

# PHILIPPINE COUNTRY REPORT

## 12<sup>th</sup> ASEAN and Japan High Level Officials' Meeting (HLOM) on Caring Societies

*A collaboration of the Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of Health and Department of Labor and Employment*

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The growing proportion of older persons is expected to rise worldwide. In the 1998 World Health Report, there were 390 million older people and this figure is expected to increase further (WHO). This growth will certainly pose a challenge to country governments, particularly to the developing countries, in caring for their aging population. In the Philippines, the population of 60 years or older was 3.7 million in 1995 or 5.4% of total population. Based on the May 2010 census, the total number of Senior Citizens is now 6.2 million representing 6.7% of the 92.3 million total household population in 2010. By 2040, there will be approximately 19.6 million senior citizens out of the projected 141.7 million Filipinos<sup>1</sup>. The life expectancy as of 2014 at birth is 72.48 years; 69.52 years for male; and 75.59 years for female<sup>2</sup>.

Respect for the elderly has always been the mark of Asian societies like the Philippines. There is a high premium on preserving the dignity of the elderly, putting them in an exalted place in the society. In fact, our history has witnessed the importance ancient Filipinos gave to the elderly. During the pre-colonial period, the elderly were a source of wisdom. Customs and traditions were kept and passed by them to younger generations. Thus, their contributions in the enhancement of the country's institutions such as government, family, education, and religion cannot be ignored<sup>3</sup>.

The Philippines, like many developing countries, does not have sufficient government-funded institutional support for its elderly population. The Filipino elderly have historically been dependent on their children or co-resident kin for economic, social and physical support. In a traditional Filipino family, grandparents are commonly seen living with their children because they enjoy their remaining lives with their children and grandchildren. The children, in particular, are expected to provide care and economic security to their parents in old age. The elderly co-residing with at least one of their children are assumed to receive better economic support, and more importantly better physical care than those living alone or those living with non-relatives or even other relatives. It is believed that the traditional familial care and support for the elderly is still widely practiced. Also, it is generally assumed that physical care can only be given by co-resident children or kin. The living arrangements of the elderly can therefore provide a picture of their well-being. However, when young adults migrate in search of work, older parents may be left living by themselves.

Significant concerns of the elderly have only recently been offered serious consideration. Perhaps because of the prevailing view that the local population is generally a young one that the research community has yet to give close attention to elderly issues<sup>4</sup>. Some of the dominant issues are the following:

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<sup>1</sup> Philippine Plan of Action of Senior Citizens 2012-2016.

<sup>2</sup> Philippines Life Expectancy at Birth at [http://www.indexmundi.com/philippines/life\\_expectancy\\_at\\_birth.html](http://www.indexmundi.com/philippines/life_expectancy_at_birth.html)

<sup>3</sup> Concerns of the Elderly in the Philippines by Clarita R. Carlos, Phd, 1999.

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*First* is the security in old age. Poverty is perceived as an obstacle to a secured old age. As such, the current pension system in the Philippines requires careful consideration and evaluation. The government offers welfare services such as homes for the aged and Senior Citizens Centers to better address the plight of the Filipino elderly. However, the effectiveness of such welfare services can only be confirmed by the level of satisfaction of their intended beneficiaries.

*Second*, occurrence of abuse committed against the elderly in homes and in institutions. Abuse of the elderly may be in the form of physical violence, psychological abuse, financial exploitation and neglect.

*Third* is the health status of the elderly. As people age, their bodies undergo changes which can make them less resistant to chronic, debilitating and disabling conditions. Consequently, the elderly tend to be more at high risk of developing disabilities and contracting diseases. One of the challenges of older persons is age discrimination in health care. Aged-based inequalities in clinical treatment partly stemmed from the lack of geriatric doctors or gerontological training for medical staff. Consequently, there is a lack of knowledge about the specific care needs of the elderly.

*Fourth* issue is the economic impact of ageing on overall welfare. Given their increasing number, the elderly pose a great economic challenge as their productivity declines. There is thus, a need for a strong commitment and a comprehensive policy that would respond to the various needs of the elderly.

Furthermore, the Philippines is not yet prepared for the growing population of older persons in terms of services and age care facilities/programs that can accommodate the needs and various concerns of the older persons. Nevertheless, in recognition of the important role and contributions of the older persons in the society as well as in the community development, the Philippines remains steadfast in initiating various programs and services that aim to promote the welfare and rights of the elderly. The Philippine Government, in collaboration with different non-government agencies, civil society organizations and the older persons themselves is committed to providing social protection for the Filipino Older Persons. With the growing consciousness for elderly concerns and needs, there is a greater awareness and demand for appropriate policies and legislative initiatives to promote the welfare of the elderly. *Please see Annex A for Philippine Legislations, Policies and other Mechanisms on Older Persons.*

### **The Philippine Plan of Action for Senior Citizens<sup>5</sup>**

The Philippine Plan of Action for Senior Citizens (PPASC) 2012-2016 is a timely and effective response of the Philippine government to respond to various key issues related to population aging in the Philippines with a vision of “*a society for all ages where the senior citizens are empowered to achieve active ageing*”. Covering a five year period, the document serves as an important guide to strategic policymakers and decision-makers. As the successor plan of the PPASC 2006-2010, the Philippine Plan of Action 2012-2016 builds on the achievements of the former plans while enhancing the strategies and mechanisms for a more responsive actions given the emerging challenges the senior citizens sector faces. The Plan focuses on strengthening the collaboration of different stakeholders and the senior citizens themselves to ensure implementation of various programs and services for the elderly. This Plan aims to be the blueprint in addressing the best interests of the senior citizens through the

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<sup>5</sup> Philippine Plan of Action for Senior Citizens (PPASC) 2012-2016.

implementation and development of social protection programs and services senior citizens. Through the Plan, the government and the private sector is able to firm up its commitment to vigorously pursue measures to address challenges of population ageing and combat elderly poverty.

