDG2), and the reduction of inequality (SDG10). The commitment to attain the SDGs, also called the Global Goals, is at sync with the country's national development plan for the medium-term (NEDA, 2016) as well as long-term aspirations (NEDA 2015). According to the most recent Voluntary National Review report of the Philippines on how the Philippines fares on the Global Goals, two-thirds (85) of the available (126) national SDG indicators pertain to the social sector covering Goals 1 to 5, 10-11 and 16 (Reyes et al. 2019a). Further, of the available 85 SDG indicators on the social sector, three-fifths (52) are able to provide trends on social conditions in the country, i.e. national level data are available for at least two years, although data disaggregation is generally scarce (**Table 1**).

Table 1. Availability of National SDG Tier I Indicators, and Disaggregation by Dimension

Dimension (SDG)	With baseline data		With available level of disaggregation								Gender relevant indicators[g]
	At least 1	At least 2	SEX	AGE	LOC[a]	MIG[b]	EIS[c]	DIS[d]	INC[e]	OTH[f]	
Economic (SDG 8 and 9)	14	11	2	1	4	0	0	0	0	3	0
Social (SDG 1-5; 10-11 and 16)	85	52	22	11	34	0	0	0	12	10	15
Environmental (SDG 6-7; 12-15)	15	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Governance (SDG 17)	12	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	126	71	24	12	38	0	0	0	12	13	15

Source: Reyes *et al.* (2019a)
Notes: [a] LOC = location or spatial disaggregation (e.g. urban/rural, regional, provincial)

ᵇ MIG = migration status
ᶜ EIS = ethnicity and indigenous status
ᵈ DIS = disability status
ᵉ INC = income quintiles or deciles
ᶠ OTH = others
ᵍ Indicators that are not sex disaggregated, but gender-relevant (e.g. maternal mortality)

The increased public investments in social protection and social welfare in the past decade have been paying off: these investments have led to a drop in the number and proportion of Filipinos deprived of social services, including those who access their rights to safe water and safe sanitation services (see **Table 2**).

Table 2. Select SDG Indicators : Latest and Early Years Data

Globa l Goal	Selected SDG Statistics on the Social Sector	Early Years		Latest Years	
SDG1	Proportion of population below international poverty line (%)	10.7	(2009)	7.8	(2015)
SDG1	Proportion of population living below the national poverty line (%)*	23.3	(2015)	16.6	(2018)
SDG1	Proportion of population living below the national food poverty line (%)*	9.1	(2015)	5.2	(2018)
SDG1	Proportion of mothers with newborns receiving maternity cash benefit (%)	...		11	(2017)
SDG1	Proportion of population covered by social assistance programs (%)	27.4	(2013)	33.8	(2015)
SDG1	Poorest quintile covered by social assistance programs (%)	57.3	(2013)	62.1	(2015)
SDG1	Proportion of population using basic drinking water services (%)	90.1	(2010)	93.6	(2017)
SDG1	Proportion of population using basic sanitation services (%)	68.7	(2010)	76.5	(2017)
SDG2	Prevalence of undernourishment (%)	13.3	(2010)	13.7	(2016)
SDG2	Number of undernourished people (millions)	12.4	(2010)	14.2	(2016)
SDG2	Proportion of children moderately or severely stunted (%)	33.8	(2011)	33.4	(2015)
SDG2	Children moderately or severely stunted (thousands)	3,802. 7	(2011)	3,819. 1	(2015)
SDG2	Proportion of children moderately or severely wasted (%)	7.3	(2011)	7.1	(2015)
SDG2	Children moderately or severely wasted (thousands)	808.6	(2011)	811.8	(2015)
SDG3	Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel (%)	72.2	(2011)	84.4	(2017)
SDG3	Maternal mortality ratio	129	(2010)	114	(2015)
SDG3	Under-five mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	28.6	(2010)	28.4	(2017)
SDG3	Number of new HIV infections**	4400	(2010)	13000	(2018)

Global Goal	Selected SDG Statistics on the Social Sector	Early Years		Latest Years	
	Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, men (per 1,000 uninfected population)	0.09	(2010)	0.12	(2017)
SDG3	Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, women (per 1,000 uninfected population)	0.01	(2010)	0.21	(2017)
SDG3	Suicide mortality rate (deaths per 100,000 population)	3.3	(2010)	3.2	(2016)
SDG3	Number of deaths attributed to non-communicable diseases (number)	189916	(2010)	233190	(2016)
SDG3	Adolescent birth rate (per 1,000 women aged 15-19 years)	59	(2011)	46.9	(2016)
SDG3	Proportion of population with large household expenditures on health (greater than 10%) as a share of total household expenditure or income (%)	4.5	(2009)	6.3	(2015)
SDG3	Universal health coverage (UHC) service coverage index	48	(2010)	61	(2017)
SDG4	Participation rate in organized learning one year before the official primary entry age (%)	41.7	(2009)	79.6	(2017)
SDG5	Percentage of ever-married women age 15-49 who have ever experienced emotional, physical or sexual violence committed by their husband/partner (%)	...		26.4	(2017)
SDG5	Proportion of women in senior and middle management positions (%)	40.8	(2010)	23.2	(2017)
SDG5	Number of seats held by women in national parliaments (number)	56	(2010)	86	(2019)
SDG10	Growth rates of household expenditure or income per capita among (a) the bottom 40 per cent of the population and (b) the total population	(a) 1.5 (b) 1.5	(2012)	(a) 2.4 (b) 1.7	(2015)
SDG10	Labour share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), comprising wages and social protection transfers	32.2	(2010)	36.3	(2017)
SDG16	Percentage of families that were asked to give bribe or grease money by a government official with whom they transacted, by availing of social services	4.3	(2013)	1.2	(2017)

Source: Mainly UNSD Global Statistical Database; Other data from *PSA and **UNAIDS
Notes: Data provided here are largely descriptive for the period 2010 to 2018 that will allow an examination of trends. The early years data typically mean 2010 to 2014, or in a few cases, 2009, while latest years refer to 2015 to 2018.

ii. Closing Social Divides, such as the Gender Gap

The country has also managed to rate well in number of assessments on social inclusion, particularly as regards gender equality (David *et al.* 2018a; WB 2012; ADB and UN Women. 2018). From 2006 to 2019, the Global Gender Gap Reports released by the World Economic Forum (WEF) have cited the Philippines for being the only Asian country to be in the top ten

performers in the Global Gender Gap Index[3], although the most recent 2020 Report describes a regression of the performance in closing the gender gap in some areas, such as political empowerment, thus putting the country ranking to 16th from 8th a year earlier (WEF 2019). According to these Global Gender Gap Reports, in most countries, the school attendance of boys is higher than that of girls, while in the Philippines and a few other countries, school participation is in favor of girls. Gender advocates point out that all children, whether boys or girls, should be in school and should stay in school. In the Philippines, girls also do better than boys in school, according to results of the National Achievement Tests, across subject areas (David et al. 2018a).

Another gender issue pertaining to human capital development is that despite the improved school participation of females, from primary to tertiary education, the participation of women in the labor force[4] has not improved. Labor force participation rate[5] of women has even fallen three percentage points from 48.4% in 2000, to 45.4% in 2018. While more than half of working age women are outside the labor force, only a fifth of their men counterparts are not economically active. Unpaid care work is the main bottleneck to women's labor participation: according to data from the Labor Force Survey (LFS) conducted quarterly by the PSA, the principal reason given by about three out of five women of working age for being economically inactive is unpaid care work, whereas for more than half of their men counterparts, "schooling" is the primary reason for being outside the labor force. From 2001 to 2018, LFS results also suggest that for every 9 women economically inactive due to household/family duties, we find one male counterpart. Despite the recent economic gains in the country, opportunities for women and men to participate in the economy remain unequal.

Gender wage gaps[6] in the Philippines, unlike those in other countries, especially neighboring ones, are, on average, in favor of women. An examination of the gender wage gap by major occupation groups, together with the female share of occupational employment by major occupation groups suggest that averages mask what is going on in specific occupations (Albert and Vizmanos). Many high-level positions (e.g., officials of government and special interest- organizations, corporate executives) have wages favoring women since women having a far bigger share than men in this occupation. But for some occupations (particularly technicians and associate professionals, clerks, service workers and shop and market sales workers), men are still better compensated despite women having the bigger share in occupational employment. The widest disparity here is among the professionals group. Further, women tend to have a bigger share of vulnerable employment[7] than men: LFS data

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[3] The Global Gender Gap Index is a composite measure of gender gaps on four socio economic outcomes: economic participation and opportunity; educational attainment; political empowerment; and health and survival.

[4] The labor force or economically active population comprises the employed and unemployed. The unemployed consists of persons who are (1) without work; (2) currently available for work; and (3) seeking work or not seeking work because of the belief that no work is available, or awaiting results of previous job application, or because of temporary illness or disability, bad weather or waiting for rehire or job recall. Those who are not in the labor force (i.e. who are neither employed or unemployed) include stay-home spouses, students, persons with disability, retired persons, and seasonal workers

[5] Labor participation rate is defined as the total percentage of working-age persons (i.e., aged 15 years old and over) who are part of the labor force.

[6] The gender wage gap is the difference between gross average nominal monthly wages of male and those of female employees expressed as a percentage of gross average nominal monthly wages of male employees

[7] Those in vulnerable employment, such as own-account workers and contributing family workers are less likely to have formal work arrangements, and are therefore more likely to lack decent working conditions,

in recent years suggests that about seven in twenty men are in vulnerable employment compared to eight in twenty for women.

Social divides exist beyond the disparities between men and women, yet disaggregated data by many relevant sub-populations (such as on disability and ethnicity status) are quite sparse, especially for SDG indicators (Reyes *et al.* 2019a). Thus it is important for DSWD to work in partnership with the Philippine Statistical System to work on filling in data gaps, especially by examining DSWD's administrative data, exploring innovative data sources, and integrating these new data sources with traditional data sources. While the Inter-agency Committee on Social Protection Statistics was established thru PSA Memorandum Order No. 03, s. 2016 to serve as venue for discussion and resolution of issues, review of current techniques/methodologies and for recommendation of policies and workable schemes towards improvement of social protection and other related statistics, there are still no specific timetables toward identifying key social protection statistics that can be put into the country's designated statistics (priority statistics required for social and economic planning/analysis), as well as generating relevant disaggregated data for many key socio-economic statistics.

When disaggregated data are available for SDG indicators and other statistics, they show that despite gain in SWD, equitable standards of decent wellbeing for all Filipinos have yet to be realized. As management and staff of the DSWD perform various social services, they also witness the varying scope and extent of capabilities, choices and behavior of Filipinos. The opportunities for social mobility and for full realization of their potentials of the poor, vulnerable and marginalized are still rather limited. In its Global Social Mobility Report 2020, the WEF put the Philippines 61st out of 82 countries in social mobility score of 51.7, which placed the country in the bottom half of all countries ranked in the study (WEF 2020). Out of seven ASEAN member states assessed, the Philippines ranked fifth behind Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Thailand (55th), that were respectively 20th, 43rd, 50th, 55th globally. The country, however, outperformed Indonesia (67th) and Laos (72nd). The WEF report makes a strong case why the reduction of inequality is important. The hard to reach, the hidden, the abandoned, the abused, the exploited, the victims of disasters, calamities and other emergencies, and the geographically disadvantaged are often having difficulties to attain social mobility. These peoples are excluded from socio-economic development processes beyond their own efforts due to social disadvantages. They are born into their conditions and communities, and get to face persisting constraints in accessing resources and social services throughout their lives making it immensely challenging to attain self-improvement and mobility in living standards.

iii.   Building resilience building and managing risks

While income poverty has been reducing since 2012, some studies (e.g., Albert and Vizmanos 2018; Mina and Reyes 2017) warn that a substantial proportion of Filipinos are at varying risks of falling into future poverty on account of events such as sharp rises in prices, natural disasters, crime and armed conflicts, job losses, health problems, the death of a family's main income earner, domestic violence, among others. These studies estimate that the proportion of the population vulnerable to future poverty is even much larger than the official poverty rates. Thus, government needs to widen its policies and interventions from curative treatments (i.e., alleviating the conditions of the poor, and/or helping them exit out of poverty) to preventive ones (i.e., protecting those vulnerable from the risks and harmful effects of poverty by building the resilience of the vulnerable). Many of those who have exited poverty in recent years may have not done so sustainably and are at strong risk of falling back into poverty given various factors (NAPC 2017).

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adequate social security and voice. Vulnerable employment is often characterized by inadequate earnings, low productivity and difficult conditions of work that undermine workers' fundamental rights.

Resilience building is also important for managing risks from the harmful effects of disasters and emergency events. Given the regular occurrences of hydro-meteorological and geological hazards in the country, the Philippines has figured prominently in the World Risk Index, featured in the 2019 World Risk Report (BEH and RUB-IFHV 2019). As per RA 10121 or the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010, the DSWD has been vice-chair for Disaster Response in the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council. The Department has been responsible for the prepositioning of family food packs and standby funds. The Philippine DRRM Act, however, also identifies LGUs as first responders in the occurrence of natural and man-made calamities, yet not all LGUs are functionally equipped as first responders (Domingo and Olaguera 2017).

iv.   Addressing persisting and emerging social problems

Despite progress in the social sector, many social problems (e.g. poverty and vulnerability, hunger and nutrition, quality of education and health services) persist. Government agencies should have mechanisms to formulate and implement coherent roadmaps that can effectively and sustainably address these problems, especially for people who have multiple social deprivations (e.g., street children who are disabled). Further, some emerging issues need to be faced squarely from an SWD lens.

Although the current prevalence of Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) is still very low in the Philippines, according to UNAIDS data, especially as reflected in the SDG Global Statistical Database (UNSD 2019), the country has the fastest growing number of HIV/AIDS cases in the world. Early last year, the country also had an outbreak of some diseases, particularly, measles, some spurred by unfounded fears regarding the consequences of vaccination that effectively led to a drop in the coverage of children getting vaccinated.

This year, the country has also gotten affected by a pandemic, i.e., the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). The concerted actions meant to contain the virus have rapidly changed how we live, work and learn, and have likely increased the proportion of Filipinos in poverty, despite the social protection assistance provided by government to the poor and vulnerable (Albert *et al.* 2020). There is recognition that policies and strategies on socio-economic development need to be tweaked given the uncertainties and volatities brought about by the "new normal" way of life amid the continuing threats of infection and the country's attempts to recover from the various adverse socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 (NEDA 2020a; 2020b).

The pathways to social development are filled with challenges and constraints. Results of the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) showed that the fifteen-year-old students in the Philippines scored lowest in reading, together with those from the Dominican Republic, while performance in mathematics and science were second to the lowest among participating countries of the PISA 2018. Further, the PISA report for the Philippines points out that two thirds (65%) of students (65%) in the country reported being bullied at least a few times a month (OECD 2019).

There are also some signs that the social fabric is changing. Data from the PSA's Civil Registration and Vital Statistics suggest that as of 2017, more than half (53 %) of babies are borne out of wedlock. This has most likely occurred because of the decline in the social stigma for single parenthood, and the changing sexual practices of Filipinos, especially among the young. Results of the PSA's National Demographic Health Survey (NDHS) 2017 conducted by the PSA show that 9% of Filipino women age 15-19 have begun childbearing: seven percent are already mothers and an additional two percent are pregnant with their first child. The changing sexual practices among the young may also be putting them at high risk from various sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

Responsibilities of the DSWD are plentiful, with the Department providing leadership to a number of inter-agency committees with SWD concerns (**Table 3**). A growing number of laws (see **Annex A**) recognize the importance of providing SWD services that build capacities of individuals and communities for risk resilience given the surfacing milieu of VUCA. Of about 39 laws enacted in the period 2000 to 2019 affecting SWD, most (84.6%) are in support of protective services. Laws enacted in the past three years, e.g. RA 11310 or the *Pantawid Pamilyang* Pilipino Program (4Ps) Act, RA 11315 or the Community-Based Monitoring System Act, RA 11350 or the National Commission of Senior Citizens (NCSC) Act, as well as prospective legislation on the establishment of a Department of Disaster Resilience, are institutionalizing certain SWD programs, or allowing the Department to transfer some of its rowing functions to new institutions. The latter provides the Department to focus on its steering functions. Presidential directives and judicial actions also have bearing on DSWD operations.

Table 3. Inter-agency Committees with DSWD Leadership

Inter-agency Committee	Brief Description and Main Function
1. National Coordinating and Monitoring Board of the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010 (NCMB) *Note: This will be replaced by the National Commission of Senior Citizens (NCSC)*	The NCMB is an inter-agency coordinating and monitoring mechanism at the national level that monitors the implementation of R.A. 9994 or the "Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010". It is chaired by DSWD with the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) as Vice-Chair. Members of the Board include the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Department of Health (DOH), the Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE), the Louise de Marillac Foundation, the Federation of Senior Citizens Association of the Philippines (FSCAP), the Alliance of Retired Postal Employees and Senior Citizens, Inc. (ARPES) and the Veterans Federation of the Philippines (VFP). Its functions are: The Department's Policy Development and Planning Bureau (DSWD-PDPB) serves as the Secretariat to the Board at the national level.
2. Human Development and Poverty Reduction Cluster (HDPRC)	The HDPRC is a cabinet cluster chaired by DSWD. Members of the cluster include the Department of Agriculture (DA), the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the DepEd, the DOH, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), the DILG, the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC), the Commission on Higher Education (CHEd), and the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC). As per EO No. 24, s. 2017, the Cluster is mandated to exert all efforts to improve the quality of life of the Filipino people through a broad-based approach in the delivery of services. The HDPRC Support Secretariat, as supervised by the Undersecretary for Policy and Plans Group, ensures the DSWD's compliance to agreements in the HDPRC.
3. Social Development Committee - Sub-Cluster on	The SDC-SCSP is an inter-agency sub-committee mechanism under the National Economic and

Inter-agency Committee	Brief Description and Main Function
Social Protection (SDC-SCSP)	Development Authority's Social Development Committee (NEDA-SDC) which leads the operationalization of the Social Protection Strategy. This sub-committee is chaired by the DSWD Undersecretary for Policy and Programs, with the NEDA Deputy Director General for Planning and Policy as Vice-Chairperson. Members include a wide range of officials from government and nongovernment agencies (including CHED, DA, DAR, DBM, DepEd, DOH, DILGI, DOLE, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), HUDCC, NAPC, National Nutrition Council (NNC), People's Credit and Finance Corporation (PCFC), PhilHealth, Social Security System (SSS), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Leagues of Municipalities, Cities and Provinces, Social Watch Philippines, and *Pambansang Kalipunan ng mga Manggagawang Impormal sa Pilipinas* (PATAMABA)]. The DSWD (PDPB) serves as the Secretariat to the SDC- SCSP.
4. Special Review Committee - Solo Parents (SRC-SP)	The SRC-SP is chaired by DSWD with the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) as Vice-Chair. As per RA 8972 Sec. 13. Implementing Rules and Regulations, the SRC-SP is headed by DSWD, with members consisting of DOH, DepEd, CHED, TESDA, DOLE, the National Housing Authority (NHA), and DILG. The Committee is tasked to evaluate the efficacy and relevance of the provisions of the Solo Parents Act relative to emerging conditions.
5. Inter-Agency Council on Violence Against Women and Their Children (IACVAWC)	The IACVAWC is the body mandated by RA 9262 to ensure the effective implementation of the Act and to be the lead coordinator and monitoring body on VAW initiatives. It is composed of twelve member-agencies that are tasked to formulate programs and projects to eliminate VAW, with DSWD as chair and DILG as co-chair.
6. Inter-Agency Council Against Child Pornography (IACACP)	Established in 2010 by virtue of RA 9775 or the Anti Child Pornography Act of 2009, The IACACP is primarily tasked to coordinate, monitor, and oversee the implementation of the Act. Composed of 12 line agency members and 3 non-government organizations, it is chaired by DSWD and vice-chaired by Department of Justice (DOJ).
7. Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT)	The IACAT was established primarily to coordinate, monitor and oversee the implementation of RA 9208 or the Anti-Trafficking In Persons Act Of 2003. The Council is chaired by the Secretary of the DOJ and co-chaired by the Secretary of DSWD.
8. Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council (JJWC)	The JJWC was established by virtue of RA NO. 9344 or the "Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006'. The Council is attached to the DOJ and placed under its

Inter-agency Committee	Brief Description and Main Function
	administrative supervision. The JJWC is chaired by an undersecretary of the DSWD.
9. ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) / Senior Officials Committee for ASCC (SOCA)	The ASCC is among the three community pillars of the ASEAN. Overseen by a ministerial body known as the ASCC Council that meets twice a year, the ASCC is the most wide ranging of the three pillars, covering all sectors that are not directly related to political-security and economic matters. The SOCA provides support to the ASCC Council by monitoring and consolidating salient developments on the implementation of key decisions and related reports from the various sectoral bodies under the purview of the ASCC including those on cross-cutting and cross-pillar issues ensuring that the goals and expected outputs from the ASCC Blueprint will be achieved by 2025. As provided in the Department's AO No. 20, s. 2011, the DSWD is mandated to Chair the PH ASCC Council and provide related technical-secretariat support to the inter-agency Committee on ASCC. As Chair and technical-secretariat for the ASCC Council, the DSWD maintains coordinated efforts among the national agencies, representing the 21 sectors under the purview of the ASCC Pillar, to ensure that the Philippines is aligned to the ASCC goals and contributes to the accomplishment of the ASEAN Community vision, mission and goals. Functions of the Technical Secretariat: • Provides technical support to PH ASCC Minister and PH SOCA Leader • Monitor PH Commitments to the ASCC Blueprint • Prepare correspondence, inputs and consolidate reports on ASCC / SOCA matters • Provide technical support to the Philippine ASCC Committee • Attendance to AMTB Meetings (by DFA) and related local coordination meetings on ASCC matters. • Conduct and provide secretariat support to PH ASCC Quarterly Meetings and Semestral Planning Workshops
10. Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD)	All activities undertaken under the ASEAN cooperation on SWD come under the purview of the SOMSWD. The ASEAN SOMSWD promotes cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination with other relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies in carrying forward relevant projects/activities under the ASEAN Strategic Framework on SWD. Functions of the Technical Secretariat: • Provide technical support to PH SOMSWD

Inter-agency Committee	Brief Description and Main Function
	Leader • Monitor and facilitate related coordination activities to implement PH Commitments to SOMSWD Strategic Workplan • Prepare reports on the status of ongoing and completed PH SOMSWD Projects • Prepare correspondence, inputs and related reports on SOMSWD matters • Prepare and/or provide inputs to SOMSWD activity proposals for submission to ASEC or for funding under Philippine International Commitment Fund (ICF)
11. ASEAN Social Work Consortium (ASWC)	Among the Philippine commitments to the SOMSWD Strategic Framework, the ASWC aims to promote and develop the social work as a profession in the ASEAN, the institutionalization of effective collaboration towards excellent and responsive social work education, and the promotion of greater support from policy makers to the role of social work in social development Functions of the Technical Secretariat: • Monitor Philippine commitments to the ASWC Workplan • Provide technical support to ASWC-Philippines • Prepare correspondence, inputs and related report • Conduct and provide secretariat support to quarterly meetings and related meetings on ASWC-PH
12. ASEAN Children's Forum (ACF)	The ACF is a mechanism that institutionalized child participation in the ASEAN. Its establishment of the ACF was proposed by the Philippines as part of its commitments to the SOMSWD Strategic Framework. It serves as an important channel where children can express their views on urgent regional issues and how these can be resolved by the governments of the ASEAN with children participation. Functions of the Technical Secretariat: • Provide technical support to Philippine rep to ACF • Monitor Philippine commitments to ACF • Prepare correspondence, inputs, and related reports on ACF matters. • Attend coordination meetings on ACF Matters
13. ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Children and Women (ACWC) - Children Representative	The ACWC is an inter-governmental body which looks into the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and children in ASEAN. It is one of the important measures to enhance social welfare, development, empowerment for and participation of women and children in building the ASEAN Community.

