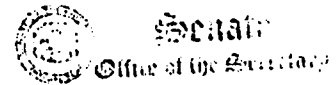


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE )  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
Second Regular Session )



SENATE  
S. No. 1792

20 AUG 26 P12:19

Introduced by Senator Francis "Toi" N. Tolentino

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**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 corona virus disease (COVID-19) continues to rage across the globe with a total of 23, 243, 621 cases worldwide and 805, 740 mortalities since the beginning of the outbreak in December 2019. In the Philippines, as of 23 August 2020, the total confirmed COVID-19 cases have reached 189,601 with a death toll of 2,998. Despite the five-month quarantine restrictions in place in different parts of the country since March this year, community transmissions remain high with new cases exceeding 3,000 daily from 30 July to 22 August. The continuing increase of confirmed daily cases only highlights the pressing need to carry out a whole of society approach to stem the spread of the contagion, considering, especially, that vaccine trials are yet to reach commercial production—and even then, vaccination does not provide fail-safe protection.

It must be noted that under Article II, Sec 15 of the 1987 Constitution, the State is mandated to "*protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.*" In the same vein, as outlined in Article XIII, Sec 11 of the Constitution, it is also the policy of the State to "*adopt an*

*integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall endeavor to make essential goods, health and other social services available to all the people at affordable cost. There shall be priority for the needs of the underprivileged, sick, elderly, disabled, women, and children. The State shall endeavor to provide free medical care to paupers.*" Yet, against the backdrop of the current global pandemic that has claimed lives and upturned economies, the capacity of our government is being stretched to the limit. Without a clear and comprehensive framework that outlines not only health protocols but also governance measures and private sector participation, the containment of the disease as well as sustainable recovery remains jeopardized, especially for Third World countries like the Philippines.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank has expressed that "returning to business-as-usual is no longer an option" and that governments must "build back better" following the COVID-19 Crisis, underscoring that this opportunity must be seized to, "reshape how we live and to build a world that is greener, smarter and fairer," for a sustainable recovery. The World Bank has also called for a renewed and urgent focus on specific public health actions as the first step and the inclusion of disease surveillance, laboratories and diagnosis, health information systems, communications about changing behaviors, engagement of communities in every country's agenda. This only highlights the pressing concern for a paradigm shift in how governments approach sustainability goals and how such goals are intricately connected to capacity building and crisis management in the long run.

Now therefore, in order to give effect to the Constitutional mandates and to address the changing health and economic landscape, this bill aims to provide the creation of protocols and standards that take into account the new normal paradigm brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, to wit:

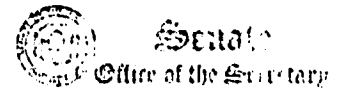
- a) Obligatory health and safety protocols on social distancing, frequent hand-washing and use of facial masks and face shields in public;
- b) Digitalization of the economy;
- c) Restoration of livelihood opportunities and assistance to the poor and marginalized;

- d) Priority to the health, well-being and safety of the education sector;
- e) Universal broadband access for all;
- f) Adoption of flexible working schedules in private commercial and industrial business;
- g) Guidelines on the conduct of business of government institutions during the pandemic;
- h) Empowerment of LGUs in handling pandemics and emergencies; and
- i) Environmental measures and protocols for greener living.

Considering the foregoing, the immediate enactment of this bill is respectfully requested.



**FRANCIS "TOL" N. TOLENTINO**



SENATE  
S. No. 1792

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Introduced by Senator Francis "Tol" N. Tolentino

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**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**

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

1  
2 SECTION 1. Title. - This Act shall be known as the "Better Normal for Sustainable  
3 Recovery Act of 2020".  
4

5 SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is the policy of the State to protect and promote the  
6 right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them. The State shall also  
7 protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with  
8 the rhythm and harmony of nature. Towards this end, the State, in order to help save lives as  
9 well as jumpstart the economy, shall:  
10

