

**REPORT TO THE JOINT CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT
COMMITTEE PURSUANT TO SECTION 5 OF REPUBLIC ACT
NO. 11469, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE “BAYANIHAN TO
HEAL AS ONE ACT”**

MONDAY, 06 APRIL 2020

Two weeks after the enactment of Republic Act (RA) No. 11469, or the “Bayanihan to Heal as One Act,” your government continues to optimize, within the limits of the Constitution and existing laws, the temporary emergency measures authorized by Congress to respond to, and mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the spirit of *Bayanihan*, to enable the country to *heal as one*, I respectfully report the concrete, far-reaching measures being undertaken, culled from the reports of sixty-nine (69) departments, agencies and instrumentalities of the Executive branch of government submitted to this Office through the Executive Secretary, most of which were received on **03 April 2020 (Friday)**.

Aligned with a national action plan, your government prioritizes the implementation of measures to: (1) Provide Emergency Assistance to all Affected Sectors; (2) Secure Facilities and Resources for the Health Sector and Other Frontliners; and (3) Establish Sound Fiscal and Monetary Actions that are Responsive to all Stakeholders.

I. Providing Emergency Assistance to all Affected Sectors

Expanded Pantawid Pamilya Program and Low Income Households

Foremost in this whole of government approach in responding to the COVID-19 situation is ensuring that we provide all possible assistance to our citizens and stakeholders: from the marginalized sectors, the low income households, laborers, Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), and general consumers, to businesses, including micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

Pursuant to Section 4 (c)¹ and (cc)² of RA No. 11469, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has received PhP100 Billion out of the PhP200 Billion requested for the Emergency Subsidy Program, intended to cover the implementation of the government’s Social Amelioration Program (SAP) for one (1) month. The Department

¹ **Section 4(c)**. Provide an emergency subsidy to around eighteen (18) million low income households: *Provided*, That the subsidy shall amount to a minimum of Five thousand pesos (P5,000.00) to a maximum of Eight thousand pesos (P8,000.00) a month for two (2) months: *Provided, further*, That the subsidy shall be computed based on the prevailing regional minimum wage rates: *Provided, finally*, That the subsidy received from the current conditional cash transfer program and rice subsidy shall be taken into consideration in the computation of the emergency subsidy as provided for in this Act.

² **Section 4(cc)**. Implement an expanded and enhanced Pantawid Pamilya Pilipino Program, responsive to the need posed by the crisis, and provision of an assistance program, whether in cash or non-cash, whichever is more practicable, where the Secretary of Social Welfare and Development, or the Secretary of Labor and Employment, when relevant, shall transfer cash, cash voucher, or goods through the LGUs or directly to households who have no incomes or savings to draw from, including households working in the informal economy and those who are not currently recipients of the current Pantawid Pamilya Pilipino Program, of an amount adequate to restore capacity to purchase basic food and other essential items during the duration of the quarantine. To carry out this subsection, the Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment may approve the temporary emergency standards of eligibility and level of benefits.

of Budget and Management (DBM) will approve the release of the balance of said appropriation as soon as the Bureau of the Treasury (BTr) releases the certification of availability of cash.

In turn, the DSWD, on 02 April 2020, released and deposited said emergency subsidy amounting to PhP16,347,295,950.00 to the accounts of not less than 3,721,833 beneficiaries of the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino* Program. Significantly, and pursuant to the directive of the President, the Inter-Agency Committee for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) Technical Working Group on Social Amelioration will deliver the emergency subsidy fully in cash, on top of the food packs support provided by the local government units (LGUs). Thus, beneficiaries have been able to withdraw their emergency subsidy since 03 April 2020.

In addition to its distribution of a total of 190,217 family food packs, the DSWD also partnered with different government agencies (e.g., Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board [LTFRB] and the Land Bank of the Philippines [LBP]), for the speedy and efficient distribution of cash assistance.

The Sustainable Livelihood Program-National Program Management Office is currently crafting supplemental guidelines for the release of the Livelihood Assistance Grant (LAG), which is set to be released to the DSWD Field Offices on or before 14 April 2020. The LAG may be used by beneficiaries as seed capital to start up new or enhance existing micro-enterprises, among others.

Moving forward, the DSWD is exploring the most efficient methods to transfer and distribute the assistance to all target beneficiaries before the lifting of the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ). For instance, the DSWD Field Office in Region VIII has initiated the implementation of the SAP in its jurisdiction through the conduct of Management Committee Meetings, workshops, and orientations, and through extensive information dissemination among the government officials in the Region on matters pertaining to the SAPs.

The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) has coordinated with the DSWD, the Department of Agriculture (DA), and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) to ensure that Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) will receive emergency relief packages, including seedlings for their farms and monetary subsidy amounting to PhP5,000.00.

The LBP has already paid out PhP6,065,483,150.00 for 1,196,634 Conditional Cash Transfer beneficiaries of the DSWD. The LBP also expects to commence payout of PhP2.66 Billion to an estimated 333,000 drivers under Department of Transportation (DOTr) LTFRB programs.

Laborers

As of 03 April 2020, the COVID-19 Adjustment Measures Program (CAMP) of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) has provided assistance to 88,388 workers from 6,923 establishments nationwide through the beneficiaries' payroll accounts or via money remittance, valued at PhP441.940 Million. The target for the said program by the end of the ECQ is to extend assistance to 115,835 workers.

Meanwhile, the DOLE's *Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers* (TUPAD) program has utilized PhP174.589 Million, with 55,934 workers/beneficiaries availing of assistance from the TUPAD-*Barangay Ko, Bahay Ko* Project. 14,135 of these workers/beneficiaries were able to receive payments through money remittance service providers. An amount of PhP294.282 Million has also been approved for payment of wages and purchase of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) and cleaning materials under the TUPAD Program. PhP54.874 Million of this amount has already been utilized as wages for the beneficiaries.

OFWs

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) has assisted in the repatriation of 3,587 Filipinos (out of the 20,000 target beneficiaries) by utilizing the Assistance to Nationals Fund Allocation of the DFA Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs, and has continuously monitored the status of 448 OFWs diagnosed with COVID-19. The DFA has also established social media portals to assist foreign nationals who are stranded in the Philippines for the duration of the ECQ. In addition, the Bureau of Immigration (BI) has processed and conducted entry formalities of the repatriated OFWs from various jurisdictions from 28 March to 02 April 2020.

On 03 April 2020, Joint Administrative Order No. 2020-001 was issued by the Department of Health (DOH), the Department of Tourism (DOT), and the DILG providing for the guidelines on the operation of accommodation establishments as quarantine facilities for OFWs. Under the guidelines, the DOT and the DILG shall jointly identify potential establishments, through DOT Regional Offices and LGUs, and submit an inventory to the President. Payment of expenses and costs would be shouldered by the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) or any relevant national government agency, recruitment or manning agencies of the guests, or the guests themselves. The DOT Regional Offices have commenced identifying accommodation establishments and preparing the inventory of potential and volunteer establishments to serve as quarantine facilities for OFWs.

As of 02 April 2020, the OWWA has provided transport, food, and accommodation assistance to a total of 3,157 OFWs.

As the National Government imposes strict quarantine measures in the entire Luzon, the government is equally steadfast in ensuring that border control protocols are implemented, consistent with the rules of the World Health Organization (WHO), such as the International Health Regulations. To this end, the BI implements contact tracing of Persons under Investigation (PUIs) and Persons under Monitoring (PUMs) by providing the DOH with the travel and other pertinent documents of such PUIs/PUMs. A travel ban for all arriving passengers is also being implemented except for: (1) Filipinos and their spouse or children; (2) foreign crew members; and (3) foreign government and international organization officials.