Consistent with the goals laid down in the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002 and the Macau Plan of Action on Ageing in 1999, the PPASC has set the following goals:

- To develop a holistic and multi-generational care program for Senior Citizens with the Filipino family network;
- To ensure the priority of community-based approaches which are gender-responsive, with effective leadership and meaningful participation of Senior Citizens in decision-making processes, both in the contexts of family and community;
- To ensure active ageing for Senior Citizens in a society where preventive aspects of health are granted in communities and where health services are accessible, affordable and available at all times; and
- To develop and enhance comprehensive programs and policies on housing, transportation, and build an environment for the care and protection of Senior Citizens.

The PPASC 2012-2016 adopts the following three priority directions laid down by the Shanghai Regional Implementation Strategy on Ageing:

1. *Senior Citizens and Development.* This area focuses on the strategies and solutions to prevent isolation, neglect and abuse of senior citizens, particularly: (i) mainstreaming the concerns of senior citizens into development; (ii) provision of social protection and security; (iii) education; (iv) capability-building; (v) employment and livelihood; (vi) promotion of active ageing.
2. *Advancing Health and Well-being into Old Age.* This plan determines appropriate interventions to advocate active ageing specifically to ensure access to and availability of quality and appropriate health and nutrition care services for senior citizens.
3. *Ensuring Supportive and Enabling Environment.* The family being the sole institution in which care for the elderly is outsourced undergoes pressure as a result of urban and labor migration. Therefore, the institution of family as a cradle of care for the elderly should be reinforced, the same with center and community-based program approaches which will serve as alternatives. Specifically this strategy aims to provide (i) advocate for the passage of related policies and legislations on senior citizens; (ii) ensure that NGAs comply with 1% total budget allocation for senior citizens; (iii) provide capability building activities for families and care-givers; (iv) strengthen community-based and residential institutions, centers as well as community support; (v) full compliance to the provisions of RA 9994; and (vi) make consumer services more accessible and responsive for senior citizens.

Among the milestones of the PPASC includes:

- The passage of the Republic Act No. 9994 or the Expanded Senior Citizens Act in 2010 and the formulation of its Implementing Rules and Regulations
- 85% of cities and municipalities in the country have established functional OSCA from the period 2006-2008. In 2013, 236 provinces/cities and municipalities in the county have functional Office of Senior Citizens Affairs (OSCA) in FOs CAR, CARAGA, VI, X

and XI. Also in 2013, a total of 232 LGUs have been monitored with established Senior Citizens Centers

- Nine regions in the country have established and operationalized a volunteer program for senior citizens from 2006-2009
- Inclusion of the concerns of senior citizens regarding poverty in Social Development or Chapter 8 of the Philippine Development Plan (PDP)
- 80% of National Government Agencies have designated their focal persons for senior citizens' concerns and implementation of PPASC
- Eight Topics on the Elderly were identified in the DSWD's Research Agenda for CY 2010-2014<sup>6</sup>

The following are among the specific accomplishments under each category:

1. Senior Citizens and Development:

- Establishment of Focal Persons on Senior Citizens Sector in LGUs and national government agencies; Increase in Senior Citizens membership in local government units; Strengthened Federation of Senior Citizens Associations of the Philippines, Inc. (FSCAP); Maintained observance to Annual Elderly Filipino Week (EFW); Conduct of income generating projects (e.g. solar dryer project and corn and rice mill project in CARAGA). Senior Citizens also continued to be benefitted from the livelihood projects / assistance from the LGUs, DOLE, DA, DTI<sup>7</sup> and DSWD. The DOLE likewise developed a program on post-retirement employment for retiring senior citizens in selected companies in the National Capital Region (NCR); established multi-sectoral and public-private partnership including donor organizations to address concerns of the senior citizen.; development and promotion of inter-generational learning projects.

2. Advancing Health and Well-Being into Old Age:

- Establishment of the Dr. Eva Macaraeg-Macapagal National Center for Geriatric Health (NGH) in San Miguel, Manila as the country's premier specialty center for providing comprehensive healthcare for Senior Citizens; Miriam College Opened a course on gerontology in 2009. 30 batches of lecture series were also conducted by UP-PGH and DOST National Academy of Science and Technology in Regions VII, VIII, XI and NC last 2009; 55,887 Senior Citizens have been provided with PhilHealth Insurance in 2013; Conduct of fora on health and well-being for older persons; Provision of flu/pneumococcal vaccines and medicines and conduct of dental missions; Continued monitoring of government and private hospitals complying to standards of facilities; Participation of Senior Citizens to healthy lifestyle activities in coordination with DOH and organizations. In the same manner, senior citizens were provided with geriatric services / therapy sessions and/or rehabilitation treatments.

