



The 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the AIPA Fact-Finding Committee (AIFOCOM)  
to Combat the Drug Menace  
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## **COUNTRY REPORT OF THE PHILIPPINES**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The drug problem in the Philippines remains significant, despite the continued efforts of the Philippine law enforcement authorities to disrupt major drug trafficking organizations and dismantle clandestine drug laboratories and warehouses. The Philippines faces challenges in the areas of drug use and production, law enforcement, corruption, and drug trafficking.

The Philippines' poorest regions, such as Mindanao, have the highest percentage of methamphetamine abusers. Crystal methamphetamine, locally known as “shabu”, continues to be the drug of choice in the Philippines and is consumed by all demographics. Information from the 2008 United Nations (UN) World drug report indicates that the Philippines has the world's highest estimated annual methamphetamine prevalence rate (6%). The Philippines also produces, consumes and exports marijuana and it is currently the second most used drug in the country. Much of the cultivation is in mountainous regions, often in government-owned areas inaccessible to vehicles. Methylenedioxy-methamphetamine (MDMA or ecstasy) is commonly used in Metro Manila night clubs and bars by young and affluent members of society.

While the scope of the drug problem is immense, the government had some successes in enforcing counter-narcotics laws, including a large methamphetamine seizure made from a speedboat in Subic Bay, northwest of Manila, and the dismantling of a large clandestine laboratory in northwest Luzon in cooperation with the Philippine National Police (PNP). Enforcement remains a high priority for the administration of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) as the lead counter-narcotics agency.

A recent survey by the Philippine National Police (PNP) shows illegal drug usage as the fourth most pressing law enforcement problem in the Philippines. However, the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) chairman announced that the Philippine infrastructure to fight illegal drugs is in place and implementation is proceeding as planned.

## **II. STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION**

The Philippines had undertaken the following actions to convey the recommendations of the Resolution adopted during the 29<sup>th</sup> AIPA General Assembly held in Singapore last August 2008:

The Philippine House of Representatives Committee on Dangerous Drugs headed by the Chairman, Hon. Roque R. Ablan, Jr., with its Oversight powers paves the way for funding allocation of the much needed support of the law enforcement agencies from intelligence gathering, seminar workshop/trainings, inter -agency conferences, anti-drug programs, rewards for tipsters and other logistical requirements to launch a full attack on the drug traffickers. The Committee's active role in the anti-drug campaign opens doors for the local law enforcers to have open lines with their drug law enforcement counterparts in China, Hongkong, People's Republic of China, Hawaii, Germany, Netherlands and Australia.

By joining drug raids of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), Philippine National Police (PNP), PNP-Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), the Committee on Dangerous Drugs of the Philippine House of Representatives can easily assess the loopholes in the law and recommend not only remedial legislation but other means of ensuring the proper implementation of the drug law. Local Government Units and Non-Government organizations have been tapped to provide the needed support of our law enforcers.

In order to boost the morale of the government's partners in the anti-drug campaign, recognition and commendations for their accomplishments are given to the brave men and women of the law enforcement agencies during regular meetings of the Committee and year end closing ceremonies. Letters of recommendation for promotion are also sent to their respective agencies.

The Philippine House of Representatives through its Committee on Dangerous Drugs, has been constantly searching for more effective ways to address the drug problem not only in Asia but in other parts of the world as well

where Overseas Contract Workers reside. Last October 2008, the Committee with the representatives from PDEA and NBI conducted dialogues with the Filipino communities in Netherlands and Germany to discuss the modus operandi of drug syndicates operating in the area. They touched base with the Filipino organizations and business groups involved in the mail/courier and remittance business who may unknowingly be used by the drug syndicates to ship their goods to other parts of the globe. A similar dialogue was conducted in Australia last April 3-12, 2009 to inform the Filipinos living there that a drug syndicate operating in China, Philippines and Australia has been discovered by the Australian federal police a few years back.

### **Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002**

#### **(Republic Act No. 9165 )**

Enacted into law in June 2002, Republic act N. 9165 otherwise known as the “Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs act of 2002” laid down an extensive legal framework for drug enforcement in the Philippines. The law imposes stiffer penalties for drug related crimes and allows for more concrete courses of action for the national anti-drug campaign. The law mandates drug abuse education in schools, the establishment of Provincial Drug Education Centers, developments of drug-free workplace programs, and other demand reduction strategies.

#### **The Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB)**

At the helm of the campaign is the Dangerous Drugs Board – a policy-making and strategy-formulating body on matters pertaining to drug abuse prevention and control.

The DDB created two additional committees, i.e., the Alternative Development Committee which is assigned to provide alternative means of livelihood for those engaged in illicit cultivation and culture of plants classified as dangerous drugs, and the Civic Awareness Committee which is tasked to draw up guidelines for the effective and sustainable execution of the National Civic Awareness Plan and the Media and Communication Strategies.

The DDB formulated regulations for aftercare program for recovering drug dependents, probation for first-time minor drug offenders and drug proficiency testing for drug testing laboratories. The DDB likewise links the Board to different government agencies through the web. This is aimed to exchange comparable data and information to address the Amphetamine-Type stimulants problem in Asia and the Pacific Region.

## **CIVIC AWARENESS**

In promoting civic awareness, the tri-media is utilized to convey ant-drug abuse messages. Civic awareness is likewise promoted, in collaboration with the local government units, through the community outreach programs that deal on the evils of drug abuse and the legal consequences of being involved in illegal drugs.

## **SUPPLY REDUCTION**

At the crux of the national anti-drug campaign are the supply reduction initiatives led by the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA). The Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) provides policy direction while PDEA implements the national drug control strategy including the enforcement of laws relative to unlawful acts involving any dangerous drug and controlled precursor and essential chemicals. The other government agencies are the Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Department of National Defense, the Philippine national Police and the National Bureau of Investigation.

## **DEMAND REDUCTION**

The different demand reduction efforts undertaken by DDB are directed towards the individual's desire to use/abuse drugs. The DDB, through its various civic awareness, preventive education and capability building programs, endeavored to reach out to the affected sectors such as families, youth, health workers, the labor force and drug abuse program planners and implementors. The member-agencies of the DDB also undertook several demand reduction efforts, which include among others, the drug testing, treatment and rehabilitation programs of the Department of Health, the family drug abuse prevention program and special drug education center for out-of-school youth and street children of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and the National Drug Education Program of the Department of Education.

## **ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

The efforts on alternative development are primarily geared towards the reduction and elimination of the cultivation of marijuana, opium poppy or any plant which is or in the future will be classified as dangerous drugs. Owing to budgetary constraints, however, the livelihood programs did not materialize in some pilot areas. Nonetheless, studies by DDB are still underway to provide

information on the demographic profile of marijuana cultivators and to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the government's efforts to control the cultivation of marijuana in selected areas in the country. Results of the study will serve as baseline information to come up with programs/projects in line with the government's effort to provide alternative and legitimate livelihood to those engaged in marijuana farming or cultivation.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

The legislative framework to address drug abuse in the country is already in place. Republic Act No. 9165 or the “Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002” laid down an extensive legal framework for drug enforcement in the Philippines. The law imposes stiffer penalties and allows for more concrete courses of action for the national anti-drug campaign.



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