Inter-agency Committee	Brief Description and Main Function
	Functions of Technical Secretariat: • Provide technical support to Philippine Child Representative to the ACWC • Prepare correspondence, inputs and reports on ACWC Matters • Monitor status of Philippine Children Representative to the ACWC approved by the President
14. National Committee on the Filipino Family - Sub-Committee on Policy and Research (NCFF-SCPR)	Established by EO 241, s. 1995 (and further amended by EO 238., s. 2003), the NCFF is tasked primarily to formulate policies, plan and promote strategies for an effective national program on the family. The NCFF-SCPR has 15 members (8 Government agencies DOH, PCW, NYC, CWC, NCIP, NCMF, DSWD, PIA and 7 NGOS). This Sub-Committee is one of the three Sub-Committees of the National Committee on Filipino Family (EC 238 and EO No. 224 their legal basis) their function is to: 1. Draft /formulate policies, plan and promote strategies for an effective national program on the family; 2. To monitor proposed House and Senate bills that can affect a family. 3. The subcom also come up a list of family research conducted 4. Pushwork : Creation of National Commission on Filipino Family or EO e0stablishment of Presidential Adviser on Filipino Family The PRD (PEAD) is the secretariat of the Sub-Committee.
15. National Council for Disability Affairs (NCDA) Sub-Committee on Auxiliary Social Service (SCASS)	The NCDA Governing Board provides policy direction to the management and operations of NCDA. It is chaired by an NGO, with members consisting of the DSWD and 11 other Departments of the national government, the Philippine Information Agency, and TESDA, six (6) private individuals including two (2) representatives from NGOs with national network on PWDs, two (2) disabled persons representing legitimate PWD organizations, and two (2) representatives from civic groups and cause-oriented organizations concerned with the welfare of PWDs. The Board has several subcommittees, including the SCASS. The SCASS ensures that the rights to auxiliary social services, aids, facilitative and rehabilitative programs and services for PWDs in the country are provided, protected and promoted in accordance with the provisions of UNCRPD and RA 7277 and other such similar international treaties and laws. (NCDA Board Resolutions No. 3 Series of 2014.)
16. Interagency Committee on Social Protection Statistics (IAC-SPS)	The IAC-SPS is a committee established by the PSA by virtue of its Memorandum Order No. 8, s. 2015. The DSWD has been identified as a member of the

Inter-agency Committee	Brief Description and Main Function
	committee, together with the PSA, NEDA, NAPC, DOLE, Philhealth, GSIS, OCD, and Social Watch Philippines. Every year, the Committee elects a Chair and is reconstituted by the PSA. Since the establishment of the IAC-SPS, the DSWD has been annually elected as Chair.

In addition to the committees identified in Table 3 above, the Department mainstreams its SWD advocacies with vigor, partly though its internal committees, e.g. Gender and Development (GAD) Technical Working Group. Further, the DSWD is taking a bigger role in the fight against hunger with its leadership/involvement in the Magna Carta of the Poor Technical Working Group (TWG) on Right to Adequate Food, as well as the Expanded Partnership on Hunger and Poverty (EPAHP). By way of EO. No. 101, s. 2020, the DSWD Secretary, together with the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA), have been made Vice-Chairs to support the Cabinet Secretary in a newly-established Task Force on Zero Hunger, whose members are mostly the Secretaries of Departments that are part of the EPAHP, together with the Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management, the Chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education, the Secretary of NEDA, the Secretary of the Presidential Communications Operations Office. This Task Force is being tasked among others, to formulate a National Food Policy.

The DSWD exercises a leadership role in many of these inter-agency bodies based on pertinent laws, EOs and Terms of Reference of these bodies. Through these bodies, sectoral plans, e.g. Philippine Plan of Action for Senior Citizens, National Decade Plan for Filipino Families, Social Protection Framework have so far been developed. However, hitherto there is no equivalent Performance Governance System in the entire government bureaucracy that defines how institutional partnerships can be harnessed with the use of whole of government frameworks. For agencies attached to the DSWD, there are general guidelines in the BOOK IV/Chapter 7 on "Administrative Relationships" of the Administrative Code of 1987 (EO 292, s. 1987) that puts a structure on the relationship between DSWD and its attached agencies, viz., Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC), Intercountry Adoption Board (ICAB) Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council, National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC), National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA) and Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor (PCUP). The attachment/supervision of NAPC, PCUP, and NCIP under DSWD is a result of a presidential directive, viz., Executive Order (EO) No. 67, s. 2018. While the DSWD regularly meets these agencies during IAC meetings and bilateral meetings, the extent of guidance by DSWD to attached agencies could however be strengthened, for instance, by having their heads of offices attend DSWD management committee meetings to inform agencies of emerging SWD policy issues.

The Department needs to make adjustments to its SWD role not only because of emerging and growing demands among stakeholders on SWD, but also on account of the likely changed landscape in the government bureaucracy, in the wake of the Supreme court ruling on the Mandanas vs. Ochoa case[8] that requires the national government to provide a larger revenue

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[8] The Supreme Court ruling stemmed from a court case filed by petitioner then Congressman now Batangas Governor Hermilando I. Mandanas *et al.* against the national government (represented then by Executive Secretary Pacquito N. Ochoa, Jr., *et al.*) regarding the extent of the revenue base for the computed Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA). As pointed out in the ruling, the national levies to be included in the computation of the IRA, which should now be called National Tax Allotment (NTA), would now include the following: (a) The national internal revenue taxes enumerated in Section 21 of the National Internal Revenue Code collected by the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs; (b) Tariff and customs duties collected by the Bureau of Customs; (c) 50% of the value-added taxes collected in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, and 30% of all other national tax collected in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in

base to LGUs in their respective Internal Revenue Allotments (IRAs). The execution of this Supreme Court ruling on the IRAs is expected to hasten the devolution of SWD services to LGUs, in fulfillment of the Local Government Code. As the national government transitions to implement the Mandanas ruling in the next year or two with LGUs getting 1.1 Trillion pesos in 20202 as share of government revenues (Manasan 2020), capacity gaps among SWD partners, especially LGUs, as well as within DSWD, from staff to leadership, have to be diagnosed and addressed.

In 1994, the Ramos administration identified a Social Reform Agenda to support the national development plan. Since then, the reform agenda on furthering social justice has been modified to reflect the changing social milieu and the administration's social contract (DSWD 2009; DSWD and NEDA SC-SP, 2019). Historically, social policy has been given lesser importance and funding in government, and social policy has often been centered on mitigating the unintended consequences of economic change. SWD policies should be about assisting everyone to attain their social rights, as well as supporting and enable those in society who suffer from the negative effects of social inequalities.

The DSWD cannot bear all the challenges of SWD: partnerships are key to attaining better SWD outcomes. Collaborative partnerships should extend beyond the public sector; modalities could include shared services and outsourcing models. The latter facilitates the transferring of some functions (or service provision) to a third-party provider, enabling these outside resources to perform activities which were previously handled in-house. One of the benefits of such partnerships is that it can help the Department to intensify its focus on core competencies (and rowing functions), while allowing other providers to carry out functions in which they have proven in-depth capabilities. Other benefits can include reduced costs, improved performance, enhanced flexibility, and providing access to good practices.

Despite its visibility in the public in terms of its frontline delivery SWD services, the Department's satisfaction ratings have, however, hardly changed according to Makati Business Club Executive Outlook Survey conducted in July 2012, July 2014, August 2015, and July 2019 (**Table 4**). While the survey only covers 100 executives from 100 companies and may likely be a reflection of business perspectives, trends may reveal some insights. Among NGAs that work in the social sector, only the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) has been garnering an improved satisfaction rating, while several NGAs have even regressed in the ratings (and comparative ranks with other agencies). The trends in the survey results suggest that some quarters in society need to be convinced of the importance of SWD within the overall inclusive development goals of the country, and the significant role that DSWD plays in this area. The Department's lack of improvements in satisfaction ratings may also reflect the perception of persisting challenges in social service delivery, particularly attitudes of some Filipinos, including those in the business community against social welfare. This stems from the view that SWD policies should not be a primary policy objective as it diverts scarce public resources from productive investment for economic growth, despite the growing amount of literature (e.g. Birdsall 2005; Bhargava 2005; Ranis and Stewart 2005; UNDESA 2005; World Bank 2013) which shows that economic growth and

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Muslim Mindanao; (d) 60% of the national taxes collected from the exploitation and development of the national wealth; (e) 85% of the excise taxes collected from locally manufactured Virginia and other tobacco products; (f) The entire 50% of the national taxes collected under Sections 106, 108 and 116 of the NIRC as provided under Section 283 of the NIRC; and (g) 5% of the 25% franchise taxes given to the National Government under Section 6 of Republic Act No. 6631 and Section 8 of Republic Act No. 6632. Under this revenue regime, the NTA will be a significant windfall for LGUs. In the past, there has been no unequivocal allocation of responsibilities between the national government and LGUs. The decentralization framework has allowed both the national government and LGUs to simultaneously assert responsibility over certain public service deliverables. The Supreme Court ruling provides for a correction to this, and would effectively require downloading not only of resources, but also responsibilities on services to the LGUs.

SWD policies must be pursued simultaneously in a complementary and mutually reinforcing manner.

Table 4. Satisfaction Ratings of Government Agencies in the Social Sector

Government Agency	Satisfaction Ratings (in %)				Rank (among Government Agencies)			
	July 2012	July 2014	August 2015	July 2019	July 2012	July 2014	August 2015	July 2019
Department of Education	78.2	75.4	79.7	65.3	8	12	12	24
Department of Health	70.9	78.5	63.5	50.0	15	8	27	43
Department of Labor and Employment	74.5	73.8	79.4	44.4	11	17	13	50
Commission on Higher Education	69.1	69.2	68.9	71.3	17	26	23	17
Technical Education and Skills Development Authority	63.6	72.3	68.9	69.8	25	21	23	19
National Economic and Development Authority	65.4	75.4	80.3	84.5	22	12	11	2
Department of Social Welfare and Development	65.4	63.1	62.5	61.3	22	32	29	25
Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth)	NA	75.4	74.2	42.1	NA	12	20	54

Source: MBC

In contrast to the DSWD perception among businessmen suggested in the MBC surveys, the general public has provided a much more positive assessment of the performance of the Department. Since 1999, approval ratings of DSWD have ranged between a low of 56% (December 2005) to its peak of 87% (June 2018), according to Pulse Asia in its *Ulat Ng Bayan* survey (Pulse Asia Research Inc., 2019). Among all government agencies assessed in the December 2019 survey, the DSWD, together with DepEd, garnered the best approval ratings (85%). Further, the Department enjoys universal awareness. This is likely a reflection of the positive views of the public, especially about its social protection programs, with the steepest rise in Oct 2010 of 15 percentage points in the approval ratings when the last administration considerably expanded the coverage of *Pantawid*.

The next section discusses how the proposed Policy Agenda for affecting SWD, particularly promoting social inclusion, enhancing social functioning, protecting and promoting the rights of everyone, especially people at risk is to be situated in the context of the country's long term aspirations.

3. Organizing the Policy Agenda

A. Processes for Agenda Setting

In preparing the Policy Agenda, the Department has collected and reviewed published and unpublished knowledge materials deemed useful for the formulation of the Agenda. These include:
   a) DSWD-related information and references;
   b) Philippine Development Plans, Country Strategies, International Commitments to Development, and Related Documents;

c) Public Policy Documents on Social Welfare and Development at the local and international scene (see **Annex B** for a list of reference materials).

A review of key DSWD policy and policy-related documents, internal research and evaluation studies, legislation, national SWD plans/strategies, and external policy research has also been undertaken to (a) identify the themes that received policy attention through the years, especially since 2010, and examine the evolution of these themes; (b) describe the processes behind the formulation of SWD policies, and look into the extent to which these SWD policies guided DSWD plans, programs and operations; and, (c) identify emerging SWD issues and/or policy gaps.

The overall goals of SWD policies are ultimately framed by the question "what are the characteristics of Philippine society that we want to live within?". While there are a multitude of answers to this question, the ultimate goal of social policies is about improving the level and distribution of well-being of Filipinos through the achievement of inclusive growth, which involves both economic dimensions (such as income and expenditure), and other aspects (such as voice, choice and safe prospects). Consequently, SWD policies should be geared to help all Filipinos have dignified lives, with basic physical, mental, and psychosocial needs consistently met. SWD policies should assist everyone, especially those socio-economically disadvantaged, in having opportunities to access community assets and social services for attaining upward social mobility and for contributing to the welfare of others. Social policies should also help Filipinos feel safe and secured, free from fear of abuse and violence. SWD polices should build individual and community resilience from risks to living standards, recognizing difference in capacities to withstand, respond and recover from harmful impacts of natural hazards, emergencies and crises (WB 2013). Further, SWD policies must also be promotive of basic human rights, especially those of the marginalized and vulnerable. And each Filipino, as part of a community and nation, should be assisted in choosing to respect the diverse perspectives and backgrounds of all.

The Policy Agenda has been developed through a participative, consultation process within and outside of DSWD, strengthened by an examination of policy documents and research on persisting as well as emerging issues on SWD. These issues are relevant to SWD clients such as youth and children, women (and men), senior citizens, persons with disabilities (PWDs), individuals in crisis situations (such as victims of disasters and calamities, and internally displaced persons), indigenous peoples (IPs), other underserved and disadvantaged individuals, families and communities. Consultation meetings were held with a wide range of stakeholders, including:

- past and present legislators, DSWD secretaries, local chief executives (LCEs), and other officials in Executive Branch,
- policy researchers,
- representatives of attached agencies, other NGAs and development partners
- DSWD staff from the central office (CO) and field offices (FOs)

A total of 38 people participated in Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) for the formulation of the Policy Agenda. Interviews lasted at least 1.5 hours. Policy researchers and representatives of international organizations were asked inputs about prevailing SWD issues that will likely dominate the global arena in the next 5 years and their implications for the Philippines. The same questions have been raised to (past and present) officials of government, and private associations but with additional questions that are related to emerging policy demands which are of utmost concern to their sectors that needed urgent attention. A preliminary version of this proposed Policy Agenda was presented to select DSWD management and staff for soliciting inputs and for conducting a stakeholder analysis that will be critical to the effective implementation of the Agenda.

In the next sub-section, the main themes of the Policy Agenda are identified and described within the framework of the country's National Development Plans. Aside from being thematic, the Agenda is supportive of the Strategic Goals (including the Client-focused and Organization-focused Objectives and Initiatives) enumerated in DSWD's Strategic Plan 2018-2022, and their concomitant Organizational Outcomes (DSWD 2018). Further, the Agenda accounts for the most recent strategy map of the Department's Performance Governance System (PGS), which identifies the various core instruments, viz., promotive programs, protective programs, Technical Assistance and Resource Augmentation (TARA), case management and Social Technology development, to be used for cascading the DSWD vision/mission into strategic priorities and strategic results. Once the Policy Agenda has been finalized, the Department should work on synchronizing its Research and Evaluation Agenda as well as its Legislative Agenda, with the Policy Agenda.

Outputs of the DSWD Policy Agenda include SWD policy notes, policy discussion papers, policy position papers, DSWD administrative issuances, and SWD legislation. These can be developed through the conduct of policy research studies, and various mechanisms for compiling stakeholder inputs (such as consultation meetings, roundtable discussions with experts, and policy fora).

The formulation of the Policy Agenda and the implementation of concomittant policy actions do not sit in a vacuum; they are driven by the complex interactions in the policy ecosystem, i.e., the community of actors involved in policy discussions (**Figure 2**).The SWD partners of the Department include the Office of the President, other concerned national government agencies (NGAs) and government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs), LGUs, the legislature, the judiciary, civil society, licensed SWD agencies (SWDAs), development partners as well as markets, communities, and families. All these SWD actors influence, formulate or execute the country's policies for addressing social concerns and social service needs of Filipinos; their interactions should be harnessed in the period 2020 to 2025 to enable yielding better SWD outcomes.

Figure 2: The Social Welfare and Development (SWD) Ecosystem
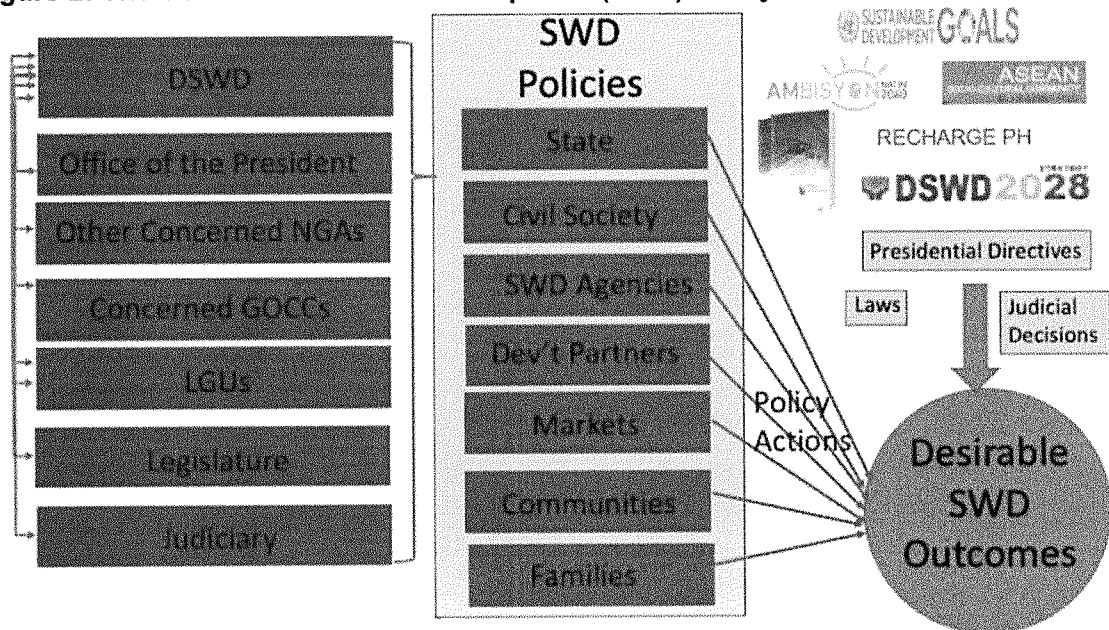
Institutions are central to the entire SWD policy development process: "there can be no effective policy development process if institutions supporting and implementing it are

ineffective or dysfunctional" (Llanto, 2018). For instance, in the case of the family, this institution plays a key role in access to emotional and physical security, as well as in the level of economic well-being of an individual. As regards LGUs, they have been empowered to deliver basic SWD services with the enactment of the Local Government Code in 1991. The Department has worked closely with LGUs to steer and capacitate them to fulfill their mandates on local service delivery, but many programs have been directly lodged with DSWD and/or not yet devolved to the LGUs. When the national government implements the Mandanas ruling, this will effectively empower LGUs to do more with the resources made available to them. National government will have to transfer some of its current functions to the LGUs. As regards SWD services, the DSWD will need to redefine itself, and consequently strengthen its steering over its rowing role in SWD. Some DSWD programs such as the Supplemental Feeding Program, and the Services for residential and center-based clients, could be delegated to LGUs (Manasan 2020). Roadmaps will be needed for managing changes in transferring rowing responsibilities from the Department to the LGUs. With this change, there are likely to be disruptions in social service delivery during this transition. The DSWD will need to seek the cooperation of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) for this transitioning, preferably through a memorandum of agreement laying out the TARA responsibilities of DSWD to LGUs and the required cooperation, especially as the DILG assists the President in the exercise of general supervision over local governments. Joint planning processes and activities, as well as communication strategies, between DSWD and DILG could be developed in the transition years. Even though power has been devolved to LGUs, local chief executives typically await clear signals from the national government through DILG on policy issues. Thus, joint DSWD-DILG communication strategies can be effective in steering the policy directions of LGUs. Further, with EO No. 67, s. 2018, effectively transferring the supervision of three agencies to the DSWD from the Office of the President, Department can use this clout to steer SWD services more effectively using a whole-of-government framework.

