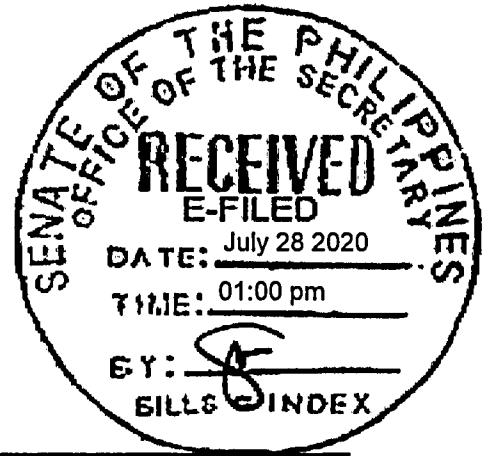


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)

SENATE
S. B. No. 1747



Introduced by Senator SONNY ANGARA

**AN ACT
ESTABLISHING PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS AND
SAFEGUARDS FOR THE BETTER NORMAL IN THE WORKPLACE, PUBLIC
PLACES AND COMMUNITIES TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY FROM
THE CORONA VIRUS DISEASE-19 (COVID-19) PANDEMIC**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The current COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically altered the lifestyles of all the people across the globe, and is forcing us to adopt the "new normal" where we have to wear face masks, find new ways of meeting with colleagues, still need to observe physical distancing, frequent hand washing, working remotely and other behavioral changes.

In April 2020, a survey conducted by the JAMA Internal Medicine – a medical journal published by the American Medical Association - revealed that in the United States, of the 8,950 respondents, 95.7% or 8,562 reported making changes to their lifestyles in response to COVID-19, with 93 percent increasing hand-washing, 89 percent avoiding social gatherings and nearly 74.7 percent stockpiling food and supplies.

A recent survey of the PhilCare Community Quarantine Wellness Index with the University of the Philippines Diliman - College of Mass Communication as the lead researcher, reported that eight out of 10 or 76.7% of the Filipino-respondents said they prayed at least more frequent than they did before the lockdown. In addition, six of 10 respondents (60.1%) particularly said they were not comfortable about going back to their offices. Meanwhile, six out of 10 respondents (60.9%) said they now rarely drank beer, wine, or liquor products as compared to before the lockdown; while

half (50.4%) said they now rarely smoked. Nearly all respondents, nonetheless, are most concerned with the health of their loved ones (95.9%), a possible "second wave" of COVID-19 (94.1%), and contracting the disease itself (93.6%).

This bill, which is a counterpart version to a bill filed by Deputy Speaker Loren Legarda in the House of Representatives, defines "Better Normal" in the context of pandemic recovery, referring to transformative behaviors and interventions informed by science that address the underlying vulnerabilities of people and communities that the pandemic has highlighted. The interventions included in the bill aim to foster a just and equitable transition to a climate-resilient, inclusive and sustainable future. It also enumerates universal mandatory health and safety measures and protocols to ensure that the public is shielded and protected from viruses of such grand scale. Further, the bill details the policies governing the management of public spaces and public transportation and the Better Normal for the education sector, e-governance, and in our work places to help stem the spread of the virus.

This proposed legislative measure similarly strengthens the synergy between and among national government agencies, local government units and the private sector by defining their roles and responsibilities in the better normal. The bill mandates the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) to provide scoreboard and incentive system to ensure compliance of various local government units. The bill also encourages all private establishments to fulfill their social and civic responsibility to help the affected Filipinos and the government in mitigating the impact of the pandemic.

The bill also seeks to develop the country's digital infrastructure through the National Broadband Plan of the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) and addresses issues on water supply, sanitation and waste management which are key in containing the spread of virus.

To help the vulnerable sectors of our society to cope with the changes brought about by the pandemic, this proposed measure mandates to establish standards and protocol that would simultaneously protect them from COVID-19 and prevent its transmission, and the restoration of livelihood opportunities and sources of income for all, especially the poor.

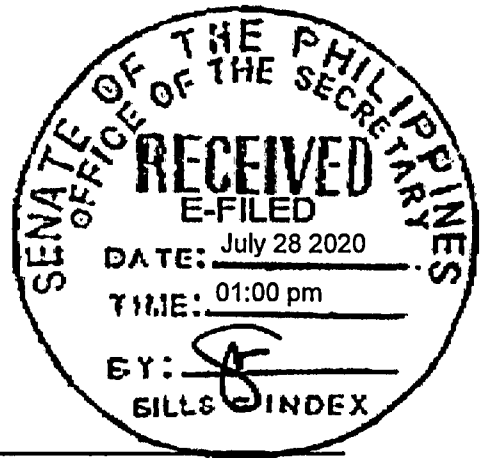
More importantly, this bill will help the national government regain the confidence of all the main actors in the economy – employees, consumers, firms, investors and local authorities in its effort to gradually re-open the Philippine economy.

Approval of this bill is earnestly sought to immediately start on the task of making the new normal a better normal.



SONNY ANGARA

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
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**AN ACT
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THE CORONA VIRUS DISEASE-19 (COVID-19) PANDEMIC**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in
Congress assembled:*

1 SECTION I. ***Title.*** – This Act shall be known as the "*Better Normal for the*
2 *Workplace, Communities and Public Spaces Act of 2020*".

3 SEC. 2. ***Declaration of Policy.*** – It is the policy of the State to protect and
4 promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.
5 The State shall also protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and
6 healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature.

7 Towards this end, the State, in order to help save lives as well as jumpstart the
8 economy, shall:

- 9 a) Adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to public health and
10 environmental policies and regulations during a pandemic, thus, ensuring
11 the overall well-being of individuals, communities, industrial and natural
12 ecosystems. Consideration shall be paid to valuing the services provided
13 by ecosystems and biodiversity in generating the direction and
14 prescriptions for a better normal and in assessing their success;
- 15 b) Institute appropriate public health, safety, and security measures to stem
16 the transmission of the corona virus disease-19 (COVID-19) or similar
17 diseases that may result in any kind of pandemic;

- 1 c) Regulate, institute, and establish standards and protocols that would
2 simultaneously protect the vulnerable from COVID-19 and prevent its
3 transmission;
- 4 d) Pursue the restoration of livelihood opportunities and sources of income
5 for all, especially the poor, in the event of widespread disease outbreak
6 and the resulting slowdown of economic activity, and building adaptive
7 capacity and resilience for future shocks;
- 8 e) Pursue universal broadband access for all to ensure a better normal in
9 recognition of the crucial role of a strong information and communications
10 technology (ICT) system to close the digital divide and that the need for
11 modern and innovative ICT cuts across all sectors of society;
- 12 f) Ensure that pandemic recovery will lead to a greener, resilient, inclusive,
13 and sustainable future, hence, recovery needs should be addressed with
14 long-term sustainability goals; and
- 15 g) Give importance to other aspects of well-being of the people based on the
16 Gross National Happiness indicators, namely, equitable and sustainable
17 socio-economic development, the preservation and promotion of cultural
18 values, the conservation of the natural environment, and the
19 establishment of good governance.

20 In adopting the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach and
21 recognizing the need for innovation and more forward-thinking systems and
22 approaches, the State shall give priority to the needs of the underprivileged, sick,
23 elderly, persons with disability, indigenous peoples, women and children.

24 **SEC. 3. Objectives.** – This Act shall have the following objectives:

- 25 a) Define and allocate roles, responsibilities, and obligations across key
26 sectors of the society that shall be heavily involved in the implementation
27 of specific and applicable measures, namely, the national government and
28 its instrumentalities, local government, private sector, and individual
29 Filipino citizens;
- 30 b) Identify standards and protocols in the management of physical spaces,
31 both publicly-owned and -managed, or privately-owned but are designated
32 communal spaces, and prescribe the allowed and prohibited activities

1 therein as well as behaviors expected and required of the citizens while
2 utilizing such physical spaces;

3 c) Facilitate the development of the necessary systems and infrastructure and
4 the enhancement of existing ones so as to ensure that the ICT needs of the
5 better normal are accessible to all, making it possible for people and
6 organizations to practice appropriate behavior and decisions as well as for
7 relevant government agencies to implement relevant, effective, and timely
8 information dissemination;

9 d) Establish systems of accountability for failure to comply with the obligations
10 and expectations prescribed under this Act;

11 e) Provide inclusive operational parameters, guidelines, and recommendations
12 for a better way of life until such time that the threat of COVID-19 virus and
13 other similar diseases that caused the occurrence of a pandemic is
14 effectively contained;

15 f) Mitigate, if not contain, the transmission of the virus and undertake
16 measures to prevent the overburdening of the public healthcare system;

17 g) Continue health promotion and behavior-enhancing measures in all levels
18 of government and the private sector; and,

19 h) Accelerate transformational change to restore the balance between human,
20 socio-economic and natural ecosystems, and reduce risk and vulnerability
21 to future crises caused by climate change, natural hazards and man-made
22 disasters.