- 11 a) Adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to public health and environmental  
12 policies and regulations during a pandemic, thus, ensuring the overall well-being of  
13 individuals, communities, industrial and natural ecosystems. Consideration shall be  
14 paid to valuing the services provided by ecosystems and biodiversity in generating the  
15 direction and prescriptions for a better normal and in assessing their success;  
16  
17 b) Institute appropriate public health, safety, and security measures to contain the  
18 transmission of the corona virus disease-19 (COVID-19) or similar diseases that may  
19 result in a pandemic;  
20  
21 c) Regulate, institute, and establish standards and protocols that would simultaneously  
22 protect the vulnerable from COVID-19 or similar diseases that may result in a pandemic  
23 and prevent its transmission;  
24

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

20 In adopting the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach and recognizing  
21 the need for innovation and more forward-thinking systems and approaches, the State shall  
22 give priority to the needs of the underprivileged, sick, elderly, persons with disability,  
23 indigenous peoples, women and children.  
24

25 **SEC. 3. Objectives. - This Act shall have the following objectives:**  
26

- 27 a) Define and allocate roles, responsibilities, and obligations across key sectors of the  
28 society that shall be heavily involved in the implementation of specific and applicable  
29 measures, namely, the national government and its instrumentalities, local  
30 government, private sector, and individual Filipino citizens;  
31  
32 b) Identify standards and protocols in the management of physical spaces, both publicly-  
33 owned and -managed, or privately-owned but are designated communal spaces, and  
34 prescribe the allowed and prohibited activities therein as well as behaviors expected  
35 and required of the citizens while utilizing such physical spaces;  
36  
37 c) Facilitate the development of the necessary systems and infrastructure and the  
38 enhancement of existing ones so as to ensure that the ICT needs of the better normal  
39 are accessible to all, making it possible for people and organizations to practice  
40 appropriate behavior and decisions as well as for relevant government agencies to  
41 implement relevant, effective, and timely information dissemination;  
42  
43 d) Establish systems of accountability for failure to comply with the obligations and  
44 expectations prescribed under this Act;  
45

- 1 e) Provide inclusive operational parameters, guidelines, and recommendations for a  
2 better way of life until such time that the threat of COVID-19 virus and other similar  
3 diseases that caused the occurrence of a pandemic is effectively contained;  
4  
5 f) Mitigate, if not contain, the transmission of the virus and undertake measures to  
6 prevent the overburdening of the public healthcare system;  
7  
8 g) Continue health promotion and behavior-enhancing measures in all levels of  
9 government and the private sector; and,  
10  
11 h) Accelerate transformational change to restore the balance between human, socio-  
12 economic and natural ecosystems, and reduce risk and vulnerability to future crises  
13 caused by climate change, natural hazards and man-made disasters.  
14

15 SEC. 4. Scope of the Act. - This Act shall provide the strategies and measures that  
16 shall be implemented so that economic and social activities can proceed in a manner that  
17 ensures public health, safety, and security during an epidemic or pandemic, and until such  
18 time that the same and its immediate impacts are declared eradicated by the authorized  
19 National Government agency or agencies of the government.  
20

21 The organization, operation, and activities in workplaces, communities, and public  
22 spaces shall be governed by the provisions of this Act.  
23

24 SEC. 5. Definition of Terms. - As used in this Act:  
25

26 a) *Agro-ecology* refers to the application of ecological and social principles in the  
27 formulation and implementation of policies and programs on food and agricultural systems,  
28 to maximize the benefits from the synergy between plants, animals, humans and the  
29 environment to achieve a resilient and sustainable food supply system;  
30

31 b) *Better normal*, in the context of recovery from an epidemic or pandemic, refers  
32 to transformative behaviors and interventions informed by science, that address the  
33 underlying vulnerabilities of people and communities that the epidemic or pandemic has  
34 highlighted and fosters a just and equitable transition to a climate-resilient, inclusive and  
35 sustainable future;  
36

37 c) *Better Normal Workforce and Workplace Management Plan*, herein referred to  
38 as the Management Plan, refers to the management plan of all public and private sector  
39 entities that conforms to the prescribed measures and protocols under this Act to mitigate the  
40 spread of the COVID-19 virus and other kinds of viruses that may be transmitted through  
41 contact in the workplace;  
42