SWD policies need to consider the role of DSWD with other SWD institutions in government and the private sector, and all SWD stakeholders. An effective DSWD Policy Agenda requires effective working environments for social workers. SWD institutions and other stakeholders will require capacity development (at the individual, institutional, and enabling environment levels) for ensuring minimal implementation deficits throughout policy themes.

Legislation and presidential directives have been passed in support of improving the service delivery, regulatory performance, and enabling environment of the country's social institutions. As pointed out earlier, key laws have been enacted that affect the SWD mandate, programs, and operations in the period 2000 to 2019 (**Annex A).** In examining the key legislation, one can find that DSWD has took on many programs and activities, including crafting evidence- and context-based policy reforms. Aside from the various development goals at the global and local stage, the changing SWD landscape, particularly in the government bureaucracy, resulting from executive directives, legislations, and judicial decisions should also be taken account in the Policy Agenda.

B. Linkages of Policy Agenda with National Development Plans and International Commitments to SWD

The thrust of the PDP 2017-2022, as well as many international commitments to SWD, e.g., the SDGs, as well as the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint 2025, are transformative for the social sector (NEDA 2017, ASEAN 2016, UN 2015). They are meant to build human capital, and make citizens, communities and society resilient to risks, by way of promoting quality social services (e.g. access to universal basic education, health, and social insurance), while working to make opportunities for social mobility and participation more inclusive, by protecting and empowering the needy and underserved segments of society.

Goals 1 to 5, 10, 11, and 16 of the SDGs seeks to strengthen the social dimension of sustainable development. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development needs to consider inter-linkages within the social sector, as well as among the various (social, economic and environmental) dimensions of sustainable development. Consequently, SWD perspectives need to be integrated into broader and more complex policy-making processes; in the same manner, economic and environmental perspectives need to be considered in SWD policy-making. The Policy Agenda also incorporates plans amid the pandemic for recovery (NEDA 2020a; NEDA 2020b; DSWD 2020) as well as the Department's Strategy Map 2028 (AO 5, s. 2020). Existing institutions and institutional mechanisms that are working in SWD have to enhance policy coherence within the broad social sector spectrum, and adjust the scope of their work to accommodate SDG targets. While the Department has no control over other government agencies, it can influence their policies in the social arena taking account of the Policy Agenda.

As regards the ASCC Blueprint 2025, five characteristics of the ASCC have been targeted for attainment by 2025 by ASEAN member states including the Philippines (ASEAN 2016). For each ASCC characteristic, Key Result Areas (KRAs) are also listed (**Table 5**). The ASCC characteristics and KRAs anchor the needs for sectoral strategies and plans in attaining the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 (ASEAN 2016).

Table 5. Characteristics and Key Result Areas of the ASCC Blueprint 2025

Characteristics of ASCC 2025	Key result areas
A. Engages and benefits the people A committed, participative and socially-responsible community through an accountable and inclusive mechanism for the benefit of all ASEAN people, upheld by the principles of good governance.	A.1 Engaged stakeholders in ASEAN processes
	A.2 Empowered people and strengthened institutions
B. Inclusive An inclusive community that promotes high quality of life; equitable access to opportunities for all; and promotes and protects human rights of women, children, youth, the elderly/older persons, persons with disabilities, migrant workers, and vulnerable and marginalised groups.	B.1 Reduced barriers
	B.2 Equitable access for all
	B.3 Promotion and protection of human rights
C. Sustainable A sustainable community that promotes social development and environmental protection through effective mechanisms to meet the current and future needs of the people.	C.1 Conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity and natural resources
	C.2 Environmentally sustainable cities
	C.3 Sustainable climate
	C.4 Sustainable consumption and production
D. Resilient A resilient community with enhanced capacity and capability to adapt and respond to social and economic vulnerabilities, disasters, climate change as well as emerging threats and challenges.	D.1 A Disaster-resilient ASEAN that is able to anticipate, respond, cope, adapt, and build back better, smarter and faster
	D.2 A safer ASEAN that is able to respond to all health-related hazards including

Characteristics of ASCC 2025	Key result areas
	biological, chemical, and radiological-nuclear and emerging threats
	D.3 A climate-adaptive ASEAN with enhanced institutional and human capacities to adapt to the impacts of climate change
	D.4 Strengthened social protection for women, children, youth, the elderly/older persons, persons with disabilities, ethnic minority groups, migrant workers, vulnerable and marginalised groups, and people living in at-risk areas, including people living in remote and border areas and climate-sensitive areas, to reduce vulnerabilities in times of climate change-related crises, disasters and other environmental changes.
	D.5 Enhanced and optimised financing systems, food, water, energy availability, and other social safety nets in times of crises by making resources more available, accessible, affordable and sustainable.
	D.6 Endeavour towards a "drug-free" ASEAN
E. Dynamic A dynamic and harmonious community that is aware and proud of its identity, culture and heritage with the strengthened ability to innovate and proactively contribute to the global community.	E.1 Towards an open and adaptive ASEAN
	E.2 Towards a creative, innovative and responsive ASEAN
	E.3 Engender a culture of entrepreneurship

Institutions, governance and stakeholder engagement have become an area of interest in the policy arena in recognition of their importance to reducing poverty and inequality, as well as sustaining, and broadening economic growth and development. As regards inclusion, key elements are: reducing barriers; providing equitable access for all; and, ensuring the promotion and protection of human rights. With regard to resilience, there is recognition that risk resilience of communities and the people themselves can be built by acquiring knowledge, building protection, and obtaining insurance for risk sharing (WB 2013). And with major disruptions in business models, production, consumption, and the labor market causing more VUCA in the world, coupled with the harmful effects of climate change and natural disasters on peoples, communities and nations, the entire ASEAN Community is expected to have a strong sense of entrepreneurship as well as nurture a culture of innovation to stay competitive in an ever-vibrant global business environment.

Aside from considering international commitments to SWD goals and targets, SWD policies in the country should be situated around two important policy documents on national socio-economic objectives, namely, *AmBisyon Natin* 2040, and the PDP 2017-2022, the latter of

which embeds elements of *AmBisyon Natin* 2040 and sets the strategies to achieve the vision in the medium term (NEDA 2016, NEDA 2017). *AmBisyon Natin* 2040 has articulated the aspiration that

> "By 2040, the Philippines is a prosperous middle-class society where no one is poor. People live long and healthy lives and are smart and innovative. The country is a high-trust society where families thrive in vibrant, culturally diverse, and resilient communities."

This vision embodies three elements: (i) Filipinos are socially cohesive (*matatag*); (ii) Filipinos are comfortable (*maginhawa*), and (iii) Filipinos are secure (*panatag*). On the assumption that *Ambisyon* 2040 remains the guiding vision in SWD for policymakers, planners and practitioners, the proposed Policy Agenda is linked with *Ambisyon* 2040. This assumption is bolstered by NEDA's plan that all subsequent 5-year PDPs up to 2040 will lay out "the pathways and modes" for realizing the long term aspirations articulated in *Ambisyon* 2040. To guide the formulation of the Policy Agenda, the overall strategic outcomes of *Ambisyon* 2040 (NEDA 2016) have been linked with three key themes, with a fourth theme to support the three themes (see **Figure 3**).

Figure 3. Linkage of *Ambisyon Natin 2040* with the Policy Agenda.
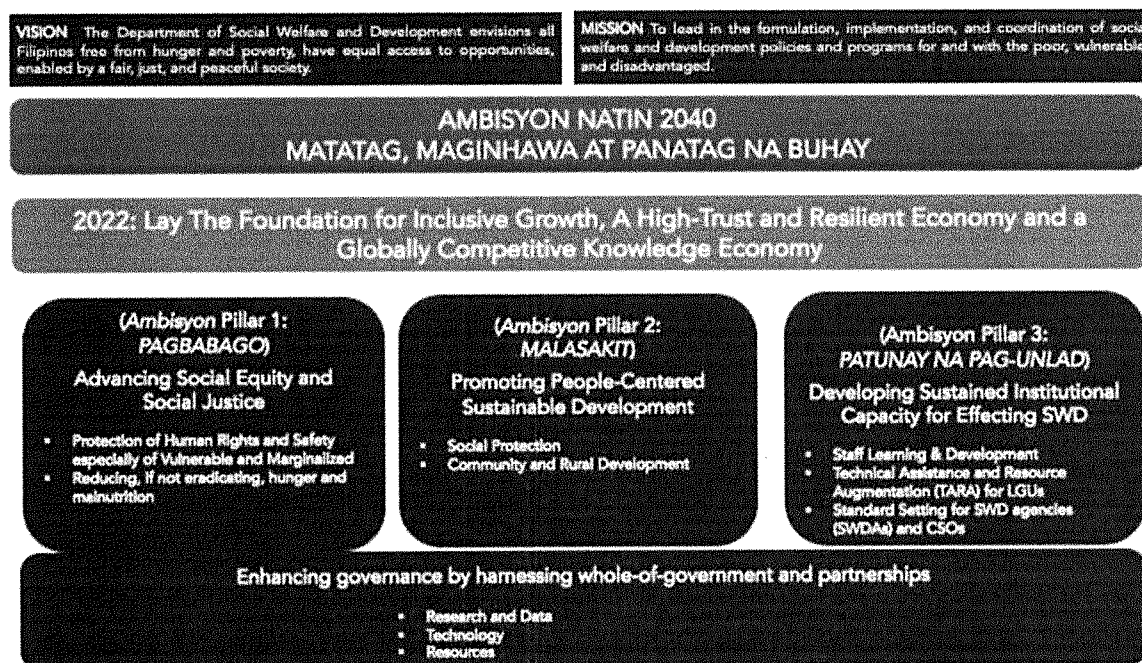
The four themes of the Agenda, viz.,

    v. Advancing Social Equity and Social Justice

    vi. Promoting People-Centered Sustainable Development

    vii. Developing Sustained Institutional Capacity for Effecting SWD

    viii. Enhancing governance by harnessing whole-of-government and partnerships

emerged from both the review of published and unpublished materials, as well as consultations with key informants, experts, DSWD staff and other stakeholders.

The first theme on "Advancing Social Equity and Social Justice", which is related to the *Ambisyon* Pillar on *"Pagbabago"*, deals with elements related to transforming Philippine society into a more inclusive, equal and just society, and the concomitant issue of a society

free from hunger. There is a consensus among the experts interviewed that the main barrier and bottleneck to social mobility is social inequality and social injustice. Since the 1990s, the DSWD has already been working on the social reform agenda, particularly the social protection operational framework and their subsequent updates, but more is being expected from the DSWD by SWD stakeholders in advancing social justice and social equity. The issue of social injustice is closely linked to with social inequality created by unequal distributions of various resources, inequitable access and unequal opportunities to social services and benefits among individuals and among different social groups. Although the country has had success in reducing income poverty especially in recent years, not every Filipino can access his or her rights, and use these rights to gain dignity, and social mobility. Pockets of the population in remote areas, in crisis situations or difficulty circumstances will need to be systematically assisted to overcome impediments in accessing their rights and improving their plights. These include street children, children in conflict with the law, children from families with members who are either drug pushers or drug dependents, persons with disability (PWDs), those suffering from the HIV/AIDS as well as other diseases, Violence against Women and Children (VAW-C) victims, IPs and their communities, and especially those suffering from multiple deprivations such as children with disability from poor families in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDAs). With more than 170 ethno-linguistic groups from distinct cultural traditions, the country has cultural diversity. This diversity should be managed to protect the dignity and rights of every Filipino, most especially the underserved and the often unseen segments of society. In the wake of crises from infectious diseases such as the novel coronavirus, or even their susceptibility to non-communicable diseases, some aging segments of society, such as poor, elderly, PWDs would need extra support to cope with vulnerabilities arising from their having to face several multiple overlapping disadvantages.

The second theme on "Promoting People-Centered Sustainable Development", which relates to the *Ambisyon* Pillar on "*Malasakit*", deals with issues that aim for enhancing the social fabric thru resilience building, with a special emphasis on caring for the needs of the most disadvantaged. Many of the hard-won gains in SWD can be endangered given vulnerabilities stemming from a variety of risks to individual and community welfare such as uncertainties from lack of decent work and educational attainment of household members, insecurity from land tenure and lack of productive assets, imperfect and asymmetric information on opportunities, as well as food insecurity, uncertain access to public goods, and asset damages from disasters and violence. Policies and programs on progressive universal social protection, coupled with use of risk transfer mechanisms, as well as community and rural development are crucial for sustainably managing risks to SWD. While universal coverage of social protection is ideal, because of limited available resources, the progressive realization of universal coverage is applied through the social protection floor. According to Chapter 11 of the PDP:

> "by the end of the planning period, Filipinos will have greater socioeconomic resiliency. A universal and transformative social protection will be provided to all, to empower the people and make them capable of preventing, responding to, and recovering from various risks (i.e., economic, governance, and political risks, risks from natural hazards and individuals' inherent vulnerabilities)." (NEDA 2016)

Often, the poorest of the poor are in rural and hard-to-reach communities bereft of access to basic social services, and easily victimized by the harmful effects of natural disasters and other shocks. Since poverty in the country continues to be predominantly rural, the thrust of poverty reduction, which is at the heart of the Department's vision and mission, should be on rural development. The Department has already shown much success in community empowerment through community-driven development. This success should bolster the Department's leadership in SWD concerns as it advocates for rural development, in consonance with work done by agencies such as DA and DAR that have been tasked to work

on the agricultural sector, while also learning from challenges in the formulation, design, implementation and monitoring of its past and current SWD policies.

The third theme on "Developing Sustained Institutional Capacity for Effecting SWD" and relatedly Pillar 3 of *Ambisyon* deals with capacity development, which is typically viewed as one-off training activities at the individual level, but actually is a process of managing transformations of capacities beyond the level of the individual, to the level of the institution, and the level of enabling environments. To sustain the strengthening of abilities at these three interlinked and interdependent levels, capacity development must account for impact at these multiple levels. In addition, capacity development activities cannot be one-off interventions. Regular assessments are critical to determine knowledge and capacity gaps that will, in turn, identify necessary interventions. Existing policies on varying levels of capacity development need to be examined in the wake of the vastly changing bureaucracy. With the Mandanas ruling increasing the share of revenues of LGUs, this effectively enables LGUs to conduct more service delivery. In consequence, the DSWD should work on transferring more of its steering functions, and on capacitating LGUs with TARA. Further, the Department also needs to continue standard setting for SWDAs, which is also part of capacity development. As DSWD rethinks its current policies on capacity development of SWD institutions, including TARA for LGUs and standard setting for SWDAs, the Department should also work systematically in reexamining current policies and developing new policies to increase innovation, creativity, communication, and other future skills among DSWD staff.

Pursuing the three themes discussed above requires enhancing governance by harnessing whole-of-government and partnerships for maximizing SWD outcomes. Governance is often viewed as the exercise of authority and control by a multiplicity of private and public interests. There has been some concern about the extent of leadership succession, as well as frequent reorganizations at the Department as these have been perceived as challenges to ensuring continuity of policy and strategic focus. In the past three and a half years, the DSWD has had four Secretaries, two at an officer-in-charge status. Policy outcomes in SWD fall significantly short of policy intentions often because of the institutions of governance and leadership, that shape the policy process. Effective governance for the policy agenda should be participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. The formulation and implementation of policies on SWD requires identification of issues and the issue context, options or solutions, assessment of options, selection of the most suitable option(s), monitoring and assessment of implementation, learning for future policy making endeavors, and attaining increased efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy. SWD policies must be anchored on information capital. The critical ingredients for decision making are relevant data, policy research studies (including monitoring and evaluation activities), supported by social technology and other resources.

The review of SWD policy documents and inputs from stakeholders suggest that the four key themes in the proposed Policy Agenda, have been persisting areas of concern in the past two decades. The emphasis and effects of these themes on DSWD operations have, however, been changing in the wake of increasing demands on SWD services across the entire SWD landscape. As pointed out earlier, various legislation (see **Annex A**) in the past twenty years have been reshaping the responsibilities of the Department, as well as the nature and extent of social protection in the country, and have given the DSWD reason to change its business processes. Poverty reduction continues to be mainstreamed in development policy, particularly in legislative frameworks. Of 39 SWD laws enacted between 2000 and 2019, most (84.6%) of the RAs enacted in support of protective services that are meant to advance social equity and social justice (**Figure 4**). In recent years, laws on enhancing governance have figured more prominently, while few legislations have been enacted on capacity development and on promotive spheres.

Figure 4. Number of Republic Acts (RAs) relevant to SWD per year, by Theme.
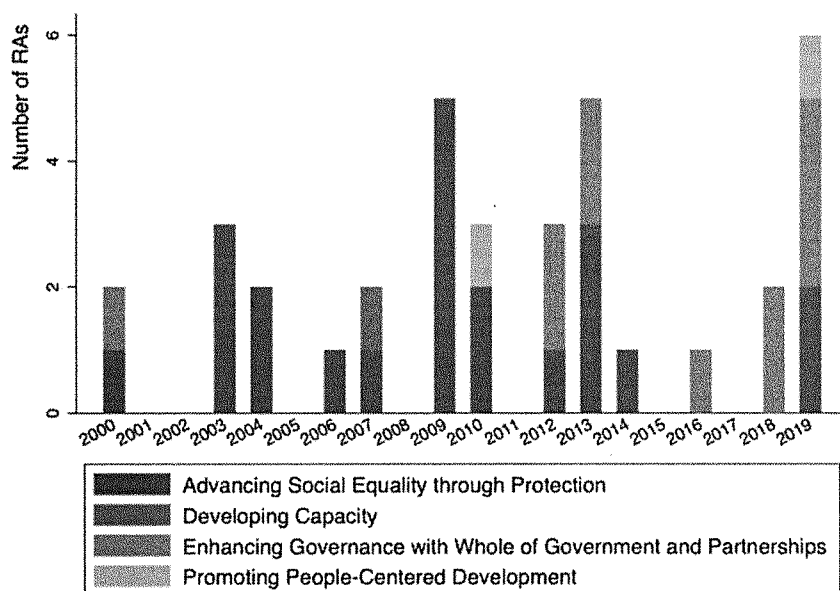

The four broad policy themes have facilitated addressing some areas that require the attention of the entire SWD environment. The governance set-up at DSWD has provided, however, only little opportunity for collaboration within DSWD siloes to effect policy reform across the whole social sector. While the DSWD has benefited from various internal and external studies of its policies, programs and operations, the extent to which the suggestions of these studies have effected changes in policies and governance has been mixed. While policy gaps may have been identified over the years through various mechanisms (such as management discussions at Execom and Mancom, cluster meetings, and conduct of the National Management Development Conference) that provide DSWD staff a means of studying these policy gaps in broad strokes, the distribution of policies across thematic areas has been highly unbalanced, and has been influenced by the extent of resources for SWD programs and projects, especially on social protection, as well as legislative thrusts to help certain marginalized and vulnerable segments of society. However, practices on case management and corresponding compilation of data have not received as much attention. Policies on graduation from Pantawid have not been developed, in part, because of the lack of available information about dynamics in living conditions among beneficiaries, that could have been systematically collected during case management activities.

It can also be instructive to examine the distribution of DSWD Administrative Orders (AOS) and Memorandum Circulars (MCs) in the past two decades to look into thematic focus across the years. As regards AOs, from 2001 to 2019, an average of 20 AOs per year have been issued by DSWD (**Figure 5**). More than half (53%) of these AOs are on governance-related matters, with the share of governance-related AOs being higher in recent years. The most number of AOs released was in 2003, while the least was in 2001.

Figure 5. Number of Administrative Orders (AOs) per year, by Theme.
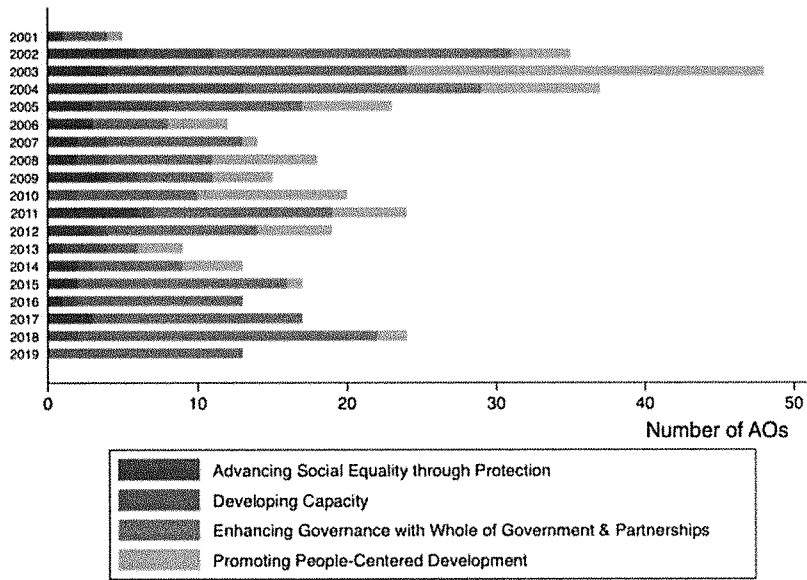
As regards MCs, an average of 21 MCs per year have been issued during the period 2001 to 2019 (**Figure 6**). In this entire period, two-thirds (68%) of these MCs are on governance-related matters, although in recent years, i.e. from 2014 to 2019, the bulk (57%) of MCs have shifted away from governance toward the promotive theme. The most number of MCs released were in the years 2003-2005 when at least 35 MCs were issued. While the least was in 2007 when only 5 MCs were released.