23 **SEC. 4. *Scope of the Act.*** – This Act shall provide the strategies and measures
24 that shall be implemented so that economic and social activities can proceed in a
25 manner that ensures public health, safety, and security during an epidemic or
26 pandemic, and until such time that the same and its immediate impacts are declared
27 eradicated by the authorized National Government agency or agencies of the
28 government.

29 The organization, operation, and activities in workplaces, communities, and
30 public spaces shall be governed by the provisions of this Act.

31 **SEC. 5. *Definition of Terms.*** – As used in this Act:

- 1 a) *Agro-ecology* refers to the application of ecological and social principles in
2 the formulation and implementation of policies and programs on food and
3 agricultural systems, to maximize the benefits from the synergy between
4 plants, animals, humans and the environment to achieve a resilient and
5 sustainable food supply system;
- 6 b) *Better normal*, in the context of recovery from an epidemic or pandemic
7 refers to transformative behaviors and interventions informed by science,
8 that address the underlying vulnerabilities of people and communities that
9 the epidemic or pandemic has highlighted and fosters a just and equitable
10 transition to a climate-resilient, inclusive and sustainable future;
- 11 c) *Better Normal Workforce and Workplace Management Plan*, herein
12 referred to as the Management Plan, refers to the management plan of all
13 public and private sector entities that conforms to the prescribed measures
14 and protocols under this Act to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus
15 and other kinds of viruses that may be transmitted through contact in the
16 workplace;
- 17 d) *Circular Economy Measures* refer to measures that place value on products
18 and materials, maintaining their use for as long as possible, thus minimizing
19 wastage and resource use, and keeping resources within the economy
20 when a product has reached the end of its life, to be used again and again
21 to create further value;
- 22 e) *Culture Mapping* refers to the approach used to identify, record, and use
23 natural and cultural resources and activities for building communities. It is
24 a set of activities and processes for exploring, discovering, documenting,
25 examining, analyzing, interpreting, presenting and sharing of information
26 related to people, communities, societies, places, built and natural
27 heritage, material products and practices associated with them;
- 28 f) *Government-managed public spaces* refer to a government or public
29 property used by the public under zoning or similar regulatory
30 arrangements, and other spaces used as National Government offices,
31 offices of local government units (LGUs), public zoos, public libraries,
32 roads, streets, avenues, alleys, public markets, parks, plazas, covered

1 courts, promenades, gymnasiums, arenas, amusement and recreation
2 centers, among others, that are publicly managed or owned by the
3 government;

4 g) *Pandemic* refers to an outbreak of a disease that occurs over a wide
5 geographic area and affects an exceptionally high proportion of the
6 population;

7 h) *Privately-managed public spaces* refer to spaces within the perimeter or
8 premises of a privately-owned real estate or property used by the public
9 under zoning or similar regulatory arrangements, which include, among
10 others, shopping malls, hotels, open spaces and common areas in
11 subdivisions and condominiums;

12 i) *Privately organized gatherings* refer to those planned or spontaneous
13 human, political, social, cultural, economic, religious and sports gatherings
14 such as concerts, events, celebrations, parties, team-buildings, seminars,
15 conferences, trainings, conventions, religious mass and sacraments,
16 retreats, funerals, electoral campaigns, inductions, ceremonies, film show
17 makings, television shows, sports, and other related forms of recreations.

18 j) *Profiling* refers to the process of discovering core relations between data
19 and databases that can be used to identify and represent a subject
20 individual or a group of individuals;

21 k) *Public spaces* refer to streets, alleys, public parks, protected areas,
22 museums, cultural and heritage spaces, schools, buildings, malls,
23 restaurants, transportation terminals, public markets, areas used as
24 evacuation centers, government offices, public utility vehicles as well as
25 private vehicles covered by application-based transport network services,
26 and other recreational or leisure places such as cinema halls, theaters,
27 cockpits, and spas;

28 l) *Workplace* refers to a place where work is carried out for a business or
29 undertaking and includes any place where a worker goes, or is likely to be,
30 while carrying out a work-related task; and,

31 m) *Zoonotic Disease* refers to a disease that can be transmitted from animals
32 to people.

1 **SEC. 6. *Standards for Better Normal.*** – In order to stem the transmission
2 of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases, and protect the people from such diseases,
3 the following standards for the better normal shall be observed:

4 **A. Universal and Mandatory Health and Safety Measures**

- 5 1) Basic personal hygiene shall be strictly observed by the general public. Massive
6 health information drive shall be conducted by the Department of Health
7 (DOH) and LGUs up to the community level, in cooperation with the private
8 sector, on COVID-19 to instill public awareness on the risks of infection and
9 possible reinfection of the disease;
- 10 2) The general public shall wear face masks, earloop masks, indigenous,
11 reusable or do-it-yourself masks, face shields, handkerchiefs, or such other
12 protective material or equipment that effectively lessen the transmission of
13 the COVID-19 virus whenever they are in the workplace, public places, and
14 communities: *Provided,* That the government shall implement the free
15 distribution of masks to the general public to guarantee the full cooperation
16 of every citizen: *Provided, further,* That the government shall allocate funds
17 to ensure the free provision of personal protective equipment and other
18 medical commodities to COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 patients in both public
19 and private hospitals: *Provided, furthermore,* That the government shall
20 integrate circular economy strategies in the procurement of materials or the
21 development of mechanisms for hygiene and sanitation;
- 22 3) Hand washing facilities or sanitizing stations shall be established and
23 maintained by the owners, managers, or administrators of public spaces, work
24 places and other places frequented by the public;
- 25 4) Physical distancing measured at least one (1) meter between individuals shall
26 be strictly observed whenever in public spaces and in the workplace;
- 27 5) Temperature reading of persons shall be conducted by the owners, managers,
28 or administrators of workplaces and in all enclosed, semi-enclosed, and open
29 areas where two or more people shall gather;
- 30 6) The DOH, in coordination with other government agencies and the private
31 sector, shall conduct an information and educational campaign utilizing
32 traditional and online media to disseminate relevant medical and health

1 information, provide updates on local cases and initiatives of the government:
2 *Provided*, That all government agencies are directed to create a communication
3 plan for the better normal to articulate the policies and interventions to be
4 adopted by the agencies for the information and compliance of their
5 employees, including the placement of relevant on-site signages and online
6 information materials which will serve as reminders to observe physical
7 distancing, practice regular handwashing, and to frequently clean and sanitize
8 surroundings;

9 7) Local chief executives of LGUs which are considered as containment zones or
10 critical zones for the transmission of COVID-19 shall establish testing centers
11 and procure COVID-19 testing kits, personal protective equipment, and such
12 other necessary equipment and supplies to be used for the conduct of mass-
13 testing of the population in their respective jurisdictions, including the
14 establishment of drive-through testing centers, and other contactless modes
15 of testing for the detection of the COVID-19 or other infectious diseases;

16 8) There shall be nationwide testing drive to prepare for any future waves of
17 infection surges or any other epidemic. The minimum rate of testing shall be
18 one percent (1%) of the population of the province or city, in the case of
19 independent cities, and shall target to finish testing residents within ten (10)
20 days;

21 9) The DOH, with assistance from LGUs and Department of the Interior and Local
22 Government (DILG), shall conduct tracing of individuals who have had contact
23 with or have been exposed to a person who has been confirmed positive for
24 the COVID-19 or similar infectious diseases. The DOH shall also conduct
25 contact tracing for individuals suspected of or probably afflicted with the
26 disease to ensure prompt containment of the disease;

27 10) The DOH shall establish and manage government-operated and -maintained
28 quarantine facilities for individuals who are suspected of being infected or
29 have tested positive for COVID-19 or other infectious diseases and who,
30 pursuant to the guidelines formulated by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF)
31 for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases and/or as prescribed
32 under DOH regulations, should undergo mandatory quarantine, including