Meanwhile, the Clark International Airport Corporation (CIAC), together with the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) and Clark Development Corporation (CDC), has provided temporary housing for passengers stranded at the Clark International Airport (CIA). The Joint Task Force on Clark Safe Haven provided

accommodations for a total of 380³ persons who were billeted at the Mansion in Clark Freeport Zone on 20 March 2020 and 31 March 2020, respectively.

Benefit Packages for COVID-19 patients

Pursuant to Section 4(a)⁴ and (e)⁵ of RA No. 11469, the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) has approved the Benefit Packages for the Spectrum of Care for COVID-19 to cover the cost of treatment for all patients with COVID-19 from 01 February 2020 until 11:59 p.m. of 14 April 2020, particularly identified as follows:

Case	Proposed Rate
COVID-19 (SARS CoV-2) testing	PhP8,150.00 (all components covered by package) PhP5,450.00 (if the test kits are donated) PhP2,710.00 (PRC testing unbundled)
Community isolation	PhP22,449.00 (with LGU overhead)
Mild pneumonia (elderly)	PhP43,997.00
Moderate pneumonia	PhP143,267.00
Severe pneumonia	PhP333,519.00
Critical pneumonia	PhP786,384.00

The PhilHealth shall pay for all COVID-19 tests conducted outside hospitals or in non-hospital facilities such as laboratories and drive-thrus, provided that the facilities are accredited by the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM). The coverage of the benefit packages both for pneumonia associated with COVID-19 and community isolation shall be reviewed within thirty (30) days from the date of implementation in order to adjust the rates.

In this regard, the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) has reported that it is ready to transfer the amount of PhP420.585 Million under Executive Order No. 108 (s. 2020) to the PhilHealth for COVID-19 related packages, in compliance with the directive under IATF Resolution No. 15 (s. 2020).

Consumers

In tandem with the various provisions being given to our citizens is the need to ensure that the consuming public is protected. Pursuant to Section 4(i)⁶ of RA No. 11469, the National Government has closely monitored the enforcement of urgent measures to combat price gouging especially while the country is under a State of National

³ The first batch of One Hundred Ninety (190) Passengers were billeted at the Mansion on 20 March 2020, while the second batch of One Hundred Ninety (190) Passengers were billeted at the Mansion on 31 March 2020.

⁴ **Section 4(a).** Following World Health Organization guidelines and best practices, adopt and implement measures to prevent or suppress further transmission and spread of COVID-19 through effective education, detection, protection, and treatment.

⁵ **Section 4(e).** Direct the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) to shoulder all medical expenses of public and private health workers in case of exposure to COVID-19 or any work-related injury or disease during the duration of the emergency.

⁶ **Section 4(i).** Continue to enforce measures to protect the people from hoarding, profiteering, injurious speculations, manipulation of prices, product deceptions, and cartels, monopolies or other combinations in restraint of trade, or other pernicious practices affecting the supply, distribution and movement of food, clothing, hygiene and sanitation products, medicine and medical supplies, fuel, fertilizers, chemicals, building materials, implements, machinery equipment and spare parts required in agriculture, industry and other essential services, and other articles of prime necessity, whether imported or locally produced or manufactured.

Emergency. To ensure the availability of basic necessities and prime commodities at reasonable prices, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has issued Memorandum Circular (MC) No. 20-07 dated 19 March 2020, as supplemented by MC No. 20-10 dated 31 March 2020, which prescribes anti-hoarding and anti-panic buying guidelines.

To ensure compliance with the automatic price freeze levels of basic commodities, the DTI has conducted 1,289 Monitoring Activities from 28 March to 01 April 2020, where 5,192 firms were monitored with 97% compliance. The DTI has processed 427 online complaints, endorsed 250 complaints to various agencies such as the DOH, issued 140 Letters of Inquiry, four (4) Notices of Violation to various retailers, and one (1) formal charge.

The DTI has launched 544 campaigns against hoarding and profiteering and, through the efforts of its Fair Trade Enforcement Bureau, resulted in 64 arrests. It also conducted 110 Joint Operations with the Philippine National Police (PNP) Criminal Investigation and Detection Group and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), resulting in the arrest of 96 persons for violations of various consumer, food, drug, price, and cybercrime laws. The DILG also reports that 594 individuals were arrested for hoarding and/or profiteering and manipulation of prices of basic commodities. The DA has likewise monitored and enforced the suggested retail prices for basic agricultural and fishery commodities in Metro Manila, which helped regulate the prices of pork, chicken, sugar, milkfish, tilapia, round scad, garlic, and onion.

On 31 March 2020, the Bureau of Customs (BOC) and the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) separately raided three (3) shops in Sta. Cruz, Manila suspected of selling smuggled PPEs and seized an estimated PhP15 Million worth of products such as gloves, face masks, and goggles. These smuggled items pose a health risk since they may not have complied with the safety standards set by the government for human utilization.

The Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) is closely monitoring the prices and supply of sugar in most areas in Metro Manila. While prices mostly appear to remain stable as of 30 March 2020, the SRA has issued notices to explain to stores found to be selling sugar at higher prices. It further reports that the current raw sugar stock of 760,557 metric tons is sufficient to supply the public for three and a half (3 ½) months, while the refined sugar supply stock pegged at 6,861,871 Lkg⁷ is sufficient for five and a half (5 ½) months. The SRA likewise disclosed that the country's total sugar refinery production exceeds its withdrawals for sugar consumption. Out of 28 sugar mills and 13 sugar refineries, 23 sugar mills and nine (9) sugar refineries are currently operating to meet the demands for sugar during the ECQ period.

At the LGU level, as of 02 April 2020, 1,533 Local Price Coordination Councils (LPCCs) all over the country have been reactivated to closely monitor the prices and supply of basic necessities and prime commodities.

⁷ One (1) Lkg is a unit of measurement equal to one 50-kilogram bag of sugar.

MSMEs and Productive Sectors

Pursuant to Section 4(n)⁸ of RA No. 11469, the DA has implemented the Expanded Survival and Recovery Aid and Recovery Project, which targets to benefit 40,000 small farmers and fishers and 295 micro and small enterprises by providing them zero interest loans to help them through the crisis and facilitate their recovery. To date, the project has reached 113,570 small farmer beneficiaries. In addition, the DA has implemented a loan payment moratorium to benefit around 244,044 marginal and small farmers and fisher-borrowers.

In addition to its existing financial assistance programs, the DA has implemented the Financial Subsidy for Rice Farmers Program to provide farmers an unconditional cash transfer in the amount of PhP5,000.00 distributed as cash grants through LBP cash cards. Said program shall cover 34 provinces which were not previously covered by existing rice assistance programs and eight (8) provinces mostly affected by the drop in *palay* prices. The number of target beneficiaries per area is approximately 591,246 individuals with a budget allocation of PhP3 Billion.