Figure 6. Number of Memorandum Circulars (MCs) per year, by Theme.
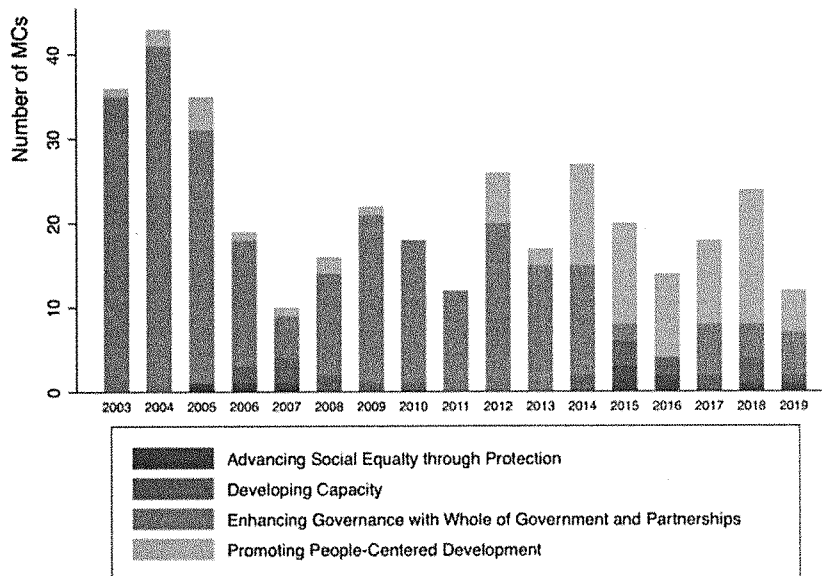
Results of consultations with various SWD stakeholders, including DSWD management and staff suggest that there is a high level of appreciation for evidence-based policy formulation. Some have even raised concerns regarding the formulation of some policies in recently passed laws that did not benefit from rigorous research, such as operations-oriented research,

medium- to long-term policy-oriented research, as well as (process and impact) evaluation studies on policies and programs. While the Department regularly expresses its positions on many proposed laws, typically inputs are given by various stakeholders, whose positions may be in contrast to those of the Department. With increasing attention given to assess the value-for-money of government programs, there is increasing demand especially for process and impact evaluation studies, and results of such studies can yield recommendations for revising policies.

While the Department has developed many policies over the past decades, supported by a broad array of SWD programs and measures over the years, it is important for DSWD to have a plan for reviewing its major policies, how these have been implemented and/or update those policies, as need be, in support of the proposed Policy Agenda that will be discussed in detail in the following section.

4. The Proposed Policy Agenda

The Policy Agenda is proposed around the four themes discussed earlier with major elements under each of the themes. Under each major element are sub-elements with specific policy issues. This is in line with the Department's need for a substantive agenda. The elements and sub-elements are aimed at guiding the process of implementation of the agenda setting, but are by no means exhaustive.

SWD policies and the proposed policy agenda are responses to social issues and conditions in the country. When social problems (such as inequity of access to social services) are identified, the formulation, development and implementation of policies, and the delivery of quality social security and social welfare programs and services are critical. The Department also needs to influence and evaluate the results of public policy that have bearings on SWD. If policies respond well to SWD issues and concerns, and the programs deliver social services that alleviate a social problem, the results are positive and there will be a measurable improvement in a specific social goal. However, sometimes even the best of policies have unintended consequences that need to be examined with an SWD lens.

Policies on SWD reflect choices about how best to provide social protection and to whom, given limited resources. SWD policies are also shaped by visions about what and how government should provide support toward attaining social equity and social justice, but these policies and the policy agenda should be dynamic, since contexts, values, and resources change across time. The process in creating successful SWD policies is however filled with potential problems; seldom is the first attempt to solve a social problem through public policy completely successful. Often, the solution to one problem even carries the seed of another problem. Thus, the need for policies on SWD to be evaluated regularly.

A. Theme 1: Advancing Social Equity and Social Justice

Ambisyon 2040 and the PDP have mainstreamed the quest for social equity and social justice (NEDA 2016, NEDA 2017). These visions and plans have been formulated with the recognition that some segments of society are vulnerable to risks, marginalized and excluded from opportunities, even from the right to access food. Remedying fundamental social inequalities and social injustices is a matter of respect for people's universal human rights, as mentioned in Article XIII on Social Justice and Human Rights of the Philippine Constitution. Two elements – (i) the protection of human rights and safety especially of the vulnerable and marginalized; as well as (ii) the reduction, if not eradication of hunger and malnutrition – are part of Policy Agenda Theme 1 on "Advancing Social Equity and Social Justice". Based on respect for the inherent worth and dignity of all Filipinos, SWD policy and practice should promote the rights to individual self-actualization and participation in development processes. What is distinctive about SWD is that it locates the person in the context of his or her life as a whole.

<u>A1. Protection of Human Rights and Safety especially of Vulnerable and Marginalized</u>

The Department's mandate includes protection of human rights and of the safety of all, particularly the underserved and underrepresented who are not given the opportunity to fully participate in development processes. Every Filipino is entitled to the realization of economic, social and cultural rights within the limits of the resources of the state. The current national development plans as well as country's international commitments to SWD, as embodied in several SDGs and the ASCC 2025 Blueprint, are all unequivocally anchored in human rights, with SWD targets meant to realize the human rights of all (NEDA 2016; NEDA 2017; UN 2015; ASEAN 2016). The national and international SWD agenda are explicitly grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international human rights treaties and other instruments including the Declaration on the Right to Development. In committing to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the SDGs (UN 2015), the Philippines, together with 192 other UN member states, have pledged to leave no one behind (LNOB).

A focus of action is on the principle of LNOB. The Preamble for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development states:

> "As we embark on this great collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind. Recognizing that the dignity of the human person is fundamental, we wish to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society. And we will endeavour to reach the furthest behind first" (UN 2015).

The developmental approach to social welfare embraces socio-economic rights, including the right to social protection. From a human rights perspective, social services include interventions such as protection of the rights of populations at risk of oppression and marginalization; the promotion of rights through education of rights and duties; facilitating access to rights; challenging social structures, institutions and systems that compromise rights and advocacy for needs and rights.

- Advocating for Rights of All Children to Quality Education and Health Services

Human rights and SWD agendas converge. Right-based approaches to SWD and SWD-based approaches to human rights emphasize social rights, including the rights of all children to quality education and health services. These rights are essential tools for achieving the objectives of social equity and sustainable development.

The right to education of every Filipino child is guaranteed by the Philippine Constitution. Every child has the right to grow, learn, and develop in the early years, and, upon reaching school age, to go to school and be welcomed and included by teachers and peers. And yet, not every Filipino child is in school. Often, economic reasons are the root cause why children are excluded from basic education (David *et al.* 2018b). Thus, since 2008, the Philippine government has instituted a conditional cash transfer program, i.e., *Pantawid*, that seeks to address demand-side issues on the lack of school participation of children from poor families. Coupled with addressing supply-side issues on basic education, these investments on *Pantawid* are paying off given the reduction of the number and proportion of children excluded from basic education in the last decade, aside from improved the living conditions of the poor (WB 2018; Tutor, 2014, Orbeta *et al.* 2016), and decreases in conflict-related incidents and local insurgent influences (Crost et al. 2016).

Even though a lot fewer children are excluded from basic education, out of school children still persist on account of poverty, gender, disability, ethnicity and other conditions that people are born into (David *et al.* 2018b; Reyes *et al.* 2017). Children with disabilities, and other children with special needs face specific challenges in the pursuit of their right to education, resulting

in reduced access to mainstream education, especially quality education. IP children, street children, and children from other marginalized families and communities are deprived of access to education because of their background or the cultural or economic barriers to education that they constantly face. Although the DepEd works on inclusive education programs, the country faces challenges in improving the quality of learning for all children, and most especially for the needy, underprivileged and underserved such as IP children (Reyes *et al.* 2017). The extremely poor performance of the Philippines in the 2018 PISA, which involved 600,000 participating students from 79 economies, as well as the poor rankings of the country in the education quality and equity dimension of the Global Social Mobility Index should come as no surprise given trends in the performance of students in the National Achievement Test (NAT). For 2018 alone, the mean percentage score (MPS) in the Grade 6 NAT was at 37.44, while the Grade 10 MPS was at 44.59. Both MPS scores are under the "low mastery" level in the NAT, across all subjects tested (David *et al.* 2018b). Disaggregated MPS data by sex suggest that girls are outperforming boys (across all subjects) though the performance metrics suggest that all learners, whether boys or girls suffer from deficits in reading skills. Many problems faced by children who dropped out from school are also traced to problems in reading at the early grades (see David *et al.* 2018b).

Disparities in school participation and completion rates across various tiers of basic education from the primary level to the lower and upper secondary levels can be observed between the richest and the poorest, between boys and girls, between urban and rural residents. These gaps in school participation and completion spill over to higher education. Amid the pandemic, schools across varous educatin tiers have made use of television and radio broadcasts in combination with the internet as communication channels between educators and learners, but likely, more gaps in quality of learning have resulted from digital divides between the poor and the non-poor segments of society.

Attempting to make tertiary education more accessible, the government has instituted a policy on Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education. Although this policy is well-intentioned toward making state-run higher education and technical-vocational institutions more accessible, policy researchers (e.g. Orbeta and Paqueo 2017) warn that this untargeted free tuition policy in state universities and colleges (SUCs), local universities and colleges (LUCs), and state-run technical vocational institutes (TVIs) will likely lead to unintended consequences of worsening equity issues. Before the policy was adopted, only 1 in 10 students from SUCs and LUCs belong to the bottom 20 percent of the income distribution. Untargeted free college would thus benefit non-poor families more than the poor. Further, in the competition for free spaces in SUCs, LCS and state-run TVIs, those with poor quality basic education, likely those from poorer households, will expectedly lose out. The poor need more than just free tuition to go to college as living allowances, rather than tuition and other fees, are the biggest component of total cost of college education. Further, the challenges in the provision of quality education in basic education among learners carry over to higher education and are reflected by the low number of higher education institutions with accredited programs, as well as the persistently low national performance in licensure exams (from an average of 39.3% in 2015 to an average of 36.8% in 2017).

The Philippine Constitution also guarantees the right of children to health and psycho-social services. However, not all children (and their mothers) are able to access their rights to health services, especially quality health and psycho-social care, due to social, economic and geographical barriers. The marginalized and vulnerable segments of society are often located in rural areas, especially GIDAs, where quality health care is not accessible, thus making these social groups more likely to have worse health outcomes than the rest of the population. Results of the 2017 National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) point to many health inequities among children. In particular, NDHS data suggests that basic vaccination coverage is slightly lower in rural areas than urban areas (66% versus 75%) . Further, under-5 mortality is also about four times higher among children from the poorest households (42 deaths per

1,000 live births) compared to children from the wealthiest households (11 deaths per 1,000 live births).

Given the current equity issues in social service delivery, the DSWD has a significant role to play in steering agencies in the education and health sectors to vigorously work for ensuring that all children, especially those from the margins, are able to access their rights to quality education and health services, as well as related social services such as access to safe water and safe sanitation.

- Promoting Lifelong Learning Systems, Skills Development Opportunities, and Quality Health and Psycho-social Care at all Life Stages for Everyone

Every Filipino has a right to attain a decent standard of living, and the state, within the limits of its resources, should find mechanisms to promote dreams of social mobility. Data from the Labor Force Survey (LFS), conducted quarterly by the PSA, suggests that in pre-pandemic times, nearly two out of five workers are less likely to have formal work arrangements and access to social protection; these workers are thus more at risk to suffer from a crisis or shock. Labor informality is also a major barrier to improving social mobility and to increasing the size of the middle class. Lifelong learning systems are vastly needed to account for the needs for tooling and retooling of the labor force across the entire life cycle, from infancy and childhood, to youth, to working age and to old age. Across various periods of life, individuals can encounter challenging life transitions (e.g. puberty and adolescence, leaving home, having a baby, getting married or separated) and traumatic life events (e.g. death of a loved one, loss of a job, occurrence of extreme natural disaster), environmental pressures (e.g. lack of financial resources and social provisions), and dysfunctional transactions in family, group, and community life. Stress from such transitions can occur when the individual believes that he/she does not have the resources, or capabilities to overcome these life period transitions, and there is a lack of available resources from the environment to overcome the challenges. Lifelong learning systems can play a key role in addressing risks from the life period transitions and persisting labor informality in the country, as well as the VUCA world we live, particularly the vastly changing nature of work spurred by increased use of frontier technologies. Policies need to be in place for constantly re-skilling and upskilling the workforce, that can narrow the gap between the average Filipino and those likely to be left behind from increased automation.

As regards the health sector, services are delivered in the country by both the public and private sectors. Despite the devolution of public health services in the county, with only 70 of the country's 721 public hospitals supervised by the DOH, Filipinos, all Filipinos, especially from the marginalized and vulnerable sectors, have yet to be provided affordable, comprehensive and quality health care. Since 1995, social health insurance has aimed to provide financial risk protection for the population. With the legislation of the Universal Health Coverage (UHC) program, all Filipinos are expected to be given all the health services they need. But variations in access to services persist between the poor and the non-poor, between urban and rural areas, and across regions, with the bulk of health care providers concentrated in urban areas and serving the non-poor, that result in inequity in quality care and in health outcomes. Specific groups, such as the elderly, have special health needs given their propensity for illnesses compared to younger people; further they are less economically active. Elderly coming from poor and low income families would thus require greater government support for quality health and psycho-social care. The rising prevalence of HIV, and the increasing teenage pregnancies should be cause for concern, given their likely social impact to the family as the basic unit of society. Results of the 2017 NDHS conducted by the PSA suggest that 1 in 10 Filipino women age 15-19 have begun childbearing; the highest rates of teenage pregnancies are among women from Davao (18% have begun childbearing). The percentage of young women who have begun childbearing is higher in the rural population than in urban areas (10% versus 7%). Teenage pregnancy in the country is also found to be more prevalent among the poor, and those with lower education. Quality care should be given

to adolescents and children to protect their physical, mental and psycho-social health, especially those with solo-parents, unwed mothers, as well as those coming from families victimized by drugs and other challenging situations. In its Philippine Health System Review Report, the World Health Organization (WHO) points out that "there is lack of institutional capacity to translate policy into effective programme implementation, monitoring and evaluation" (WHO 2018).

There are instrumental reasons for working to have all Filipinos given lifelong learning opportunities and quality health and psycho-social services. Progress across various aspects of SWD will accelerate if the current gaps in opportunities for lifelong learning and quality care between the most and least deprived are narrowed. The availability and accessibility of lifelong learning and quality care to Filipinos, most especially those from vulnerable sectors, such as PWDs, IPs, elderly, the homeless, and the rural population. Equity actions promote social cohesion, and these interventions can positively affect the overall attainment of sustainable development (Reyes *et al.* 2019b; Reyes *et al.* 2017; Reyes, *et al.* 2011; Tabuga and Mina 2010; Reyes *et al.* 2009; Yap *et al.* 2007).

While the DepEd, TESDA and CHED are mandated to serve the entire education sector, and the DOH together with LGUs manage the health sector, the regular review of public policies in human capacity investments using the lens of SWD is important. DSWD has a function to champion SWD policies that look into the varying needs of individuals for learning and quality care, and the risks they face across their life cycle.

- Achieving Gender Equality, Social Cohesion and Inclusion

Gender equality, social cohesions and inclusion are cross-cutting priorities in SWD. Social cohesion pertains to the process of social solidarity that is based on shared values, common norms and common bonds within the population. Inclusion entails opportunity enhancement for building or re-establishing social relationships by facilitating the access of everyone, especially the poor, marginalized and vulnerable, to public institutions, and social services, especially social protection and welfare programs (ASEAN 2018; ADB 2018). Social cohesion and inclusion are particularly manifested in gender equality, as gender is all about social relations (ADB and UN Women 2018; WB 2012).

Various data show that the Philippines has made significant progress in closing the gender gap in school participation. Further, the gender wage gap is slightly in favor of females, with the country ranking fifth across the world in this indicator according to the 2020 Global Gender Gap Index (WEF 2019). However, other available data, particularly in leadership and political empowerment highlights persisting inequalities for women and girls: female representation in the cabinet declined from 25% in 2017 to 10% in 2019. Female representation in the legislature is also slightly reduced, and stands at 28% as of the beginning of 2019, but is still far from levels of gender equity. While many laws, including the Magna Carta for Women, have been passed to eliminate violence against women and children (VAWC), implementation deficits in key policies and practices have been observed (David *et al.* 2018a). The devolved nature of core social services for VAWC also needed policies to coordinate holistic responses to VAWC, especially in poorer locales where the prevalence of VAWC appears to be higher. Children need particular protection: it is important to have key policies on safeguarding them from violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect. Proposed bills on gender equality and equal protection under the law, as well as the repeal of laws and provisions that are harmful for women and children should be pushed by DSWD, in cooperation with the Philippine Commission on Women, the Council for the Welfare of Children, and other advocates of gender equality and child protection.

Results of the 2020 Global Gender Gap Index (WEF 2019) also suggest that the Philippines remains one of the poorest performers on labor force participation, ranking 121st out of 159

countries assessed, with only half of women (47.7%) in the labor force, compared to three quarters (76.2%) for males. Unpaid care work is the main bottleneck to women's labor participation. As of January 2018, the principal reason given by (about 58.2% of) women of working age for being economically inactive, i.e., being outside the labour force is unpaid care work, whereas for (54.5% of) their men counterparts, "schooling" is the primary reason for being outside the labour force. While unpaid work covers shortfalls in formal social protection, but it also carries important costs borne by women and girls, including restriction of choices that can improve their social mobility. If unpaid care work were properly valued into national accounts, portraits of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) would look very different: accordingly, the contribution of unremunerated work of women to the Philippine economy has been estimated at 18.6 percent of the GDP (Abrigo and Abrigo 2019). The issue on unpaid care work gets further exacerbated by multiple overlapping disadvantages, as in the case of PWDs: PWD women allot more work time to unpaid home care work, and personal activities (Reyes *et al.* 2011; Tabuga and Mina 2010).

The unequal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work between women and men is also a major obstacle to gender equality and women's socio-economic empowerment (ADB and UN Women 2018). Women, including those educated, still account for most unpaid care work: annual estimates in the period 2001 to 2018 from the four quarterly rounds of the PSA's LFS suggest that for every 9 women economically inactive due to household/family duties, we find one male counterpart. Many factors contribute to the unpaid time and relative burdens among women and men include social norms, demographic factors, as well as public policies on employment, parental leave, public infrastructure on water, sanitation and energy. Growing populations, changing demographics, ageing societies, women's secondary status in labour markets and deficiencies in social policies require policies to recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care and domestic work that is undoubtedly essential for social inclusion and sustainable development. The Department can advocate for policies at the local level, implemented by LGUs, that offer incentives to households to reduce and rebalance the burden of unpaid labor.

As regards rapid economic and social disruptions, accompanied by cultural change, the VUCA are resulting in unusually high demands on institutions, such as the DSWD. Further, the country is getting more demographic pressures: the population is ageing as a result of decreased mortality rates and falling birth rates; and family structures have changed with more lone parent families, more members of the family becoming OFWs, and more old people living alone. Social values are in flux regarding what is acceptable and unacceptable social disadvantage, and the scope of public interventions for the disadvantaged that can hasten social inclusion. While some sectors continue to champion increased social services to be desirable (which, if provided, will mean increased costs, and necessitate increased government revenues for these services), yet some Filipinos may be blaming SWD programs and services as creating a culture of dependency. Very few policies and strategies are currently being developed to cushion the impacts of economic and social reorganization on people and communities. Various changes in social relations, attitudes and practices, including technology use have resulted in issues that affect the family, which is the basic unit of society. These issues maybe deterrents to attempts at strengthening social cohesion and inclusiveness. Examples include unwed mothers and teenage pregnancies, single parents, overseas parents, mental health of children, illegal drugs abuse, infections from HIV/AIDS, diseases and epidemics, among others. For the children and families affected by these circumstances, there should be SWD responses available to the changing social environment.

Further, while technology, especially the internet yields various opportunities and benefits for everyone, especially women and children in terms of the impact of technology on social inclusion and economic empowerment (for women), and on learning (for children), there is also growing concern regarding online sexual exploitation of women and children. The net has also increased risks to women and children of having abusive images of them shared on

cyberspace; of being lured into sexual conversations or exploitation; and, of being bullied or harassed online. The Department will need to advocate for creating a safe external environment that allows women and children to benefit from the use of modern technologies without experiencing harm. The policy framework should entail (a) empowering women and children, and enhancing their resilience to harm; (b) ensuring punishment for cyberspace abusers; (c) reducing availability of harmful material from the internet and access to harm; and, (d) promoting recovery and rehabilitation for women and children who have experienced online abuse, exploitation and harm (UNICEF 2011).

A2. Reducing, if not eradicating, hunger and malnutrition

A 2019 report on the Global Hunger Index[9] suggests that across 117 countries assessed, hunger levels in the Philippines and 47 other countries remain serious or alarming (WHH and Concern Worldwide 2019). The report noted that while the level of hunger in developing countries as a group has fallen by 27% since 2000, "the state of hunger in the world remains serious."

