


SENATE

'19 SEP 19 A11 :21

P.S. Res. No. 140

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by **SENATOR LEILA M. DE LIMA**

**RESOLUTION**  
**DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE, WELFARE AND**  
**RURAL DEVELOPMENT TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF**  
**LEGISLATION, INTO THE STATE OF SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMS**  
**ADDRESSING THE PREVALENCE OF STREET CHILDREN AND STREET**  
**FAMILIES AROUND THE COUNTRY WITH THE END IN VIEW OF**  
**PROTECTING THE BASIC RIGHTS OF THESE CHILDREN AND**  
**PROVIDING LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS TO THEIR SITUATION**

1 WHEREAS, Article II, Section 13 of the Constitution states that "[t]he State  
2 recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote and protect  
3 their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being. It shall inculcate in  
4 the youth patriotism and nationalism, and encourage their involvement in public and  
5 civic affairs";

6 WHEREAS, Article XV, Section 3 (2) of the same states that "[t]he State shall  
7 defend the right of children to assistance, including proper care and nutrition, and  
8 special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation and other  
9 conditions prejudicial to their development";

10 WHEREAS, in 1990, the Philippines became a state-party to the UN  
11 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC);

12 WHEREAS, under the said Convention, the Philippines undertakes to  
13 implement all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the  
14 implementation of the rights recognized therein;

15 WHEREAS, the Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by the United  
16 Nations, aims to reduce ,by 2030, at least by half the proportion of men, women and

1 children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions<sup>1</sup>, end hunger and ensure  
2 access by all people – in particular, the poor and people in vulnerable situations,  
3 including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round<sup>2</sup> – and end  
4 abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of  
5 children;<sup>3</sup>

6 WHEREAS, the decades-long problem of Filipino children living on the streets  
7 persists until now. “Street children” are forced to call cold pavements their home, with  
8 only the flickering light from lampposts that guide their every footstep. Poverty, the  
9 disease that cripples these children’s families’ ability to meet even the most basic of  
10 needs, is the very reason why they are compelled to endure the pain of scorching heat  
11 and the cold that comes with rains. Poverty not only represents the shackles that bind  
12 these children and their families to destitution, it also places stresses on families that  
13 may induce or exacerbate other problems such as substance abuse, family break-up,  
14 child abuse and domestic violence;<sup>4</sup>

15 WHEREAS, the term “street children” has been defined as those “spending a  
16 large percentage of their time living, working or playing on the street. For these  
17 children the street is their playground, workplace and sometimes their home”;<sup>5</sup>

18 WHEREAS, the Consortium for Street Children, a global network that seeks to  
19 protect the rights of street children, revealed that street children are exposed to a wide  
20 range of risks, such as the probability of suffering domestic violence, possible  
21 recruitment into gangs, addiction to illegal drugs and exposure to mental health issues,  
22 among others, making them one of the vulnerable sectors;<sup>6</sup>

23 WHEREAS, despite the efforts of both the government and non-government  
24 organizations to address the alarming rise in numbers of street children, the  
25 Department of Social Welfare and Development reported that there are approximately

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<sup>1</sup> SDG Goal 1 target 1.2

<sup>2</sup> SDG Goal 2, target 2.1

<sup>3</sup> SDG Goal 16, target 16.2

<sup>4</sup> Bahay Tuluyan & UNICEF. (2008) *Sagip or Huli?: Rescue of Street Children in Caloocan, Manila, Pasay and Quezon City* pgs. 23-24

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>6</sup> Consortium for Street Children. *Street children are one of the most vulnerable children on the planet*. Retrieved from: <https://www.streetchildren.org/about-street-children/>



1 250,000 street children in the Philippines<sup>7</sup>. Other reports even reveal that their  
2 number can be as high as one million<sup>8</sup>. Notably, their number has been on an  
3 increasing trend in recent years, and creating a pressing need to generate an up-to-  
4 date overview of the situation of street children to avert the effects of inadequate data  
5 to the government's strategy that seek to address their situation and problems;

6 WHEREAS, the UN General Comment on Children in Street Situations,  
7 published by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, enjoined states around the  
8 world to adopt holistic and long-term strategies and make the necessary budget  
9 allocations for children in street situations. The same likewise mandates that children  
10 in street situations should participate in developing and implementing strategies how  
11 best to uphold their rights and address their situation;<sup>9</sup>