To support individual households and small businesses during the COVID-19 crisis, the DTI launched the Livelihood Seeding Program-*Negosyo Serbisyo sa Barangay* Program, expanding the *Negosyo* Center services to serve barangays, particularly those identified as Local Communist Armed Conflict affected areas, Indigenous People communities, as well as MSMEs affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The *Negosyo* Center shall bring the services of the national government to the barangays to facilitate the processing of business registration and provide technical, financial, and business management assistance to MSMEs. In addition, the program shall also now include individual packages amounting to PhP5,000.00 to PhP8,000.00 to qualified affected individuals and MSMEs to support their enterprises during this crisis. The program targets to benefit 3,592 barangays, 359,200 participants, and 17,960 MSMEs. It is also set to distribute 8,000 kits in 16 regions, namely National Capital Region (NCR), Cordillera Autonomous Region (CAR), Regions I, II, III, IV-A, IV-B, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI, XII, and Region XIII/Caraga.

The DTI has likewise implemented measures to ensure the availability of credit to the productive sectors of the economy, especially in the countryside. All borrowers of Small Business Corporation (SBC) in good standing have been granted a one-month loan moratorium and the option to limit their payments in the succeeding six (6) months to just the interest portion. This policy has benefited a total of 127,000 Micro Enterprises under the *Pondo sa Pagbabago at Pag-asenso* (P3) Program and 15,000 MSMEs under SBC's corporate-funded loan portfolios. Further, MSMEs have been granted a 30-day grace period (deferment) on commercial rents falling due during the period of the ECQ, with no interest penalties, fees, and other charges.

The LBP also recently launched the PhP10 Billion Help via Emergency Loan Assistance for LGUs (HEAL) Lending Program for provincial, city, and municipal governments for emergency funding in the purchase of goods and procurement of services. Loans will have an affordable fixed interest rate of 5% per annum, payable up to a maximum of five years, with a one-year grace period on principal payment.

⁸ **Section 4(n).** Ensure the availability of credit to the productive sectors of the economy especially in the countryside through measures such as, but not limited to, lowering the effective lending rates of interest and reserve requirements of lending institutions.

The DBM is about to release the “Bayanihan Grant to Cities and Municipalities” which is a funding assistance to cities and municipalities for their COVID-19 measures and relief efforts. This will be equivalent to 1-month of their IRA, totalling PhP30.824 Billion.

Supply Chain

Integral to ensuring the flow of commerce is facilitating the supply chain and minimizing disruptions thereto.⁹ Towards this end, the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and the University of the Philippines (UP) Public Administration Foundation are creating a national supply chain plan¹⁰ for essential medical supplies, food commodities, and other critical materials during the State of Public Health Emergency. This plan will provide an end-to-end supply chain, from procurement, sourcing, manufacturing, quality and food safety, to logistics and distribution to consumers. The NEDA’s Networks’ Hub¹¹ is setting up a transport analytics tool to address supply chain concerns and bottlenecks to the supply, distribution, and movement of essential goods and services.

As of 28 March 2020, the DA has issued a total of 41,689 Food Passes to delivery trucks and other vehicles transporting agri-fishery products and inputs. It also activated the 1381 (AGRI) Hotline to address problems on movement of food and agri-fishery products and inputs.

Through the enhanced *KADIWA ni Ani at Kita*, the DA linked farmer-cooperatives to LGUs in Metro Manila for their agri-fishery food supply. The DA also deployed trucks to move vegetables, rice, fruits, and fish from trading posts or “bagsakan centers” to wholesale, storage, and retailing areas. In addition, the DA has set-up *KADIWA ni Ani at Kita on Wheels* in strategic areas to provide communities access to rice, fish, vegetables, and fruits. To date, said project is currently serving 28 out of its 1,708 target barangay-beneficiaries in the NCR. The *KADIWA ni Ani at Kita Online*, so far, has already served five (5) of its 17 target cities/municipalities in the NCR.

As of 02 April 2020, the DA has linked ARBs with buyers to provide them with an established market for their farm products. This is in addition to the 66 KADIWA stores that will be rolled-out in the coming weeks nationwide.

The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), in coordination with the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and Developers Connect, a non-profit local software developer organization, is set to fully roll out the RapidPass.Ph on 06 April 2020. The RapidPass.Ph, which was tested in areas in

⁹ **Section 4(p)**. Ensure the availability of essential goods, in particular food and medicine, by adopting measures as may reasonably be necessary to facilitate and/or minimize disruption to the supply chain, especially for basic commodities and services to the maximum extent possible.

¹⁰ The NEDA Report refers to the national supply chain plan as supply chain analytics.

¹¹ The hub shall be composed of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry network, Supply Chain Management Association of the Philippines, Philippine Exporters and Importers Confederation, Export Development Council – Networking Committee on Transport and Logistics network, Confederation of Truckers Association of the Philippines, Haulers and Truckers Association in the Waterfront, Inc., United Port Users Confederation, Philippine Multi-Modal Transport and Logistics Association, Chamber of Customs Brokers of the Philippines, Container Depot Association of the Philippines, Philippine Ports Authority, Bureau of Customs, Maritime Industry Authority, Department of Transportation, Anti-Red Tape Authority, Department of Agriculture, Department of Trade and Industry, and the National Economic and Development Authority.

Mandaluyong (27 March 2020) and Marikina (02 April 2020), will enable frontliners and those working to provide essential goods and services to pass through checkpoints quicker through the use of a QR code or an alphanumeric code for verification, minimizing contact with checkpoint personnel.

The DICT also allowed establishments from the Private Express and/or Messengerial Delivery Services sector to continue their operations to ensure the delivery of food, water, medicine, and other basic goods and necessities during the ECQ period.

The Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) continues to facilitate the unhampered movement of flights to ensure the sustained supply of food, medicine, and other essential goods to different parts of the country, while the Civil Aeronautics Board continues to expedite the prompt approval of *ad hoc* charter cargo flights for the delivery of essential goods and services.

To give way to incoming essential cargoes, the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) has adopted port emergency measures to decongest and ensure the unhampered flow of import cargoes at the Manila International Container Terminal (MICT). The PPA gave temporary authorization to the Manila North Harbor to receive overstaying and cleared import cargoes from the MICT. It also prohibited the imposition of additional port charges and fees, including hazard fees, in the provision and delivery of port services. To ensure the continuous operations of our ports, the PPA facilitated the provision of temporary accommodations for ports personnel in the quarters provided by private sector companies.

Significantly, as of 02 April 2020, 1,484 or at least 86% of LGUs have already complied with the DILG's directive on the unrestricted movement of essential goods and cargoes.

Ensuring Water and Energy¹²

The National Government has instituted measures to ensure supply of water and power. Through the Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA), 528 Water Districts (WDs) all over the Philippines continue to deliver safe drinking water to some 4.762 Million households, or around 24 Million Filipinos. Further, to ensure the provision of adequate water supply by the WDs in their respective areas of responsibility, 232 water supply projects in various stages of construction, with a total project cost of PhP4.282 Billion, are presently being undertaken. Upon completion of the projects, Luzon WDs shall have 56,320 additional household/service connections equivalent to 281,602 resident beneficiaries; Visayas WDs shall have 54,077 additional household/service connections corresponding to 270,386 resident beneficiaries; and Mindanao with 45,332 additional household/service connections proportionate to 226,659 resident beneficiaries. Overall, the projects will produce 155,729 additional household/service connections to serve 778,647 additional resident beneficiaries.

Based on the monitoring, as of 01 April 2020, by the National Water Resources Board (NWRB), the water level in the Angat reservoir is 196.25 meters, which is 16.25 meters above the minimum operating water level of 180 meters, and 3.83 meters higher compared to the water level at this time last year. It also reports that the rainfall forecasts

¹² **Section 4(u).** Conserve and regulate the distribution and use of power, fuel, energy, and water, and ensure adequate supply of the same.

of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration project sustainable water supply in the Angat reservoir in the coming months. The water level in the Ipo dam, on the other hand, is being maintained at 101 meters to provide sufficient supply to concessionaires of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System.