To fight the war against hunger, the DSWD has been implementing feeding programs (together with DepEd), as well as nutrition advocacies in both the *Pantawid* Family Development Sessions (FDS) and the SLP. These DSWD programs are part of the Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition (PPAN) 2017-2022, the government's blueprint for addressing the immediate causes of hunger and malnutrition: inadequate food and nutrient intake, poor care-giving and parenting practices, and infectious diseases. The PPAN, formulated within the framework of the PDP (NEDA 2017), is being championed by the National Nutrition Council (NNC) of the DOH; the DSWD is a member of the NNC's Governing Board, together with 8 other Departments (headed by DOH), as well as three private-sector institutions. As key to achieving improvements in nutritional outcomes, PPAN's strategic thrusts include a focus on the first 1,000 days (F1KD) in life, intensified mobilization of local government units, and reaching geographically isolated and disadvantages areas and communities of indigenous peoples. Nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive programs under the PPAN aim to reach 90 percent of the target population, with a rather ambitious target of reducing stunting from a third (33.4%) to a fifth (21.4%) of children under five years of age.

Further, the Department is involved in the EPAHP, which started off in 2016 as the Partnership Against Hunger and Poverty (PAHP), a collaborative effort of DSWD, the Department of Agriculture (DA) and Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) to create community food hubs. The PAPH has been expanded into EPAHP in 2019 to include more government entities. Aside from DSWD, DA and DAR, the agencies in EPAHP include the DILG, the DepEd, the DOH, the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), NAPC, National Irrigation Administration (NIA), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Commission on Population (POPCOM) and Landbank. The EPAHP is meant to mitigate hunger, ensure food and nutrition security, and reduce poverty in urban and rural communities, including marginalized communities.

The Department is being expected by SWD stakeholders to actively steer policies in the efforts to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, which are problems of the poorest of the poor. While not all the poor suffer from hunger, but all those suffering from hunger and malnutrition are poor, and among the poorest of the poor. Hunger and malnutrition has dire consequences especially

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[9] The index comprises four indicators: (a) UNDERNOURISHMENT: the share of the population that is undernourished (that is, whose caloric intake is insufficient); (b) CHILD WASTING: the share of children under the age of five who are wasted (that is, who have low weight for their height, reflecting acute undernutrition); (c) CHILD STUNTING: the share of children under the age of five who are stunted (that is, who have low height for their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition); and (d) CHILD MORTALITY: the mortality rate of children under the age of five (in part, a reflection of the fatal mix of inadequate nutrition and unhealthy environments).

for children, whose lifelong development from the moment they go to school, up to the time they eventually join the work force, is put at risk given their developmental disadvantages.

- Securing Right to Access Adequate Food and Healthy Diets for Individuals and Families

Malnutrition, especially undernutrition of infants and children, has been a perennial problem in the country; and this problem not only impacts on health outcomes, but also on education attainment and economic productivity. As of 2015, a third (33.4%) of children under five years old were found stunted or too short for their age. This prevalence rate is a significant reduction from nine in twenty children (44.7% in 1989) two and a half decades ago, but reductions have been rather modest in recent years, despite investments to improve children's health and nutrition over the years.

A further concern is disparities in stunting across socio-economic groups. In 2015, stunting among children below five is higher among children from the rural population than their urban counterparts (38.1% vs 28.3%). Across the country, nearly half (49.7%) of children from the poorest quintile are stunted as of 2015: this rate is thrice that of the richest (14.7%). Other forms of child malnutrition are due to micronutrient deficiency and hunger and food insecurity with two thirds (68.3%) of Filipino households, mostly among the poorest families, not meeting their caloric requirements. There are also concerns on maternal nutrition: adolescent pregnant women with low educational attainment, coming from the poorest families, and are employed are found to have relatively higher levels of undernutrition which could consequences to the nutrition of the growing fetus, and to the resulting infant.

According to the PPAN, the underlying causes of hunger and malnutrition include sedentary lifestyle and behaviors, insufficient supply or access to healthy foods, inadequate care and feeding practices and behaviors and poor water, sanitation, food safety and inadequate health services. Public policies should actively work toward ensuring food security and adequate nutrition for all infants and children (and their mothers), especially those from needy and vulnerable families.

The F1KD days of life are a unique and critical period of opportunity for supporting the physical brain development of a child, which, in turn, have a lifelong impact on their mental and emotional health (Morris et al. 2008). During this period, a child's brain begins to grow and develop. When a baby's health development (physical, cognitive, social and emotional, and behavioral development) falls behind the norm during the F1KD of life, it is much more likely that the child will fall even further behind in subsequent years than catch up with those who have had a better start. Poor nutrition in the F1KD can cause early deaths or irreversible damage to a child's growing brain, affecting the subsequent ability of a child to do well in school and earn a decent living—and thus making it harder for a child from a poor family to eventually rise out of poverty. It can also set the stage for various chronic diseases which can lead to a lifetime of health problems. At the societal level, child malnutrition risks prosperity and growth which could further hamper efforts to reduce poverty. Thus part of PPAN's interventions include early childhood care and development (ECCD) for the F1KD. Recent process evaluation studies (e.g. Abrigo et al. 2019) suggest that access to and delivery of ECCD-F1KD programs and services is affected by governance (including lack of integrated planning at the LGU level; lack of coordination in planning and budgeting), demand side issues (poor capacity of many households to access such interventions), supply side constraints (lack of capacity of volunteer health workers; overburdened midwives; difficulty of reaching GIDAs due to security concerns and geographical barriers); and measurement issues (the absence of proper M&E; the use of data of questionable quality) that deserve policy support.

While the PPAN tries to harmonize nutrition and related programs, it is clear that reducing hunger and malnutrition needs to become a top priority in the sustainable and inclusive

development action agenda, which can happen with the establishment of the Task Force on Zero Hunger.

- Ensuring Food Security for All

Food insecurity is defined as "the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways" (Life Sciences Research Office, 1990). Food-insecurity and malnutrition are related though the relationship is not one-to-one as there are also children from food-secure households that experience growth faltering on account of factors such as inappropriate feeding practices, poor access to health services, and poor sanitation. Still, poorer households face greater risk of food insecurity than nonpoor households. Poverty limits a household's capacity to earn a regular income, access to education and health services. Income has effects on the capacity of the household to ensure food security.

The World Food Summit of 1996 described food security as existing "when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life". Food security thus encompasses a measure of resilience to future disruption or unavailability of food supply due to risk factors including droughts and other natural disasters, transport disruptions, fuel shortages, economic instability, and wars. Food security is thus not just a question of there being enough food available but rather it also reflects the fact that some people do not have equal access to food because of differences in the resources they possess and other economic, social and political factors. Control of the distribution of food within households is another dimension: female children and adults often get less food than male counterparts; and the provision of adequate food for elderly family members may not be a priority particularly during difficult times. Food insecurity can be temporary or long-term.

According to the FNRI's 2015 Food Security Survey, more than a fifth (21.9%) of Filipino households were "severely food insecure" (DOST-FNRI 2016). The results of the survey also showed that some areas, particularly, provinces in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), are more vulnerable to food insecurity. More than four fifths (44.5%) of households in ARMM were severely food insecure; this represents about twice the national rate. Households that are dependent on fisheries and agriculture sector (21.8%) and those with heads that had low or no educational attainment (15.9%), which characterize poor households, especially the poorest of the poor, also had lower incidence of being food secure than households headed by professionals (67.4%) and college graduates (67.7%). Households whose wealth category were in the lowest tiers were also found to be less food secure compared to households in the wealthiest category. Wealthy households have also diverse diets as well compared to other socio-economic groups, especially the poorest. More concerted policies and programs should be developed toward strengthening the link between supply and demand for food. This should include increasing farmers' capabilities and efficiency, and organizing them into networks that can facilitate access to fresh, nutritious, and varied food especially in areas more vulnerable to food insecurity. Problems on hunger have to be ultimately worked out in specific contexts, with the participation of the people who are vulnerable to food security. These grassroots solutions require supportive policies both nationally and sub-nationally.

B. Theme 2: Promoting People-Centered Sustainable Development

The consequences of inequality can be overwhelming: a sense of unfairness, perceived loss of dignity, weakening social fabric, distrust of institutions, dissatisfaction with political processes, and an erosion of the social contract. Attaining the Department's vision that the country eradicates poverty requires policies that are people-focused, and at sync with sustainable development. People-centered sustainable development has multiple overlapping aspects that entail self-supporting social, economic and environmental systems. People face

various risks that can turn into crises. Risks can be sector-specific. They can be consequences of technology use or environmental conditions such as climate change. Or they can arise from factors, such as age, gender, and culture. Those from rural areas, such as agricultural and fishing households, and certain communities including GIDAs, drug-affected *barangays*, and insurgency-affected areas, may face risks to their welfare from volatility of food prices, land insecurity, natural resource degradation, climate change, poor quality of water and sanitation, and ill-health. In its 2014 World Development Report, the World Bank contends that responsibly and effectively managing risks to welfare has the potential to save lives, avert damages, prevent development setbacks, and unleash opportunities (WB 2013). Although individuals' efforts, initiative, and responsibility are essential for risk management, their success can be limited unless there is a supportive social environment especially when risks are large or systemic in nature. The national and local governments have crucial roles to play in helping people to manage risks, whether through direct interventions, or the provision of an enabling environment of shared risks. In line with its aspirations to reduce poverty and risks to welfare, the country has adopted a framework for social protection, which includes an official definition of social protection that is consistent with international usage, as well as an action plan (DSWD and NEDA-SC-SP 2019). Poverty has historically been largely concentrated in rural areas. While there is recognition that rural development should account for both economic and social aspects of development in rural areas, policies and programs on rural development in the country have focused on the economic aspects. The country will need to enhance rural development, and empower communities with a lens of SWD. The Department would need to steer government away from "one size fits all" policies and strategies on social protection as well as on community and rural development in recognition of varying risks faced by people and communities.

B1. Social Protection

Effective social protection policies, programs and projects are imperative for SWD (NEDA 2017, ASEAN 2018, ADB 2018). They promote social cohesion given the multiple overlapping risks faced by vulnerable groups in society, and they help bring about inclusive and sustainable development. A decade ago, evaluations of the country's social protection system (e.g., DAP 2009; Manasan 2009; Aldaba 2008) have noted that social protection measures tend to be fragmented and uncoordinated, scarcely funded, inadequately designed, short-lived, in some cases redundant and overlapping, and in many cases, mistargeted and dysfunctional. With the adoption of the Philippine Social Protection Operational Framework and Strategy (PSPOFS)[10], the country has made more efforts to synchronize, expand, and meld social protection interventions through the establishment of new institutional arrangements for coordinating social protection[11] (DSWD PDPB 2019). The primary goal and

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[10] The PSPOFS reiterates the official definition of Social Protection : "constitutes policies and programs that seek to reduce poverty, inequality and vulnerability to risks and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalized by promoting and protecting livelihood and employment, protecting against hazards and sudden loss of income, and improving people's capacity to manage risks. (as adopted by SDC Resolution No. 1 Series of 2007)". The PSPOFS identifies the underlying purpose of SP, namely, a better and improved quality of life for the citizenry (as exemplified in Ambisyon 2040), achieved through reduction of poverty and vulnerability and the inclusion of the marginalized in the development process. Specific objectives of social protection are: (1) To protect and prevent people from falling from their current income/consumption levels due to various risks factors; (2) To build capacity and adaptability to ensure that better quality of life is maintained and sustained; (3) To expand opportunities for employment through sound policies and income generation expansion and improved human capital investment in the long term; (4) To generate adequate support from government and other sectors to ensure sustained standards of living in spite of exposure to risk of different types; (5) To help create mechanisms and institutions to promote social inclusion and prevent/mitigate social vulnerabilities and discrimination; (6) To integrate responses to indigenous people's and other cultural concerns and issues.

[11] See Resolution No.2 series of 2009, Social Development Committee (SDC), NEDA.

specific objectives of social protection encompasses both themes 1 and 2 of the Policy Agenda. The last decade has also seen significant strides in social protection in the country, with the development and use of objective targeting mechanisms, the implementation of a conditional cash transfer that currently covers one-fifth of the household population, stronger coordination. Social protection has also had a rising prominence in the country's recent development plans and long-term development vision. The PDP 2017-2022 (NEDA 2017) has identified adopting and institutionalizing the social protection floor as a strategy to achieve universal social protection for building resilience of individuals, families and communities. Specific strategies include enhancing social protection for the informal sector, improving the pension system, strengthening mechanisms to ensure enrolment in the social security system, expanding health insurance packages, establishing an unemployment insurance system, among others. Further, the PDP highlights the requirements to address implementation issues on planning, mainstreaming and harmonizing of social protection at the local level, including better M&E, collection and use of data (NEDA 2017).

While social protection is already in the priorities of the Department, the relevance of mainstreaming social protection and ensuring that social protection is shock-responsive has even been more recognized amid COVID-19. For the next two years, the LGUs must come up with their respective SP policies and programs that are responsive to the current pandemic, and to future health emergencies and natural disasters for the remaining three years. It should be noted however, that this is possible only with a clear guidance from the DSWD and relevant national policies.

- Enhancing Well-being and Empowering of Needy with Social Assistance, Case Management and Graduation Programs

In the period 2009 to 2017, the public expenditure on social protection has grown, averaging at 5.9% of government expenditure or 0.9% of GDP. The bulk of the social protection expenditure has been on social welfare/assistance programs, including *Pantawid*, at 4.7% of public expenditures or 0.7% of GDP (Diokno-Sicat and Mariano 2018). Data from the World Bank's ASPIRE database are also suggests among poorest quintiles, 62 percent of conditional cash transfers beneficiaries are from the rural areas while 38 percent are urban residents. Despite the huge investments in social assistance, DSWD staff are currently hard-pressed to engage in critical social case management tasks, especially of social case M&E given the huge program coverage of Pantawid (Albert and Dacuycuy 2017). Due to the extent of caseloads (sometimes covering thousands of beneficiary-families per staff), *Pantawid* personnel are unable to conduct home visits during workweeks, and instead have to perform social case management either during weekends or during the FDS. The Department has identified 23 Social Welfare and Development Indicators (SWDI), 4 of them measuring economic sufficiency, while the remaining 19 measure social adequacy). The SWDI is meant to be used as an organizing framework for reflecting the common goal/objective of improving the level of well-being of Filipinos. In particular, SWDI data can be used as a case management tool for assessing the conditions and needs of DSWD program beneficiaries, and as a monitoring tool for tracking whatever welfare changes, if any, from survival (i.e., the level below poverty threshold) to subsistence (the level where beneficiaries have means to address basic needs like food and shelter) to self-sufficiency (the level where beneficiaries can provide for themselves without assistance from the Programs). Data on the SWDI are clearly vital inputs to action plans in the DSWD FOs, but they have not been regularly collected, although at the moment of writing of this report, some activities on gathering SWDI data are being undertaken. While SWDI is a useful data-driven tool to assess the needs and to identify gaps and interventions, it needs to be complemented with other information obtained from qualitative assessments including feasibility studies, immersions, and consultations. Further, hitherto no clear policies and strategies are in place regarding the graduation of *Pantawid* beneficiaries. Policies on exiting *Pantawid* currently cover only program exit, i.e., when the beneficiary household no longer meets the eligibility criteria as

established by Pantawid. Hitherto, no policies are in place regarding "graduation" or exiting from *Pantawid* when welfare conditions have improved for beneficiaries so they no longer need the cash transfers. However, a pilot implementation of Kilos-Unlad under the *Pantawid* program, which aims for the graduation of beneficiaries after a 7-year program towards self-sufficiency, undertaken by the Asian Development Bank with DOLE among 1,200 *Pantawid* families in Negros to place them on an upward trajectory into sustainable and resilient livelihoods and self-sufficiency. This has the potential to provide evidence on capacitating the beneficiaries with mind-sets and skills that can facilitate a transition into productive activities so that the families may have a better and sustainable future for themselves. More empirical studies can be undertaken guided by exit strategies of conditional cash transfers in other countries, such as Mexico (Medellín *et al.* 2015). The results of such studies could feed into policies and strategies, especially as *Pantawid* has been institutionalized by way of RA 11310. Currently, DSWD provides livelihood support through SLP, but studies (e.g.,Banerjee *et al.*, 2015) show that sustainably helping the very poor needs simultaneous interventions, viz., (a) productive asset grant, (b) training support, (c) life skills coaching, (d) temporary cash consumption support, (e) access to savings, and (f) health information and services. Data on the SWDI, or from the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction could also be systematically used to build evidence on what can work and what cannot for transition out of the program.

- Increasing Resilience Mechanisms, including Labor Market Interventions, Safety Nets and Social Insurance for targeted underserved areas & disadvantaged sectors

SWD should be seen not as a mechanistic operation but as a process which involves people and their modes of life. The country implements four core program social protection instruments, viz., (i) social insurance (including mandated occupational or personal pension plans; voluntary occupational or personal pension plans and supplementary non-contributory schemes); (ii) labor market interventions; (iii) social safety nets; and (iv) social welfare/assistance programs. These diverse instruments aim for building risk resilience, as well as promoting human capital, ensuring the rights of the needy segments of society, and improving equity. Resilience ensures that individuals, families, communities can withstand crisis — whether effects of a natural disaster, a job loss or a food price shock — and bounce back with limited long-term damage, and be better prepared for the next crisis. Strengthening risk resilience among undeserved areas and disadvantaged sectors ultimately builds the capacity of people and communities to move progressively and sustainably into improved living conditions. Resilience increasing measures should be adaptive to various risks :

(i)   individual and life-cycle risks (such as hunger, illness or injury, disability, pregnancy, childbirth, old age, or death);

(ii)   economic risks (such as unemployment, underemployment, sudden end of source of livelihood, price instability of basic commodities, economic crisis, lack of local opportunities, or weak agricultural production) ;

(iii)   environment and natural risks (such as drought, rains and floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruption, landslides, or storm surge) ;

(iv)   social and governance risks (such as shelter insecurity, corruption, crime, domestic violence, political instability, armed conflict, or social exclusion).

According to the country's Social Protection Plan 2020-2022 (DSWD and NEDA-SC-SP 2019), four program response planning groups (PRPG) are led by certain institutions on the various social protection instruments:

a.   Labor Market   - DOLE
b.   Social Assistance   - DSWD
c.   Social Insurance   - PhilHealth
d.   Social Safety Nets   - National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) and/or DILG

Active labor market programs are meant to assist disadvantaged groups find employment opportunities and or develop sustainable livelihoods for improving their level of economic sufficiency. The DSWD's SLP targets poor, vulnerable and marginalized households and communities through two tracks of livelihood support: (i) the Microenterprise Development track, which provides microcredit services to the poorest residents of SLP beneficiary communities for establishing microenterprises and for providing business support to them; and (ii) the Employment Facilitation track, which facilitates the employment of program participants through job matchings and skills training courses (Ballesteros *et al.* 2017). The Department may need to re-examine whether it should be having policies regarding establishing partnerships, especially among LGUs, for implementing the SLP in GIDAs and other underserved areas.

Social insurance is meant to cushion the risks associated with poor health, disability, unemployment, work injury, and old age. One of the current policies on social insurance is health care for all Filipinos by way of the Universal Health Care law. Transitioning into universal health care should target and account for the immediate needs of the underserved. While all Filipinos are granted "immediate eligibility" and access to a full spectrum of health care which includes preventive, promotive, curative, rehabilitative, and palliative care, some Filipinos, especially the poor, and those in GIDA, are given priority in access to basic health services. Another social insurance policy that DSWD is chiefly undertaking is the implementation of the Social Pension (SocPen). The SocPen targets the provision of some financial assistance to indigent elderly who are not part of any pension systems (Reyes *et al.* 2019b; Reyes et al. 2018; and Velarde and Albert 2018).The Department should keep calling attention to finding data that will help identify the extent to which social insurance coverage is improving, particularly among the poor, and to make policy adjustments, as need be, including differentiated interventions for improving social insurance coverage of disadvantaged sectors of society.

A specific area that the country has focused on is managing disaster resilience with the development of legislative frameworks and/or regulatory provisions. The Philippine DRRM Act of 2010 provides a comprehensive, all-hazard, multi-sectoral, interagency, and community-based approach to DRRM. Although this law mandated the crafting and implementation of the National Disaster Risk Management Framework and the NDRRM Plan, but institutional issues hamper the law's effective implementation (Domingo and Olaguera 2017).

The provision of early response and social safety nets during emergencies is critical. Safety nets are temporary in nature; they play a vital role in helping people to meet their immediate needs, and protecting them against falling back into irreparable long-term harm in welfare. The impact of assistance and social safety nets to victims of emergencies can be dependent on the design and implementation of these interventions. The challenge for safety nets is to design these so that they are targeted to those in greatest need, and to do so cost-effectively and sustainably. The ability to make relief and emergency decisions and communicate them with haste to the involved parties is also important. The effectiveness of response and recovery is largely dependent on the mutual trust of individuals and institutions in the affected area.

Strengthening resilience also includes providing people and communities the means to support themselves and to restore their livelihoods. Unconditional cash transfers have proven especially helpful during super-typhoon Yolanda, with people using the cash support for buying food and for addressing some of their other needs such as medicines, housing repair, livelihood and education-related expenses (Reyes *et al.* 2018).

Current efforts are underway in the legislature for the establishment of a Department of Disaster Resilience. Since LGUs are first responders, policies are needed for assessing and enhancing the capacity of LGUs to handle disaster relief efforts and develop reinforced social safety nets in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which among other issues calls for strengthening a community's ability to reduce disaster risk at the local level. The Department will have to develop policies in the exercise of its rowing functions in risk management for disasters and other emergency events.

<u>B2. Community and Rural Development</u>

Another important component of people-centered and sustainable development is community and rural development with a focus on establishing a system to enhance people's organizations, facilitate community participation, increase the community's social capital and the effective use of local resources. SWD should entail both economic betterment as well as greater social transformation, especially in rural areas, where poverty is concentrated. Policy setting, planning, and decision-making on community and rural development should be made through a process of dialogue in which all those involved express their needs and views. This process requires more time and resources than a top-down approach. Increased participation of people from rural communities in the social policy planning process are envisaged for providing the rural people with better prospects for their general quality of life. Community development also needs increased tolerance, respect for diversity, non-violence, trust in society, and contribution to the community. This requires policies on investing in information campaigns and advocacy material to inform people of their rights, deal with all forms of discrimination, especially with social technology.