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<sup>6</sup> Topics on Older Persons: (i) Participatory Action Research for Indicators of Poverty among Older Persons; (ii) Fears, Challenges and Dreams of the Elderly Abuse, Abandonment and Neglect; (iii) Prevalence of Elderly Abuse, Abandonment and Neglect; (iv) Assessment of the Implementation of Republic Act 9257 re Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2003; (v) Effects of Power of Appointment and Supervision of OSCA Heads by Local Chief Executives; (vi) Subsidy Programs for Underprivileged Senior Citizens; (vii) Appropriation and Utilization of the 1% Budget Allocation for Older Persons and PWDs; and (viii) Collaboration between the Academe and Partner Agencies on Caring for the Elderly.

<sup>7</sup> Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE); Department of Agriculture (DA); Department of Trade and Industry (DTI); Local Government Units (LGUs)

### 3. Ensuring Supportive and Enabling Environment:

- Courtesy lanes for senior citizens were placed in commercial establishments; Voice automated system and regular visits were established to serve GSIS pensioners; 948 senior citizen centers were established and are functional in 16 Regions since 2010; Issued guidelines on the Home Care support Services for Senior Citizens and general implementing guidelines on the Long Term Care Program for Senior Citizens in 2010; Conducted trainings on support for families and caregivers to promote quality home care for senior citizens and endorsed replication by the LGUs; DOH conducted capacity building for all regional coordinators on the health and wellbeing of older persons; The NCMB developed feedback mechanisms such as hotline 951-7120, text number 0999-3417425 and e-mail [ncmb@dswd.gov.ph](mailto:ncmb@dswd.gov.ph). Similarly, the NCMB webpage was launched on October 2007 as the main repository of information on the implementation and monitoring of the national plans and policies for senior citizens.

#### *Mechanism for Plan Implementation and Follow-Up*

National mechanism on Ageing in the form of the Inter-Agency council on the PPASC was created. The National and Regional Coordinating and Monitoring Board monitor the implementation of RA 9257 or the “Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2003” and related policies on ageing including the PPASC. This mechanism is focused on the establishment of social structures, including the development of a common tool for monitoring and evaluation of the PPASC highlighting best practices and lesson learned to ensure a more effective and responsive national plan in the succeeding years.

#### **Health care and healthy life style for the elderly by utilizing the potential of communities**

With the rise of the aging population is the increase in the demand for health services by the elderly. A study done by Racelis et al (2003) on the share of health expenditure of Filipino elderly on the National Health Account, the elderly are “relatively heavy consumers of personal health care (22%) and relatively light consumers of public health care (5%).” From out-of-pocket costs, the aged are heavy users of care provided by medical centers, hospitals, non-hospital health facilities and traditional care facilities.

RA 9257 or the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2003 (predecessor of RA 9994) provided for the expansion of coverage of benefits and privileges that the elderly may acquire, including medically necessary services. Parallel to this objective is the Department of Health’s desire to provide affordable and quality health services to the marginalized population, especially the elderly, without impeding currently pursued objectives and alongside health systems reform. One of the provisions of RA 9994 or the Expanded Senior Citizens act of 2010 is for the DOH to administer free vaccination against the influenza virus and pneumococcal diseases for indigent senior citizens. The DOH in coordination with local government units (LGUs), NGOs and POs for senior citizens institutes a national health program that provides an integrated health service for senior citizens. It shall train community – based health workers among senior citizens health personnel to specialize in the geriatric care and health problems of senior citizens<sup>8</sup>.

#### **Long Term Care Service for Elderly**

<sup>8</sup> Health and Well-being of Older Persons at <http://www.doh.gov.ph/content/health-and-well-being-older-persons.html>

The government has recognized the need for urgent action on challenges related to aging specifically those addressing the developmental and long-term care needs of the senior citizens and ensuring active ageing. The DSWD programs for the elderly include technical assistance, training, program development, licensing and accreditation of welfare agencies including public and private homes for the aged. Programs and services planned for the elderly are based on the following guiding principles:

- The individual elderly's right to have access to services and opportunities that will help him achieve a productive, wholesome and satisfying life;
- Family and community responsibility in recognizing the potentials of elderly persons and the need to provide opportunities to make minimum use of such potentials;
- The government's responsibility to provide basic and essential services for the elderly's well-being through the provision of adequate care and relief from stress.

The DSWD as the lead agency in promoting the welfare of the senior citizens developed a comprehensive Long Term Care Program for Senior Citizen (LTCSC)<sup>9</sup>. The DSWD LTCSC serves as the blueprint of the government to ensure the development of a milieu that would meet the present and future needs of the growing number of senior citizens in term of human development and service delivery. It is an integration of devolved and new services in the LTCSC that will ensure efficient and effective implementation of the programme and national uniformity of activities toward promoting active ageing and society of all ages.

1. **Residential Care Services (RCS).** A 24-hour facility that provides long term or temporary multi-disciplinary care to senior citizens who are abandoned by their families or with no significant others to provide the needed supervision and supportive care. The services that will be provided includes social services, health and medical services, psychological services, skills training, group work activities, dietary services, homelife / group living services, spiritual services, and provision of assistive devices. Among the Residential Care facilities of the Department are the following: Golden Acres in Quezon City; Haven for the Elderly in Tanay, Rizal; Home for the Elderly in Zamboanga City; and Home for the Aged in Tagum City.
2. **Community-Based Services for Senior Citizens and their Families.** Refers to the programs and services rendered when the helping process takes place in the community as the primary client system or when social welfare and development activities are provided to individuals, groups and families while they remain in their own homes.
  - 2.1 **Strengthening the organization of Senior Citizens Association.** Refers to the Organization / strengthening of existing organization of people aged 60 years old and above who shall be provided with opportunities for participation, conscientization, and action of senior citizens on socio-political and economic endeavors/
  - 2.2 **Senior Citizens Center.** The enactment into law of the "Senior Citizens Center Act of the Philippines", ( R.A. No. 7876, An Act Establishing A Senior Citizens Center in all Cities and Municipalities of the Philippines and Appropriating Funds Therefor) is indeed very timely and significant given the different issues of aging faced by our elderly today. R.A. 7876 upholds and recognizes the Senior Citizens' right to have access to vital facilities to be able to achieve a more productive, healthful and satisfying life. "Center" refers to the place established