The NWRB has also ordered all water utility operators and water service providers to ensure the sustained and efficient supply of safe water to all hospitals and institutions, whether government-run or privately-owned or managed, including makeshift structures/tents, particularly those used as quarantine and holding areas for COVID-19 patients and/or health personnel.

To ensure the continued supply of fuel, energy and other related products, the Department of Energy (DOE) established a 24/7 Bayanihan Energy Service hotline to address the issues and concerns of industry players and consumers. The DOE has also coordinated with the BOC in prioritizing the entry of petroleum products and ethanol for supply security. It has also facilitated the issuance of a Certificate of Compliance for coal importation of 2.9 million metric tons to have enough supply for the requirements of power plants, cement, food and beverages, canning, and other industries using coal as fuel. The DOE has likewise issued an Advisory to assure the public of the availability of petroleum products inventory for the next 45 days.

The National Transmission Corporation (TransCo) is proceeding with the Feed In Tariff (FIT) Payments for FIT-Eligible Renewable Energy Developers to ensure that they have the means to support their operations while the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation (PSALM) has temporarily increased the allocation for Lanao del Sur Electric Cooperative, Inc. and Maguindanao Electric Cooperative, Inc. to ensure stability of power in Mindanao and to avoid power outages during the ECQ.

Assistance with respect to statutory deadlines¹³

A week ago, this Office reported the rescheduling of various statutory deadlines and periods, in light of the imposition of the ECQ. This week, various agencies (i.e., the DAR, Philippine Economic Zone Authority [PEZA], Maritime Industry Authority [MARINA], PhilHealth, Environmental Management Bureau) have reported the movement of reglementary periods in their respective offices.

On 02 April 2020, the DAR issued memorandum circulars for the suspension of the running of the reglementary periods and other legal processes involving Agrarian Law Implementation cases and those falling under the jurisdiction of the DAR Adjudication Board. Meanwhile, the PEZA has issued a Circular extending the validity of Letters of Authority issued to PEZA-accredited service enterprises. Moreover, it also extended the payment of all prescribed fees within a period of 15 days from the lifting of the ECQ.

The MARINA issued advisories extending the reglementary period for the filing of legal cases, the period for payment of discounted annual tonnage fees, and the validity of Certificates of Seafarers onboard ships.

¹³ **Section 4(z)**. Move statutory deadlines and timelines for the filing and submission of any document, the payment of taxes, fees, and other charges required by law, and the grant of any benefit, in order to ease the burden on individuals under Community Quarantine.

The PhilHealth extended the period for submission of claims by healthcare facilities from 60 to 120 calendar days from the date of discharge of a patient.

The Environment Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, for its part, ordered the automatic extension for 60 days of all existing Transporter Registration Certificates of transporters of pathological and infectious wastes and treatment, storage, and disposal registration certificates nationwide which may expire during the ECQ period. It also set up an online application system for the renewal of regular Permits to Transport set to expire within the same period.

Assistance to and partnership with LGUs

The government recognizes that LGUs are indispensable partners in responding to this crisis and it is imperative to extend necessary assistance to them. Thus, the DBM and the DILG issued Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) No. 02 dated 30 March 2020, relaxing the requirement on the preparation of the Annual Investment Plan (AIP) or supplemental investment program/s for purposes of utilizing any supplemental budget to be approved by the local *sanggunian*. JMC No. 2 provides that the AIP or supplemental investment program shall be prepared by the Local Development Council upon the normalization of the situation.

The DA has distributed agricultural products worth PhP2.5 Million to the LGUs of Caloocan City, Las Piñas City, Makati City, Muntinlupa City, and Parañaque City to augment their relief goods operations and provided assorted vegetable seeds for distribution to affected individual households in Regions I, II, III, IV-A, V, VI, and VII.

The DOTr has established the DOTr *Malasakit* Helpdesks in various transport hubs nationwide to aid passengers stranded in ports, airports, and bus terminals by providing them with snacks and beverages. The DOE has distributed *e-trike* units to LGUs which, in turn, use the same for food distribution and transportation for frontliners.

Pursuant to Section 4(g)¹⁴ of RA No. 11469, the National Government and the LGUs have synchronized intervention efforts to ensure cohesive action against COVID-19. As of 02 April 2020, 1,465 or 85% of the total number of LGUs complied with the directive on the handling of PUIs and PUMs in accordance with DOH-issued guidelines. Additionally, 83% or a total of 1,419 LGUs have utilized their respective Quick Response Fund to assist indigent families and persons earning minimum wage under their respective localities.

The NEDA Regional Offices also continue to cascade IATF Guidelines to the LGU-members of the Regional Development Councils and monitor their respective LGUs' compliance with the IATF's directive to identify government facilities for temporary conversion into isolation or quarantine facilities. To date, LGUs in Luzon are largely

¹⁴ **Section 4(g)**. Ensure that all Local Government Units (LGUs) are acting within the letter and spirit of all the rules, regulations and directives issued by the National Government pursuant to this Act; are implementing standards of Community Quarantine consistent with what the National Government has laid down for the subject area, while allowing LGUs to continue exercising their autonomy in matters undefined by the National Government or are within the parameters it has set; and are fully cooperating towards a unified, cohesive and orderly implementation of the national policy to address COVID-19: *Provided*, That all LGUs shall be authorized to utilize more than five percent (5%) of the amount allocated for their calamity fund subject to additional funding and support from the National Government.

compliant by having already identified and equipped their isolation and quarantine facilities. As of 02 April 2020, 12,324 barangays have designated Barangay Isolation Units or Barangay Special Care Facilities that will house PUIs in their respective jurisdictions.

Meanwhile, the NBI has since started investigations into, and filing of charges against, local government officials who willfully disregard, contravene or violate declared policies under RA No. 11469 and other laws and issuances relative to the COVID-19 national emergency.

Finally, the National Government, through the collaboration of the National Commission of Muslim Filipinos and the LGUs, has sought to provide medical assistance and relief operations to Muslim communities. These include: (i) the rescue of a patient and 35 *tablighs* (missionaries) stranded in Manila and Sibuco, Zamboanga, respectively; (ii) Muslim burial assistance in the NCR; (iii) coordination with the DILG regarding the observance of Muslim burial customs by the different LGUs; (iv) provision of assistance in the transportation of cadavers; (v) distribution of relief goods in Baguio, the Visayas and NCR; and (vi) and providing Halal guidelines for the provision of relief goods.

II. Secure Facilities and Resources for the Health Sector and Other Frontliners

It is critical to ensure that resources are mobilized to strengthen health facilities catering to COVID-19, and all possible support must be extended to our health workers, who are risking their health and lives on a day-to-day basis.

Human Resource for Health, Referral Hospitals, and Equipment by the Numbers

As of 02 April 2020, a total of 55 COVID-referral hospitals have been designated for activation across the country, with every region having at least one (1) hospital. In Metro Manila, three (3) COVID-19 hospitals have a capacity of 620 beds, while around 1,700 isolation and quarantine beds are to be supplied with the assistance of LGUs and the BCDA.

The country has a total of 172,744 active Human Resource for Health in health facilities from both private and public sectors: 28,428 doctors, 89,254 nurses, 42,108 midwives, and 12,754 medical technologists. The total number of mechanical ventilators in the inventory of Level 2 and Level 3 hospitals, both private and public, is 1,263.