- 1 those who are not able to observe quarantine protocols in their respective
2 places of residences;
- 3 11) Local chief executives of LGUs shall continuously implement existing
4 measures, including quarantine measures, in dealing with residents or any
5 other individual in the locality manifesting COVID-19 symptoms, or who has
6 been classified as a suspect, probable, or a confirmed case of COVID-19
7 infection by authorized testing or medical facilities;
- 8 12) The National Government shall establish and implement infection prevention
9 and control protocol, biosafety and waste management measures;
- 10 13) Local chief executives of LGUs shall continuously monitor the level of
11 transmission among residents in their jurisdiction; *Provided*, That the
12 standards provided in Republic Act (RA) No. 10173, also known as the *Data*
13 *Privacy Act of 2012*, as well as legal and ethical standards, and existing DOH
14 guidelines are observed and complied with;
- 15 14) The National Government shall recognize the vulnerabilities of certain sectors
16 of the population such as the elderly, pregnant, children and persons
17 deprived of liberty, and shall provide safeguards and assistance to them,
18 including access to mental and psychological health services; and
- 19 15) Government offices and the owners, managers, or administrators of
20 workplaces and other places frequented by the public shall implement regular
21 cleaning and disinfection of transport conveyances, terminals and similar
22 facilities including elevators and escalators, particularly frequently touched
23 surfaces thereat;

24 **B. Management of Spaces**

- 25 1) Mass gatherings are prohibited subject to the exceptions as may be provided
26 under the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of this Act;
- 27 LGUs shall regulate public gatherings as well as the flow of people in
28 government-managed public spaces, subject to the limitations as may be
29 provided under the guidelines set in the IRR of this Act to prevent disease
30 transmission: *Provided*, That activities of agencies of the National Government
31 or their provincial or regional offices involved in the delivery of services or
32 distribution of all forms of public assistance or the facilitation thereof shall in

1 no way be impeded nor be required a permit from any government authority:
2 *Provided, further,* That gatherings under this category shall observe the
3 Universal and Mandatory Safety Measures enumerated in paragraph (A) of this
4 Section: *Provided, furthermore,* That LGUs, in consultation with the private
5 sector stakeholders, shall provide the national, regional, and provincial agencies
6 and their attached offices the necessary assistance to carry out their activities
7 requiring the presence or participation of a significant number of the
8 population: *Provided, finally,* That other than exceptions to these prohibitions,
9 intended for public purpose or interest, the guidelines shall likewise include
10 parameters to ensure compliance with physical distancing and other measures
11 to prevent transmission of the virus;

- 12 2) Land use planning and zoning shall be strictly observed in the implementation
13 of this Act; and,
14 3) Management of spaces shall likewise include the establishment of urban
15 gardens, and green spaces not only for people to enjoy a clean and healthy
16 environment, but also to enable them to grow their own sources of food and
17 nutrition.

18 **C. Management of Public Transportation**

- 19 1) The appropriate government agencies shall monitor the implementation of the
20 Universal and Mandatory Safety Measures in the management of public
21 transportation terminals and facilities, including queuing or ticketing lines,
22 ticketing offices, as well as the interiors of public utility vehicles, mass
23 transportations, and private vehicles covered by application-based
24 transportation network services, and by their respective drivers, conductors
25 and passengers; *Provided,* That the government shall shoulder the costs of
26 mandatory COVID-19 testing in the public transportation sector;
27 2) The operation of motorcycle taxis shall remain suspended to prevent the
28 spread of the virus through shared helmets and close physical contact between
29 passengers and drivers;

- 1 3) Passengers in all types of public transportation vehicles shall be required to
2 sanitize their hands prior to boarding the vehicle, shall be seated a seat apart
3 and wear face masks while inside the vehicle;
- 4 4) Contact-less payment mechanisms shall be promoted such as the use of money
5 trays and automatic fare collection systems to minimize the risk of transmission
6 of the COVID-19 virus;
- 7 5) Agencies and authorities tasked to manage transport hubs such as airports,
8 ports, harbors, and similar facilities shall coordinate with the concerned LGUs
9 in the implementation of the Universal and Mandatory Safety Measures herein
10 provided and shall consider the following special measures:
- 11 i. Establishment of public health corridors in airports and ports;
 - 12 ii. Mandatory body temperature reading for all arriving and departing
13 passengers;
 - 14 iii. Mandatory quarantine at home or in an authorized government facility
15 for all arriving passengers;
 - 16 iv. Mandatory collection of data for the maintenance of a database of
17 information for contact-tracing purposes only;
 - 18 v. Thorough sanitizing and disinfection of all arriving and departing
19 vessels;
 - 20 vi. Mandatory regular testing of all employees, personnel, staff, and crew
21 attached to vessels and those who have assisted passengers; and
 - 22 vii. Mandatory conduct of rapid testing for arriving and departing
23 passengers.
- 24 6) The Department of Transportation (DOTr) shall craft and implement programs
25 that will help modes of public transport, such as jeepneys and public buses, to
26 transition to better normal in consideration of the health and safety protocols
27 without requiring them to commit to the government's public utility vehicle
28 (PUV) modernization program. The agency shall also ensure the smooth
29 operation of different modes of public and mass transport while upholding
30 existing health and safety protocols;
- 31 7) National Government authorities in coordination with the stakeholders of the
32 transport sector shall establish dedicated lanes along roads, avenues,

1 highways, and other transport infrastructure networks to give priority to
2 healthcare, emergency, peace and order, and supply-chain vehicles
3 transporting individuals, goods, equipment, or those used in the pursuit of
4 services deemed essential and critical: *Provided*, That pursuant to the
5 provisions of Section 21 (d) of RA No. 8749, otherwise known as the *Clean Air*
6 *Act*, the DOTr shall ensure that vehicles strictly comply with current emission
7 standards; and

- 8 8) To promote safe physical distancing and sustainable mobility, LGUs and
9 appropriate government development authorities having jurisdiction over
10 roadways or highways, in coordination with the Department of Public Works
11 and Highways (DPWH), and the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA)
12 in the case of the National Capital Region (NCR), shall immediately create
13 green lanes which are dedicated, protected and interconnected lanes for
14 personal mobility devices such as bicycles, e-bicycles, scooters, and
15 similar micromobile devices: *Provided*, That personal mobility users shall
16 observe safe physical distancing and speeds prescribed by the LGUs or
17 relevant regional development agencies. Bicycle racks and secure bicycle
18 parking sheds and spaces shall be established in government offices,
19 hospitals, public schools and higher education institutions, and other facilities.
20 Changing and shower rooms shall be promoted as well by public facility
21 managers to encourage more bicycle and micromobile commuting: *Provided*,
22 *further*, That the DOTr, DPWH and LGUs shall ensure that these dedicated
23 and interconnected lanes for bicycles and micromobility devices are included
24 in current and future road projects.

25 **D. Better Normal for Schools and Education Institutions**

- 26 1) To give priority to the health, well-being and safety of the education sector,
27 the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education
28 (CHED) shall make the necessary determination on the appropriate start of the
29 academic year for all public and private schools, state universities and colleges
30 (SUCs), local universities and colleges (LUCs), private colleges and universities,

- 1 and other learning institutions and make the appropriate recommendation to
2 President;
- 3 2) All public and private education institutions including private and public
4 universities and colleges shall formulate, develop and adopt a flexible learning
5 approach which is designed to meet students' needs, capabilities of faculty
6 members and conditions on the ground, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity
7 and without prejudice to the adoption of measures for online learning;
- 8 3) The DepEd shall develop, implement and promote a flexible learning program
9 for K-12 students in all public and private schools, taking into consideration
10 the capability of the school and its teachers in delivering such program, and
11 the accessibility of learning materials, either physical or electronic, to the
12 students. The flexible learning program shall be geared towards limiting
13 physical contact among the school population and minimizing the impact on
14 the potential for learning and instruction between learners and teachers and
15 upgrading or improving the quality of electronic and digital content to be made
16 available in cases where online or distance learning modalities are pursued:
17 *Provided*, That students shall not be penalized for their inability to access and
18 participate in electronic or digital means of learning due to limitations in
19 connectivity, unavailability of equipment or other circumstances caused by the
20 COVID-19 pandemic: *Provided, further*, That, television (TV) and radio
21 programs done in partnership between DepEd, National Council for Children
22 Television, National Commission for Culture and the Arts and it's attached
23 agencies, Film Development Council of the Philippines, Philippine Sports
24 Commission, Early Childhood Community Development Center, higher
25 education institutions (HEIs) and pertinent cooperatives and organizations,
26 and with the assistance of licensed TV and radio broadcast stations shall serve
27 as alternative platforms for learning;
- 28 4) The CHED shall monitor the implementation of flexible learning programs for
29 all HEIs, SUCs and LCUs. HEIs shall continue to exercise academic freedom and
30 levels of autonomy in the governance of their own academic affairs: *Provided*,
31 That students shall not be penalized for their inability to access or participate