12 WHEREAS, in a survey conducted by KidsRights Foundation, an Amsterdam-  
13 based organization advocating children's rights issues, the Philippines ranked 73rd out  
14 of the 163 countries surveyed in promoting and observing children's rights. However,  
15 they noted that vulnerable and marginalized children, including refugee children,  
16 disabled children and street children, are still widely discriminated in countries  
17 around the world;<sup>10</sup>

18 WHEREAS, considering the current policy and strategy of the government  
19 against crime and illegal drugs, Human Rights Watch reported that street children are  
20 also listed among the victims of this violent and extrajudicial approach<sup>11</sup> putting them  
21 at greater risk of discrimination or even human rights violations;

22 WHEREAS, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) launched a  
23 project named "Sagip Batang Solvent project" aimed to rescue minors in the streets  
24 abusing solvents such as rugby, in pursuit of the Duterte administration's campaign

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<sup>7</sup> *Protect street children and uphold their rights – DSWD*. Department of Social Welfare and Development (2018 April 18) <https://www.dswd.gov.ph/protect-street-children-and-uphold-their-rights-dswd/>

<sup>8</sup> Agence Francaise De Developpement. *A BREATH OF HOPE FOR STREET CHILDREN IN THE PHILIPPINES* (6 November 2018). Retrieved from: <https://www.afd.fr/en/breath-hope-street-children-philippines>

<sup>9</sup> UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. *Committee on the Rights of the Child General comment No. 21- National strategy overview (2017) on children in street situations* (21 June 2017)

<sup>10</sup> Passion, P. *PH ranks high in global report on children's rights* PH ranks high in global report on children's rights. Rappler (16 June 2016) Retrieved from: <https://www.rappler.com/nation/136641-ph-ranks-high-children-rights-kidsrights>

<sup>11</sup> Siagan, C. *Saving street kids in Duterte's Philippines*. New Mandala (7 July 2016) Retrieved from: <https://www.newmandala.org/saving-street-kids-dutertes-philippines/>

1 against illegal drugs<sup>12</sup>. However, a recent operation of the City of Manila to implement  
2 a curfew policy among minors revealed that many street children were doing solvent  
3 abuse<sup>13</sup>. This shows one of the prevailing problems of street children and lack of  
4 effectivity of the government's intervention;


5 WHEREAS, as we enter the Christmas season, there is an anticipated increase  
6 in homeless kids or street children and those belonging to Indigenous Peoples with  
7 their children in metro centers such as the National Capital Region, – a recurring case  
8 which the government must proactively address;<sup>14</sup>

9 WHEREAS, amid several efforts of government, including rescue operations  
10 and round-up activities, the need for long-term interventions of the national and local  
11 governments through sustainable social welfare programs must be implemented to  
12 solve the crisis and address the alarming situation faced by street children, who are  
13 deprived of a better and promising future;

14 WHEREAS, it is imperative to look into the state of social welfare interventions,  
15 the residential, center-based and community-based programs, and the long-term plan  
16 of government for street children and their families which demand review and careful  
17 consideration;

18 **NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY**  
19 **RESOLVED**, to direct the Senate Committee on Social Justice, Welfare and Rural  
20 Development to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, into the state of social welfare  
21 programs addressing the prevalence of street children and street families around the  
22 country, with the end in view of protecting the basic rights of these children and  
23 providing long-term solutions to their situation.

*Adopted,*

  
DEILA M. DE LIMA

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<sup>12</sup> Talambong, R. 'Sagip Batang Solvent': PDEA wants to take in street children for rehab. Rappler (10 July 2018)  
Retrieved from: [rappler.com/nation/206916-pdea-plans-rehabilitation-for-street-children](https://www.rappler.com/nation/206916-pdea-plans-rehabilitation-for-street-children)

<sup>13</sup> Talambong, R. *Hundreds of Manila minors taken into custody for staying out past curfew*. Rappler (3  
September 2019) Retrieved from: <https://www.rappler.com/nation/239213-minors-taken-into-custody-streets-curfew-full-blast-manila-september-2019>

<sup>14</sup> DSWD to 'rescue' homeless kids, IPs begging in streets during holidays. Rappler (15 December 2018)  
Retrieved from: <https://www.rappler.com/nation/218959-dswd-rescue-street-children-indigenous-peoples-begging-holidays>