Quarantine Facilities

Pursuant to Sections 4(a) and 4(k)¹⁵ of RA No. 11469, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) continues to facilitate the conversion of evacuation centers and selected sites as health/quarantine facilities, emergency operation centers, food hubs, and quarters for health workers. It has designated 114 evacuation centers for conversion, 68 of which have already been converted and are ready for use while the remaining 46 are already being utilized as follows: 29 as health/quarantine facilities,

¹⁵ **Section 4(k)**. Undertake the procurement of the following as the need arises, in the most expeditious manner, as exemptions from the provisions of Republic Act No. 9184 or the "Government Procurement Reform Act" and other relevant laws: x x x

(3) Lease of real property or venue for use to house health workers or serve as quarantine centers, medical relief and aid distribution locations, or temporary medical facilities.

seven (7) as emergency operations centers, nine (9) as food hubs, and one (1) as quarters for health workers. The converted quarters provide lodging for approximately 100 persons at any given time, while the health/quarantine facilities have served 341 PUIs and PUMs so far.

The DPWH has also started construction works necessary to convert of the Philippine International Convention Center-Forum, Ninoy Aquino Stadium, and the World Trade Center into health/quarantine facilities to accommodate a minimum estimate of 912 PUIs and PUMs. These facilities, with a total estimated budget of PhP29.96 Million, are expected to be completed before 14 April 2020.

On 30 March 2020, the IATF directed the DOTr to lead in identifying of maritime vessels that can serve as “floating quarantine hospitals” to be deployed in different parts of the country to accommodate PUMs. The ships will be fitted with the required medical equipment before deployment and pre-positioning to different parts of the country. On 05 April 2020, the 2GO Group agreed to convert two (2) of its ships into “quarantine ships” that can serve around 1,500 patients.

The Office of Civil Defense (OCD) is working on Procurement Guidelines on Leasing of Real Property for quarantine purposes and for the use of health workers and/or other related activities, in coordination with the Government Procurement Policy Board and the DBM.

Assistance to health workers

In line with Section 4(d)¹⁶ of RA No. 11469, I recently signed Administrative Order (AO) No. 28 (s. 2020) which authorizes the grant of a one-time Special Risk Allowance to public health workers (PHWs) for the duration of the ECQ. This grant covers PHWs in the National Government, government-owned -or controlled corporations (GOCCs), and LGUs, including those under a contract of service, job order workers, and barangay health workers regardless of the nature of their engagement who are assigned to hospitals and other healthcare facilities.

Aside from lending bicycles to frontline personnel through its Bike Lending Program, the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), in partnership with the DOTr, private bus companies, and other donors/sponsors, has been dispatching buses to provide free rides to health workers and frontliners. As of 01 April 2020, 380 bus trips have been dispatched which, in turn, served 8,240 health workers and frontliners. These buses are disinfected by MMDA personnel equipped with face masks and PPEs prior to every dispatch. They are also fitted with plastic cover barriers for the protection of the bus drivers, who are equipped with their own PPEs. To facilitate contact tracing if and when necessary, the MMDA maintains a record-keeping system of the passenger manifest. The MMDA has also been providing portalets, emergency health tents, and quarantine check points via the Metro Parkways Program.

The *Malasakit* Helpdesks of the DOTr have also been rolled out in 19 different hospitals. It has also given free meals to health workers, enforcers, and drivers participating in the DOTr Free Ride for Health Workers Program. To sustain the

¹⁶ **Section 4(d)**. Ensure that all public health workers are protected by providing them with a “COVID-19 special risk allowance”, in addition to the hazard pay granted under the Magna Carta of Public Health Workers or Republic Act No. 7305.

continuous operation of its Free Ride for Health Workers Program within Luzon during the ECQ period, the DOTr will also provide fuel subsidies to participating private bus companies and partners.

The PCSO has also approved PhP444.500 Million under its Calamity Assistance Program to provide financial assistance to 81 beneficiary government hospitals all over the country. The PhilHealth is prepositioning funds with accredited hospitals and other health care facilities for the COVID-19 response in the amount of PhP27 Billion to be made available to 5,094 hospitals, dialysis centers, maternity clinics, and infirmaries nationwide. As of 02 April 2020, a total of PhP2,501,925,537.79 has been released to 65 hospitals.

Government agencies and instrumentalities like the DOTr, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), PCG, Commission on Higher Education (CHED), MMDA, CAAP, and Light Rail Manila Corporation have donated face masks, alcohol, thermal scanners, gloves and meals to healthcare workers, drivers, and other frontline personnel. Significantly, the TESDA has mobilized its resources through training-*cum*-production of TESDA-designed masks, face shields, PPEs, hand sanitizers, and surface disinfectants in TESDA Technology Institutions, and distributed these supplies to provincial hospitals in 16 regions, Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Mobile Groups, PNP, LGUs, traffic enforcers, TESDA frontliners, and other government agencies. Hand sanitizers and surface disinfectants are also produced in TESDA Technology Institutions. The CHED mobilized 71 state colleges and universities which were, in turn, able to produce volumes of alcohol, sanitizers and disinfectants, face shields, face masks and a proto-type design for a disinfection cabin for frontline service providers.

The TransCo has entered into an agreement with the Lung Center of the Philippines (LCP) for the use of TransCo dormitory facilities located at the Bantayog ng mga Bayani grounds to house LCP health workers, or serve as a quarantine area. The TransCo has also offered its vehicles to service frontliners during the crisis, including the provision of shuttle services to nearby hospitals such as the LCP, the Philippine Heart Center, and the East Avenue Medical Center.

The CHED is currently finalizing guidelines for the grant to higher education institutions (HEIs) of PhP180 Million from its Higher Education Development Fund for April 2020, for their continued production of items for distribution to frontline service providers.

Test Kits and Testing Centers

With the objective of ensuring fast and effective detection of the spread of the virus, the government is driven to expedite accreditation of test kits and to conduct as much testing as possible. Pursuant to Section 4(b)¹⁷ RA No. 11469, the Food and Drug

¹⁷ **Section 4(b).** Expedite and streamline the accreditation of testing kits and facilitate prompt testing by public and designated private institutions of PUIs and PUMs, and the compulsory and immediate isolation and treatment of patients: *Provided*, That the cost of treatment for COVID-19 patients shall be covered under the National Health Insurance Program of the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation.

Administration (FDA), as of 03 April 2020, has processed applications for special certification for COVID-19 test kits,¹⁸ as follows:

Type of Application	Total Received	Approved	Disapproved	For Review	With pending requirements for compliance
PCR	118	46	55	0	17
Rapid	231	41	134	0	56
Others	14	0	14	0	0
Total	363	87	203	0	73

To date, it has approved a total of 21 PCR-based kits and nine (9) Antibody rapid test kits. The list includes GenAmplify™ CoronaVirus Disease-2019 (COVID-19) rRT-PCR, the first locally-made PCR-based COVID-19 test kit which was developed by the DOST and the DOH in collaboration with the UP-National Institute of Health (NIH). Field testing of the GenAmplify™ (COVID-19) rRT-PCR was completed on 01 April 2020, while field implementation for 26,000 test kits with partner hospitals began on 04 April 2020.

The IATF directed the DOH and the FDA to draft the necessary guidelines for the utilization of FDA-approved COVID-19 rapid test kits to rationalize the testing protocols as well as to complement existing capacity of the country to conduct reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction testing.