1 in electronic or digital means of learning due to limitations in connectivity or
2 unavailability of equipment;

3 5) The National Government shall allocate funding for the research, training of
4 faculty, curriculum development, monitoring and evaluating, benchmarking,
5 and the development of systems for learning continuity during times of crisis
6 such as the occurrence of a pandemic. Such funding shall be made available
7 by the National Government, from the existing budgetary allocation for the K-
8 12 and other similar programs, and made available to HEIs, including those
9 organized as stock corporations, local research institutes, academic
10 organizations, LGUs, school boards, and individual researchers through an
11 application process to be prescribed by the DepEd and the CHED: *Provided,*
12 That for the benefit of learners who have hearing impairment, the full
13 participation of deaf linguistics organizations and deaf cooperatives shall be
14 required in the development of learning materials;

15 6) Subject to consultation with the DepEd, CHED, and the Technical Education
16 and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), all face-to-face classes and group
17 school activities, including sports, athletics, cultural, and academic meets,
18 exhibitions, competitions as well as extra-curricular field or exposure trips and
19 student exchanges shall remain suspended unless otherwise officially declared
20 permissible by competent authorities without prejudice to the academic
21 freedom and levels of autonomy enjoyed by HEIs in the management and
22 conduct of their academic affairs;

23 7) Digital learning shall be promoted by the National Government in coordination
24 with telecommunications companies, private sector content providers and
25 stakeholders, and internet service providers;

26 8) Public and private education institutions including private colleges and
27 universities and other accredited learning and training institutions shall
28 prioritize the establishment of online platforms for the Continuing Professional
29 Development (CPD) and Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (MCLE)
30 programs; and

31 9) Subject to existing rules and regulations, meaningful inclusion and effective
32 participation of students and the learning community must be ensured in all

1 aspects of pandemic response and recovery plan in education: *Provided*, That
2 mechanisms to uphold autonomy of student councils or governments, and
3 support for uninterrupted operations of campus press shall be in place.

4 **E. Management of Cultural and Heritage Spaces**

5 Digital platforms shall be used to consolidate resources and cultural forms
6 in public spaces, whether generated by the private or the public sector, to
7 create an archive of oral histories, visual ethnographies, philosophical
8 discourse, and technical and creative capacity-building programs geared
9 towards bolstering various creative industries, that shall be made available to
10 the public for virtual appreciation and learning, most especially in the K-12
11 system. Online promotion or streaming of cultural programs, performances,
12 exhibitions and enhancement of existing public arts and monuments shall be
13 highly encouraged and geared towards sustainability.

14 **F. Better Normal for Private Commercial and Industrial Workplaces**

- 15 1) The National Government, in coordination with the LGUs, and in partnership
16 with accredited or duly-recognized organizations that pertain to each sector,
17 shall maintain databases on all private commercial, industrial, and other
18 businesses operating in their areas of jurisdiction. The database shall include
19 information such as the number of employees, working hours, workspace
20 conditions, office floor areas, and other information necessary to ensure
21 compliance with physical distancing and other protocols prescribed by this Act
22 to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 virus;
- 23 2) All private commercial, industrial, and other forms of businesses shall be
24 required to submit a Management Plan to the concerned LGU which shall
25 determine the said business's compliance with the necessary safeguards and
26 the Universal Safety Measures provided under this Act, as well as industrial
27 safeguards and safety measures provided for by the implementing agencies:
28 *Provided*, That the review of all Management Plans shall be conducted
29 promptly upon submission to allow establishments to resume operations as
30 soon as possible: *Provided further*, That the Management Plan shall integrate
31 circular economy strategies in the procurement of materials or the
32 development of mechanisms for hygiene and sanitation: *Provided*,

1 *furthermore*, That LGUs are authorized to conduct periodic inspection of
2 private commercial, industrial and other businesses operating within their
3 territorial jurisdiction to ensure compliance of these businesses with the
4 Universal and Mandatory Safety Measures and other standards and protocols
5 prescribed under this Act and its IRR;

6 3) All private commercial, industrial and other businesses shall implement their
7 Management Plan and shall incorporate alternative work arrangements such
8 as work-from-home schemes, including rotational work or shifting in
9 schedules, in applicable industries to lessen by at least fifty percent (50%) the
10 number of employees required to report to their workplaces physically. For the
11 private sector, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), in
12 consultation with the private sector, shall standardize the template for and the
13 required contents of the said Management Plan. The LGUs shall be in charge
14 of monitoring the implementation of this provision;

15 4) All private commercial, industrial and other businesses shall shoulder all
16 expenditures in complying with the mandates of this Act, and such
17 expenditures shall not in any way be charged to employees. There shall be no
18 diminution of salaries, wages, benefits and other remunerations guaranteed
19 by the Labor Code and other relevant laws to employees by reason of
20 employer's compliance with this Act;

21 5) The relevant provisions of the Labor Code notwithstanding, being late or being
22 absent for work due to heavy traffic, unavailability of public transport or of
23 shuttle or transportation service due to reasons related to the implementation
24 of this Act shall not be a cause for disciplinary action against, or termination
25 of, the employees. Private commercial and industrial businesses are hereby
26 mandated to adopt a flexible working schedule in keeping with the policy of
27 maintaining a minimum of eight (8) hour work per day, or forty-eight (48) hour
28 work per week, which shall be incorporated in their Management Plans; and

29 6) The DOLE shall ensure the conduct of health and safety audits of all
30 workplaces, including special economic zones, in line with RA No. 11058,
31 otherwise known as *An Act Strengthening Compliance with Occupational*
32 *Safety and Health Standards and providing penalties for violations thereof.*

1 **G. Better Normal Governance Measures**

- 2 1) Various forms of electronic governance or e-governance mechanisms shall be
3 established to facilitate continuous and efficient transactions between and
4 among government agencies, and the private sector, as well as in the
5 delivery of socio-economic services including the utilization of online payment
6 system, appointment-based transactions, the Philippine national public key
7 infrastructure, electronic business permits and licensing systems, electronic
8 procurement system, electronic management systems for human resources,
9 records, accounting, as well as other ICT- enabled systems and solutions for
10 effective and efficient e-governance.

11 An internet based electronic payment facility and gateway, such as e-
12 money and similar platforms, shall be utilized in collecting taxes, fees, tolls,
13 imposts, and other revenues and in paying for goods, services, and other
14 disbursements. Government offices and government-owned and -controlled
15 corporations (GOCCs) that are already partially applying this kind of digitized
16 payment mechanism must improve the current system used in order to
17 accommodate the increase in the number of transactions. The government
18 shall establish online payment systems and may partner with payment
19 solutions providers;

- 20 2) Government agencies involved in business registration such as the Department
21 of Trade and Industry (DTI), Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC),
22 Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR),
23 Social Security System (SSS), Home Development Mutual Fund (Pag-Ibig Pag-
24 IBIG Fund), Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (Philhealth), LGUs, and
25 other permit and license issuing agencies shall be integrated to facilitate the
26 efficient delivery of business registration-related services;

- 27 3) The *Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas* shall accelerate the adoption by all payment
28 service providers of the National Quick Response (QR) Code standard to
29 hasten the interoperability of QR-driven payment services and eliminate the
30 need for merchants and clients to maintain several accounts;

- 31 4) A government online procurement system that encompasses all procurement
32 processes involving bidding, contract agreements, and payment for services or

1 supplies, and which shall contain a tracking and customer service mechanism
2 shall also be developed; and

- 3 5) Where applicable, the relevant provisions of RA No. 11032, otherwise known
4 as the *Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act*
5 of 2018, shall supplement the provisions of this Act.