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<sup>9</sup> DSWD Administrative Order No. 05 Series of 2010 entitled: DSWD Long Term Care Program for Senior Citizens (LTCSC) General Implementing Guidelines

in this Act with recreational, educational, health and social programs and facilities designed for the full enjoyment and benefit of the senior citizens in the city or municipality”. It can be any available sheltered structure, a spacious room in a private or public building, a room attached to a community center, or a barangay hall or chapel. The establishment of the centers shall be jointly decided and implemented by the Local Government Unit, Department of Social Work and Development (DSWD) and Federation of Senior Citizens Association of the Philippines (FSCAP).

The Senior Citizens Center aims to: (i) provide opportunities where the senior citizens can participate in economic and social development activities in the country giving them feelings of fulfillment and self-esteem; (ii) serve as a place where the senior citizens share one’s knowledge, expertise, experiences, time and financial resources to help other needy people; (iii) provide a venue for the social, recreational and other needs that would suit the energy levels, abilities and interests of the senior citizens.

The Senior Citizen Center shall serve as a focal point in the delivery of integrated and comprehensive social services to the senior citizens. The DSWD in coordination with the LGUs, Department of Health and other non-government organizations shall provide the necessary service to include but not limited to the following:

- Social and recreational services such as social interaction with peer counseling, active participation in sports, recreation and socio-cultural activities and holding of special celebration to recognize the contribution of the senior citizens.
- Health and personal care such as regular physical and dental check-up, eye care, lectures on proper health and nutrition and how to grow old gracefully.
- Spiritual services such as bible studies, special masses, retreats and other kinds of religious services, preparation for death and support services for the dying and their families.
- Livelihood services such as the provisions of self-employment assistance to supplement their earnings. This will include the provision of small capital loans or grants for their livelihood projects.
- Volunteer resource services such as identification/recruitment, training and mobilization of Senior Citizens for community volunteer works where they can share their time talent, resources and willingness to be involved in community development.
- Other services which the DSWD and other coordinating agencies may deem necessary for the benefit of the senior citizens.

**3. Home Care Support Service.** This pertains to services provided to senior citizens while in their homes such as assisting senior citizens in their daily living activities; training volunteers and family members on caregiving for senior citizens; provision of assistive devices for senior citizens; and community-based rehabilitative activities.

3.1 Hospice Care Service. This service offers shelter and care to weary-sick senior citizens.

3.2 Foster Home. This is the provision of a planned temporary alternative family care for older persons who are abandoned, neglected, unattached from the community or

those in residential care facilities but found eligible to benefit from the program. It provides subsidies and care giver training for foster families licensed by the DSWD.

3.3 Family / Kinship Care. This is a form of foster care which involves the placement of a senior citizen under the care of his/her relatives and/or family members. This includes provision of caregiving training to the main family cared; establishing community-based support system to prevent burn-out of the carer; and prevent institutionalization of the senior citizens.

3.4 Support Services for Caregivers. This refers to capability-building and continuing education for caregivers on care and management of older persons and on burn-out prevention. It also seeks to relieve caregivers/family cares of stress arising from the responsibility of providing daily care. It provides subsidies and allowances to volunteers in the amount approved by the LGUs.

4. ***Volunteer Resource Service (VRS)***. This encourages and mobilizes individuals, interested groups and intermediaries as well as able-bodied senior citizens to volunteer contribute their time, skills and capabilities for the delivery of programs / services for the benefit of the impoverished senior citizens. The components are the following:

4.1 *Friendly Visitor Service*. This provides opportunities for interested individuals, organizations members of senior citizens organizations and other sects to volunteer, visit, befriend advise and assist senior citizens who are either living on their own or in the residential care or alternative care.

4.2 *Volunteer Companion Service*. This encourages volunteers to escort/accompany senior citizens who would need to go to the hospital, church, malls, and other public places. This service taps the National Student Training Program (NSTP) students as volunteers to which the DSWD provides orientation and basic training.

4.3 *Inter-Generational Service*. This provides opportunities for the young and old to interact and mutually learn from each other. The senior citizens act as resource persons for the younger generation, sharing their vast experiences and insights. The LGUs and OSCA facilitates memorandum of agreements with schools to allow volunteer senior citizens to act as resource persons on particular subject or topics or mentor pupils who are slow learners. The Integrated Day Services for Senior Citizens and Children provides an integrated and comprehensive social services for older persons and pre-schoolers where intergenerational approaches and strategies would bridge the gap between generations.

5. ***Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS)***. AICS is the provision of assistance to individuals and families in crisis situation, which include but are not limited to, medical, transportation, burial, referral, and counseling services. AICS is being provided through the Crisis Intervention Unit (CIU). A special unit in the DSWD located in Field Offices which serves as an action center to immediately responds to cases of individuals families in crisis situation. In 2011, a total of 9,602 senior citizens were provided with assistance.

