



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Social Welfare and Development

IBP Road, Batasan Pambansa Complex, Constitution Hills, Quezon City 1126

Telephone Nos. (632) 931-8101 to 07; Telefax (632) 931-8191

E-mail: osec@dswd.gov.ph

Website: <http://www.dswd.gov.ph>

28 December 2015

Hon. JESUS R.S. DOMINGO

Assistant Secretary

Office of the United Nations & International Organizations

Department of Foreign Affairs, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City

Dear Assistant Secretary Domingo:

This is to forward the Department's inputs to the questionnaire on good/best practices related to the promotion and protection of the rights of the older persons.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

Florita R. Villar

FLORITA R. VILLAR

Undersecretary, Policy and Plans Group

Enclosure: a/s

Department of Social Welfare and Development

Inputs to the Questionnaire on Good/Best practices Related to the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Older Persons

1. Name of Practice: **Social Pension**
2. Area concerned: **Social Protection**
3. Type of Practice: **Program**
4. Level of Implementation: **National level down to the local**
5. Describe the practice, including a) its purpose; b) when and how it was adopted; c) how long it has been used/implemented; d) its geographic scope.

It is the provision of a monthly stipend of Php500.00 to indigent senior citizens. It aims to augment the daily subsistence and other medical needs of senior citizens. Republic Act 9994¹ or the Expanded Senior Citizens Act, Section 5(h)(1) serves as the legal basis of the program. The program is being implemented since 2011 in all regions of the country.

6. Which actors are involved in the development and implementation of such practice?

The actors involved in the development and implementation of the program are the National Coordinating and Monitoring Board (NCMB) and the Regional Coordinating and Monitoring Board (RCMB), an inter-agency coordinating and monitoring mechanism for the concerns of senior citizens, composed of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Health (DOH), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Philhealth, and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and accredited Non-Government Organizations/Peoples Organizations namely the Federation of Senior Citizens Association of the

¹ An Act Granting Additional Benefits and Privileges to Senior Citizens, further amending Republic Act 7432, as amended, otherwise known, "An Act to Maximize the Contribution of Senior Citizens to Nation Building, Grant Benefits and Special Privileges and for Other Purposes".

Philippines (FSCAP), St. Vincent Federation, and Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE), Inc.; the Local Government Units (LGUs) and; the Office of Senior Citizens Affairs (OSCA).

7. Which rights of older persons does the practice promote and protect?

The rights being promoted and protected by the practice is the right to social security, social and medical assistance, and social welfare services (International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Articles 12-14).

8. How does the practice promote and protect such rights?

The social pension augments the daily subsistence and other medical needs of senior citizens.

9. What groups of older persons, if any, particularly benefit from the practice?

Currently, indigent senior citizens ages 65 years old and above are benefitting from the program. Next year it will include/serve indigent senior citizens ages 60 years old and above.

10. How has the practice been assessed and monitored? Please provide specific information on the impact of the practice, with data, indicators among others, if any.

The program is monitored through regular monitoring visits and reporting. The monitoring and reporting cover the physical (i.e., target beneficiaries, beneficiaries that are included in the payroll, and beneficiaries that have received a stipend) and the financial (i.e., total grants, amount obligated, and amount paid for a specific period of time) accomplishments. Issues and concerns on the implementation of the program as well as good practices which include policies and strategies adopted by DSWD regional offices and Local Government Units (LGUs) are also covered of the monitoring and reporting.

In 2012, after a year of the program implementation, a research study was conducted by the DSWD to assess *how well the program performed as perceived by the beneficiaries and implementers in its first year of implementation*. The study revealed that despite of significant issues particularly pertaining to *amount of the stipend, accessibility of the stipend to senior citizens in far-flung areas and regularity of its disbursement*, the program yielded positive implications. A considerable number of

beneficiaries expressed satisfaction and gratitude with the program as well as hopeful that it will be continued to benefit more senior citizens.

11. What lessons do you believe could be learned from this practice? How could it be improved?

The importance of the provision of relief to the most vulnerable senior citizens is one of the most important lessons learned from the program. The social pension, no matter how meager the monthly stipend, is considered by its recipients crucial in reducing their vulnerability in terms of augmenting their daily subsistence. Moreover, it restores their sense of value within the household stemming from their capacity to contribute to household expenses.

Basically, the government is progressively addressing issues that are surfaced from the regular monitoring and reporting and the study conducted to improve the implementation of the program. Among these initiatives include:

- *Assessment of the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR) or the “Listahanan”² to address issues with regard to inclusion and exclusion. (The second round of nationwide household assessment using the Proxy Means Test (PMT) of the NHTS-PR is currently on going and is expected to be completed in 2016).*
- *“Widen” the coverage of the social pension to cover all indigent senior.³ (The first three years of the program implementation only covers 77 years old and above indigent senior citizens. This year (2015), the coverage is widened to include senior citizens who are 65 years old and above.)*

12. How could this practice be a model for other countries?

It can be a model to other countries as it bears recognition to the right of older persons who are really poor for survival.