6 **H. Other Aspects of Better Normal**

- 7 1) The government shall provide important information related to health
8 emergencies to persons with disabilities (PWDs) and institutionalize assistive
9 mechanisms for them such as requiring sign interpretation in TV news
10 broadcasts and live streamed public information programs and content. In
11 relation thereto, a system of standards for assistive mechanisms for PWDs shall
12 be planned, financed, implemented, and monitored. For purposes of this Act,
13 individuals who assist PWDs such as sign language interpreters shall be
14 recognized as front liners providing essential services;
- 15 2) The government shall provide sufficient support for culture bearers and
16 masters, and those engaged in crafts-making such as weaving and carving. To
17 this end, appropriate support shall be given to artists, cultural workers,
18 freelancers and the self-employed, such as those working in the audiovisual,
19 entertainment, and live events sector, and other creative industries such as
20 architecture and allied arts, dance, dramatic arts, literary arts, music, visual
21 arts, contemporary arts or expressions, audiovisual and multimedia, and
22 scholars, critics, curators, and cultural workers;
- 23 3) The local chief executives of LGUs, in coordination with the private sector, shall
24 implement, monitor and maintain a planned schedule for people traveling to
25 and from their respective workplaces or residences located in the LGU and if
26 possible or applicable, the charter of various means of transportation for the
27 use of residents and workers to and from their respective destinations;
- 28 4) There shall be a continuous implementation of alternative work arrangements
29 in the public and private sectors based on the nature of work of an employee,
30 the workplace and its location or place, and its distance to and from the
31 residences of employees;

- 1 5) The implementation of RA No. 9003, also known as the *Ecological Solid Waste*
2 *Management Act of 2000*, in relation to the proper disposal and management
3 of wastes resulting from activities related to the implementation of this Act
4 shall be strictly monitored: *Provided*, That the National Government shall
5 implement regulations on the manufacture and importation, use, recycling of
6 all single-use plastics used in trade or commerce in business enterprises, as
7 well as by retailers and consumers: *Provided, further*, That the government
8 shall conduct a research and develop single-use plastic packaging alternatives
9 and provide incentives to plastic industries that will shift to other
10 manufacturing activities;
- 11 6) Adaptation measures such as the establishment of multi-hazard early warning
12 systems that reach out the last mile, capacity building of national experts,
13 construction of rainwater harvesters in government owned- and
14 managed buildings and spaces, and the establishment of seedbanks and
15 vegetable gardens in available open spaces in local communities, rooftops of
16 government-owned and -managed buildings shall be implemented;
- 17 7) To prevent the transmission and spread of zoonotic diseases among humans,
18 all government agencies and offices and LGUs shall ensure that the protection
19 of biological diversity is integrated and mainstreamed into programs and
20 projects;
- 21 8) The National Government, through relevant government agencies such as the
22 DICT, DTI, DILG, in accordance with their respective mandates, and with the
23 support of the private sector, shall plan for and undertake universal
24 digitalization as well as promote and implement programs and innovations to
25 accelerate public access and connectivity including the progressive roll-out of
26 the National Broadband Program and the Free Public Internet Access Program
27 down to the barangay level;
- 28 9) The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), National Disaster Risk Reduction and
29 Management Council (NDRRMC), DILG through the Persons with Disabilities
30 Affairs Offices (PDAOs), and DOH shall gather, compile, update, and publish
31 online, disaggregated demographic and mapping data on deaf and all other
32 persons with disabilities nationwide in the context of the pandemic;

1 10)The PSA, DTI, NDRRMC, DOLE, DOH, National Economic Development
2 Authority (NEDA) and other relevant agencies shall gather, compile and update
3 disaggregated demographic and mapping data on critically impacted
4 businesses, sectors, and industries in the context of the pandemic in order to
5 get a better census of the needs of the various sectors and industries; and,

6 11)In compliance with Section 10 of RA No. 11106, otherwise known as the
7 *Filipino Sign Language Act*, ensure the continued placement of TV insets in
8 news and public affairs programs through video remote interpreting on TV as
9 well as online streaming platforms, and promote as well deaf-produced/-signed
10 pandemic and quarantine related public information.

11 **SEC. 7. Role of LGUs.** – LGUs shall, in their respective territorial jurisdictions,
12 be primarily responsible for instituting localized policies and legislation in accordance
13 with the better normal measures prescribed under Section 6 hereof and other related
14 directives and issuances of the National Government. Local governments must ensure
15 that their policy-making process shall involve the participation of all stakeholders.
16 Consultations with the communities shall be pursued as a matter of course to ensure
17 that such policies respond properly to the needs of the people. In this regard, the
18 LGUs shall have the following responsibilities:

19 a) Ensure the proper implementation of the provisions of this Act within
20 their respective territorial jurisdiction;

21 b) Enact the necessary and appropriate ordinance for the local
22 implementation of the provisions of this Act, including the promotion of low-
23 contact payment mechanisms such as the use of electronic money (e-money)
24 as a medium of exchange in collecting taxes, fees, tolls, imposts, and other
25 revenues and in paying for goods, services, and other disbursements:
26 *Provided,* That the LGU shall make the necessary arrangements with the
27 relevant government agencies and government-recognized regulating entities
28 to acquire e-money payment capability;

29 c) Require, by ordinance, merchants or business entities in their localities
30 to obtain and maintain e-money payment system capability that is accessible
31 by phone or other access devices, as a prerequisite for the approval of
32 application for or renewal of business permits;

- 1 d) Create a Better Normal Task Force to monitor the compliance of the
2 private businesses and offices with the provisions of this Act;
- 3 e) Orient the applicant thereof of the guidelines on the management of
4 spaces as provided in Section 6 (B) of this Act, which shall be observed
5 throughout the entire gathering;
- 6 f) In cooperation or with the assistance of the Land Transportation Office
7 (LTO), initiate information campaigns on public transportation schemes in their
8 localities in accordance with Section 6 (C) of this Act;
- 9 g) Establish the Inter-Local Government Unit Task Force as authorized by
10 and in accordance with the appropriate guidelines of the DILG;
- 11 h) In coordination with the DICT, foster, support and facilitate the effective
12 roll-out of free wi-fi access points and other infrastructure needed for the
13 National Broadband Program. The LGUs shall likewise foster, support, and
14 facilitate the construction of common towers and other passive
15 telecommunication infrastructure in strategic locations for the use of
16 telecommunications service providers to propagate connectivity and provide
17 quality telecommunications services to their constituents in accordance with
18 existing laws, and the policies and standards set by the DICT;
- 19 i) In coordination with DOH, provide immediate assistance to all reported
20 COVID-confirmed residents and patients;
- 21 j) In coordination with the DOH, establish and maintain a functional local
22 epidemiology and surveillance unit pursuant to RA No. 11332, also known as
23 the *Mandatory Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Health Events of Public*
24 *Health Concern Act*. In accordance with Section 6(A) of this Act, the LGU shall
25 specify the conduct of contact tracing systems for suspect, probable, and
26 confirmed COVID-19 cases, or other similar diseases, to avoid delay in contact
27 tracing and to ensure the prompt management and containment of the
28 disease. In all cases, the LGU shall ensure that disease surveillance and contact
29 tracing procedures are in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012;
- 30 k) In coordination with the Department of Agriculture (DA), plan and
31 implement a resilient agro-ecology and local food supply system that: (1)
32 involves a shorter, more diversified food supply chain that is resilient to future

1 shocks; (2) ensures food access shall remain at, or swiftly returns to, pre-
2 pandemic levels, (3) mitigates the impact on vulnerable food systems actors,
3 including small-holder producers, informal traders, and low-income and
4 marginalized groups, (4) encourages a shift towards good agricultural and
5 climate-resilient practices, and (5) builds capacity towards family-farming
6 model to encourage food security. The plan shall promote permaculture and
7 the establishment of community food gardens, family farms, local food
8 production and shorter supply chains, the strengthening of urban-rural
9 linkages, and the promotion of diversity in the food supply chain and channels
10 of distribution as well as ensuring the integrity of sufficient wild spaces nearby
11 to preserve genetic stocks, revitalize monoculture areas and ensure water
12 security;

13 l) Establish and manage the use of cultural spaces to serve as venues and
14 facilities for keeping the creativity of the people alive, affording people to
15 exercise their freedom of expression, enhancing psycho-spiritual health, and
16 providing them opportunities for meaningful participation in community life,
17 even while observing the universal mandatory standards and protocols during
18 the time of a pandemic: *Provided*, That such cultural space must meet the
19 minimum criteria of facilities or landscapes that are open to the public:
20 *Provided further*, That cultural spaces are adaptable, do not compromise on
21 quality, able to enhance a sense of community, and are inclusive, accessible
22 and welcoming; and

23 m) The LGUs, in coordination with the cultural agencies such as the NCCA,
24 National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) and the National
25 Museum, DepEd, CHED and SUCs, Department of Environment and Natural
26 Resources (DENR), Department of Tourism, DPWH, and the DOH, shall
27 conduct a comprehensive cultural heritage mapping of their areas, including
28 natural resources, built heritage structures, and tangible and intangible
29 heritage, including indigenous knowledge and resources, with the end in view
30 that the resulting database and documentation shall aid LGUs in formulating
31 localized policies and programs that will help prevent the transmission of

1 zoonotic diseases among the people and help protect their health and well-
2 being.