6. ***Social Pension for Indigent Senior Citizens***. Indigent senior citizens shall be entitled to a monthly stipend amounting to Php 500.00 to augment the daily subsistence and other medical needs of senior citizens<sup>10</sup>. Social Pension Program for Senior Citizens

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<sup>10</sup> RA 9994 or the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010. RA 9994, also known as an Act Granting Additional Benefits and Privileges to Senior Citizens, further amends RA 7432. DSWD issued the AO 03 Series of 2011 dated 13 December, 2010 and AO 15 Series of 2010 dated 17 February.

was designed to protect indigent senior citizens from the loss of income and unemployment as a result of illness, injury, disability, harvest failure, and other circumstances. This program fulfills the obligation of the government to protect the most vulnerable sector through social protection and the full implementation of RA 9994 or the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010. For 2011, the priority age bracket for social pension is 77 years old, the program served a total of 122,678 senior citizens that amounted to Php 495,646,000.00.

### **Age-Friendly Cities and Communities**

Age-friendly city/communities help the elderly to live safely, enjoy good health and stay involved. It recognizes the initiatives of local government unit and the community itself in establishing measures and mechanisms conducive for senior citizens and at the same time motivate them to remain productive and actively participate in community activities while protecting their rights and welfare. In the Philippines, these initiatives are further reinforced and strengthened through the three strategies under the PPASC mentioned in the first part of this paper.

The following are some of the communities / cities in the Philippines that have outstanding programs and best practices for the older persons:

#### *Makati City, Metro Manila*

The Philippine Retirement Authority (PRA) has named Makati as the Most Retirement-and Ageing-Friendly City in the country for having fully complied with the Age-friendly City Criteria of the World Health Organization. Makati City recently increased the bi-annual allowance of the of the senior citizens through Ordinance No. 2012-017 to P1,500 every June and December for those aged 70 to 79 years old, and P2,000 for those aged 80 and above. Other benefits given to the elderly include mobility aids (e.g. walking sticks, quad canes, wheelchairs), exemption from color coding, free movies, birthday cakes delivered during their birthdays, free haircut and salon treatments, free massage, and BLU Card benefits including the cash gift and burial assistance. Makati City has a comprehensive health program for senior citizens that include regular consultation, laboratory services, dental services, medicines subsidized hospitalization, hospice care and home visits for disabled and bedridden cases. The city also established an Elderly Health Care Office that caters to the health and social needs of senior citizens. The City's Elderly Welfare Program provides balik-probinsya assistance, counseling, food assistance, public service, referral and provision of medical support devices such as crutches, and wheelchairs.

#### *Cabadbaran City, Agusan del Norte*

In Cabadbaran City, the local government unit thru has adopted policies seeking the welfare of older persons above all and ensuring that their days remain happy and worthwhile even in their twilight years. Among the goals of the City LGU for the Senior Citizens in Cabadbaran includes: (i) empowered senior citizens; (ii) to establish measures whereby the contribution of the senior citizens are maximized; (iii) motivate senior citizens to contribute to nation building; (iv) encourage families and communities they live in to reaffirm valued Filipino tradition of caring for senior citizens; (v) functional FSCAP and OSCA Office Sustained; (vi) improved quality of life of Senior Citizens through provision of social protection and welfare services; (vii) mobilization of elderly as volunteer and human resource in the locality.

To achieve these, the City of Cabadbaran has the organization of its elderly into active organization as chapters of the Barangay Senior Citizens Association of the Philippines (BSCAP) and the federated organization named Federation of Senior Citizens Association of the Philippines (FSCAP) Cabadbaran Chapter in accordance with the RA. 9994 and regularly conducts meetings to ensure that concerns of the elderly are addressed. The Local Government Unit through the Office of the Senior Citizens Affairs (OSCA) has also produced and issued the OSCA ID thereby updating the registry if senior citizens in the City. A full time support staff was also employed to act as administrative aid and desk officer in the Senior Citizens Center to ensure that the operationalization of the Senior Citizens Program is in order. Through the Delivery of Basic and Comprehensive Constituency Assistance and Responsible Services (DBC CARES) on the elderly, the following programs are adopted and implemented: (i) Self and Social Enhancement Services for the Elderly; (ii) Pa-Birthday ni Lolo og Lola; (iii) Pahalipay ni Lolo og Lola; (iv) Advocacy Services and Information Drive; (v) Support to Medical and Mortuary Services; (vi) Support to FSCAP Meetings / Transportation / Seminars and Meetings of Senior Citizens; (vii) Milestone Award; and (viii) Healthy Lifestyle and Long Term Support. Cabadbaran City has a total number of 4,215 registered Senior Citizens of which 95% participates in all LGU-initiated activities. The budget allocation for the Senior Citizen comprised over 3% of the City's IRA for 2014.

To name a few, other cities / communities which also adopted similar initiatives conducive to older persons include *Quezon City* (which provides accident insurance, one-time financial assistance amounting to Php 10,000.00, monthly allowance for senior citizens aged 100 years old and above, livelihood assistance and exemption from parking fees); *Pasig City* (celebrates Senior Citizens Day in tis barangays wherein the elderly are provided with free medical consultations, vaccinations, and medical tests); and *Marikina City* (provides free services at the Lifestyle Center and Rehabilitation Facility, free pneumonia vaccine and discounts/special privileges at the City Hall).