The DOH, in coordination with the RITM and the WHO, has accredited eight (8) COVID-19 testing laboratories. There are four (4) in the NCR and one (1) each in the cities of Baguio, Cebu, Davao, and Iloilo. The DOH is still assessing and validating 63 applications for COVID-19 testing accreditation which are at varying stages of the accreditation process.

Approximately 100,000 test kits have been delivered to these eight (8) COVID-19 laboratories. As of 03 April 2020, a total of 19,315 individual persons have been tested for COVID-19, with an average of 900 to 1,200 tests conducted daily. The DOH aims to increase the capacity for COVID-19 testing to 8,000 to 10,000 tests a day by the end of April 2020.

Meanwhile, the DOST has deployed 106 units of RxBox, a device used for bedside monitoring of COVID-19 patients and PUIs and which reduces contact between said patients and healthcare workers. It is also making use of FASSSTER, a decision-making tool previously developed with the DOH and the Ateneo de Manila University for other diseases, to assist the IATF, local chief executives and health facility administrators in resource planning and identification and implementation of measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. DOST laboratories also remain open to provide COVID-19 related testing services.

¹⁸ The applications reported herein refer to those submitted by distributors. Some products have more than one distributor.

Healthcare supplies and equipment

In line with liberalizing the grant of incentives for the manufacture or importation of critical or needed equipment or supplies, including healthcare equipment and supplies,¹⁹ the DTI and Department of Finance (DOF) issued a JMC providing guidelines on the operations and incentives for all enterprises engaged in the manufacture or production of medicines, medical supplies and equipment, packaging, and their related raw materials. The DTI-Board of Investments is also coordinating with various manufacturers to repurpose their facilities for the importation of medical supplies (e.g., PPEs and alcohol) and medicine, for sale/distribution to drugstores and government hospitals.

To ensure the availability of these essential goods (Section 4[p] of RA No. 11469), the government targeted the production of medical supplies/equipment for distribution to our public health workers. In this connection, the DTI has initiated the production of 3,840 face shields using Digital Fabrication at the Philippine Trade Training Center-Global MSME Academy to be donated for use of medical personnel. To ensure availability of PPEs, the DTI-Bureau of Philippine Standards coordinated with the European Committee for Standardization and facilitated the adoption and promulgation of the European Standards for PPEs and the ISO Standards for Business Continuity Management.

Pursuant to Section 4(j),²⁰ I issued Administrative Order (AO) No. 27 (s. 2020), which provides a framework for the consolidation of donations of related medical supplies and equipment to the National Government (i.e. where the donee is not a specific agency) and to the DOH, while allowing the continuation of direct donations to other agencies, and donations of nominal value from the private sector. The framework under AO No. 27 empowers the OCD to reallocate donations to hospitals and health facilities, as may be necessary. Oversight of the consolidation and reallocation of donations is vested in the Chief Implementer of the declared policy on COVID-19, namely, the Presidential Adviser Peace, Reconciliation and Unity.

In relation to this, the DFA has processed international humanitarian assistance from four (4) foreign governments, one (1) international organization and fifteen (15) private companies, and facilitated the entry of nineteen (19) medical experts and responders from China, the WHO and other organizations, pursuant to Foreign Service Circular No. 29-2020. It was also able to obtain landing clearances from the Hong Kong and Chinese Governments for three (3) Philippine Air Force flight missions to pick up PPEs acquired from China. For its part, the OCD has received and distributed medical kits and supplies from various local and international donors.

From 31 March 2020 to 03 April 2020, the OCD is set to mobilize a total of 12,040 PPEs, 9,684 bottles of alcohol, 37,000 bouffant caps, and 72,000 face masks, procured by the DBM-Procurement Service and 15,000 face masks received as donations. The

¹⁹ Section 4[o] of RA No. 11469.

²⁰ **Section 4(j).** Ensure that donation, acceptance and distribution of health products intended to address the COVID-19 public health emergency are not unnecessarily delayed and that health products for donation duly certified by the regulatory agency or their accredited third party from countries with established regulation shall automatically be cleared: *Provided*, That this shall not apply to health products which do not require a certification or clearance from Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

OCD has made the delivery of the first batch of consisting of 12,040 sets of PPEs and 4,860 bottles of 500 ml. alcohol to six (6) hospitals in the NCR.²¹

Meanwhile, the BOC issued Customs AO No. 07-2020 dated 30 March 2020 declaring all imported goods, supplies and equipment, including test kits and PPEs needed for containing the COVID-19 outbreak, as well as imported materials needed to manufacture these products, exempt from all taxes, duties, and fees. As of 01 April 2020, the BOC immediately released a total of 4,204 shipments of these goods on the same date as their arrival. The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) also issued guidelines to expedite the release of all goods imported under Section 4(o) of RA No. 11469.

The PCG has deployed vehicles and personnel to assist the AFP and the PNP in the delivery of sterile protective suits, medical overboots, medical goggles, N95 masks, latex gloves, surgical masks, and alcohol to healthcare facilities. Meanwhile, the PCG aviation force continues to provide air support operations, specifically to transport PPEs such as N95 masks, face masks, infrared gun thermometers, latex ambidextrous gloves, stethoscope, pulse oximeters, shock resistant aneroids with adult cuffs, to different areas in the country such as in Bacolod, Iloilo, Cebu, Tacloban, Zamboanga, Cagayan de Oro, and Davao.

The MMDA also continues to assist in the transportation and distribution of medical supplies and equipment and relief goods when requested by hospitals and LGUs.

III. Establish Sound Fiscal and Monetary Actions that are Responsive to the Needs of All Stakeholders.

Moratoriums and other relief measures

On 01 April 2020, the DOF issued the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Section 4 (aa)²² of RA No. 11469, directing all lenders to grant a 30-day grace period or extension for the payment of all loans, including credit card payments and pawnshop loans, falling due within the ECQ period, without incurring interest on interest, penalties, fees, and other charges on the borrowers. Pursuant thereto, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) also issued a memorandum requiring all BSP-supervised financial institutions engaged in lending to comply with the provisions of said IRR.

The DOF also approved regulations issued by the BIR clarifying that the above-stated relief for loans is not subject to Documentary Stamp Tax to ensure that the burden of debt is lessened without compromising the viability of the lending institutions.

²¹ This pertains only to goods received by the OCD and does not reflect the status of delivery of goods and supplies from DOH warehouses.

²² Section 4 (aa). Direct all banks, quasi-banks, financing companies, lending companies, and other financial institutions, public and private, including the Government Service Insurance System, Social Security System and Pag-ibig Fund, to implement a minimum of a thirty (30)-day grace period for the payment of all loans, including but not limited to salary, personal, housing, and motor vehicle loans, as well as credit card payments, falling due within the period of the enhanced Community Quarantine without incurring interests, penalties, fees or other charges, persons with multiple loans shall likewise be given the minimum thirty (30)-day grace period for every loan.

The LBP provided payment moratorium to the following (i) for credit cardholders, salary loan borrowers, mortgage and housing loans, and project finance loans, 60-day grace period for payments falling due from 18 March 2020 to 30 April 2020; and (ii) for business loans, 30-day grace period for payments falling due from 18 March 2020 to 30 April 2020. For loan amortizations of ARBs, the LBP Board also approved a one (1)-year moratorium.

In addition to the three (3)-month moratorium on the payment of loan amortizations issued earlier, the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) declared another moratorium on the payment of in-house financing plans or credit intermediation extended by real estate developers to buyers of lots or house-and-lots in subdivision projects and units in condominium projects and in other projects required to be registered with the DHSUD. Said moratorium shall be effective for the duration of the ECQ plus one (1) month thereafter. Any unpaid amortizations shall be payable within six (6) months after the moratorium and shall not incur interests and penalties.