3 An application shall be developed as repository of the data retrieved
4 from cultural mapping activities.

5 n) Local Water Districts shall ensure the availability of sufficient water
6 supply in their areas of coverage. In the case of private water utilities, such
7 service providers shall review and recommend the appropriate extension of
8 concession agreements necessary to ensure sufficient water supply in their
9 service areas as well as to fast track sewerage systems as required under RA
10 No. 9275, otherwise known as the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004. Such
11 service providers shall also be required to submit new master plans to reflect
12 a speedier full sewerage, septage and wastewater treatment coverage of the
13 metropolis.

14 To ensure the implementation of this provision, the DILG shall create a
15 scoreboard and incentive system for LGUs.

16 **SEC. 8. *Role of the Private Sector*—**

17 a) All private businesses, offices and establishments shall submit a
18 Management Plan, to the concerned LGU where the entity conducts
19 operations or holds office not later than fifteen (15) days upon resumption of
20 their operations: *Provided*, That priority approval shall be granted by LGUs
21 to Management Plans that strictly comply with industry best practices,
22 minimum health standards, and safety protocols as accredited by DOH, DTI,
23 DOLE and other implementing agencies. Such Management Plan shall
24 contain, among others, the following information:

25 1) Total number of employees in the specific workplace, office, or branch
26 covered by the plan;

27 2) Overall strategy for the reporting of the workforce which may be on
28 rotational, staggered, tele-commuting, remote or on work-from-home
29 basis, including the relevant time specifications and periods as well as
30 the number of workers who shall be allowed ingress and egress;

- 1 3) Total number of workers at any given time in the workplace or office
2 on a daily basis;
- 3 4) Number of workers per area of space and the spacing mechanisms to
4 be implemented in compliance with physical distancing protocols, if
5 applicable;
- 6 5) Mechanisms for maintaining personal hygiene and cleanliness among
7 the employees and in workstations or areas including the availability of
8 handwashing or hand sanitizing implements;
- 9 6) Physical changes in space management introduced or to be introduced
10 in the workplaces to protect employees and to implement physical
11 distancing such as plastic barriers between customers and personnel
12 or between and among customers or other individuals within the
13 workplace;
- 14 7) Signages, reminders, and other information, in accessible formats,
15 including Filipino sign language, and/or easy-to-understand text in the
16 appropriate written language, installed or posted in key areas of the
17 workplace to serve as constant reminders for workers to practice the
18 mandatory health, safety and sanitation practices;
- 19 8) Mechanisms for maintaining physical distancing in communally shared
20 areas in the workplace, such as cafeterias, restrooms, conference
21 rooms, prayer rooms, breastfeeding stations, including safeguards
22 against sharing of tools, implements, utensils, equipment, and
23 supplies;
- 24 9) Physical and personal protective equipment provided or to be provided
25 by businesses to their respective employees in order to inclusively
26 implement the practices mandated in this Act;
- 27 10) Mechanisms for managing employees exhibiting symptoms or
28 confirmed to have tested positive for COVID-19 infection, including the
29 company or business unit's system for contact tracing;
- 30 11) The Workers' Compensation Plan which provides how workers are
31 required to work and will be compensated while on quarantine;

1 12)Mechanisms to implement a circular economy in the workplace such
2 as the: i) reduction on the consumption of non-renewable resources;
3 ii) development or design of products that minimize waste; iii) re-use
4 of materials and expansion of the useful life of products; iv) prevention
5 of harmful emissions to soil, air and water; and iv) the installation of
6 segregation and recycling facilities;

7 13)Mechanisms for a healthier working environment such as but not
8 limited to the use of natural, non-toxic and low global warming
9 potential materials and equipment, improved indoor air quality and
10 ventilation with sustainable cooling technologies, and the more
11 efficient use of space; and

12 14)Measures to implement a "zero to landfill" policy such as setting targets
13 for reducing waste production; implementing sorting and recycling for
14 all office waste; ensuring that recycled waste is composted or recycled;
15 or observing sharing economy practices such as reusing and recycling.

16 b. All private businesses, offices and establishments shall require all employees
17 to subject themselves to a thermal or temperature scan prior to being allowed
18 entry. Employees whose recorded body temperature render them suspect for
19 symptoms of COVID-19 shall be asked to undergo the necessary quarantine
20 protocols and given the appropriate medical advice, or subjected to the
21 appropriate health care in coordination with authorized medical facilities;

22 c. Private entities resuming their operations and requiring the physical presence
23 of their employee subject to their Management Plan shall provide shuttle or
24 transportation services under the conditions applicable to public
25 transportation operators: *Provided*, That private entities and owners of
26 buildings and establishments shall support employees and building occupants
27 who have opted to commute through bicycles and other micro-mobility devices
28 by installing bicycle racks, storage, and bicycle parking spaces: *Provided*,
29 further, That the installation of changing and shower rooms to support green
30 transport and promote safe and proper hygiene shall likewise be promoted by
31 business establishments;

- 1 d. There shall be an employee case management protocol to be observed on the
2 treatment of patients or of persons suspected to be afflicted with the disease
3 in accordance with prevailing DOH guidelines: *Provided*, That patient-doctor
4 confidentiality shall be suspended in order to aid contact tracing and in the
5 identification of possible COVID-19 patients; and,
6 e. In the provision of assistance and financing schemes, the lack of capacity of
7 micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the implementation of their
8 respective Management Plan shall be taken into consideration.

9 The implementation of mandatory public health standards and other
10 health-promoting practices committed by business owners in their respective
11 Management Plans shall be the joint responsibility of the owners or
12 management of establishments and their respective LGUs.

13 All private establishments are hereby encouraged to practice corporate social
14 responsibility (CSR) to help the government in its fights against COVID-19.

15 **SEC. 9. *Specific Responsibilities of Particular National Government***
16 ***Offices, their respective Attached Agencies, and GOCCs.*** – In addition to the
17 duties and mandates of National Government agencies already prescribed in the other
18 sections of this Act, the following agencies and offices are mandated to carry out the
19 following responsibilities, to wit:

20 A. Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA)

21 The PSA shall fast-track the implementation of the provisions of RA No. 11055,
22 otherwise known as the *Philippine Identification System Act*, and RA No. 11315,
23 otherwise known as the *Community-Based Monitoring System Act*, to facilitate the
24 profiling, contact-tracing, and distribution of forms of assistance under the better
25 normal period after the lifting of enhanced community quarantine measures.

26 The PSA shall coordinate with the DILG, Department of Social Welfare and
27 Development (DSWD) and LGUs to cull information from the Community-Based
28 Monitoring System (CBMS) that may be utilized in fast-tracking efforts geared towards
29 the full implementation of the Philippine Identification System Act.

30 The PSA may likewise cull information contained in the existing databases of
31 the government on birth certificates, passports, voter's registration, GSIS, SSS,
32 PAGIBIG, Philhealth through data-sharing arrangements, subject to the rules and

1 procedures that shall be established by the National Privacy Commission (NPC) for
2 purposes of facilitating the implementation of the Philippine Identification System Act.

3 To facilitate the integration of environmental concerns in national development
4 planning and policy-making, the PSA, in coordination with the DENR, DA, NEDA,
5 Department of Energy (DOE), and the Climate Change Commission, shall enhance the
6 Philippine Economic-Environmental Natural Resources Accounting (PEENRA) System
7 as part of the national income accounting system.

8 The DENR and the DA shall generate baseline information and build a database to
9 support ecosystem-based assessment and monitoring, continuing research and
10 development, technology development and transfer, and capacity building, for the
11 conservation and sustainable use of natural resources and ecosystems, especially the
12 coastal, marine, and forestry sectors.