### **Social Participation and Contribution of Elderly<sup>11</sup>**

Older people have experienced much more in life than the younger ones. They have witnessed and seen the good times, bad times and everything in between. The elderly have wisdom that is useful to society. There are plenty of roles the elderly can play in our society if they are respected as much as they should be. Thus, we should be paying more attention to them. In the area of employment, the 2012 Philippine Labor Force Survey revealed that of the total Philippine workforce which is estimated at 37.6 million, about 5.1 million (13.6%) belong to the working age group of 55 years old and over (DOLE-BLES Labor Survey, 2012).

#### **Employed Persons by Age Group Philippines: 2012 – January 2014 (In Thousands)**

Age Bracket	2012		2013 (Average)		2014 (Jan.)	
	Number	Ratio	Number	Ratio	Number	Ratio
15-24	7,322	19.47	7,335	19.24	6,842	18.79
25-34	9,929	26.41	10,080	26.44	9,719	26.67
35-44	8,597	22.86	8,743	22.94	8,426	3.14

<sup>11</sup> Department of Labor and Employment

Age Bracket	2012		2013 (Average)		2014 (Jan.)	
	Number	Ratio	Number	Ratio	Number	Ratio
45-54	6,648	17.68	6,779	17.78	6,547	17.98
55-64	3,601	9.58	3,660	9.60	3,470	9.53
65 and over	1,503	4.00	1,520	3.99	1,414	3.88
All Age Group	37,600		38,118		36,418	

The Decent Work Framework under the Philippines Labor and Employment Plan, 2011-2016 can be translated to address the employment issues and concerns of elderly persons still willing to work. Resilient or age-friendly communities should provide supportive environment for developing employment and economic opportunities, resources and income, and has the ability to respond to employment or livelihood related changes and risks.

Decent Work Pillar	The Community ...	The Elderly Worker ...
<b>Employment</b> (promotes the creation of sustainable enterprises and increased efficiencies in the economy)	Harnesses the wisdom and expertise gained by the elderly persons through their acquired skills and knowledge for the improvement of the community. Provides productivity improvement programs, skills upgrading measures and training programs tailored fit to the capacities and needs of the elderly that would enable them to contribute productively to increased efficiencies in the local economy	Demonstrates : ➤ Increase in employment levels through access in employment opportunities in the community; ➤ Increase sense of worth, economic independence ➤ Contributes to the economic development of the community
<b>Rights at Work</b> (aims to strengthen observance of the constitutionally protected rights of Workers)	Develops/implements/promotes regulations/ordinances that aims to strengthen observance of the constitutionally protected rights of elderly workers	Enjoys improvements in the in their work related benefits and working conditions through observance of their rights
<b>Social Protection</b> (seeks to improve access to social protection mechanisms, improved wages, and expanded employment opportunities for all)	Provides and improves access to social protection mechanisms and promotes the creation of sustainable enterprises	Gains access to social security, livelihood opportunities, training and income augmenting programs
<b>Social Dialogue</b> (seeks to strengthen tripartism and broaden representation of workers as a tool for attaining employment goals)	Strengthens and broadens representation of elderly persons/workers on matters related to their employment, livelihood and other concerns affecting the community and the sector.	Demonstrates advancements in participation in social dialogues processes affecting the community in general and the sector in particular toward mutual or collective gains.

Philippine employment regulations provide protection to all the members of the workforce. The elderly who are employed, just like any other member of the workforce, are covered by the provisions of the Labor Code of the Philippines and other labor standards and regulations.

One of the issues of the elderly is inadequate economic opportunities that would afford them to provide for their basic needs to live decently and improve their quality of life. For those in the sector who are still willing to work, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), through its program, “DOLE Integrated Livelihood and Emergency Employment Programs (DILEEP) provides the elderly with access to training and employment. The DILEEP is the Department’s contribution to the Philippine government’s agenda of inclusive growth through massive job generation and poverty reduction. It particularly seeks to contribute to poverty reduction and reduce vulnerability to risks of the poor, vulnerable, and marginalized workers through: (1) transitional emergency employment; and (2) promotion of entrepreneurship and community enterprises.

The Program has two major components: (1) Livelihood or the **KABUHAYAN** Program; and (2) Emergency Employment Program, or *Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers* or **TUPAD**. All the existing livelihood programs of the DOLE that are catering to specific sectors (g. women, youth persons with disabilities, displaced) are integrated into the KABUHAYAN Program. The program can likewise be accessed by the sector needing livelihood assistance which includes the elderly.

Coalition of Services of the Elderly, Inc. (COSE) is the only non-government organization in the Philippines that introduced community-based approach in addressing the issue of the older people. It was founded by groups of individuals representing various organizations sometime in November 1989. Through the facilitation of HelpAge International, the group was able to identify looming condition of the older people where some older people had to beg in the street in order to survive despite the fact that many religious groups established numbers of home for the aged. The group proposed an alternative that the issue should be brought back to the community where older people themselves had to be involved.

