



Senate of the Philippines

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Senator

Comments and Recommendations on the First Report on the Implementation of the Bayanihan Law II (RA 11494)

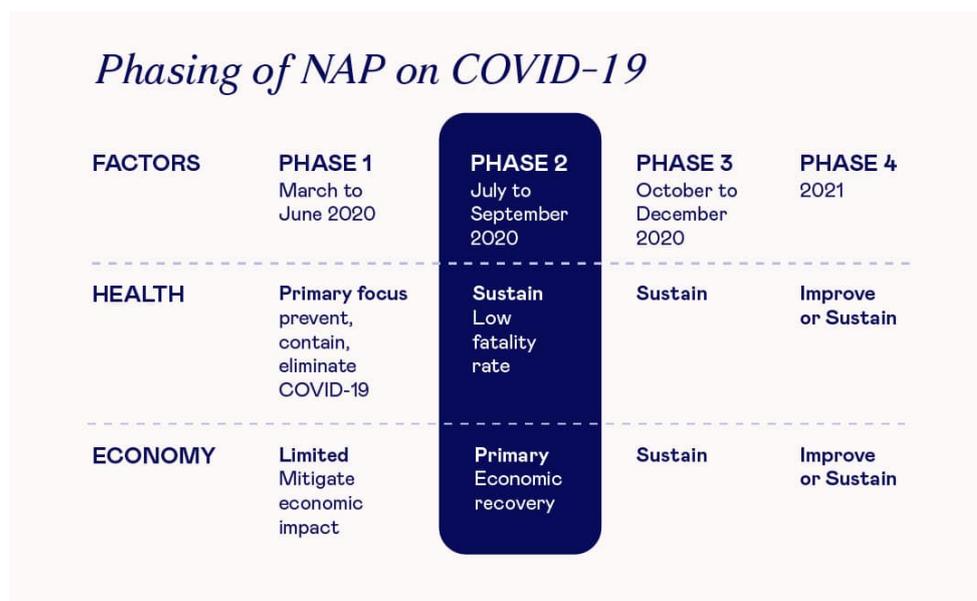
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Here are our comments and recommendations on the measures currently being implemented to address the COVID-19 pandemic and mitigate its impact:

On the National Action Plan (NAP) Against COVID-19

- We would appreciate receiving the full and official document containing the National Action Plan (NAP) Against COVID-19. It is crucial to compare the efforts under the Bayanihan 2 with the supposed overall plan that guides COVID-19 response of the government. Specifically, moving forward, we hope to analyze the alignment of government efforts with the goals and plans included in the “Phase 3” of the NAP, which covers the period October to December 2020.**

Despite our efforts to search for the document, the closest we could find was a PowerPoint presentation containing the “Phase II” of NAP, as well as a set of infographic photos¹ posted in the Facebook page of the National Task Force Against COVID-19.



¹ <https://www.facebook.com/ntfcovid19ph/photos/pcb.172535657742369/172602014402400>

On Separate Reporting to Include the Overall and Unreported Accomplishments under Bayanihan 1 (RA 11469)

2. **The weekly reporting on the accomplishments under the Bayanihan I Law (RA 11469) ended on July 1, given that the law's effectivity was only 3 months. Hence, we hope to be apprised of the updates relevant to the implementation of Bayanihan 1 which remained unreported to this date.**

Such updates should cover the roughly three-month gap between the last Bayanihan 1 weekly report and the first Bayanihan 2 weekly report. This is also crucial so that policymakers can have a baseline information on COVID-19 response that can act as a starting point of the Bayanihan 2.

- For instance, we hope to know the outcome of the data-sharing agreement signed on June 19, 2020 by the Department of Finance (DOF), Social Security Services (SSS), and the Department of Social Welfare and Development. Specifically, we hope to know the most recent progress as to the number of beneficiaries cross-matched between the Emergency Subsidy Program and the SBWS program.
- The last Bayanihan I Report also showed that there were 112 LGUs without liquidation report for the implementation of the first tranche of SAP. Such LGUs without reports comprise a relatively large portion of LGUs in BARMM (94.9%), Region II (47.3%), and Region IVB (37%). Updates regarding these will be very much appreciated.

On the Guidelines on the Rollout of Assistance to Displaced Workers

3. **We would also like to reiterate our request during the budget hearings for agencies to coordinate with each other and expedite the issuance of guidelines for the release of assistance to displaced workers including returning Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and teaching and non-teaching personnel in educational institutions.**

The release of the said guidelines is crucial considering that the Bayanihan II Law is only effective until December 19, 2020, and more especially considering that 4.6 million Filipinos or 10% of our labor force are currently jobless. We certainly do not want the Bayanihan 2 funds to go to waste and we believe that time is of the essence right now.

- Under the Bayanihan 2 Law, Php13 billion is allocated for the implementation of unemployment and involuntary separation assistance for our displaced workers including returning OFWs. It also provides Php 1 billion to TESDA, for the retooling, retraining, and upskilling of displaced workers including returning OFWs.
- The law also provides Php300 Million for subsidies and allowances of displaced teaching and non-teaching personnel, including part-time faculty, in private and public elementary, secondary, and tertiary education institutions including part-time faculty in SUCs.

On Clear Reporting of Targets and Accomplishments

- 4. Similar to what we previously raised during the Bayanihan I law, the reporting on the progress of this law should include targets against which the performance updates are to be appropriately compared against.**

Information on targets is crucial to better gauge the situation, for instance, in understanding the scope of the assistance provided to affected sectors.

Lastly, reporting should also consistently include accomplishments in terms of beneficiaries reached and budget utilized.

- In the Report, the number of drivers that remain unable to operate due to quarantine measures is not provided. Rather, it only stated that the “*emergency subsidy is continuously being distributed to drivers*”. Thus, for the upcoming report, we hope that the government can provide the number of public utility drivers (further broken down into (Taxi, PUV, PUJ, Bus, Motorcycle, FX, etc.) that remain unable to operate by October, November, or December 2020. That way, we can better understand whether the distribution of emergency subsidy is slow or adequate.
- Another example is the information on the number of COVID-19 referral facilities. While the Report cites that there are 32 COVID-19 referral hospitals and 1,874 COVID-19 accepting hospitals among other DOH, LGU, and private hospitals in the country, it does not inform policymakers, by how much, if any, this total number of facilities is short from ideal. Similarly, we would like to know whether the COVID-19 dedicated beds, which currently constitute 20% of total authorized bed capacity in the country, is adequate or not.
- By this time, we hope that the government has an overall estimate on the number of workers affected by the pandemic. This will be the basis of comparing the physical accomplishments under programs such as TUPAD or Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers and COVID-19 Adjustment Measures Program (CAMP) implemented by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

On Assistance to SUCs

- 5. We would also like to reiterate our request to the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to immediately release the appropriate guidelines on the use of Php 3 billion fund under the Bayanihan 2 to assist State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in the development of smart campuses through investments in ICT infrastructure, acquisition of learning management systems, and other appropriate equipment to fully implement flexible learning modalities.**

There is still news that it remains difficult for students and teachers to continue with their flexible learning so we need to expedite the issuance of these rules and regulations.