Rural development has adopted sectoral approaches, typically been fragmented, with several institutions, chiefly the DA, DAR and the DENR providing overlapping functional services (CPBRD 2016). Since 1999, the government has been pursuing institutional coordination mechanisms through the National Convergence Initiative (NCI) to achieve sustainable rural development. However, the lack of commitment to mainstreaming the NCI for ensuring better overall policy coherence and the marginal role of LGUs in convergence have hampered delivery of outcomes. There is growing recognition that rural development can be accelerated and sustained only with policy-proofing.

Further, government efforts cannot be merely top-down approaches, but adequately supplemented by direct and indirect involvement of people at the grass roots. Community-driven development (CDD) approaches and strategies enable barangays to: (a) participate in identifying, prioritizing, planning and budgeting community development interventions; (b) implement community projects; and (c) practice transparency and accountability in resource allocation and implementation of sub-projects by having project grants directly managed by community volunteers without passing through the local government units (ADB 2016). These strategies build and strengthen social capital by generating the appropriate environment and opportunities for people to collaborate in designing and implementing development programs and projects. The Department has implemented CDD through the *Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan* Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services - National Community Driven Development Program (KC-NCDDP). At present, Guidelines on the Implementation of Harmonized CDD Process in Specialized Programs is being initiated by KC-NCDDP. Its objectives are the following: (i) to standardize the social preparation process across all programs; (ii) ensure internal and external convergence, whenever relevant; and (iii) facilitate access of beneficiaries to other complementary social protection services.

Given the issues in the rural sector under existing institutional structures, the Department may be able to provide policy direction and oversight functions to agencies involved in rural development to view issues through an SWD lens. The DSWD can help other institutional

partners in rural development recognize the need for increasing social cohesion that can help people make use of their right to live in dignity, and to enjoy time with their community.

- Enabling Basic Sectors, People's Organizations, Cooperatives, and Rural Institutions to be Effective Social Organizations

People who are underserved tend to lack voice, and their inability to dialogue creates social risks, and may even lead to violence. Developing the basic sectors, people's organizations, cooperatives, rural institutions (whether public or private) must be an integral part of any strategy for SWD as well as for rural development. This is a policy goal in itself: that of building "an equitable and civilized society." Without strong rural institutions, households in rural areas will not gain broad, equitable access to SWD services. When people are part of social organizations and share their problems, the result is often increased encouragement and trust, and a better capacity to create positive change for themselves and their communities. The basic sectors, people's organizations, cooperatives and rural institutions can help communities to defend their interests. As social organizations need to stand up against powerful local interest groups, it is important to build their capacity to cope with intimidation and exploitation. The terms rural development and agricultural development tend to be synonymous, although the latter mainly aims at increasing agricultural products, while rural development mainly targets on people and institutions (Bautista 1994). Although rural development includes agricultural development activities, the ultimate aim of rural development is the improvement of sustainable livelihoods (especially impoverished groups) in rural areas. Rural development can only thrive when there is investment in people and institutions.

The basic sectors, people's organizations, cooperative and rural institutions are key to effective and sustained rural development. Enabling the basic sectors, people's organizations, cooperatives, and rural institutions to be effective social organizations alleviates the vulnerability of impoverished groups and can enhance the impact of interventions. Through community organization, impoverished people and communities can be empowered as active beneficiaries of development. The basic sectors, people's organizations, cooperatives, and rural institutions are also preferable partners of development organizations from the perspective of efficiency, compared to assistance of individuals. CDD may be able to rehabilitate roads where individuals cannot. However, the success of CDD depends on effective leaders, organized communities and cultural factors (ADB 2016).

- Supporting People's Participation in Planning, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

The promotion of the development of human and physical resources in rural areas requires recognizing the fact that local people themselves are the main beneficiaries of policies and projects, and participatory approaches can be effective to the extent that they provide a means of incorporating local realities into the intervention (ADB 2004). In other words, a project that the local people themselves plan and implement is given priority as local materials and human resources are utilized effectively by the local people's initiative and responsibility. The Department has thus developed initiatives to support people's participation in planning for social protection (SP) by formulating and making available to LGUs, peoples' organizations the SP Handbook, and its companion SP Vulnerability Assessment Manual. These inform people and organizations about SP, as well as how to assess their risks, and identify adaptation strategies considering local contexts. Each community/LGU can develop a Social Protection and Development Report (SPDR) that provides aggregate information and data on the current situation of a particular area. All these tools enable people and communities to be part of the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of SP.

In rural development policies, programs and projects, challenges in implementation could be avoided, or at least anticipated, if those involved in planning had been aware of the possible social costs and unintended consequences. Much of rural development practices are not necessarily within the purview of the Department, but the SWD lens needs to be used in rural development policy-making. Typically, the local community organizations would be able to give insights about issues if they had been part of the process of policy agenda setting, and program formulation and design. Local independence and sustainable development of outcomes are enhanced by the effective use of local resources, including inputs of people in monitoring and evaluation work.

Community organization is of great consequence to rural development. For example, when a water system or an irrigation system is constructed, it is often managed by the community because it is difficult to dig wells for each household. Cooperatives for product distribution, material purchases, or community organizations for schools, health facilities, and preservation of the natural environment are likewise important. People's organizations are necessary when individuals or LGUs with limited budgets are involved in forestry conservation or riverbank protection works. Policies are required to facilitate ownership among community organizations that ensuring that the voices and needs of local people are heard and taken into account in SWD processes.

C. Theme 3: Developing Sustained Institutional Capacity for Effecting SWD

Effecting SWD entails address root causes of inequalities, as well as reforming intergovernmental relations through capacity building, focusing on weakest localities and regions. As earlier pointed out, decentralization is a factor for deepening and widening community and rural development. Although the Local Government Code has devolved many powers to LGUs, there continue to be SWD services that are shared by national and local governments. Further, there are cases where LGUs lack policy-making and planning capabilities, or human resources. Social protection measures have both a curative function (i.e., directing support towards those who are already vulnerable) and a preventive function (*viz.*, strengthening risk-reducing mechanisms that help prevent households from falling into that trap to begin with). Appropriate policies are required in social protection and rural development activities, including capacity development of both the national government and LGUs.

The term capacity development has been traditionally associated with technical training of individuals. Since the 1990s, there has been recognition that capacity development goes beyond the level of the individual, and includes the institutional and enabling environment levels. Various organizations have communicated broad senses or more operational definitions of capacity development that involve supporting the enhancement of a sustained ability of institutions to do things for themselves:

"The process by which individuals, groups and organisations, institutions and countries develop, enhance and organise their systems, resources and knowledge; all reflected in their abilities, individually and collectively, to perform functions, solve problems and achieve objectives." – OECD-DAC (2006)

"The process through which individuals, organisations, and societies obtain, strengthen, and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time." – UNDP (2009)

Emerging from the definitions above, capacity development can be understood as a continuous process of change, and involves managing transformations of capacities at the level of the individual, the level of the institution, and the level of enabling environments.

C1. Technical Assistance and Resource Augmentation (TARA) for LGUs

The Department has been providing Technical Assistance and Resource Augmentation (TARA) for LGUs to enable them perform the tasks associated with the achievement of SWD. While the Local Government Code provided a mechanism for decentralization, but development gaps have persisted, and in some cases even widened between high- and low-performing LGUs (Diokno-Sicat at al. 2020). This highlights the need for special, multi-faceted capacity building policies for the LGUs, especially in the rural sector, as well as a steering role for DSWD in establishing a more supportive framework for effective decentralization of SWD services. In the wake of COVID-19, the Department also needs to provide TARA to LGUs on the formulation of response/recovery policies, plans and actions (RECHARGE PH).

Since the establishment of the government of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) in 2019, the national government has so far not developed specific policies on capacity building for BARMM. For instance, no policies are currently in place for the Department to provide TARA to its counterpart ministry in BARMM), at least in the area of standard setting, and sharing of good practices in policy research. Various statistics by region show that compared to other regions, BARMM is being left behind in SWD. The latest poverty data for 2018 released by the PSA alone suggests that poverty reduced in all regions of the country, except in BARMM where poverty increased from 58.9% in 2015 to 61.3% in 2018. Building administrative capacity in BARMM and in various LGUs where the very poorest reside should be a matter of high national priority. This entails policies for strengthening mechanisms for developing M&E systems of local administration.

- Assessing Situations, Needs and Capacities of LGUs

The substantive requirements for effective SWD, particularly social protection and rural development, are predicated on strong institutions and good governance. The low coverage of social services and the lack of outcomes on rural development in the country is often related not only to low resource availability, but to poor administrative capacity. As effective policies and practices require the incorporation of local views, community participation, and utilization of existing local resources, the management capabilities of local chief executives must be improved, aside from officers in charge of local development planning, as well as members of LGU councils. As per MC No. 16, s. of 2014, the Department conducts assessments of situations, needs and capacities of LGUs, particularly a functionality assessment of local SWD offices (LSWDOs) using an assessment tool of administration, program management, case management, and physical structures. Using results of its assessment tool, the DSWD categorizes LSWDOs into (i) those that have not met the minimum standards (partially functional and functional), (ii) those that are fully functional (with bronze, silver and gold level recognition). These assessment tools can likewise be used in diagnosing capacities of the LSWDOs within the ministry of social services in BARMM. Also it should be pointed out that as per AO No. 3, s. 2015 and MC No.6, s 2016, the Department has a vital role regarding assessing LGUs on "sphere standards"[12] in the area of disaster risk management (Sphere Association 2018). Current policies on assessment need re-examination to ensure that tools are effective, and plans that link assessment and interventions are effective.

- Conducting TARA interventions

Future demands placed upon LSWDOs will be much higher given the VUCA environment; they will have more challenging duties placed on them by local chief executives, and higher levels of accountability will be demanded of LSWDOs from SWD clients. Results of

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[12] The sphere standards form a set of principles and minimum humanitarian standards in four technical areas of humanitarian response: (i) Water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion (WASH); (ii) Food security and nutrition (iii) Shelter and settlement; and (iv) Health.

assessments are supposed to have a corresponding TARA strategy for improving functionality of LSWDOs. Further, FOs should be regularly conducting program reviews of TARA strategies. As per AO No. 44, s. 2002, AO No. 26, s. 2004, AO No. 1, s. 2005, MC No. 10, s. 2018, technical assistance to LGUs, FOs and other instrumentalities is in the form of training activities, orientation, consultation meetings, demonstration sessions, workshops, fora, conferences, informal capacity building activities (such as coaching and mentoring), and even conduct of surveys and studies. On the other hand, research augmentation involve the provision of manpower, funding and supplies. Specific policies on deployment of DSWD staff to LGUs have largely been focused on disaster response and related-functions. Policies could be developed on staff deployment for addressing human resource gaps in GIDAs, IP communities and other national priority areas for poverty reduction. Policies on technical assistance and knowledge diffusion could also be enhanced, e.g., with use of e-learning modalities that can promote the reuse, remixing of knowledge resources and information capital, aside from developing standards for implementing multi-modal approaches on providing learning and development interventions for LSWDOs. The Department can provide LSWDOs various opportunities to avail the learning and development interventions (LDI), including online, blended or distance learning. TARA can also be provided to LGUs in the area of local poverty reduction plans and strategies, especially in the wake of the new normal.

- Strengthening the SWD Learning Network

As early as one and a half decades ago, the Department recognized the importance of using learning networks as a means of building capabilities of intermediaries to ensure quality service delivery. By virtue of AO No. 20, s. 2005, the Department established the SWD Learning Network (SWD L-Net) as part of a strategy for shifting the DSWD mandate from rowing to steering functions, and for developing partnerships at locale level on knowledge sharing. The SWD L-Net can improve access to, and exchange of, information and expertise in SWD, and can help network members to maximize their impact on SWD through synergies that come from knowledge sharing and greater cooperation. Networks can, however, be dysfunctional. Problems faced by networks include disparate membership, lack of resources and the difficulty of monitoring and evaluating impact of activities. No current policies are in place for assessing the functionalities of existing SWD L-Nets in various areas, for identifying the determinants of effective networks, and for strengthening existing networks.

C2. Standard Setting for SWD agencies (SWDAs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

The provision of SWD services is a formidable task that needs constant capability building for maximum policy effectiveness, especially given the increasing demands amidst the VUCA world. As reflected in EO No. 15, s. 1998 on "Redirecting the Functions and Operations of the DSWD", the Department is mandated to conduct SWD policies and program development, TARA to LGUs, and standard setting for SWD agencies (SWDAs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). The regulatory function of DSWD is meant to ensure the promotion and protection of the rights of individuals, groups, families and communities as SWD clients when they are provide services by SWDAs. SWDAs give direct service to individuals or groups in a community through such methods as social case work and social group work; they may also provide SWD services to communities through community organization. SWD services maybe targeted for particular clientele, e.g. day-care, marriage counselling, VAWC assistance, counselling for drug dependents.

While standard setting (including licensing, accreditation/ authorization and compliance monitoring) is crucial for assurance of quality SWD services, it is also critical for the Department to reduce regulatory burdens, as well as improve regulatory quality and coherence as regards standard settings for SWDA. The regulatory framework for SWDAs should not be static; it needs to evolve, adapt to new challenges and improve through innovative

approaches; these changes should be inspired in part by inputs from various stakeholders, including the SWDAs themselves.

- Reducing regulatory burdens

The ultimate objective of regulating SWDAs through standard setting, accreditation, and compliance monitoring is to uphold public interest. This view of regulation rests on the assumptions that an unhindered market of SWDAs can fail because of externalities, and DSWD is capable of correcting market failures through regulation. For instance, a market of day care services can result in inefficiencies. Thus, regulation is one policy tool for addressing failure of the market to produce desirable social outcomes (i.e., quality care for children in the case of day-care service providers). However, there is also concern particularly among the business community about the unintended consequences of poor and inefficient regulation, particularly over-regulation (that stifles innovation) and under-regulation (that can enable SWDA to offer sub-standard services to the public). Excessive regulation can be redundant or bureaucratic. Policies are needed for regularly examining regulatory burdens at DSWD, say, by way of (a) conduct of SWDA client satisfaction surveys, (b) obtaining regular feedback from the Area-Based Standards Network (ABSNET), i.e., local network composed of LGUs and registered, licensed, and accredited SWDAs, or (c) making use of third party evaluations (possibly even by DSWD's peer institutions across ASEAN), to obtain insights on regulatory relief, i.e. administrative simplification and deregulation for reducing the burden of regulation.

- Improving regulatory quality and coherence

Understanding the relationships of SWDAs and their clients is a core task for policy makers. While SWDAs should be regulated, there ought to be policies meant regarding regulatory reform. One focus of policy is on improving on ensuring the quality of regulation through more effective alignment of regulatory means to achieve SWD policy goals. Policy issues requiring quality improvement should be identified and implemented at regular time frames. Policies on quality improvement activities should be developed and reviewed. It can be helpful also to develop policies on regulatory oversight as well as on the conduct of process evaluations by third party assessors for examining DSWD's regulatory function, particularly its exercise of regulatory quality and coherence, as a means of organizational learning. It is also important to recognize that incentives drive quality services, thus policies need to be developed to provide recognition to exceptionally performing SWDAs.

C3. Professional Learning & Development for DSWD Staff

The Department should work systematically in caring for its carers by keeping to hear the Latin maxim "*Nemo dat quod non habet*" (i.e., "no one can give what they do not have"). The DSWD needs a learning and development strategy for each of its staff and management, as their strengths and weaknesses reflect upon the institution. DSWD workers are working as agents of social change; their work is critically important today and for the nation's future. Individuals and units within DSWD should constantly be provided with professional learning and development activities. These can help them gain technical and soft skills to mobilize personal and environmental resources, as well as to influence social and physical environmental forces to be responsive to needs of people and communities. In using a life cycle model of DSWD clients (from infancy and childhood, to youth, to working age, to ageing), the management and staff of the Department can holistically assess clients for life stressors, as well as how the clients' respective environments are helping or obstructing in alleviating the stress and using resilient adaptive practices. SWD interventions may then subsequently involve working with the clients to change the ways in which they view themselves and the world, intervening in the environment to improve relationships and interactions, and/or intervening in the environment to remove or minimize obstructive resources, or mobilize the environment to create new

resources. Preferably, the Department should be having internal policies pertinent to career pathing of each staff, as well as succession planning and management.

- Intensifying Technical Skills on Social Work, Public Policy and Data Analytics

Actions of DSWD management and staff should be well-though through. Owing to their diverse educational background and previous work, management and staff may have gaps in technical skills, particularly either in Social Work, Public Policy and Data Analytics, that are cornerstones for SWD work. As regards leadership, empirical research (see e.g, Artz *et al.* 2015; Goodall 2016) suggests that what makes leaders successful in a management role is not only soft skills but also their technical competence. While the Department provides mechanisms for training of staff as well as seminars for senior and junior managers, policies have not been in place regarding the development of assessment tools, nor on the specific annual training hours required for tooling and re-tooling. Neither are there policies and practices on the use of e-learning modalities for staff learning.

The internet currently provides free training courses, called massive open online courses (MOOCs). These MOOCs have not yet been systematically made use of as a mechanism for learning and development at the Department. Several providers, e.g., eDX, Coursera, FutureLearn, offer self-paced SWD-relevant MOOCs (**Table 6**).

Table 6. Sample Titles of Social Welfare and Development-Related MOOCS

MOOC	Service Provider
Social Welfare Policy and Services: https://www.edx.org/course/social-welfare-policy-and-services	edX
Social Work Practice with Individuals, Families, and Small Groups : https://www.edx.org/course/social-work-practice-with-individuals-families-and	edX
Social Work Practice: Advocating Social Justice and Change : https://www.edx.org/course/social-work-practice-advocating-social-justice-and	edX
Social Work: Research: https://www.edx.org/course/social-work-research	edX
Social Services for Families, Seniors and Those with Disabilities: https://www.coursera.org/learn/social-health-policy-programs	Coursera
Social Policy for Social Services & Health Practitioners Specialization : https://www.coursera.org/specializations/social-welfare-policy	Coursera
Design Thinking for the Greater Good: Innovation in the Social Sector https://www.coursera.org/learn/uva-darden-design-thinking-social-sector	Coursera
Understanding Violence https://www.coursera.org/learn/violence	Coursera
Disability Awareness and Support https://www.coursera.org/learn/disability-awareness	Coursera
Identifying Social Entrepreneurship Opportunities : https://www.coursera.org/learn/social-entrepreneurship-opportunities	Coursera
Community Organizing for Social Justice : https://www.coursera.org/learn/community-organizing	Coursera
Make Change Happen : https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/make-change-happen	FutureLearn
Creative Problem Solving: Design Thinking in Health and Social Care	FutureLearn

MOOC	Service Provider
https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/design-thinking-in-health-and-social-care	
Supporting People with Health Conditions Into Work: Individual Placement and Support (IPS) : https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/supporting-individuals-with-health-conditions-into-work-delivering-ips	FutureLearn
Social Enterprise: Business Doing Good https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/social-enterprise-business-doing-good	FutureLearn
Disability and a Good Life: Working with Disability https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/working-with-disability	FutureLearn
Understanding Gender Inequality https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/understanding-gender-inequality	FutureLearn
Realising Career Potential: Rethinking Disability : https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/rehabilitation-counselling	FutureLearn
Improving Children's Lives: Reducing Child Poverty and Inequality Around the World : https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/improving-childrens-lives	FutureLearn
Social Well being : https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/social-wellbeing	FutureLearn

Prospective learners merely have to go the website of the MOOCs provider, create a free account, and then to enroll in the desired course/s. Learning is free: the course typically provides knowledge materials, including videos. Many MOOCs offer students the choice of upgrading to receive proof of completion of the MOOCs that can be potentially used as credits for continuing education. Additionally, learners can apply for financial aid to reduce or eliminate the certification cost of the MOOC. Certification involving testing extent of knowledge gained by learners in each module (that can be repeated until learner obtains passing results for a test in a module). One of the major features of MOOCs is flexibility. A typical course will include pre-recorded video lectures, quizzes, and discussion assignments. The majority of MOOCs are self-paced, allowing the learner to start and stop at any point within the course. Learners can finish the course in a weekend or pace themselves over several weeks. MOOCs also provide learners information on the estimated time commitment, typically ranging from 1 to 5 hours per week. Some MOOCs require learners to complete the course within a set period, such as three months. The Department could develop policies on assessing competencies of DSWD staff and management, on systematically making use of MOOCs. The DSWD could work toward obtaining sustainable financing for systematically sponsoring selected management staff in obtaining certification for some very important MOOCs.

- Improving Soft Skills for Active Listening and Communication, Critical Thinking, as well as Organization, Negotiations and Partnership-Building

Work at DSWD requires a diverse range of technical as well as soft skills. While many social workers have a natural aptitude for soft skills, it is crucial for management and staff to continuous improve on these skills especially, now that becoming a life-long learner is a requirement of professional SWD workers. A few qualities and skills required to be a social worker include active listening and communication, critical thinking as well as organization, negotiations and partnership-building. By developing active listening and communication skills, DSWD management and staff can be better at collaborating on policies, programs and projects, as well as on sharing knowledge effectively, and negotiating with peers, clients or other SWD stakeholders. Critical thinking can help answer the toughest policy questions. Increasing organization skills can make changes in business processes at DSWD, and

creatively use social technologies . Other important soft skills for work at DSWD include empathy, tolerance, inner strength, team work and emotional intelligence, negotiations and partnership building. MOOCs also provide means of learning (see **Table 7**).