The Department of Education (DepEd) has requested private lending institutions duly accredited in their automated payroll delivery system not to charge penalties and interest during the implementation of the ECQ. It has also advised its concerned finance officers that loan amortizations automatically deducted under the DepEd's payroll system for April 2020 are to be eventually returned to the employees, in accordance with guidelines it will soon issue on the matter.

Government entities like the PSALM, Social Housing Finance Corporation, the Al-Amanah Islamic Bank of the Philippines, and the DOT-Philippine Retirement Authority have granted relief measures.

Pursuant to Section 4(bb)²³ of RA No. 11469, the IATF extended the grace period to commercial rents falling due upon MSMEs within the period of the ECQ without incurring interests, penalties, fees and other charges. The DTI was directed to issue the necessary guidelines to implement said IATF directive. All airport concessionaires were granted rental holidays and deferment of rental charges.

Fiscal measures of the BSP

The BSP, together with the DOF, has developed and implemented specific temporary measures such as: (i) reduction of the reserve requirement ratio on the reservable liabilities of banks; (ii) reduction of the minimum liquidity ratio for stand-alone thrift banks, cooperative banks, and quasi-banks; (iii) grant of a 60-day period for banks to settle outstanding obligations with the BSP; (iv) approval of the temporary reduction of the term spread on rediscounting loans relative to the overnight lending rate; and (v) issuance of memoranda to all BSP-supervised financial institutions extending temporary regulatory forbearance with the objective of helping them cushion the impact of COVID-19.

The BSP also authorized the purchase of government securities from the BTr under a repurchase agreement in the amount of PhP300 Billion. It also advanced the remittance of PhP20 Billion dividends to the National Government based on its unaudited financial statements for year 2019.

²³ **Section 4 (bb).** Provide for a minimum of thirty (30)-day grace period on residential rents falling due within the period of the enhanced community quarantine, without incurring interests, penalties, fees, and other charges.

Budgetary Measures to Fund COVID-19 Efforts

Pursuant to Section 4(v)²⁴ of RA No. 11469, the DBM has identified items of appropriations that may be discontinued under the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 General Appropriations Act (GAA) and the FY 2019 Continuing Appropriations to fund COVID-19-related interventions. Unreleased appropriations amounting to PhP189.823 Billion (unreleased appropriations), which were taken from the funding sources below, may be discontinued:

In thousand pesos

	PS	MOOE	FinEx	CO	Total
FY 2020 GAA	44,934	27,901,141	-	158,554,394	186,500,169
FY 2019 Continuing Appropriations	922,654	537,687	505	1,862,074	3,322,920
Total	967,588	28,438,828	505	160,416,468	189,823,389

Of the total unreleased appropriations, PhP4.209 Billion was sourced from Special Purpose Funds (Budgetary Support to Government Corporations). The unreleased appropriations shall be utilized to fund the following:

- a. To provide for additional requirements of existing programs/ activities/projects (P/A/Ps) of concerned NGAs/GOCCs and/or requirements for new P/A/Ps in support of the response measures of the government against the COVID-19 pandemic; and
- b. To provide for any deficiencies that may be incurred under the Special Purpose Funds, i.e., National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund (NDRRMF) and Contingent Fund.

A total of PhP100 Billion in allotments has already been released to the DSWD as of 01 April 2020.

Line departments are also assisting the DBM in the determination of P/A/Ps which can be discontinued to generate savings which can augment COVID-19 response measures.

The DBM, pursuant to Section 4(x),²⁵ has reported that as of 03 April 2020, the following additional allotments and cash allocations were released to the following

²⁴ **Section 4(v)**. Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, direct the discontinuance of appropriated programs, projects or activities (P/A/P) of any agency of the Executive Department, including government-owned or -controlled corporations (GOCCs), in the FYs 2019 and 2020 General Appropriations Act (GAA), whether released or unreleased, the allotments for which remain unobligated, and utilize the savings generated therefrom to augment the allocation for any item directly related to support operations and response measures, which are necessary or beneficial in order to address the COVID-19 emergency, consistent with the herein declared national policy; x x x.

²⁵ **Section 4 (x)**. Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, reprogram reallocate, and realign from savings on other items of appropriations in the FY 2020 GAA in the Executive Department, as may be necessary and beneficial to fund measures that address and respond to the COVID-19 emergency, including social amelioration for affected communities, and the recovery of areas, sectors and industries severely affected. All amounts so reprogrammed, reallocated or realigned shall be deemed automatically appropriated for such measures to address the COVID-19 situation within the period specified under Section 9 hereof.

departments/agencies to cover their COVID-19 response activities, which can be attributed to their existing P/A/Ps under the FY 2020 GAA:

Department/Agency	Allotment	Cash Allocation*
DOH	600,000,000.00	600,000,000.00
DSWD	3,930,605,846.00	3,908,259,846.00
DILG	548,029,000.00	520,627,550.00
DOST		53,230,732.00
DOLE		100,000,000.00
Total	5,078,634,846.00	5,182,118,128.00

*Net of withholding taxes

Meanwhile, pursuant to Section 4(w) which states that all unutilized, unspent and unreleased funds sourced from collections or receipts shall be appropriated and utilized to support COVID-19 measures, the LBP has remitted to the BTr cash balances from various government agencies amounting to PhP12.13 Billion, unutilized balance of Letter of Credit procured by the DOH and the AFP in the total amount of PhP4.4 Billion and unutilized Unconditional Cash Transfer funds amounting to PhP5.5 Billion.

Further, pursuant to Section 4(y),²⁶ the DBM and the DOF have issued Joint Circular No. 1 dated 30 March 2020, which prescribes procedural guidelines in the pooling of cash, funds and investments to fund the Social Amelioration Measures under RA No. 11469.

As of 31 March 2020, the BTr has certified a total amount of PhP101.642 Billion to fund the said Social Amelioration Measures of the Government. In the implementation of the Social Amelioration Measures, all budgetary accounting and auditing rules and regulations shall be applied. To ensure transparency and efficient utilization of the funds released, implementing departments shall submit the required Financial Accountability Report and Monthly Report of Disbursements on the programs/projects funded out of the unprogrammed appropriation releases to the DBM.

In the spirit of *bayanihan*, several GOCCs have made early remittances of dividends to the National Government. For instance, (i) the PPA, the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA), and the CAAP, remitted in advance, through the DOTr over PhP10 Billion in dividends; (ii) the Cebu Ports Authority, PhP500 Million; and (iii) the SRA, PhP159.5 Million.

The DOE's attached agencies advanced dividends and unutilized funds in the amount of PhP12.34 Billion to the National Government. It is also finalizing a Circular which will propose the distribution of available and unremitted ER 1-94 Funds among host LGUs for the latter to have readily available funding to undertake their duty to contain COVID-19 within their respective areas.

As of 01 April 2020, the DOF has collected dividend contributions in the amount of PhP78.64 Billion from twelve (12) GOCCs to fund the government's response to the COVID-19 emergency.

²⁶ Section 4(y) Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, the President is hereby authorized to allocate cash, funds, investments, including unutilized or unreleased subsidies and transfers, held by any GOCC or any national government agency in order to address the COVID-19 emergency, as declared in Section 3 hereof.