Active participation of the Elderly are further encouraged and reinforced through the provisions under the RA 7432, *An Act to Maximize the Contribution of Senior Citizens to Nation Building, Grant Benefits and Special Privileges*. The law provides the establishment of *Municipal/City Federation of Senior Citizens*<sup>12</sup>, an organization of senior citizens in the locality which is affiliated with the National Federation of Senior Citizens’ Associations of the Philippines (NFSCAP). Also Article 9 of the RA 7432 provides that any qualified senior citizen as determined by the OSCA may render his/her services to the community, which shall consist of, but not limited to any of the following: (i) tutorial and/or consultancy services; (ii) actual teaching and demonstration of hobbies and income generating skills; (iii) lectures on specialized field like agriculture, health, environmental protection; (iv) transfer of new skill acquired by virtue of their training mentioned in Section 4 of paragraph of the Act; (v) undertake other appropriate services as determined by the OSCA such as school traffic guide, tourist aide, pre-school assistance, etc.<sup>13</sup>

The Philippines observes Elderly Filipino Week every first week of October. This annual event is embodied in Proclamation No. 470. The contributions of the elderly for the country, family and community are recognized in this event. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), with partner agencies and senior citizens associations leads the celebration with activities such as outstanding senior citizen awards, visits to older persons’

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<sup>12</sup> Rules And Regulations In The Implementation Of RA 7432, The Act To Maximize The Contribution Of Senior Citizens To Nation Building, Grant Benefits And Special Privileges And For Other Purposes.

<sup>13</sup> In consideration of services rendered by the qualified elderly, the OSCA may award or grant benefits/privileges to the elderly, in addition to the other privileges provided for under Section 4 of the Act.

centers, exhibits and cultural shows, and the giving of free medical checkup, medicines, cataract operation, eyeglasses, and dentures.

### **Future cooperation with and among ASEAN countries for the aging population**

In the Philippines, the conduct of forums<sup>14</sup> in the regional level for example has provided an opportunity for an exchange of experiences and best practices in the implementation of policies, programs and services for Older Persons. The wealth of information shared and acquired through these forums enabled the ASEAN Member States to confront and discuss critical concerns and issues on older persons. The shared experiences also deepened the awareness of each country in terms of making the necessary steps and actions to overcome various challenges faced by aging societies. This resulted to the establishment of action plans that aims to enhance and further strengthen strategies towards achieving the common goal of promoting the rights, welfare and protection of older persons.

Although many international treaties and conventions offer generic human rights protection that implicitly include older persons such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the international Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)<sup>15</sup>, there is a need to establish mechanisms and instruments focused and responsive to the needs of the Older Persons.

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<sup>14</sup> Example: *The Regional Workshop and Comparative Study on Social Pensions in the ASEAN*. The workshop was conducted in Dusit Thani Hotel, Manila on 11-13 March 2014. Participated by a total of Twenty Five (25) delegates composed of officials from various social welfare and development, planning and finance agencies, international and local non-government organizations and other older person experts from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam, the workshop succeeded in gathering baseline information on the implementation of social pension for the indigent and marginalized older persons through sharing and discussions on the various schemes and mechanisms, practices and the levels of implementation.

<sup>15</sup> Statement Delivered by H.E. Mr. Libran N. Cabactulan, Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of the Philippines to the United Nations, during the General Discussion on the Existing International Framework on the Human Rights of Older Persons and Identification of Existing Gaps at the International Level, in the 5<sup>th</sup> Working Session of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing. UN Headquarters, New York. 30 July 2014.

## Annex A: LEGISLATIONS / POLICIES

1. **The 1987 Philippine Constitution.** The constitution ensures that older Filipinos receive due care not only from the family but also from the state. The 1986 Constitution, Article II, Section 9 states that “The state shall promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all”. Article 13, Section 11 also provides that “The state shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall endeavor to make essential goods, health and social services available to all people at affordable cost. *There shall be priority for the needs of the unprivileged, sick, elderly, disabled, women and children.* The state shall endeavor to provide free medical care to paupers”. Article XV, Section 4 also states that “*The family has the duty to care for its elderly members although the State may also do so through just programs of social security*”. Further, Article XVI, Section 7 provides that “*The State shall provide immediate and adequate care, benefits and other forms of assistance to war veterans and veterans of the military campaigns, their surviving spouses and orphans*”. Finally, for the benefit of those who are retiring, Article XVI of Section 8 stipulates that “*The State shall from time to time, review and upgrade the pensions and other benefits due to retirees of both the government and private sector.*”

2. **RA. No. 9994. (February 15, 2010). An Act Granting Additional Benefits and Privileges to Senior Citizens, Further Amending Republic Act No. 7432.** The Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010 is anchored on augmenting the benefits and services given to the elderly. This law is also centered on securing the roles and functions of the implementing body and concerned agencies. Senior citizens are entitled to free secondary, tertiary, and vocational education in both private and government learning institutions. They can also avail livelihood and training programs and self-employment assistance. There is social pension for indigent elderly as well as mandatory Philhealth coverage for indigent senior citizens. Significant features of the law include: (a) the 20% discount and VAT exemptions on medicines, professional fees, diagnostic and laboratory fees, certain goods, as applicable; (b) the 5% discount for the senior citizens monthly utilization of water and electricity; (c) the 50% discount for the consumption of electricity, water and telephone by the senior citizens centers, and residential care/group homes for neglected and abandoned senior citizens; (d) monthly stipend of Php 500.00 and other services for indigent senior citizens; (e) honorarium for the head of the Office of the senior Citizens Affairs (OSCA); and (f) the inclusion of the Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) as member of the National Coordinating and Monitoring Board (NCMB).