Table 7. Sample Titles of MOOCS on Soft Skills

MOOC	Service Provider
Business Communication https://www.edx.org/course/business-communication	edX
Team Work and Collaboration https://www.edx.org/course/teamwork-collaboration	edX
Public Speaking https://www.edx.org/course/public-speaking	edX
Critical Thinking and Problem solving https://www.edx.org/course/critical-thinking-problem-solving-2	edX
Visual Presentation https://www.edx.org/course/visual-presentation	edX
Storytelling in the Workplace https://www.edx.org/course/storytelling-in-the-workplace	edX
People Analytics https://www.coursera.org/learn/wharton-people-analytics	Coursera
Leadership and Influence https://www.coursera.org/learn/leadership-influence	Coursera
Creative Problem Solving: Design Thinking in Health and Social Care https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/design-thinking-in-health-and-social-care	FutureLearn
Managing People: Teamwork and Diversity : https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/managing-people-teamwork	FutureLearn
Supporting People Living with Long-term Conditions https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/supporting-long-term-conditions	FutureLearn
Successful Negotiation: Essential Strategies and Skills https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/successful-negotiation	FutureLearn

- Caring for Carers and Monitoring Career Paths

The most important resources of any organization are its human resources. Thus, the Department must be providing its staff opportunities for career development pathways. The lack of human resource development strategies can have negative effects on employee motivation and engagement. The Department should ensure a conducive, healthy working environment, making full use of its pool human resources who want to make a positive difference in the lives of others. The DSWD should be examining its current policies on human resources, from recruitment, to staff engagement and retention, to staff development, to succession planning, to preserving institutional memory. While training activities of staff and management on technical and soft skills are crucial, they are not the only mechanism for human resource development. The Department should have in place policies for actively monitoring career paths of staff and management, and strategies on caring for its carers, including wellness strategies given the pressures that the Department constantly face. Further, the Department should also work toward policies on succession planning and management as well as on managing staff turnover, particularly developing transition processes whenever an employee resigns or retires from the service.

D. Theme 4: Enhancing governance by harnessing whole-of-government and partnerships

The design, implementation and evaluation of policies are interlinked with governance, broadly defined as "the organization of collective action" (Daly 2003). Governance can be viewed as a building block for better implementation and development results. Governance issues have consequences for the DSWD, NGAs, LGUs, and SWDAs involved in policy design and implementation as well as in service delivery, as governance affects the ways in which these SWD institutions operate and cooperate, and the structure of accountability relationships among them.

Partnerships are key to enhancing governance. A key challenge for social service delivery in the public sector is the lack of mechanisms for making use of whole-of-government, i.e., a public sector management approach "where a government actively uses formal and/or informal networks across the different agencies within that government to coordinate the design and implementation of the range of interventions that the government's agencies will be making in order to increase the effectiveness of those interventions in achieving the desired objectives" (OECD 2006). Coordination seemingly happens within government entities, especially as representatives of government agencies (and units within agencies) regularly meet. In practice, however, breaking down siloed thinking within and across government agencies is a challenge given the specific insular mandates and functions of these agencies (and their units). Within government, independent vertical units or 'silos' are a common feature, necessary to structure processes and manage human capital in institutions. Various NGAs, GOCCs and LGUs may have a responsibility on SWD, and they may perform their specific functions well, but their focus on delivery of their specific activities does not consider the broader, shared cross-cutting goals and interlinkages of various SWD programs in the public sector.

Whole-of-government involves the alignment of a common client-centric vision in the public sector and public services with objectives, outcomes, information and process flows (Christensen, and Lægreid, 2007). In different government organizations, key factors involved in the drive to execute whole-of-government include

- building visible leadership at a strategic level,
- setting common goals (service standards) supported by integrated objectives, outcomes, information and process flows,
- focusing on the front end (where services are actually delivered),
- breaking down intra-agency silos as well as interagency silos thru greater cross-governmental collaboration, project-based task management, as well as internal and external knowledge sharing
- putting in place an enabling policy and legal framework.

Thus a whole-of-government approach is aimed to build connected government, i.e. joining up various agencies to provide services which are aligned to offering consolidated service delivery and thus ultimately, improve development effectiveness, making intended outcomes more impactful.

The DSWD has instituted coordination mechanisms through its framework on "convergence", i.e., "pooling of expertise and resources, and systematically channeling efforts in pursuit of a commonly agreed goal or objective; a common understanding of [the] what and how of a program, a common commitment and institutional support, and a common resolve for joint action" (Albert and Dacuycuy 2017). However, convergence has been limited to the Department's three major social protection programs: (a) *Pantawid*; (b) Kapit-bisig Laban sa Kahirapan Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services National Community-Driven Development Project (KALAHI-CIDSS NCDDP), and the (c) Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP).

Another principle underlying governance reform at DSWD is refocusing on steering over rowing functions. The Department is recognizing a need to shift the overall policy directions in which SWD is to proceed (the overall legal framework and guiding strategy): let LGUs, and other public and private institutions, as well as market forces provide the services, but under the direction (and regulatory control in the case of SWDAs) from the Department. Further, communities, including LGUs, must be empowered rather than simply deliver services. SWDs partners of the Department should be mission-driven rather than rule-driven; they should be making plans based on the outcomes desired. The Department and its partners in SWD should meet the needs of sectors and clients, and help government come up with policies on investing in the prevention of social problems rather than their cure. The DSWD should be solving social problems by harnessing whole-of-government and partnerships with NGAs, LGUs, and SWDAs rather than assuming that the establishment of DSWD public programs to be the only feasible solution for social problems.

D1. Research and Data

SWD is ultimately about putting people first in development processes, promoting social inclusion of the poor and vulnerable. This process, however, is not simple and requires public interventions and investments. Research as well as M&E activities, including the collection of data, should play a critical role in DSWD operational and strategic policy decisions. In recent years, the volume of data collected within the Department has increased dramatically, especially with the advent of activities on *Listahanan*, the SWDI, and various administrative data systems for a growing number of DSWD programs. While research studies and M&E have been conducted on various topics at the Department with the aim of influencing the development, design and implementation of the Department's programs and service, the effective use of information capital to achieve improved levels of SWD has been mixed. This may partly be on account of the lack of operational recommendations in research and evaluation studies, or the lack of communication strategies of research and evaluation findings. Further data from the Department's administrative systems should be triangulated with information obtained from surveys and other data sources. The Department should apply insights from research and data to policy, with the aim of ultimately enhancing the wellbeing of people and their families, and communities.

- Conducting Relevant Policy Studies

As per MC No. 9, s. 2019, the Department is updating its research and evaluation agenda to make it responsive to the emerging concerns of the SWD sector, framed along DSWD Strategic Plan 2018-2022. The growing recognition that the Department needs to work with its partners to deliver effective SWD policies has led to a discussion of the role of DSWD vis a vis other SWD actors, particularly NGAs, LGUs, SWDAs, communities and families in the policy landscape. Further, different countries may be adopting different solutions to common problems, making a focus on the Philippine setting alone unnecessarily restrictive. Research and evaluation should look into the global nature of key SWD issues, and the rising VUCA. Added to this, SWD policy should now draw from a broader range of areas beyond social welfare – such as population and demography, economics, environmental science – as DSWD research and evaluation studies search for answers to the question of how best to sustainably reduce social inequalities and sustainably foster social justice and the well-being of Filipinos. Quality and relevant research and evaluation studies in DSWD are meant to move beyond strategy development toward supporting or providing evidence to the attainment of Organizational Outcomes and Foundational Outcomes of the Department (**Table 8**). The identified research priorities, however, may need reexamination in the wake of the policy agenda thrusts identified; further, they will need validation particularly from major stakeholders of the Department (identified through a stakeholder analysis).

Table 8. Research and Evaluation Areas and Priority Topics for 2019-2022

Area	High Priority Topics
Organizational Outcome 1 – Well-being of poor families improved	• Impact and Sustainability of SLP • Program evaluation and Cost-Benefit Analysis of Specialized Programs • Cross-sectional and longitudinal study of SLP
Organizational Outcome 2 – Rights of the poor and vulnerable sectors promoted and protected	• Assessment of the Juvenile Justice System Pillars • Impact Evaluation of SFP • Impact Evaluation of Social Pension Program • Efficiency of and effectiveness of services and interventions provided by centers and institutions • Reintegration of trafficked persons • Relevance and effectiveness of AICS • Evaluation of the BangUn Project • Study on addressing the Issue of Child Cyber-Pornography • Study on Psycho-social Responses for Internally Displaced People • Research on additional aid/services for Solo Parents, IPs and Persons with Disabilities
Organizational Outcome 3 – Immediate relief and early recovery of disaster victims/survivors ensured	• Department's preparedness for the new normal • Evaluation of Cash for Work Program • Evaluation of the Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center's Reporting System
Organizational Outcome 4 – Continuing compliance of SWD agencies to standards in the delivery of social welfare services ensured	• Research on attaining Centers of Excellence • Impact of TARA provided to the SWDAs* • SWD Standards: Its Applicability and its Effect to the Community* • Effect of ABSNET on policy formulation*
Organizational Outcome 5 – Delivery of SWD programs by LGUs, through LSWDOs, improved	• Effectiveness of DSWD interventions on capacitating the LSWDOs • Effects of social protection mainstreaming at the local level • Research on Increasing Functionality of LSWDOs as Frontline Service Providers • Knowledge, Awareness, and Perceptions of Local Chief Executives on SP and SWD
Foundational Outcome 1 – Enabling policy environment fostered	• Effect of centrally-crafted policies on regional implementation and delivery of services • Service Providers Competencies and Work Performance as Basis for Learning Development Intervention*
Foundational Outcome 2 – Timely and evidence-based decision making driven by a responsive data management, R&D and PM&E systems promoted	• Interoperability and efficiency of DSWD-wide M&E processes and data flow • Effectiveness of DSWD performance management systems • Research on the state of IT system in the Department*
Foundational Outcome 3 – Dynamic organization with a culture of innovation, integrity and excellence exhibited	• Responsiveness of the DSWD organizational structure • Process assessment of procurement system • Study on the Gains/Setbacks of ISO 9001 Certification*

Note: * = Medium Term Priority Researches/Evaluation Topics

Depending on the nature of the topic, research and evaluation studies can either be conducted in-house or out-sourced to third party researchers or research institutions. In the latter case, it would be important for the Department to have policies that ensure transfer of knowledge, as part of organizational learning and capacity development.

- Integrating Data Systems within DSWD and Exploring Wealth of Data, including Innovative Data Sources

Improving governance for SWD policy involves considering data as a strategic asset. The whole of government approach in setting SWD policy should be a mechanism for the sharing of data, information capital and expertise. Successful M&E of SWD programs and services are not possible without good quality data and statistics, regardless of how clearly the policy questions of interest are delineated. Data are useful for policy analysis, for general scoping and diagnosis of conditions and needs, and for general M&E of progress. There is often, however, a gap between what is desirable for policy questions because of the availability and quality of data, and, in practice, data will be a mix of quantitative and qualitative information. Inadequate data is always a problem in planning for SWD. In the case of local development planning, data needed may be available but not in a form suitable for use at the local level because the data has been collected for national planning purposes. In the case of social planning, qualitative data may be available, but analysis is constrained since definitive conclusions from such data cannot be drawn.

Aggregate statistics, either at national, regional or provincial levels, on SWD indicators are typically sourced from either administrative data, sample surveys, or censuses. When data are aggregated, they provide a macro picture of SWD conditions. Sample surveys, in particular, are often designed to only get national level or at best regional level statistics. Thus disaggregated data may not be possible to generate for describing local conditions or the situation of segments of society that are marginalized and vulnerable, including persons with disability, people living with HIV/AIDS or other diseases, those affected by illegal drugs, IPs, the uninsured, the homeless, the elderly, those living in GIDAs or displaced by civil strife and emergency events. This hiddenness masks the extent of deprivation and disparities they face, and further exacerbates their vulnerabilities. The Department should be steering data producing agencies, as well as budget managers and the legislature, to address these gaps in disaggregated statistics.

Innovative data sources, such as big data (including data from social media, and satellite imagery) and crowd-sourced data have begun to be used to complement traditional data sources, but these have not been made use of yet for policy research and evaluation studies. The Department has been conducting many data collection activities related to implementation of its programs and services. The wealth of available administrative records at the Department, however, has not been fully mined to inform program improvements and policy effectiveness. Furthermore, data systems on *Listahanan*, SWDI, SocPen, and other programs and projects are in siloes, and are not currently inter-operable. Their lack of linked administrative data across programs, e.g. determining how many Pantawid beneficiary families currently have SocPen beneficiaries, limits their usefulness for understanding long-term and cross-system outcomes and for discovering solutions to SWD problems. Polices should be in place toward the integration of data systems at the Department, as well as to systematic linkage of data across government agencies while also safeguarding personally identifiable data and ensuring nondisclosure of confidential data. The Department also has a significant role to play in clarifying policies and protocols about data privacy, especially amidst humanitarian crises that pose critical threats to the safety, security or well-being of people and communities (Cate *et al*. 2017).

Roadblocks on interoperability exist not only within the Department but across government. The Department should be actively on whole-of-government policies regarding data, in

particular, working with all NGAs and LGUs to disaggregate their program beneficiaries, by *Pantawid* beneficiary status. This could help in determining the extent at which complementary public interventions are improving welfare conditions of *Pantawid* beneficiaries. Policies should thus be developed that allow streamlined cross-system data sharing, anonymized methods for case-matching across systems, and data openness for improving government effectiveness, generating program evaluation, and stimulating policy analysis. Such policies on harnessing and integrating data can allow a broader view of needs of persons, families and communities, as well as in-depth understanding of how various programs are working together, who is being touched by these programs, what the successes are, and where the gaps are, especially for those with multiple disadvantages.

The recent law on the Community Based Monitoring System (CBMS), i.e., RA 11315, provides an opportunity for the country to obtain timely and granular socio-economic data. Although the Department does not currently have a role in the development of the CBMS, there is a lot of scope for DSWD to advocate with the PSA for the use of the *Listahanan* instrument as the core module for the CBMS questionnaire. This way, the proxy means tool used for targeting the poor may continue to be employed for examining the dynamics in welfare conditions of *Pantawid* beneficiaries.

- Utilizing M&E Reports and Research Findings

Findings from research and M&E reports should propel the DSWD to improve processes for fulfilling its overall mission on SWD and for achieving its vision of a country free from hunger and poverty, having equal access to opportunities, enabled by a fair, just, and peaceful society. M&E and research reports should be providing practical lessons to be learned and actionable matters within and across programs. They should feed into strategic and operational planning giving inputs about current practices and the need for changes in policies and processes. These also contribute to institutional memory and knowledge, especially given staff turnovers experienced at the Department. Communication of results is essential: no matter how good the evidence and analysis obtained in M&E and research reports, they will not inform and influence if they are not well written, presented, and communicated. The Department has research and evaluation policies, integrated policies on performance review and evaluation workshops, and research protocol policies that embed research results within the Department's operational systems to ensure that organizational learning takes place. These policies are important, otherwise the evaluation or research report is merely archived, and then forgotten amidst other pressing issues. These policies, however, need to be reviewed and assessed regularly. Plans for sharing and using evaluation results and research findings should preferably be built into the evaluation/research process itself. Evaluation and research processes should also be as open as possible, and their results and finding made widely available and accessible since replicability is a core tenet of science. Participatory M&E and research processes creates a sense of ownership in the M&E/research report, which greatly increases the likelihood that lessons will be noted and acted upon. Management should be developing a culture of learning within the Department. Using evaluation and research results, the DSWD should rethink and reform institutional goals and targets if it is to remain relevant in the context of current changes in social relations and in the entire institutional environment.

D2. Technology

The term technology broadly connotes materials, tools and equipment, knowledge and skills, as well as organization and products. The diffusion of technology is not automatic: technologies must be promoted and their users must have the necessary resources to obtain them, and the skills to utilize them. Technology is also constantly in flux, it can be used for good, but results of technology use are not always positive. The internet, the huge growth in mobile telephone use and the wide use of social media have greatly facilitated connectivity in communications, but they also have created a digital divide.

Frontier technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution are currently reshaping how every industry, including government, operates. The rise and increasing use of emerging technologies are changing the way services are offered, and hence how the Department and all its SWD partners interact and communicate with clients. Emerging technologies offer opportunities to accomplish SWD work in innovative ways. Technology can be used to automate various aspects of a program or service. While routine tasks of report filing, and even data collection can bring down employee performance, integrating technology and digitizing work processes minimizes the risk of mistakes and also frees up work assignments that can be reallocated elsewhere. Further, technology can make the process extracting required information from data systems fast.

Information and communication technologies, in particular, can now be deployed to improve the efficacy of SWD programs and services, accelerate the pace of social discovery, and transform social work to respond in faster ways that ensure technology is ethically used to reduce social inequalities existing today. Social workers can now use social technologies, i.e., online resources to communicate with clients, to track their information and needs, and to research information and issues. Online support groups could be created for at-risk groups and remote communities, assuming that these subpopulations have access to cyberspace. These support groups can be moderated and function in a similar way to face-to-face support groups, except that the modality is through cyberspace. At the Department, data systems can track client information, assist in service delivery, and may even enable communications and focus group discussions online for a fraction of the cost that would be involved if participants had to meet face to face. These technologies present opportunities for improving governance in the Department, as well as concerns and risks.

- Developing Systems for Improving Administrative and Support Processes

An important factor for successful implementation of SWD programs and services is the Department's administrative and support systems, including management information systems (MIS), legal, procurement, project management and the like. Competence of management capabilities is closely linked to the concept of administrative capacity. Better organizational management of administrative and support systems promotes efficiency. Administrative and support processes are structured to assist policy makers, program managers and service providers within the Department in creating, sharing, and using knowledge. MIS support not only program supervision, M&E but also the transparency of the program through dissemination of knowledge in various formats and for different audiences. Periodic reports from MIS, legal, procurement and other administrative support systems help reduce fraud, error, and corruption by ensuring that eligibility rules are met, particularly through automatic crosschecks of the information provided by beneficiaries.

Policies are needed to constantly improve administrative and support systems for reinforcing the strategic and operational priorities of the Department. Support processes and systems should be regularly evaluated, and updated as these are crucial to support storage and cataloguing of documents, work planning and programming and various knowledge tools, including research studies and M&E, that in turn, improve overall governance within the Department. Viewing governance as the set of incentives and accountability relationships implies that, efforts to improve governance fall into three broad areas: first, the rules of the game which define the context for accountability relationships; second, the roles and responsibilities of SWD actors involved; and third, the controls and accountability processes and mechanisms which enforce accountability. All these areas require corresponding policies for regular improvements in administrative and support processes.

- Making Technology Work for Decision Makers

The Department makes use of technology including knowledge portals, communication systems, emails, and collaboration mechanisms including networks, for knowledge management. Amidst the growing needs for faster and better social services, social technology will greatly facilitate more effective decisions, project quality and operational excellence. Technology also offers immense possibilities for the reduction of administrative burdens as it improves knowledge management, dissemination and transactions. The capacity to deal with and analyze enormous volumes of data even from administrative processes such as procurement can improve responsiveness of the Department to external demands. The use of social technologies can multiply information dissemination exponentially. The electronic exchange of data within the Department (instead of the traditional paperwork transactions) can a powerful tool for leaders to make quick decisions. The Department should be having policies toward digitizing administrative systems. The use of emerging technologies should be accompanied by a parallel review and reengineering of existing administrative processes and systems to avoid wastes and inefficiencies resulting from the automation of support processes.

Innovative uses of technology also provide powerful tools to enhance accountability and transform the way public services are delivered to citizens. Technology can empower citizens to communicate directly with government and service providers. The value of these modern avenues for registering grievances is that they can establish accessible, alternative channels to the standard means by which people complain.

D3. Resources

Resources are of paramount importance for the Department to ensure that SWD services are impacting upon the lives of the Filipino citizenry, but competing development issues also place increasing demands on limited public resources. Although the Department is expected to ensure that delivery of SWD services are enhanced, yet it should also exercise financial prudence and leverage the available resources as it does so. Thus, careful management of funding resources are required. The DSWD will also need to leverage partnerships for mobilizing sufficient funding resources, as well as technical, technological and other resources, for emerging needs.

- Utilizing All Resources Effectively and Efficiently

In SWD, resources need to be utilized effectively and efficiently (Moore 1995). Leaders should take decisive action when resources are not being used well; they should also be actively making use of social capital for resource acquisition. Leadership successions at the DSWD have undoubtedly had an effect on SWD policy development, and implementation, and on resource use. Institutional arrangements for financing, organizing and delivery of SWD services are typically a reflection of ideologies and management priorities. In the past three and a half years, the Department has been led by four persons, two in an acting capacity; each of these leaders have had different thrusts and management styles. In the last administration, SWD policies and programs have been more focused around targeted interventions, but at the onset of the current administration, policies and programs have shifted toward the use of more universal, rights-based approaches. With the advent of a new administration in 2022, there will be another turnover of leadership, who will have to learn on the job. Policies and strategies must be developed to mobilize the support of external resource providers (i.e. budget managers and the legislature) around the criterion of service effectiveness. Leaders should also be managing resources to meet current and future demands as well as changing expectations, both from within the Department and at a wider policy level.

- Developing Partnerships for Societal Change

The Department cannot address every aspect of SWD. The scale, frequency and complexity of social problems across the country can only be addressed by deploying a wide range of knowledge, skills, methods and resources. Social protection and rural development should involve multisectoral partnerships, enabling organizations in the public and private sector to share ideas, work coherently, and deliver interventions more effectively. A whole-of-government approach to SWD involves considering and including various government actors, and multilevel governance perspectives (the relation between national, sub-national levels of government). Institutional linkages, networking, coordination and accountability are the main elements of identifying common priorities and of working on outcomes for better governance. The whole-of-government approach is necessary to ensure coherence of public policies and maximize development effectiveness of interventions.

