

Statement of the

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Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development and
Head of the Philippine Delegation to the *High-Level Roundtable
Discussion on “Women and Girls – Catalyzing Action To Achieve
Gender Equality”* during the World Humanitarian Summit
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Due to the multiple humanitarian emergencies over the past decade, the Philippines has rich experiences not only on emergency response, but also on DRR and Climate Change across all areas including reproductive health and gender-based violence. We have a number of ongoing and planned initiatives in the Philippines with a special focus on women which have provided valuable insights in terms of what actions are required to ensure that women and girls are put at the center of disaster response.

Legal Bases

As an example, the Philippines will be operationalizing the **Magna Carta on Women**, which specifically recommends that women should be represented and included in environment and natural resources management, climate change adaptation, and DRR governing and decision-making bodies.

Recently, on May 18, 2016, the President also signed the **Children's Emergency Relief and Protection Act**, which seeks to implement a comprehensive program of action to provide the children and pregnant and lactating mothers affected by disasters and other emergency situations with utmost support and assistance necessary for their immediate recovery and protection against all forms of violence, cruelty, discrimination, neglect, abuse, and exploitation.

Women in DRR and Peace-Building

Filipino women figure prominently in the leadership of institutions attending to natural and human-induced disasters. Institutions such as the Department of Social Welfare and Development; the Philippine Red Cross; the Climate Change Commission are all led by women. A significant number of DRR champions in the Philippines are also women.

In the peace process, women also hold key positions in the negotiating tables. The Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process is led by a woman; the head of the negotiating panel with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the head of its legal team are both women and both very competent and driven, like many women in government that I know.

In order to further strengthen the role of women in the peace process, particularly in the grassroots, we drafted a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security in 2010 as a testament to the

Government's commitment to give Filipino women a greater role in preventing and resolving armed conflict.

Women as First Responders

Filipino women are also oftentimes first responders in actual crises. They can be nurses, doctors, volunteers, women-members of the **Team Balikatan Rescue in Emergency (TeamBRE)** Project in coastal barangays, or partner-beneficiaries of our **Conditional Cash Transfer** Program. We therefore foresee sustaining gender balance in the role of men and women in disaster preparedness, response, and rehabilitation down to the community level.

We also commit to continue to strengthen community organizing of women at the barangay level. This is done through the organization and capacity building of the **Kalipunan ng Liping Pilipina or KALIPI**. KALIPI is a national federation of women's organizations committed to respond to the need of organizing women and promote women's development and empowerment.

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Protection

We commit to the inclusion of sexual and reproductive health, food security, and nutrition in the design and implementation of inclusive policies and social safety-net mechanisms in the post-disaster phase of the Sendai Framework.

The Philippines actually adopted a policy to provide a **Minimum Initial Service Package for Sexual and Reproductive Health** in emergencies and disasters. In times of crises, reproductive health concerns become even more significant as causes of new risks. This package includes emergency healthcare for pregnant and lactating women and their newborn and measures to protect women, girls, and other vulnerable groups from gender-based violence, unplanned/unintended pregnancies, STI, HIV and AIDS during emergencies and disasters.

The Philippines also has an existing policy on the establishment of **Women and Children Friendly Spaces** in evacuation centers or relocation sites during crises to guide women on self-care, maternal and child care nutrition, early childhood illness, environmental sanitation, leadership skills, community participation, basic business management skills training, numeracy exercises, social communication skills and development exercises.

These are some of the significant strides we have made in the past six years and the commitments that we will be fulfilling in the near future. I believe that with our discussions, we have gained more insight into further broadening the space for the participation of women in development and in making gender equality a norm in our communities. Thank you.