

HONORABLE BIENVENIDO M. ABANTE JR.

 Chairperson
 Committee on Human Rights
 House of Representatives
 Quezon City

 ATTN: **MS. FELY D. PARCON**
 Committee Secretary

 Dear **CONGRESSMAN ABANTE**,

This refers to your request for comments and recommendations on the following bills:

House Bill (HB) No.	Title	Author
2974	Internally Displaced Persons Act of 2022	Rep. Zuur-Rahman Alonto Adiong Lanao del Sur, 1st District Rep. Yasser Alonto Balindong Lanao del Sur, 2nd District
4579	Rights of Internally Displaced Persons Act of 2022	Rep. Gust S. Tambunting Paranaque City 2nd District
5268	Rights of Internally Displaced Persons Act of 2022	Rep. Bienvenido Abante Jr. Manila, 6th District Rep. Josephine Veronique R. Lacson-Noel Malabon City, Lone District Rep. Yedda Marie K. Romualdez Party List - TINGOG Rep. Jude A. Acidre Party List - TINGOG

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) fully supports the proposed measures as we believe that the passage into law of these bills will provide a more comprehensive law for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

Republic Act No. 10121 or the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010 provides for the legal guidelines for the State's response in cases of displacement brought about by natural and man-made disasters and calamities. The proposed legislations would fill in the gaps in the scope of RA No. 10121 and ensure that the Philippines remain committed to our obligation under our covenants on human rights under international instruments and customary law, particularly under Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement issued by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights on IDPs.

Based on the latest analysis conducted by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, as of 31 December 2021, there are about 140,000 internally displaced persons in the Philippines, with about 108,000 mostly located in Mindanao mostly due to conflict and violence. The proposed legislation would provide more concrete guidelines and mechanisms, and establish a strategic program of action for the government to immediately provide relief, assistance and protection to IDPs not only during natural calamities and disasters, but also during other emergency situations such as domestic armed conflicts and violence.

Pursuant to its mandate, the DSWD has been implementing projects on disaster reduction and disaster response management including camp coordination and camp management to ensure that displaced persons due to natural and manmade calamities are well-tended. Disaster response also includes provisions of relief for both food and non-food items as well as delivery of social protection services. The DSWD had been at the forefront of promoting gender-responsive disaster response and ensured that camps and facilities are free from any form of gender-based violence and well-equipped to supply and address specific issues and concerns of the vulnerable sector. To this, the DSWD has issued Memorandum Circular No. 06, Series of 2015¹ providing for Guidelines in the Institutionalization of Women Friendly Space in Camp Coordination and Camp Management as recognition of the different needs, capacities and contributions of each gender.

Furthermore, the DSWD together with Department of Health (DOH), Department of Education (DepEd) and Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) issued Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) No. 02, Series of 2021 or Guidelines on Camp Coordination and Camp Management and Internally Displaced Persons Protection² to supersede JMC No. 1, Series of 2013. JMC No. 02, s. 2021 serves as a holistic response of the government agencies to the evolving challenges in the efficient delivery of relief assistance and services to IDPs due to disasters becoming more complex and as to its effects. Likewise, JMC No. 02, s. 2021 recognized the need to give special importance to vulnerable sectors such as women, persons with disabilities, elderly and children, the latter being pursuant to the implementation of Republic Act No. 10821 or the Children's Emergency Relief and Protection Act of

¹ Available at https://www.dswd.gov.ph/issuances/MCs/MC_2015-006.pdf

² Available at https://www.dswd.gov.ph/issuances/MCs/JMC_2021-002.pdf

2016, and incorporated and integrated information management mechanisms and IDP protection.

Moreover, the DSWD through its Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS) provides the following types of assistance: Food, Medical, Funeral, Transportation, Educational, Non-Food, Psychosocial, and other forms of Cash Assistance, which IDPs may avail of. Hence, the Committee may wish to consider increasing the budget allocation for AICS in consideration of the implementation of the proposed legislations.

Lastly, we submit the following comments and recommendations, for the Committee's consideration:

1. On Rights During and After Displacement

● To include the rights as indicated under JMC No. 2, Series of 2021: Guidelines on Camp Coordination and Camp Management and Internally Displaced Persons Protection, as follows:

- Food and Non-Food Items
- General Protection Concerns
- Child Protection
- Child-Friendly Space Protection Services
- Gender-Based Violence Protection
- Women-Friendly Space Protection Services
- Minimum Services Package for Health MISP for SRH
- Education


2. On Family Unity and Missing Persons

● To explore the DSWD's Family Tracing and Reunification for missing/separated IDPs/IDCs as stated in Sec. 6 of RA No. 10821 or the "Children's Emergency Relief and Protection Act", which states that "The DSWD, upon consultation with the relevant agencies, shall develop a minimum set of standards and guidelines for the Family Tracing Reunification System of orphaned, unaccompanied and separated children."

In view of the foregoing, the DSWD reiterates its support for the passage of the proposed bills.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,


REX GATCHALIAN
Secretary
Date: JUN 09 2023