² It is an information management system that identifies who and where the poor are nationwide. The system makes available to national government agencies and other social protection stakeholders a database of poor families as reference in identifying potential beneficiaries of social protection programs and services which include the Social Pension. With NHTS-PR or “Listahanan”, uniform set of criteria for identifying poor families in the country through scientific means is formulated; high quality database to public and private social protection stakeholders is made available; leakage or inclusion of the non-poor and under-coverage or exclusion of the poor in social protection services is reduced and; implementation cost of social protection programs and services by saving resources intended for targeting. NHTS-PR or “Listahanan” serves as basis of the list of recipients of the social pension.

³ Senior citizens are defined in the Philippines laws as those 60 years old and above.

Inputs to the Questionnaire on Good/Best practices Related to the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Older Persons

1. Name of Practice: **Privileges for senior citizens⁴**
2. Area concerned: **Discrimination, social protection, and independence and autonomy**
3. Type of Practice: **Policy**
4. Level of Implementation: **National level down to the local**
5. Describe the practice, including a) its purpose; b) when and how it was adopted; c) how long it has been used/implemented; d) its geographic scope.

The privileges for senior citizens are entitlements being enjoyed by senior citizens in all parts of the country. The said privileges is adopted in 1992 with the enactment Republic Act 7432 or “An Act to Maximize the Contribution of Senior Citizens to Nation Building, Grant Benefits and Special Privileges and for Other Purposes” further expanded by Republic Act 9752⁵ and Republic Act 9994.

6. Which actors are involved in the development and implementation of such practice?

The actors involved in the development and implementation of the program are the National Coordinating and Monitoring Board (NCMB) and the Regional

⁴ These privileges include: 1) (20%) discount and exemption from the value -added tax (VAT), if applicable, on the sale of goods and services from all establishments, for the exclusive use and enjoyment or availment of the senior citizens; 2) exemption from the payment of individual income taxes of senior citizens who are considered to be minimum wage earners in accordance with Republic Act No. 9504; 3) the grant of a minimum of five percent (5%) discount relative to the monthly utilization of water and electricity supplied by the public utilities; 4) free medical and dental services, diagnostic and laboratory fees such as, but not limited to, x-rays, computerized tomography scans and blood tests, in all government facilities; 5) free vaccination against the influenza virus and pneumococcal disease for indigent senior citizen patients; 6) educational assistance to senior citizens to pursue post secondary, tertiary, post tertiary, vocational and technical education, as well as short-term courses for retooling in both public and private schools through provision of scholarships, grants, financial aids, subsidies and other incentives to qualified senior citizens, including support for books, learning materials, and uniform allowances, to the extent feasible; 7) to the extent practicable and feasible, the continuance of the same benefits and privileges given by the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), the Social Security System (SSS) and the PAG-IBIG, as the case may be, as are enjoyed by those in actual service; 8) retirement benefits of retirees from both the government and the private sector shall be regularly reviewed to ensure their continuing responsiveness and sustainability, and to the extent practicable and feasible, shall be upgraded to be at par with the current scale enjoyed by those in actual service; 9) to the extent possible, the government may grant special discounts in special programs for senior citizens on purchase of basic commodities, subject to the guidelines to be issued for the purpose by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Department of Agriculture (DA); 10) provision of express lanes for senior citizens in all commercial and government establishments and; 11) death benefit assistance.

⁵ “An Act Granting Benefits and other Privileges to Senior Citizens Amending for the Purpose Republic Act No. 7432”, otherwise known as “An Act to Maximize the Contribution of Senior Citizens to Nation Building, Grant Benefits and Social Privileges and for Other Purposes”

Coordinating and Monitoring Board (RCMB), an inter-agency coordinating and monitoring mechanism for the concerns of senior citizens, composed of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Health (DOH), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Philhealth, and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and accredited Non-Government Organizations/Peoples Organizations namely the Federation of Senior Citizens Association of the Philippines (FSCAP), St. Vincent Federation, and Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE), Inc.; the Local Government Units (LGUs) and; the Office of Senior Citizens Affairs (OSCA).

7. Which rights of older persons does the practice promote and protect?

The practice promotes and protects senior citizens' right to health (Article 11), right to education (Article 13), right to social security, social and medical assistance, and social welfare services (Articles 12-14) and protection of especially vulnerable groups (Articles 15-17, 19), and right to work (Article 23) (International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)).

8. How does the practice promote and protect such rights?

The practice guarantees entitlements (as enumerated above) to senior citizens.

9. What groups of older persons, if any, particularly benefit from the practice?

All senior citizens (60 years old and above) in the country are benefitting from the practice.

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10. How has the practice been assessed and monitored? Please provide specific information on the impact of the practice, with data, indicators among others, if any.

