## **CONTRIBUTION FROM THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES**

## **TO THE THEMATIC REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT EXPERT ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER ORIENTATION (IE ON SOGI) ON THE “PROTECTION AGAINST VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION AGAISNT SOGI IN THE CONTEXT OF SDG 3”**

## **(Pursuant to HRC Resolutions 32/2 and 41/18 )**

The Philippines takes this opportunity to emphasize the government’s commitment to the global effort in the multilateral sphere by responding to the 2015 United Nation's universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and improve the lives and prospects of everyone in the form of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development[[1]](#footnote-1). Through the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the State affirms its commitment to eradicating poverty, fighting inequalities, such as pertaining to sexual orientation and gender, curbing climate change, and protecting the environment, among others, while ensuring that no one is left behind over the next fifteen (15) years[[2]](#footnote-2).

The Philippines adopted and integrated the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in the development and implementation of the Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022 (PDP 2017-2020). The PDP 2017-2020, the country's medium-term national roadmap for development[[3]](#footnote-3), and the *AmBisyon Natin 2040* represents the collective long-term vision and aspirations of the Filipino people for themselves and the country in the next twenty-five (25) years[[4]](#footnote-4).

The government of the Philippines is pleased to provide its response to the letter dated 7 January 2022 from Ms. Beatriz Balbin, Chief of the OHCHR-Special Procedures Branch, requesting contribution to inform the preparation of the upcoming thematic report by the Independent Expert on the Protection against Violence and Discrimination based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (IE on SOGI), Mr. Victor Madrigal-Borloz, on the question of health and sexual orientation and gender identity including in the context of sustainable development in particular SDG 3 to ensure the health and well-being for all.

The contribution was provided by the Presidential Human Rights Committee Secretariat (PHRCS), as follow:

***On item 1.1 whether the State (or other stakeholders) gather data, including data disaggregated by SOGI.***

By virtue of Executive Order No. 27 (s. 2017), government agencies, including local government units, are enjoined to implement the SDGs[[5]](#footnote-5). Data is submitted to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), as the official repository of Philippine SDG indicators, to track the progress made in achieving the SDGs[[6]](#footnote-6).

While data disaggregation remains a challenge, the PSA and the rest of the government agencies concerned, are fully committed to achieve the SDGs by adopting appropriate measures and mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of the country's performance of the SDGs.

***On item 5.2. (indicator 3.3.1.) whether the State measures progress of SOG 3 indicators for persons affected by violence and discrimination based on SOGI, i.e., number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex, age. and key populations.***

The Department of Health (DOH), through its Epidemiology Bureau, tracks and monitors HIV/AIDS statistics in the country[[7]](#footnote-7). The Epidemiology Bureau's monthly publication of its HIV/AIDS and Anti-Retroviral Therapy Registry tallied a total of laboratory-confirmed 93,364 cases as of November 2021, disaggregated by sex, age, specific populations, as well as gender. It has been noted that cases have risen remarkably among males who have sex with other males[[8]](#footnote-8). However, the self-identification of individuals in reporting HIV/AIDS limits

the availability of actual data disaggregated by SOGI[[9]](#footnote-9), which can be observed in data gathered on other indicators under Goal 3.

Moreover, the DOH's HIV, AIDS, and STI Prevention and Control Program caters to all Filipinos, making no distinction among individuals of differing SOGI. It focuses on eliminating stigma, empowering and educating communities, and providing free resources, such as contraceptives, and services where possible[[10]](#footnote-10)

In 2018, Republic Act (RA) No. 11166 or the Philippine HIV and AIDS Policy Act[[11]](#footnote-11), was signed into law by President Rodrigo Duterte enabling minors as young as 15, to avail diagnostic and therapeutic interventions without their primary guardian's consent. Further, the law not only strengthens the educational institutions in terms of addressing the stigma and misinformation surrounding HIV/AIDS through a human rights-based approach, especially in disadvantaged and/ or isolated areas, but also targets to bolster delivery of comprehensive interventions to key populations[[12]](#footnote-12).

***On item 5.2 (indicator 3.4.2.) on suicide mortality rate.***

According to the PSA, 3,081 registered deaths were induced by self-harm within the period of January – October 2021, a drop of 24% from the 4,060 reported in 2020[[13]](#footnote-13). The LGBTQI youth in particular is at much higher risk of suicidal ideation and/or self-harming behavior than their heterosexual peers[[14]](#footnote-14).

It is noteworthy to mention that with the enactment of RA No. 11036 (s. 2012) or the Mental Health Act[[15]](#footnote-15), Filipinos are afforded the opportunity to access much needed mental health-related services, especially in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic[[16]](#footnote-16).