43 d) *Circular Economy Strategies* refer to measures that place value on products  
44 and materials, maintaining their use for as long as possible, thus minimizing wastage and  
45 resource use, and keeping resources within the economy when a product has reached the end

1 of its life, to be used again and again to create further value;

2  
3 e) *Culture Mapping* refers to the approach used to identify, record, and use natural  
4 and cultural resources and activities for building communities. It is a set of activities and  
5 processes for exploring, discovering, documenting, examining, analyzing, interpreting,  
6 presenting and sharing of information related to people, communities, societies, places, built  
7 and natural heritage, material products and practices associated with them;

8  
9 f) *Government-managed public spaces* refer to a government or public property  
10 used by the public under zoning or similar regulatory arrangements, and other spaces used  
11 as National Government offices, offices of LGUs, public zoos, public libraries, roads, streets,  
12 avenues, alleys, public markets, parks, plazas, covered courts, promenades, gymnasiums,  
13 arenas, amusement and recreation centers, among others, that are publicly managed or  
14 owned by the government;

15  
16 g) *Pandemic* refers to an outbreak of a disease that occurs over a wide geographic  
17 area and affects an exceptionally high proportion of the population;

18  
19 h) *Poor* refers to individuals or families whose income falls below the poverty  
20 threshold as defined by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and/or  
21 who cannot afford in a sustained manner to provide then' minimum basic needs of food,  
22 health, education, housing, or other essential amenities of life, as defined under Republic Act  
23 No. 8425, otherwise known as the "Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act". In determining  
24 who constitute the poor, the Multidimensional Poverty Index determined by the Philippine  
25 Statistics Authority (PSA) shall be considered;

26  
27 i) *Privately-managed public spaces* refer to spaces within the perimeter or premises  
28 of a privately-owned real estate or property used by the public under zoning or similar  
29 regulatory arrangements, which include, among others, shopping malls, hotels, open spaces  
30 and common areas in subdivisions and condominiums;

31  
32 j) *Privately organized gatherings* refer to those planned or spontaneous human,  
33 political, social, cultural, economic, religious and sports gatherings such as concerts, events,  
34 celebrations, parties, team-buildings, seminars, conferences, trainings, conventions, religious  
35 mass and sacraments, retreats, funerals, electoral campaigns, inductions, ceremonies, film  
36 show makings, television shows, sports, and other related forms of recreations.

37  
38 k) Profiling refers to the process of discovering core relations between data and  
39 databases that can be used to identify and represent a subject individual or a group of  
40 individuals;

41  
42 l) Public spaces refer to streets, alleys, public parks, protected areas, museums,  
43 cultural and heritage spaces, schools, buildings, malls, restaurants, transportation terminals,  
44 public markets, areas used as evacuation centers, government offices, public utility vehicles  
45 as well as private vehicles covered by application-based transport network services, and other

1 recreational or leisure places such as cinema halls, theaters, cockpits, and spas;

2  
3 l) Workplace refers to a place where work is carried out for a business or  
4 undertaking and includes any place where a worker goes, or is likely to be, while carrying out  
5 a work-related task; and,

6  
7 m) Zoonotic Disease refers to a disease that can be transmitted from animals to  
8 people.

9  
10 SEC. 6. Standards for Better Normal. — In order to stem the transmission of COVID-  
11 19 and other infectious diseases, and protect the people from such diseases, the following  
12 standards for the better normal shall be observed:

13  
14 A. Universal and Mandatory Health and Safety Measures

- 15  
16 1) Basic personal hygiene shall be strictly observed by the general public. Massive health  
17 information drive shall be conducted by the Department of Health (DOH) and LGUs up  
18 to the community level, in cooperation with the private sector, on COVID-19 to instill  
19 public awareness on the risks of infection and possible reinfection of the disease;  
20  
21 2) The general public shall wear face masks, earloop masks, indigenous, reusable or do-  
22 it-yourself masks, face shields, handkerchiefs, or such other protective material or  
23 equipment that effectively lessen the transmission of the COVID-19 virus whenever  
24 they are in workplace, public places, and communities: *Provided*, That the government  
25 shall implement the free distribution of masks to poor : *Provided further*, That the  
26 government shall allocate funds to ensure free provision of personal protective  
27 equipment and other medical commodities to COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 patients in  
28 both public and private hospitals: *Provided*, finally, That the government shall integrate  
29 circular economy strategies in the procurement of materials or development of  
30 mechanisms for hygiene and sanitation;  
31  
32 3) Hand washing facilities or sanitizing stations shall be established and maintained by the  
33 owners, managers, or administrators of public spaces, workplaces and other places  
34 frequented by the public;  
35  
36 4) Physical distancing measured at least one (1) meter between individuals shall be strictly  
37 observed whenever in public spaces and in the workplace;  
38  
39 5) Temperature reading of persons by the owners, managers, or administrators of  
40 workplaces and in all enclosed and semi-enclosed, areas where two or more people  
41 shall gather;  
42  
43 6) The DOH, in coordination with other government agencies and the private sector, shall  
44 conduct an information and educational campaign utilizing traditional and online media  
45 to disseminate relevant medical and health information, provide updates on local cases



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

8 7) Local chief executives of LGUs which are considered as containment zones or critical  
9 zones for the transmission of COVID-19 shall establish testing centers and procure  
10 COVID-19 testing kits, personal protective equipment, and such other necessary  
11 equipment and supplies to be used for the conduct of mass-testing of the population  
12 in their respective jurisdictions, including the establishment of drive-through testing  
13 centers, and other contactless modes of testing for the detection of the COVID-19 or  
14 other infectious disease. *Provided*, that the National Government shall render aid and  
15 assistance to LGUs with limited financial capacity;  
16

17 8) There shall be nationwide testing drives to prepare for any future waves of infection  
18 surges or any other epidemic. The minimum rate of testing shall be one percent (1%)  
19 of the population of the province or city, in the case of independent cities, and shall  
20 target to finish testing residents within ten (10) days;  
21

22 9) The DOH, with assistance from LGUs and Department of the Interior and Local  
23 Government (DILG), shall conduct tracing of individuals who have had contact with or  
24 have been exposed to a person who has been confirmed positive for the COVID-19 or  
25 similar infectious diseases. The DOH shall also conduct contact tracing and mandatory  
26 testing for individuals suspected of or probably afflicted with the disease to ensure  
27 prompt containment of the disease. *Provided*, That the cost of the mandatory testing  
28 shall be covered by the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (Philhealth);  
29

30 10) The DOH shall set a unified common price for the reverse transcription polymerase  
31 chain reaction (RT-PCR) test for COVID-19 being conducted by both public and private  
32 hospitals and testing centers to ensure affordability and to expand the general public's  
33 access to testing services;  
34

35 11) The DOH shall establish and manage government-operated and -maintained quarantine  
36 facilities for individuals who are suspected of being infected or have tested positive for  
37 COVID-19 or other infectious diseases and who, pursuant to the guidelines formulated  
38 by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) for the Management of Emerging Infectious  
39 Diseases and/or as prescribed under DOH regulations, should undergo mandatory  
40 quarantine, including those who are not able to observe quarantine protocols in their  
41 respective places of residences;  
42

43 12) Local chief executives of LGUs shall continuously implement existing measures,  
44 including quarantine measures, in dealing with residents or any other individual in the  
45 locality manifesting COVID-19 symptoms, or who has been classified as a suspect,

1 probable, or a confirmed case of COVID-19 infection by authorized testing or medical  
2 facilities. *Provided*, That local chief executives may order the lockdown or temporary  
3 closure of public and private buildings and establishments with COVID-19 infections;  
4

5 13) The National Government shall establish and implement infection prevention and  
6 control protocol, biosafety and waste management measures of health-care wastes  
7 coming from hospitals and quarantine facilities. *Provided*, further, That the LGUs shall  
8 identify households of individuals suspected of being infected or have tested positive  
9 for COVID-19 who are undergoing mandatory quarantine in their respective place of  
10 residences and ensure the proper disposal of their health-care wastes in accordance  
11 with the aforementioned infection prevention and control protocol, biosafety and waste  
12 management measures;  
13

