



04 July 2017

Senator CYNTHIA A. VILLAR
Chairperson
Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Senate of the Philippines
Pasay City

Dear **Senator Villar**,

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) supports Senate Resolution No. 398 entitled, "Resolution Directing The Senate Committee On Environment and Natural Resources To Conduct an Inquiry, In Aid Of Legislation, On The Strategies And Measures Being Undertaken By The Concerned Government Agencies Mandated To Clean-Up, Rehabilitate And Preserve Manila Bay, And Restore Its Waters TO SB Level To Make It Fit For Swimming, Skin Diving And Other Forms Of Contact Recreation Under The Writ Of Continuing Mandamus Issued By The Supreme Court.

Although the DSWD is not mentioned in the said Resolution as among the thirteen (13) agencies with their respective mandates/duties to clean up Manila Bay, we wish to inform that the DSWD actively participates in various activities/initiatives of the DENR in support of the preservation of our environment and advances the interest of the people. These initiatives are as follows:

1. Inter-agency collaboration with other national government agencies on clearing waterways in the metropolis include social preparation through dialogues and tours at the resettlement site to prevent resistance from the relocatees and urban poor groups. Options offered for the relocatees may be off-site, near-site and on-site and these are explained to them in the respective regions.
2. The DSWD, USAID Office of Environment, Energy and Climate Change had a Memorandum of Understanding which formalizes the partnership with focus on strengthening and enhancing capabilities of upland communities, particularly the DSWD Pantawid beneficiaries who helped in the rehabilitation, development and protection of the Sierra Madre Forest in DENR's National Greening Program areas in the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape (UMRBPL) in Rizal and Kaliwa Watershed Forest Reserve (KWFR) in Quezon.

- Php92 Million under the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program budget will be allocated by the DSWD to more than 1,000 Pantawid beneficiaries in Tanay, San Mateo and Antipolo, Rizal and General Nakar in Quezon, who will be involved in maintenance and protection activities like tree planting, weeding and nursery establishment. The project started in 27 July 2015 and is still on-going. The DENR will take the lead in identifying and validating the National Greening Program (NGP) areas. The target area to be covered will be at least 2,000 hectares of NGP sites.

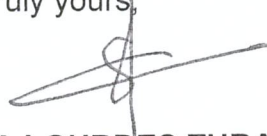
This collaboration will lead us a step closer to achieving our shared goal of broad-based, inclusive and resilient growth for Filipinos and opportunity for our Pantawid Pamilya beneficiaries to participate and work for forest conservation and protection and will encourage them to better appreciate the importance of watersheds.

- The 26,175 hectares Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape and 27,613 hectares Kaliwa Watershed Forest Reserve are home to hundreds of species of flora and fauna, many of which are found only in the Philippines. The watersheds play an important role in providing water resources to Metro Manila and in mitigating floods in the National Capital Region.
3. The DSWD pledged its full support to the efforts of the Philippine government in addressing pressing environmental problems in the country, including the destructive impact of illegal mining, during a plenary session on the Community Consultation and Engagement for the Affected Mining Areas and Communities in Dinagat Island, Surigao del Sur and Norte held in Butuan City on 28 February 2017.

Likewise, we also express our concern to make Manila Bay a viable fishing and aquaculture area for sustainable livelihood of the population.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,



MARIA LOURDES TURALDE-JARABE
Undersecretary and Officer-In-Charge