Finally, in recognizing the need to specifically address the psychological distress caused by the pandemic which accompanies the scourge of COVID-19, the DOH is poised to prioritize mental health interventions and augmenting the capacity of psychological service providers[[17]](#footnote-17).

The Philippines invites the Independent Expert to visit the websites provided in the footnotes.

The government of the Philippines hopes that the above contribution would be useful in the preparation of the IE’s upcoming thematic report to be presented at the 50th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council in June 2022 (pursuant to HRC resolutions 32/2 and 41/18). ###

1. Philippine Statistics Authority. Sustainable Development Goals. https://psa.gov.ph/sdg [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. United Nations Development Programme. What are the Sustainable Development Goals? UNDP. https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. National Economic Development Authority. The PDP as the Implementation Mechanism for SDGs. https://sdg.neda.gov.ph/the-pdp-as-the-implementation-mechanism-for-the-sdgs/ [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. NEDA. About AmBisyon Natin 2040 https://2040.neda.gov.ph/about-ambisyon-natin-2040/ [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The Official Gazette. (2017, June 1). EO No. 27, s. 2017 https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2017/06jun/20170601-EO-27-RRD.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. PSA. (2021, May 12). PSA Tracks the Philippine Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Progress [Press Release) https://psa.gov.ph/sdg/press-release-id/164429 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Department of Health. (2017, September 5). Epidemiology Bureau. DOH. https://doh.gov.ph/nec-orgchart [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. DOH-EB. (2020). A Briefer on the Philippine HIV Estimates 2020. DOH-EB. https://doh.gov.ph/sites/default/files/publications/A%20Briefer%20on%20the%20PH%20Estimates%202020\_08232021.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. DOH. (2021, November). November 2021 HIV/AIDS &ART Registry of the Philippines. National HIV/AIDS and STI Surveillance and Strategic Information Unit, Surveys Monitoring and Evaluation Division, Epidemiology Bureau. https://doh.gov.ph/sites/default/files/statistics/EB\_HARP\_November\_AIDSreg2021.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. DOH. HIV, AIDS and STI Prevention and Control Program. https://doh.gov.ph/national-hiv/sti-prevention-program [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. The Official Gazette. (2018, July 23). RA No. 11166. https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2018/12dec/20181220-RA-11166-RRD.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. DOH. (2019, July 12). Philippine National AIDS Council Chair Sec. Duque Signs IRR of New HIV Law, More Support for PLHIV [Press Release]. https://doh.gov.ph/press-release/PNAC-chair-sec-Duque-signs-IRR-of-new-HIV-Law-more-support-for-PLHIV [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Philippine Statistics Authority. (2022, January 17). Page 7 of 9 Table 1. Number of Registered Deaths, Percent Shares, and Ranks by Cause of Death (Top 50), Philippines: January to October, 2020(p) and 2021(p) (as of 29 November 2021), Causes of Deaths in the Philippines (Preliminary): January to October 2021. *PSA.* https://psa.gov.ph/sites/default/files/attachments/crd/pressrelease/COD\_Jan-Oct2021\_Tab1.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Manalastas, E.J. (2013).Sexual Orientation and Suicide Risk in the Philippines : Evidence from a Nationally Representative Sample of Young Filipino Men. *Philippine Journal of Psychology,* 46 (1), 1-13. https://pages.upd.edu.ph/sites/default/files/ejmanalastas/files/manalastas\_2013\_fil\_gay\_suicide\_risk.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. The Official Gazette. (2019, November 25). Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 11036. https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2019/01/22/implementing-rules-and-regulations-of-republic-act-no-11036/ [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. WHO. (2020, September 10). DOH and WHO promote holistic mental health wellness in light of World Suicide Prevention Day: Mental health hotlines bolstered amidst a surge of calls during COVID-19 pandemic . *WHO Philippines.* https://www.who.int/philippines/news/detail/10-09-2020-doh-and-who-promote-holistic-mental-health-wellness-in-light-of-world-suicide-prevention-day [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. DOH. (2021, November 22). ICYMI: INVESTING IN MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS PEOPLE AND THE ECONOMY DOH,

WHO, UNDP, and UN NCD Task Force share important findings from Investment Case Report on Mental Health in the Philippines [Press Release). https://doh.gov.ph/press-release/ICYMI-INVESTING-IN-MENTAL-HEALTH-BENEFITS-PEOPLE-AND-THE-ECONOMY-DOH-WHO-UNDP-and-UN-NCD-Task%20Force-share-important-findings-from-Investment-Case-Report-on-Mental-Health-in-the-Philippines [↑](#footnote-ref-17)