13 The PEENRA shall be considered a scientific planning tool to avert ecosystems
14 and biodiversity loss with a view to preventing the transmission of zoonotic diseases
15 and pursuing anticipatory adaptation measures amid the impacts of climate change.
16 It shall include the provision for strategic climate financing for localized climate
17 adaptation investments supporting risk-based local planning, energy transition to
18 renewable and indigenous sources, resilient infrastructure, agro-ecology, water and
19 food security, technological innovation for critical sectors like agriculture and fisheries,
20 and capacity building for green enterprises.

21 The PEENRA system shall be based on a framework that includes the
22 accounting of environmental conditions and quality, environmental resources and their
23 utilization, depreciation of natural capital, environmental damages, and loss and
24 damage associated with climate change impacts.

25 B. Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT)

26 The DICT shall fast track the progressive and full implementation of the
27 National Broadband Program (NBP) by immediately establishing and implementing a
28 nationwide and comprehensive information and communications technology (ICT)
29 action plan that shall involve all stakeholders, including the major TELCOs, small
30 TELCOs, internet service providers (ISPs), and developers of technology and digital
31 applications, with the end in view of -widening and improving connectivity not only for
32 the fight against COVID-19 but also for the long-term development needs of the

1 country. The NBP shall serve to enable the widespread accessibility to and utilization
2 of the internet for essential and significant public and private transactions, including
3 learning and instruction: *Provided*, That the NBP must be reliable and sufficiently able
4 to support a high volume of video streaming, in compliance with the Filipino Sign
5 Language Act.

6 Further, the DICT shall immediately formulate and implement an industry-wide
7 policy for the TELCOS, both major and small, ISPs, and technology applications that
8 aims to widen connectivity in all sectors of society, particularly the poor, the
9 unconnected, the underserved households in poor urban communities, geographically
10 isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDAs), and the MSMEs: *Provided*, That in relation
11 to the widening of connectivity to all sectors of society, the principle behind the NBP
12 shall be adhered to. To achieve the goal of providing connectivity to all sectors of the
13 economy, incentives shall be provided to new market that shall invest in unserved
14 areas: *Provided, further*, That such incentives shall result in affordable prices for
15 internet usage: *Provided finally*, That the following key policies shall be implemented:

- 16 a) Provision of incentives to TELCOs which serve the poor and underserved
17 MSMEs nationwide via WiFi technology by implementing a reduced Spectrum
18 User Fee (SUF) for WiFi such that a fair and reasonable scheme is achieved
19 consistent with existing rules and regulations governing the use of WiFi;
- 20 b) Implement its departmental policies and initiatives for the propagation of
21 Common Tower and the sharing of Passive Telecommunication Infrastructure
22 in the telecommunications industry;
- 23 c) Implementation of the provision for fiber optic transmission rental from the
24 National Grid Corporation to new telecommunications industry players to
25 accelerate development therein;
- 26 d) Implementation of the spectrum sharing arrangement among and between
27 TELCOs, at intra-industry fee agreements regulated by NTC, to fully and
28 optimally utilize the usage of licensed frequencies that are presently assigned
29 to existing major TELCOs;
- 30 e) Full use of the Internet Bandwidth supply made available by the Luzon
31 Bypass infrastructure to provide connectivity to all government offices and to
32 the unserved and underserved areas of the country. For this purpose, the DICT

1 shall formulate a policy to implement effective measures to make the internet
2 Bandwidth supply available at a fair pricing scheme, to other TELCO
3 stakeholders, giving priority to new incoming players, particularly those that
4 serve the poor and underserved communities and GIDAs;

5 f) Undertake contracts and other arrangements with private sector,
6 including the middle and last mile providers, the GOCCs or LGUs for the
7 provision of internet bandwidth sourced separately from, or in conjunction
8 with, the Luzon Bypass Infrastructure, should it become necessary, to provide
9 connectivity to end-users through multi-year obligations;

10 g) Promulgate joint policies with the DILG that mandate a simplified and
11 streamlined permitting process for telecommunication and broadband
12 infrastructure; and

13 h) Promulgate and implement policies for effective cross-sector infrastructure
14 sharing, such as, but not limited to, coordinated or joint infrastructure
15 development, dark fiber leasing, and joint venture.

16 In pursuit of the above policy directives, the DICT shall undertake the following:

- 17 i. Implement programs that shall facilitate the setting-up of online, internet-
18 based systems and platforms in offices of the public sector, including
19 schools, universities and even barangay halls, across all levels;
- 20 ii. Assist public sector offices and agencies in the upgrading of their existing
21 internet and other ICT infrastructure;
- 22 iii. Establish, in coordination with other government agencies, learning
23 modules and relevant ICT solutions and systems to assist public sector
24 employees, freelancers and self-employed individuals, and MSMEs in the
25 use of relevant technological and digital platforms that can assist in the
26 various cycles of their business model; and
- 27 iv. Direct the NTC to implement all relevant policy directives under this Act,
28 including, but not limited to, those pertaining to the enhancement of
29 connectivity, improvement of internet speed and quality of service, and
30 development of the digital infrastructure of the country.

31 The DICT in coordination with the DOH shall also promote research towards the
32 development and establishment of an online data tracking system or the creation of a

1 digital/phone-based application which is downloadable by the public for case
2 monitoring, mapping, and contact-tracing that shall be integrated with global
3 positioning system (GPS) activated by real-time technologies to monitor and track
4 individuals, alert the user of location-based risks and provide the user with updated
5 and constant reminders and information for their health and safety. Any technology
6 created for case monitoring, mapping and contact tracing shall be consistent with the
7 Data Privacy Act. The DICT shall leverage the existing systems used for case
8 monitoring, mapping and contact tracing. All systems, initiated by the public or private
9 sector, shall be interconnected to each other and shall be subject to the policies and
10 standards issued by the DICT.

11 The DICT shall take the lead in the establishment of e-government systems
12 and shall fast track its plans to build the necessary infrastructure to promote and
13 facilitate digitization of the government and interoperability of government services
14 and systems, especially those located in the provinces and rural areas. Under this
15 Act, government offices and agencies shall develop, introduce, and implement
16 solutions and systems to effectively facilitate government transactions through
17 various online channels or contact-less mechanisms. This includes the uploading of
18 pertinent government forms and their completion and/or submission thru websites or
19 online portals in order to minimize the need for face-to-face transactions or physical
20 travels or visits to government offices. Government agencies shall utilize creative
21 adaptive technology that allows full access of PWDs to government services and are
22 compliant with relevant existing laws and practices. This includes the establishment
23 of a system of standards for Filipino sign language interpreting.

24 C. Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)

25 The DTI in coordination with the DICT shall establish a digital application for
26 MSMEs to further enhance the conduct of e-commerce activities. The following
27 measures shall be undertaken to assist MSMEs:

- 28 a) Regulatory bodies and other concerned government agencies and
29 instrumentalities shall allow the immediate use of online platforms for
30 application, processing, approval and release of loans;
- 31 b) The use of video or teleconferencing, emails, and other online platforms shall
32 be allowed and shall be considered as compliance with government rules and

1 regulations, and the requirements of meetings such as service of meeting
2 notices, quorum and attendance requirements, and the registration of votes,
3 on matters before the body conducting the meeting.

4 c) The DTI shall provide special support programs that will assist MSMEs and
5 startups in achieving business recovery and resiliency including the following:

6 i. Capacity-building in digital skills;

7 ii. Support for digitalizing operations;

8 iii. Knowledge transfer and information-sharing with MSMEs; and

9 iv. Startup and MSMEs innovation aid.

10 The DTI, in coordination with the DICT and the DOH, shall also promote the
11 shifting, prioritization, or increase in government support or funding for the
12 manufacturing sector, including MSMEs engaged in the production of healthcare,
13 hygiene, and safety related goods, and the establishment of real-time online
14 information exchange between private hospitals and medical facilities in the supply,
15 demand, and procurement of the same: *Provided*, That concerned government
16 agencies shall promote and integrate circular economy strategies in the procurement
17 of materials or the development of mechanisms for hygiene and sanitation in the
18 implementation of this Act.

19 The provision of government support could come in the form of: (1) integrated
20 and uninterrupted supply chain networks; (2) reliable online market platforms; (3)
21 stable universal broadband; (4) digital IDs or digital signature infrastructure; and (5)
22 secured mobile payment channels, among others.