The Social Pension Program implemented by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), provides a monthly stipend of P500 to indigent senior citizens. The program has given its beneficiaries great comfort knowing there is pension they can count on in their twilight years. One of the provisions of R.A. 9994 is for the Department of Health (DOH) to administer free vaccination against the influenza virus and pneumococcal diseases for indigent senior citizens.

3. **RA No. 9257. (February 26, 2012) An Act Granting Additional Benefits and Privileges to Senior Citizens, Amending for the Purpose Republic Act No. 7432.** This law was enacted to give full support to the improvement of the total well-being of the elderly and their full participation in society considering the senior citizens as integral part of the Philippine society. It expanded the coverage of the benefits and due privileges to the senior citizens to include all business establishments. It made mandatory the provision of 20 percent discount in all establishments, as well as installed due processes in the organization of the OSCA and selection of the OSCA Head. It also recognizes the important role of the private sector in the improvement of the welfare of senior citizens and to actively seek their partnership. Also, it provides a comprehensive health care and rehabilitation system for the disabled senior citizens to foster their capacity and to attain a more meaningful and productive ageing.

4. **Republic Act 9336 or the "General Appropriations Act of 2005"** allocates one (1) percent of the total budget of government agencies for the implementation of programs and services for senior citizens. It complements RAs 9994 and 7876.

5. **RA No. 7876. (July 25, 1994). “An Act Establishing a Senior Citizens Center in All Cities and Municipalities of the Philippines, and Appropriating Funds Therefore.** This law was enacted in

response to the declared policy of the State to provide adequate social services and an improved quality of life for all. It also mandated the establishment of a senior citizens center in all cities and municipalities under the supervision of the DSWD in coordination with the LGUs to respond to older persons' socialization and interaction needs as well as to serve as a venue for the conduct of other meaningful activities. The law further states that the DSWD in coordination with the LGUs, the DOH and other government agencies, the Federation of Senior Citizens Associations of the Philippines (FESCAP) and other NGOs shall provide the necessary services to include but not limited to the following: social and recreational services, health and personal care services, spiritual services, livelihood services and volunteer resource services.

**6. RA No. 344 (February 25, 1983). An Act to Enhance the Mobility of Disabled Persons by Requiring Certain Buildings, Institutions, Establishments and Public Utilities to install Facilities and Other Devices.** It enhances the mobility of disabled persons by requiring certain buildings, institutions, establishments and other public utilities to install facilities and other devices. This Act provides for the minimum requirements and standards to make buildings, facilities and utilities for public use accessible to disabled persons including older persons who are confined to wheelchairs and those who have difficulty in walking or climbing stairs, among others. Rule II, Section 1.3 states that the built environment and transportation shall be designed so that it shall be accessible and shall ensure safety to disabled people, including older persons

**7. The General Appropriations Act FY 2012 (RA 10155) Section 28 - 1% Allocation of Agency Budget to Programs and Services for Senior Citizens and Persons with Disabilities and Section 29 – Programs and Projects Related to Senior Citizen and Differently Aabled.** In Section 28, all government agencies and instrumentalities are mandated to allocate 1% of their total agency budget to programs and projects for senior citizens and persons with disabilities. LGUs shall also set aside at least five percent of their total FY 2012 budget appropriations for programs, services, and activities for persons with disabilities.

Section 29 stipulates all agencies of the government shall formulate plans, programs and projects intended to address the concerns of senior citizens and differently-abled person. Moreover, it provides that all government, as well as office buildings, streets and highways, shall provide architectural facilities or structural features and designs that shall reasonably enhance the mobility, safety and welfare of differently abled persons pursuant to Batasa Pambasa Bilang 344 and Republic Act 7277. As of 22 September 2014, the Senate approved the third and final reading of the bill providing mandatory PhilHealth insurance coverage to Filipinos 60 years and above regardless of their social and economic status.

**Implementation of the Philippine Plan of Action for Senior Citizens (2012 -2016).** As the successor plan of the Philippine Plan of Action for Senior Citizens 2006-2010 - the Philippine Plan of Action 2012-2016 builds on the achievements of the former plans<sup>16</sup> while enhancing the strategies and mechanisms for a more responsive actions given the emerging challenges the senior citizens sector faces. The Plan focus on strengthening the collaboration of different stakeholders and the senior citizens themselves to ensure implementation of various programs and services for the elderly. Through the Plan, the government and the private sector will firm up its commitment to vigorously pursue measures to address challenges of population ageing and combat elderly poverty. This Plan aims to be the blueprint in addressing the best interests of the senior citizens through the implementation and development of social protection programs and services senior citizens.

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<sup>16</sup> Three action plans for Senior Citizens have been developed since its first conception in 1999. The first Philippine Plan of Action for Older Persons (PPAOP) covers the period 1999-2004, was in response to the Macau Regional Plan of Action and in compliance to the Presidential proclamation No. 1048 declaring nationwide observance in the Philippines of the International Year of Older Persons in line with the UN declaration of International Year of Older Persons. The plan addressed the need to institute appropriate policies, strategies, mechanisms and programs to ensure that senior citizen's rights are upheld and respected. The second PPASC covering the period 2006-2010 was developed following the issuance of Resolution No. 4 series of 2005 of the National Coordinating and Monitoring (NCMB) which provides for the creation of action plan for senior citizens in coordination with concerned government agencies and other stakeholders. This plan spelled out the strategies, programs, projects and activities contributing to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) for the promotion of Active Ageing in the Philippines through the active participation of Senior Citizens in development as well as appreciated by the community as a whole.