At the local level, the monitoring of the compliance of the provisions of R.A. 9994, particularly the grant of special discounts and privileges to senior citizens, is the function of the Office of Senior Citizens Affairs (OSCA). While, the monitoring functions at the regional level and at the national level is being undertaken by the Regional Coordinating and Monitoring Board (RCMB) and the National Coordinating and Monitoring Board (NCMB), respectively. Stakeholder's consultations, meetings, fora and similar activities are also regularly conducted to assess and monitor the practice.

No impact evaluation have been conducted on the practice but it can be inferred that senior citizens have been enjoying these privileges as reflected in the reports and surfaced through regular consultations and related activities. Further, minimal complaints/cases received on the practice, and usually are isolated ones.

11. What lessons do you believe could be learned from this practice? How could it be improved?

The important lesson that could be learned from the practice is that the *institutionalization of above specified entitlements of senior citizens* compels obligations among stakeholders (particularly the private sector) and ensures the promotion and the protection of the rights of senior citizens.

The implementation of the practice could be improved with the establishment of an oversight body for the concerns of the senior citizens.

12. How could this practice be a model for other countries?

It can be a model to other countries as it enables the senior citizens in the country enjoy rights and privileges that are distinct to their social needs.

Inputs to the Questionnaire on Good/Best practices Related to the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Older Persons

1. Name of Practice: Establishment of the monitoring and coordinating mechanism
2. Area concerned: Discrimination, social protection, independence and autonomy, adequate standard of living, participation, education training and lifelong care, and etcetera.
3. Type of Practice: Institution
4. Level of Implementation: National level and regional level
5. Describe the practice, including a) its purpose; b) when and how it was adopted; c) how long it has been used/implemented; d) its geographic scope.

The National Coordinating and Monitoring Board (NCMB) was established in 2004 with the enactment of Republic Act No. 9257 or An Act Granting Additional Benefits and Privileges to Senior Citizens, Amending for the Purpose Republic Act No. 7432 otherwise known as the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2003. The NCMB is an inter-agency coordinating and monitoring mechanism at the national level and is replicated at the regional level - the Regional Coordinating and Monitoring Board (RCMB). The RCMB functions similar with the National board.

6. Which actors are involved in the development and implementation of such practice?

The National Coordinating and Monitoring Board (and the Regional Coordinating and Monitoring Board) is comprised of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Health (DOH), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Philhealth, and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and accredited Non-Government Organizations/Peoples Organizations namely the Federation of Senior Citizens Association of the Philippines (FSCAP), St. Vincent Federation, and Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE), Inc.

7. Which rights of older persons does the practice promote and protect?

The practice promotes and protects senior citizens' rights specified in R.A. 9994 which include right to health (Article 11), right to education (Article 13), right to social security, social and medical assistance, and social welfare services (Articles 12-14) and protection of especially vulnerable groups (Articles 15-17, 19), and right to work (Article 23) specified under the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

8. How does the practice promote and protect such rights?

The NCMB is established with the following functions: a) Formulate a National Plan of Action for Senior Citizens in coordination with concerned government agencies and other stakeholders; b) Develop an effective monitoring and reporting system towards an efficient, consistent and uniform implementation of the law; c) Develop and institute effective and innovative approaches and methods with which to address emerging concerns of the senior citizens; d) Coordinate the programs and projects of government agencies with responsibilities under RA No. 9994 and these Rules; e) Coordinate the conduct of nationwide information, education campaign and other advocacy activities on RA No. 9994; f) Monitor the conduct of orientation, training and other capability building programs to maximize the contributions and participation of senior citizens; g) Coordinate the conduct and evaluation of the plan of action, research and documentation of good practices and disparities for policy and program development; h) Actively establish national, regional and international networks for resource generation and technical cooperation and; i) Prepare yearly accomplishment report for the Office of the President, Congress, and the concerned national government and local government units. With these functions the NCMB (and apparently the RCMB) promotes and protects the rights of senior citizens guaranteed in R.A. 9994.

9. What groups of older persons, if any, particularly benefit from the practice?

All senior citizens in the country are benefitting from the practice.

10. How has the practice been assessed and monitored? Please provide specific information on the impact of the practice, with data, indicators among others, if any.

The NCMB (and the RCMB) meets quarterly to evaluate its efforts as well as conduct consultations, dialogues and similar activities with stakeholders, i.e., concerned government agencies, private sector/business establishments and utility services providers, and senior citizens organizations, to assess its work.

11. What lessons do you believe could be learned from this practice? How could it be improved?

The important lesson that could be learned from the practice is that a coordinating and monitoring mechanism is essential to enable an effective promotion and protection of the rights of senior citizens.

12. How could this practice be a model for other countries?

It can be a model to other countries as the mechanism ensures the effective promotion and protection of the rights of the senior citizens.