Meanwhile, other instrumentalities like the EMB has allocated PhP2.352 Million from its Climate Change support activities to be realigned for COVID-19 programs and projects; the TransCo has also directed the use of available unutilized funds for the purchase of PPEs for COVID-19 frontliners, thermal scanners, relief goods, and donation (in the amount of PhP3 Million) to the Philippine Red Cross; the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office has allocated its agency funds to address and respond to the COVID-19 emergency, including social amelioration measures for severely affected communities and sectors such as: (1) *Lingap* packages for all of its 451 agency personnel amounting to PhP1.041 Million; and (2) donations amounting to PhP10,000 to the Philippine Resilience Corp., Inc., in support of its Project *Ugnayan* to feed 1 Million poor families, and PhP20,000.00 to the UP Vanguard Foundation to help feed the stranded UP Diliman students.

IV. Other Measures for the Protection of the Welfare of our Citizens

Pursuant to Section 4 (s),²⁷ as of 03 April 2020, a total of 2,513 Quarantine Control Points were established by the Joint Task Force Corona Virus Shield, composed of 38,870 personnel from the PNP, AFP, Bureau of Fire Protection, PCG and other law enforcement agencies. In particular, the AFP has established and installed sanitation booths in various locations across Metro Manila and other provinces. Consequently, a total of 75,750 individuals were apprehended and/or arrested for violation of curfew hours, while 7,063 drivers of public utility vehicles were apprehended for violating the rule on social distancing.

In relation to Section 4(t), agencies in the Executive Department continue to adopt and implement alternative work arrangements (i.e., compressed work week, skeleton workforce, staggered working hours, work-from-home) to ensure the health and safety of its employees and customers, while delivering continued services during this extraordinary time.

The same policy has been implemented in specific economic sectors affected by the pandemic. The PEZA has adopted work from home arrangements and skeleton workforce, and recommended the adoption of the same measures among PEZA-registered enterprises, including those which temporarily ceased operations due to the ECQ. Out of 1,128 companies, there are 900 (80%) which are fully operational, while 228 have temporarily stopped operations.

In light of the issuance by the Department of Justice (DOJ) of guidelines for the conduct of electronic and online inquest proceedings in the NCR during the ECQ period, the DICT offered its Philippine National Public Key Infrastructure (PNPKI) digital certificates to the DOJ's National Prosecution Service (NPS) to ensure the integrity of documents and information on its online platform. On 02 April 2020, the DICT also issued guidelines allowing the online application and issuance of PNPKI digital certificates in favor of any person or entity during the ECQ period. Digital certificates act as proof of an individual or a machine's electronic identity and allow people to digitally sign and encrypt pending work documents.

²⁷ **Section 4(s).** Regulate traffic on all roads, streets, and bridges, and access thereto; prohibit putting up of encroachments or obstacles; authorize the removal of encroachments and illegal constructions in public places; and perform all other related acts.

The DICT also continues to assist stakeholders in the Information Communications Technology-enabled Business Process Outsourcing sector in resolving issues in the implementation of work-from-home arrangements.

By virtue of my authority under Section 4(ee)²⁸ of RA No. 11469, other significant measures being undertaken are as follows:

- a. The NEDA has created a ten (10)-day work plan to recommend programs and strategies to: (i) promote confidence in the country's health systems through data analytics; (ii) rebuild consumer and business confidence; and (iii) adapt to a "new normal" state of economic activities, including strategic stockpiling; and
- b. The Commission on Population and Development²⁹ (POPCOM) has continued to implement its Responsible Parenthood Family Planning program even during the State of National Health Emergency. On 25 March 2020, the POPCOM issued Guidelines on Uninterrupted Resupply of Pills and Condoms and Family Planning Information by Barangay Population Volunteers/Workers during the State of National Health Emergency and to monitor the LGUs' compliance in their respective jurisdictions, particularly, in areas in total lockdown.

Meanwhile, relevant agencies of the government have ongoing efforts to ensure widest dissemination of information relative to the crisis. For the period of 25 March to 03 April 2020, the Presidential Communications Operations Office employed communication strategies to promote public awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the provisions of RA No. 11469. These strategies include virtual pressers, TV and radio specials, a dedicated #COVID19PH Radio with 24/7 programming, a devoted covid19.gov.ph website, the *Laging Handa* and COVID-19 PH social media platforms, social media cards and infographics, short videos and radio plugs/public service announcements, outdoor advertising, and news and feature reports.

The TESDA continues to issue circulars and memoranda for guidance and information on the COVID-19 situation. The SBC³⁰ has issued press releases in English and Filipino to address the questions and alleviate the uncertainties of MSMEs affected by the on-going COVID-19 pandemic. These press releases provide relevant information on the government's efforts to help MSMEs restart and/or restock businesses and/or to avoid foreclosure of their business assets. The information drive has so far benefited a total of 127,000 micro enterprises under the *Pondo sa Pagbabago at Pag-asenso* Program and 15,000 MSMEs under the corporate-funded loan portfolios of the SBC.

CHED is also: (1) closely overseeing the compliance of HEIs with CHED-issued COVID-19 advisories; and (2) continuously monitoring social media to correct erroneous information through the production and publication of infographics regarding COVID-19 and related CHED initiatives and activities.

²⁸ **Section 4(ee)**. Undertake such other measures as may be reasonable and necessary to enable the President to carry out the declared national policy subject to the Bill of Rights and other constitutional guarantees.

²⁹ The POPCOM is an attached agency of the NEDA.

³⁰ The Small Business Corporation is the financing arm of the DTI.

Pursuant to Section 6(f),³¹ the Anti-Cyber Crime Division of the NBI has issued subpoenas to certain individuals in connection with alleged acts of posting fake news online. Two (2) accounts have since been taken down due to the questionable posts.

To aid the IATF in determining whether to lift/extend or limit/expand the scope of the ECQ, the NEDA and the Philippine Institute for Development Studies³² (PIDS) are currently working on a study to model the spread of COVID-19 in the Philippines under varying scenarios. Said study will provide the IATF an accurate calculation of the health resources required to promptly and effectively address any expected rise or outbreak of COVID-19 cases. The NEDA and the PIDS have also begun crafting the parameters for the partial/total lift or extension/expansion of the ECQ.

I would like to highlight that two (2) of the most coercive powers granted to me under RA No. 11469 remain unutilized--the power to direct the operation of specified private establishments or to take over their operations in very specific conditions, and the power to require businesses to prioritize contracts for materials and services necessary for this crisis. Again, I will exercise these powers only when absolutely necessary. In the spirit of *bayanihan*, it has been the government's policy to exert all efforts to enter into collaborative and mutually beneficial arrangements with the private sector. I am pleased to inform the distinguished members of Congress that, thus far, the private sector has been a willing partner in the expansion of facilities needed to confront this pandemic.



³¹ **Section 6. Penalties.**— In addition to acts or omissions already penalized by existing laws, the following offenses shall be punishable with imprisonment of two (2) months or a fine of not less than Ten thousand pesos (P10,000.00) but not more than One million pesos (P1,000,000.00), or both, such imprisonment and fine, at the discretion of the court: x x x (f) Individuals or groups creating, perpetrating, or spreading false information regarding the COVID-19 crisis on social media and other platforms, such information having no valid or beneficial effect on the population, and are clearly geared to promote chaos, panic, anarchy, fear, or confusion; and those participating in cyber incidents that make use or take advantage of the current crisis situation to prey on the public through scams, phishing, fraudulent emails, or other similar acts x x x.

³² The PIDS is an attached agency of the NEDA.