23 The DTI, NEDA, Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO),
24 cultural government agencies such as the NCCA and the FDCP, in partnership with the
25 private sector, shall formulate and implement a strategic marketing communications
26 plan that will renew public interest in and restore confidence in industries classified as
27 non-essential but heavily affected due to the implementation of quarantine and other
28 health measures to prevent the transmission of COVID-19.

29 D. Department of Health (DOH)

30 The DOH shall institutionalize and regulate telemedicine and e-prescription
31 activities, in accordance with relevant rules and regulations. It shall likewise explore

1 technological innovations for certain health services that might be compromised in the
2 new normal setting. It shall promote and support local research on COVID-19 testing
3 and treatment, and the development, manufacture and distribution of a vaccine.

4 To improve on public sanitation, the DOH shall execute all plans geared at
5 achieving zero open defecation and require all LGUs to report on their achievements
6 of this goal.

7 F. Department of Public Works and Highways

8 The DPWH shall take full responsibility for the implementation of the National
9 Sewerage and Septage Management Plan, and shall provide sufficient funds for it. -All
10 highly urbanized cities shall, in coordination with DENR, identify remaining hotspots
11 of fecal transmission and construct the necessary waste water infrastructure using
12 funds made available by the DPWH.

13 G. Department of Budget and Management (DBM)

14 The DBM shall undertake the formulation of the annual national budget in a
15 way that ensures the appropriate prioritization and allocation of funds to support
16 programs and projects to implement this Act for green, resilient and sustainable
17 communities.

18 H. Department of Finance (DOF)

19 The DOF shall streamline and rationalize the process for accessing
20 international green and climate finance for programs and interventions identified
21 under this Act to accelerate the implementation of technical cooperation projects
22 and grants supportive of the resilient and sustainable recovery objectives of this Act.

23 **SEC. 10. *Gender and Social Equity.*** – In the implementation of this Act and
24 its implementing rules and regulations, special care and consideration shall be given
25 to integrating gender issues and eliminating all forms of discrimination in the
26 following:

27 a) Implementation of alternative work arrangements in the public and private
28 sectors ensuring that DSWD and LGUs attend to possible heightened cases of gender-
29 based and domestic violence during intermittent mandatory lock-downs or
30 quarantines;

31 b) Social protection measures to be instituted for low-income and informal
32 female and male workers and daily wage earners that ensure restoration of

1 livelihoods and such other ameliorative measures that shall compensate for temporary
2 loss of incomes;

3 c) Sufficient and equal support for both women and men with disabilities,
4 cognizant that women with disabilities are most disadvantaged and excluded from
5 access to vital pandemic-related information and assistive acts;

6 d) Sufficient and equal provision of protective personal equipment to male and
7 female frontline health workers and employees in both health centers and public and
8 private firms and workplaces; and

9 e) Public reproductive health care services and the capacity of maternal health
10 clinics and midwives to address needs of child-bearers in terms of isolation from
11 infected patients, lactation and re-lactation assistance, and sufficient staffing and
12 facilities for life-saving procedures.

13 The needs of women in the health care and medical frontline professions shall
14 be considered in the procurement of personal protective equipment and such other
15 assistive measures such as access to clean restrooms, reasonable work shifts and
16 equity in wages.

17 Any sector that may be affected adversely by measures under this Act that
18 would lead to unemployment or industry collapse shall be assisted by the LGUs and
19 interlocal units in alleviating their economic status.

20 **SEC. 11. *Prohibited Acts.*** – The following acts and omissions are prohibited
21 under this Act:

22 a). Failure to wear a mask while in public spaces or in the workplace;

23 b) Failure to comply with the provisions on the management of spaces required
24 in Section 6 (B) of this Act except in subsections (1) and (3). In such cases,
25 the subject gathering shall either be ordered ceased, with the maximum
26 tolerance possible under existing laws, if such gathering does not comply with
27 Section 6 (A) of this Act;

28 c) Failure to implement and monitor the proper implementation of Management
29 of Public Transportation provided for under Section 6(C) of this Act;

30 d) Failure to comply with Section 6(D)(2) of this Act and other issuances,
31 circulars, memorandum and directives of DepEd and CHED in relation to the
32 holding of classes during COVID-19 pandemic: *Provided*, That no penalty or

1 discrimination in whatever form shall be imposed on any student, teacher, or
2 member of the faculty for his or her inability to attend or hold online classes or
3 comply with the flexible learning approaches;

4 e) Failure to submit the Management Plan within the period required in Section
5 8(a) of this Act; and

6 f) Failure of the employer, supervisor, manager or any person in charge to
7 abide by the Case Management Protocols as provided for in Section 8 of this
8 Act.

9 **SEC. 12. Penalties.** – Any person, natural or juridical, who violates the
10 provisions under Section 11 of this Act shall, upon conviction, suffer the following
11 penalties:

12 a) For violation of Section 11 (a) of this Act, a stern warning shall be issued
13 for the first offense, and for succeeding offenses, a mandatory rendition of community
14 service or performance of productive tasks, such as assisting in information campaign
15 to combat the COVID-19 pandemic;

16 b) Imprisonment of one (1) month and one day to two (2) months or a fine
17 ranging from One thousand pesos (P1,000.00) to Fifty thousand pesos (P50,000.00),
18 or both, at the discretion of the court for violation Section 11(b) to (g) of this Act.

19 In case the violation is committed by a partnership, corporation, association or
20 any juridical person, the partner, president, director or manager who consents to or
21 knowingly tolerates such violation shall be directly liable and responsible;

22 c) Suspension of the entity's permit to operate for any violation of Section
23 11(e): *Provided*, That the place owner, administrator or manager of the entity shall
24 be given a period of fifteen (15) days to submit the required Management Plan:
25 *Provided further*, That failure to comply within the 15-day period shall be meted a fine
26 of Twenty thousand pesos (P20,000.00); and

27 d) Imprisonment of not less than two (2) months but not more than six (6)
28 months, or a fine of not less than Five thousand pesos (P5,000.00) but not more than
29 One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00), or both imprisonment and fine, at the
30 discretion of the court, in case the offender is a government official or employee.

31 **SEC. 13. Appropriations.** – The amount necessary to effectively carry out
32 the provisions of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the

1 concerned government agencies. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the
2 continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General
3 Appropriations Act.

4 **SEC. 14. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within fifteen (15) days
5 from the effectivity of this Act, a technical working group (TWG) shall be constituted
6 composed of the respective heads or the duly authorized representatives of the
7 following agencies:

- 8 a) Department of Interior and Local Government;
- 9 b) Department of Finance;
- 10 c) Department of Trade and Industry;
- 11 d) National Economic Development Authority;
- 12 e) Department of Labor and Employment;
- 13 f) Department of Information and Communications Technology;
- 14 g) Department of Budget and Management;
- 15 h) Department of Transportation;
- 16 i) Department of Education;
- 17 j) Department of Health;
- 18 k) Civil Service Commission;
- 19 l) Commission on Higher Education; and
- 20 m) the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) for the Management of Emerging
21 Infectious Diseases

22 Within fifteen (15) days after the TWG is constituted, it shall promulgate the
23 necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

24 **SEC. 15. *Joint Congressional Oversight Committee.*** – A Joint
25 Congressional Oversight Committee composed of four (4) members of each House to
26 be appointed by the Senate President and the House Speaker, respectively, shall
27 exercise an oversight function over the implementation of this Act.

28 **SEC. 16. *Sunset Clause.*** — This Act shall expire after a three-year period
29 from the date of its effectivity, or sooner upon official declaration of the President of
30 the Philippines issued upon recommendation of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the
31 Management of Emerging and Infectious Diseases that the prevailing pandemic
32 caused by the COVID-19 virus or similar infectious diseases has already been

1 eradicated: *Provided*, That standards, protocols, and other measures prescribed by
2 this Act which are not rendered useless or impractical by the eradication of COVID-
3 19 may continue to be implemented.

4 **SEC. 17. *Separability Clause.*** — If any part or provision of this Act shall
5 be declared as unconstitutional or invalid, the other parts or provisions hereof which
6 are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

7 **SEC. 18. *Repealing Clause.*** — All laws, executive orders, presidential
8 decrees, rules and regulations or parts thereof which are in conflict or inconsistent
9 with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

10 **SEC. 19. *Effectivity*** — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
11 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,