Partnership-building for SWD is not straightforward: it requires time, negotiation, sustained effort, transparency, trust, commitment and institutional support. Skilled facilitation is also important; leadership is also critical to maintain momentum. The DSWD leadership, including senior and junior managers, should be visionaries with both technical and soft skills in management and execution; they should be good listeners, and skilled facilitators who can successfully engage staff and stakeholders with divergent priorities and perspectives. They should see their role as catalyzing, enabling and supporting action. The ability to influence and manage other people's behavior and actions is a component in all relationships among organizations or groups. Influence issues should be identified and acknowledged openly, and clear and effective accountability mechanisms should be put in place.

5. Implementation Instruments

In recent years, SWD services have been expanding in the country; concomitantly, SWD policies have been generally viewed in terms of social services. In the Policy Agenda for 2020-2025, the SWD policies are being re-oriented toward social goals of enhancing opportunities for all, strengthening resilience for the vulnerable, and improving equity for the poor. The Department's Policy Development and Planning Bureau (PDPB) should develop a communication plan (for DSWD staff and the Department's major stakeholders), preferably summarizing the Agenda in a one-pager and infographics, as well as make use of implementation instruments for the Policy Agenda. The primary instrument for the Agenda are the Department's research and evaluation studies. In consequence, the priority topics in the Research and Evaluation Agenda, though officially approved, will need some reexamination in the wake of how they fit into the four Policy Agenda thrusts, on (i) Advancing Social Equity and Social Justice; (ii) Promoting People-Centered Sustainable Development; (iii) Developing Sustained Institutional Capacity for Effecting SWD; and, (iv) Enhancing governance by harnessing whole-of-government and partnerships. While some policies may not need new research, but a mapping of what has been done in the past five years and the intended research/evaluation studies, vis-à-vis the Policy Agenda will be helpful to the Department.

Another implementing instrument for the Agenda are policy notes. For several years, the PDPB has already been producing policy notes but for its internal use. Existing SWD policies in place (as documented in laws, or the MCs and AOs of the Department) are described and/or evaluated in these policy notes. The policy notes use a number of approaches: (a) informal evaluations, such as case studies, anecdotes and stories; (b) results of formal research and M&E reports in the Department that can provide empirical evidence on the effectiveness of current policies. The quality of these policy notes could, however, be enhanced given the wealth of knowledge materials developed in the past five years (and beyond) from research and evaluation studies in the Department, as well as policy research studies conducted by individual researchers, think tanks and the development community. It would be important for the policy notes to be crisp (i.e., having a length not more than four pages) and yet insightful. Faulty SWD policies can be a result of an insufficient understanding of the situation, deficient knowledge of the implementation context, unclear, or even contradictory goals, poor quality

evidence, and/or an absence of political support for a policy. Improving the PDPB policy notes should involve retooling activities for PDPB staff on policy analysis and on data analytics in the first quarter of 2020. This way, PDPB staff can learn how to make full use of both quantitative and qualitative data for situational analysis of issues even for those where policies are currently not in place.

The PDPB could target a monthly release of at least one policy note starting middle of 2020. Initially the policy notes could be written by PDPB staff, either with the assistance of other DSWD staff, or guided by external expert advisers. Past policy notes still undergo consultations with OBS and FOs before being released, which stretches the process. These consultative processes should be continued, but with definitive targets for comments on draft policy notes. The Department could also get into partnerships with training and research institutes especially in government through a memorandum of agreement for them to supply experts as external advisers for these policy notes. The Department could also make use of the advice of some members of the DSWD Multisectoral Governance Council, or former officials of the Department in the identification of policy gaps and specific areas to be examined in the Policy Agenda.

The PDPB should prepare to disseminate the policy notes to senior and junior managers in the Department, at least in the period 2020 to 2022, and then work to have them published with peer-refereeing processes starting 2023, or earlier, if possible. Once the policy notes are made public, their dissemination should involve a communication plan, e.g. use of infographics and social media, and dissemination mechanisms to major SWD policy stakeholders.

From 2020 to 2025, the PDPB should be identifying at least a dozen specific policy concerns/issues annually that could focus on concerns across the four policy thrusts. These concerns could be specific to or cut-across vulnerable sectors, such as the (a) poor, (b) homeless, (c) youth, (d) elderly (e) women, (f) disabled, (g) individuals in crisis situations and victims of challenging circumstances (the drug war, insurgencies, natural disasters, epidemics and emergencies, mental illness, violence), (h) rural sector / GIDA areas, (i) IPs, and other marginalized/disadvantaged groups in the country. These concerns could be updated quarterly to be responsive to the evolving policy environment.

The Department will also need to translate its knowledge capital for more extensive advocacy/lobbying of pertinent laws on SWD, including revisions of past laws that have implementation deficits and those that run contrary to social equity and social justice. Advocacy activities should be strengthened through stakeholder analysis that identifies the various SWD actors and their respective roles in the SWD landscape.

The three main implementation instruments of the Policy Agenda, i.e. research and evaluation studies, as well as the policy notes series, and advocacy/lobbying activities should include a resource framework with explicit estimates of budgets and a resource mobilization strategy. This will ensure that needed resources (including for costs pertaining to policy advisers, capacity building and communication activities) are available across the period 2020-2025. After the first year of implementation, capacity building activities and incentives could be extended to DSWD FO staff for them to co-author policy notes with PDPB staff. This can help ensure that resulting SWD policy reforms are relevant, and that the country can work to ensure that as the country moves along its social development path, no Filipino is left behind.

Laws Affecting Social Welfare and Development

LAW	TITLE	DESCRIPTION / OBJECTIVE	DATE IMPLEMENTED	ROLE OF DSWD
RA 5416	Social Welfare Act of 1968	An Act to provide for comprehensive social services for individuals and groups in need of assistance, creating for this purpose a Department of Social Welfare	June 19, 1965	
RA 4373	Social Work Law	An Act to regulate the practice of Social Work and the Operation of Social Work Agencies in the Philippines	June 19, 1965	Member, Board of Examiners for Social Workers
RA 5175	Amending Social Work Law	An Act to amend RA 4373 An Act to regulate the practice of Social Work and the Operation of Social Work Agencies in the Philippines	August 4, 1967	Council Member
PD 994	Changing the Name of the Department of Social Welfare to Department of Social Service and Development	Changed name of Department of Social Welfare to Department of Social Service and Development	Sept 8, 1976	
RA 9433	Magna Carta for Public Social Workers	Promote and improve the social and economic well-being of public social workers, their living and working conditions, and terms of employment.	April 12, 2007	DSWD Secretary or Representative is Head of Social Work Management and Consultative Council

LAW	TITLE	DESCRIPTION / OBJECTIVE	DATE IMPLEMENTED	ROLE OF DSWD
1987 Constitution Article XV Section III	The Family	The State shall defend "the right of children to assistance including proper care and nutrition and special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation and other conditions prejudicial to their environment,"	1987	Advocate / Mediator / Enabler / Counselor / Therapist/ Broker
Presidential Decree No. 603	Child and Youth Welfare Code	The Child is one of the most important assets of the nation. Every effort should be exerted to promote his welfare and enhance his opportunities for a useful and happy life.	December 10, 1974	Council Member with Department of Justice, Department of Education and Culture, Department of Labor, Department of Health, Department of Agriculture, DILG & Local councils for protection of children
RA 6972	Barangay-Level Total Development and Protection of Children Act	An Act establishing a Day Care Center in every Barangay, instituting therein a total development and protection of children program	November 23, 1990	Supervising Agency
RA 7610	Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act	It shall be the policy of the State to protect and rehabilitate children gravely threatened or endangered by circumstances which affect or will affect their survival and normal development and over which they have no control.	June 17, 1992	Implementation of Rules with Coordination of DOJ

LAW	TITLE	DESCRIPTION / OBJECTIVE	DATE IMPLEMENTED	ROLE OF DSWD
RA 7658	Act prohibiting the employment of children below 15 years of age in public and private undertaking	Children below 15 years of age shall not be employed, amending the RA 7610	November 9, 1993	Implementation of rules with DOLE
RA 9231	An act amends the Republic Act No. 7610 or the Special Protection of Children Against Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act	An act providing the elimination of the worst forms of child labor and affording stronger protection for the working child	December 19, 2003	Implementation of Rules with DOJ, DepED & DOLE
RA 9775	Anti-Child Pornography Act of 2009	The State recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation building and shall promote and protect their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, emotional, psychological and social well-being.	November 17, 2009	Chairperson of Inter-Agency Council against Child Pornography
RA 8043	Inter-Country Adoption Act of 1995	An Act establishing the rules to governs inter-country adoption of Filipino children	June 7, 1995	Board Member
RA 8552	Domestic Adoption Act of 1998	An Act establishing the rules and policies on the domestic adoption of Filipino children	February 25, 1998	Promulgation & implementation of guidelines & provisions

LAW	TITLE	DESCRIPTION / OBJECTIVE	DATE IMPLEMENTED	ROLE OF DSWD
RA 9523	Adoption Act of 2009	An Act requiring certification of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to declare a "Child Legally Available for Adoption" as a prerequisite for adoption proceedings, amending for this purpose certain provisions of RA 8552, otherwise known as the Domestic Adoption Act of 1998, RA 8043 otherwise known as the Inter-Country Adoption Act of 1995, Presidential Decree No. 603 otherwise knowns as The Child and Youth Welfare Code	March 12, 2009	Implementor with Council for Welfare of Children, Inter-Country Adoption Board /NSO & Civil Registry
RA 11222	Simulated Birth Rectification Act	An Act Allowing the Rectification of Simulated Birth Records and Prescribing Administrative Adoption Proceedings for the Purpose	February 21, 2019	Dissemination of Information to the Public
RA 8044	Youth in Nation-Building Act	An Act establishing the National Comprehensive and Coordinated Program of Youth Development	June 7, 1995	Advisory Council of National Youth Commission
RA 8980	Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Act	The policy of the State to promote the rights of children to survival, development and special protection with full recognition of the nature of childhood and its special needs; and to support parents in their	December 05, 2000	CO-Chairperson of National EDDC Coordinating Council

LAW	TITLE	DESCRIPTION / OBJECTIVE	DATE IMPLEMENTED	ROLE OF DSWD
		roles as primary caregivers and as their children's first teachers		
RA 10410	Early Years Act (EYA) of 2013	An Act recognizing the age from zero (0) to Eight (8) years as the first crucial stage of educational development and strengthening the Early Childhood Care and Development System, appropriating funds therefor and other purposes	March 26, 2013	ECCD Council member with DepED, DOH, NNC & ULAP
RA 9344	Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006	An Act establishing a comprehensive juvenile justice and welfare system, creating the juvenile justice and welfare council under Department of Justice	April 28, 2006	Chair of Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council (JJWC)
RA 10630	Amendment on RA 9344 Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006	An Act strengthening the juvenile system in the Philippines, amending for the purpose RA 9344	October 03, 2013	Chair of Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council (JJWC)
RA 10165	Foster Care Act of 2012	An Act to strengthen and propagate foster care and to provide funds	June 11, 2012	Lead agency with Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Health (DOH), Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), the Council on Welfare of Children

LAW	TITLE	DESCRIPTION / OBJECTIVE	DATE IMPLEMENTED	ROLE OF DSWD
				(CWC) & DILG as Council
RA 10821	Children's Emergency Relief and Protection Act	An Act mandating the provision of emergency relief and protection for children before, during and after disasters and other emergency situations.	May 18, 2016	Implementer with consultation and coordination with DND, DOH, DepEd, DILG, PNP, AFP and child-focused CSOs
RA 11188	Special Protection of Children in Situations of Armed Conflict Act	An Act providing for the special protection of children in situations of armed conflict and providing penalties for violations thereof	January 10, 2019	Committee Member with Senate, House of Rep, CWC, OPAPP, CHR & CSO
RA 6955	The Anti-Mail Order Bride Law	It is the policy of the State to ensure and guarantee the enjoyment of the people of a decent standard of living. Towards this end, the State shall take measures to protect Filipino women from being exploited in utter disregard of human dignity in their pursuit of economic upliftment.	June 13, 1990	Implementation with Department of Foreign Affairs /CFO/ PCW and NGO
RA 7192	Women in Development and National Building Act	An Act promoting the integration of women as full and equal partnership of men in development and nation building	February 12, 1992	Consulting government agency with NEDA

LAW	TITLE	DESCRIPTION / OBJECTIVE	DATE IMPLEMENTED	ROLE OF DSWD
RA 8505	Rape Victim Assistance and Protection Act of 1998	An Act providing assistance and protection for rape victims, establishing for the purpose a rape crisis center in every province and city in the Philippines	February 13, 1992	Establishment of rape crisis center with DOJ, DILG and NGO
RA 8353	The Anti-Rape Law of 1997	An Act expanding the definition of the crime of Rape, reclassifying the same as a crime against persons, amending for the purpose of Revised Penal Code	September 30, 1997	Implementation of the comprehensive intervention against gender-based violation with inter-government agency and LGU's
RA 9262	Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004	The State values the dignity of women and children and guarantees full respect for human rights. The State also recognizes the need to protect the family and its members particularly women and children, from violence and threats to their personal safety and security.	March 08, 2004	Inter- Agency Council on Violence Against Women and Their Children (IAC_VAWC) Member
RA 9710	The Magna Carta of Women Act of 2009	Operationalizes the Philippines' commitment to CEDAW, the Magna Carta is an expansive comprehensive Act which aims to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women.	August 14, 2009	Board Member of Philippine Commission on Women
RA 10398	November 25 as National Consciousness Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Children.	Recognizing the need of comprehensive and structured campaign for national consciousness on anti-violence against women.	March 19, 2013	Member of organizing consciousness-raising activities

LAW	TITLE	DESCRIPTION / OBJECTIVE	DATE IMPLEMENTED	ROLE OF DSWD
RA 9208	Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003	An act providing for policies to eliminate and punish human trafficking, especially women and children, establishing the necessary institutional mechanisms for the protection and support of trafficked persons.	May 26, 2003	Council Member _ reintegration on trafficked person
RA 10364	Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2012	An Act expanding RA 9208 entitled An act to institute policies to eliminate trafficking in persons especially women and children, establishing the necessary institutional mechanisms for the protection and support of trafficked persons, providing penalties for its violations and for other purposes.	February 08, 2013	Chairperson of Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking with Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Labor & Employment, Department of Justine, Philippine Commission on Women ,Bureau if Immigration, Philippine National Police, Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, Overseas Workers and Welfare Administration, Department of Interior and Local Government, Local Government Units

LAW	TITLE	DESCRIPTION / OBJECTIVE	DATE IMPLEMENTED	ROLE OF DSWD
RA 8972	Solo Parents' Welfare Act of 2000	An Act providing benefits and privileges to Solo Parents and their Children, appropriating funds therefor and for other purposes	November 07, 2000	Head on interagency committee with DOH, DECS, CHED, TESDA, DOLE, NHA & DILG
RA 11210	Expanded Maternity Leave Act	An Act increasing the Maternity Leave Period to One Hundred Five (105) Days for Female Workers with Option to Extend for an Additional Thirty (30) Days Without Pay, and Granting an Additional Fifteen (15) Days for Solo Mother, and for others Purposes	February 14, 2019	Committee Member in related to RA 8972
RA 7277	Magna Carta for Disabled Person	An Act providing for the rehabilitation , self-development and self-reliance of Disabled persons and their integration into the mainstream of society	March 24, 1992	Design and implementation of training programs; vocational guidance and counseling with NCDWP and DOLE
RA 9442	Magna Carta for Disabled Person 2007	An Act amending RA 7277 "Magna Carta for Disabled Persons"	April 30, 2007	Coordinating Agency with other government agencies, organizations & establishment on implementing rules & regulations

LAW	TITLE	DESCRIPTION / OBJECTIVE	DATE IMPLEMENTED	ROLE OF DSWD
RA 10070	Magna Carta for Disabled Person 2010	An Act establishing and institutional mechanism to ensure the implementation of programs and services for persons with disabilities in every province, city and municipality	April 06, 2010	Head Agency in consultation with NCDA, NGO & POa.
RA 7432	An act to maximize the contribution of senior citizens to nation building, grant benefits and special privileges	Pursuant to Article XV, Section 4 of the Constitution, it is the duty of the family to take care of its elderly members while the state may design programs of social security for them	April 23, 1992	Head Agency with DOF, DOT, DOH, DOTC and DILG
RA 7876	Senior Citizens Center Act of the Philippines	An Act establishing a Senior Citizens Center in all cities and municipalities of the Philippines	February 14, 1995	Head Agency in coordination with DOH and other agencies on rule implementations
RA 9257	Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2003	An Act granting additional benefits and privileges to senior citizens amending for the purpose RA 7432 "An act to maximize the contribution of senior citizens to nation building, grant benefits and special privileges	February 26, 2004	Implement & monitoring of rules with DOJ/DOLE/DepED/DOTC/DOH/ DILG / DTI / DOF/ CHED / TESDA/ NEDA / Housing and Urban Development Coordinating council ; Development of social services (self and social

LAW	TITLE	DESCRIPTION / OBJECTIVE	DATE IMPLEMENTED	ROLE OF DSWD
				enhancement / after care & follow-up services / neighborhood support services / substitute family care)
RA 9994	Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010	Amending the RA 7432 and RA 9257 (Expanded Senior Citizens Act 2003)	February 15, 2010	Chairperson of a National Coordinating and Monitoring Board
RA 10645	Mandatory PhilHealth Coverage for All Senior Citizens	All Senior Citizens shall be covered by the national health insurance program of PhilHealth	November 5, 2014	Implementation with PhilHealth
RA 9201	National Human Rights Consciousness Week Act of 2002	An Act declaring December 4 to 10 as National Human Rights Consciousness Week in the Country	April 01, 2003	National Committee Member
RA 9745	Anti-Torture Act of 2009	An act Penalizing torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishing and prescribing penalties	November 10, 2009	Formulation of a Comprehensive Rehabilitation Program for both victims & persons who committed torture

LAW	TITLE	DESCRIPTION / OBJECTIVE	DATE IMPLEMENTED	ROLE OF DSWD
RA 9803	Food Donation Act of 2009	An Act to encourage the donation of wholesome food for charitable purposes	November 25, 2009	Main Coordinating Agency
RA 10121	Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010	An Act strengthening the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management System, providing for the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Framework and Institutionalizing the National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Plan, appropriating funds therefor and for other purposes.	May 27, 2010	Council Member
RA 10174	Establishing People's Survival Fund	The policy of the State to afford full protection and the advancement of the right of the people to a healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature. In this light, the State has adopted the Philippine Agenda 21 framework which espouses sustainable development, to fulfill human needs while maintaining the quality of the natural environment for current and future generations.	August 16, 2012	Board Member
RA 10354	The Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012	Specifically stating gender equality goals in its declaration of policy, the RH Law provides a national policy for family planning, maternal and child	December 21, 2012	Committee Member

LAW	TITLE	DESCRIPTION / OBJECTIVE	DATE IMPLEMENTED	ROLE OF DSWD
		health, and age-appropriate reproductive health education.		
RA 10361	Domestic Workers Act of 2012	An Act Instituting Policies for the Protection and Welfare of Domestic Workers	January 18, 2013	Implementation with DOLE, DILG, PNP, NGO's
RA 11053	Anti-Hazing Act of 2018	An Act Prohibiting Hazing and Regulating other Forms of Initiation of Fraternities, Sororities and Other Organizations, and Providing Penalties for Violations Thereof, Amending the Purpose RA 8049	June 29, 2018	Implementation with CHED, DepEd, DOJ, DILG, AFP, PNP and NYC
RA 11055	Philippine Identification System Act	An Act Establishing the Philippine Identification System	August 06, 2018	Council Member with NEDA, PSA, DBM, DFA, DICT, DOF, DILG, NPC, BSP, GSIS, PhilHealth, SSS and PHLPost
RA 11223	Universal Health Care Act	An Act Instituting Universal Health Care for all Filipinos, Prescribing reforms in the Health Care System	February 20, 2019	LGU Implementation
RA 11228	Mandatory Philippine Health Insurance Corporation(PhilHealth) coverage to persons with disabilities.	An act providing mandatory Philippine Health Insurance Corporation(PhilHealth) coverage to persons with disabilities.	February 22, 2019	Consultant with DOH, DOLE, NCDA and LGUs to PhilHealth

LAW	TITLE	DESCRIPTION / OBJECTIVE	DATE IMPLEMENTED	ROLE OF DSWD
RA 11310	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) Act of 2019	The State shall promote a just and dynamic social order thereby uplifting its citizens and marginalized sectors from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living and an improved quality of life for all	April 17, 2019	Lead Agency

<div align="right">**Annex B.**</div>

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List of References Reviewed

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A. DSWD-Documents and Related Information

1	DSWD Strategic Plan 2018-2022
2	DSWD Assessment Report 2018
3	DSWD Final Integrative Report, National Sector Support for Social Welfare and Development Reform Project (NSS-SWDRP)
4	DSWD Organizational Chart
5	DSWD Performance Governance System User's Guide
6	DSWD Administrative Orders (AOs) Various Years (from 2010 onwards) especially AO No. 13, series of 2015; AO Nos. 1 and 2, series of 2018, AO Nos. 1, 3, 6 and 7, series of 2019; AO Nos. 3 and 5, series of 2020.
7	DSWD Memorandum Circulars Various Year (from 2000 onwards)
8	DSWD Position Papers (from 2000 onwards)
9	DSWD Policy Notes (from 2000 onwards)
10	DSWD Legislative Agenda (from 2000 onwards)
11	DSWD Draft Research and Evaluation Agenda
12	DSWD Inventory of International Commitments
13	Draft EO. Strengthening the Department of Social Welfare and Development and Redefining its Powers, Functions and Organization
14	

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