14 14) Local chief executives of LGUs shall continuously monitor the level of transmission  
15 among residents in their jurisdiction; *Provided*, That the standards under Republic Act  
16 (RA) No. 10173, also known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012, as well as legal and ethical  
17 standards, and existing DOH guidelines are observed and complied with;  
18

19 15) The National Government shall recognize the vulnerabilities of certain sectors of the  
20 population such as the elderly, pregnant, children and persons deprived of liberty, and  
21 shall provide safeguards and assistance to them, including access to mental and  
22 psychological health services; and  
23

24 16) Government offices and the owners, managers, or administrators of workplaces and  
25 other places frequented by the public shall implement regular cleaning and disinfection  
26 of transport conveyances, terminals and similar facilities including elevators and  
27 escalators, particularly frequently touched surfaces thereat;  
28

## 29 **B. Management of Spaces**

30

31 1) Public gatherings are prohibited subject to the people's right to free exercise of  
32 religion, freedom of expression, petition the government for a redress of grievances,  
33 and other exceptions as may be provided under the implementing rules and regulations  
34 (IRR) of this Act: *Provided*, that the exercise of the aforementioned rights shall be  
35 subject to the health protocols of the DOH and/or the IATF to prevent the further  
36 spread of infection;  
37

38 2) LGUs shall regulate public gatherings as well as the flow of people in government-  
39 managed public spaces, subject to the guidelines set in the IRR of this Act that will  
40 provide the limitations on such public gathering in order to prevent disease  
41 transmission: *Provided*, That activities of agencies of the National Government or their  
42 provincial or regional offices involved in the delivery of services or distribution of all  
43 forms of public assistance or the facilitation thereof shall in no way be impeded nor be  
44 required a permit from any government authority: *Provided*, further, That gatherings  
45 under this category shall observe the Universal and Mandatory Safety Measures

1 enumerated in paragraph (A) of this Section: Provided, furthermore, That LGUs, in  
2 consultation with the private sector stakeholders, shall provide the national, regional,  
3 and provincial agencies and their attached offices the necessary assistance to carry  
4 out their activities requiring the presence or participation of a significant number of  
5 the population: Provided, finally, That exceptions to these prohibitions, intended for  
6 public purpose or interest, shall be supplemented by the IRR of this Act;  
7

8 3) Privately-organized gatherings in privately-managed spaces shall comply with the  
9 Universal and Mandatory Safety Measures prescribed under this Act, the guidelines set  
10 forth in the IRR of this Act, as well as minimum health standards, safety protocols and  
11 best practices prepared by the private sector as approved or accredited by the  
12 appropriate implementing agencies: Provided, That such guidelines shall consider the  
13 nature of the gathering, number of expected attendees, size of the venue, and other  
14 reasonable parameters that will ensure compliance with physical distancing and other  
15 measures to prevent transmission of the virus;  
16

17 4) Land use planning and zoning shall be strictly observed in the implementation of this  
18 Act; and, Management of spaces shall likewise include the establishment of urban  
19 gardens, and green spaces not only for people to enjoy a clean and healthy  
20 environment, but also to enable them to grow their own sources of food and nutrition.  
21

## 22 **C. Management of Public Transportation**

23  
24 1) The appropriate government agencies shall monitor the implementation of the  
25 Universal and Mandatory Safety Measures in the management of public transportation  
26 terminals and facilities, including queuing or ticketing lines, ticketing offices, as well as  
27 the interiors of public utility vehicles, mass transportations, and private vehicles  
28 covered by application-based transportation network services, and by their respective  
29 drivers, conductors and passengers; Provided, That the government shall shoulder the  
30 costs of mandatory COVID-19 testing in the public transportation sector; Provided,  
31 further, That drivers and conductors of public utility vehicles shall be subjected to  
32 mandatory testing twice a month to ensure the safety of the public. *Provided*, finally,  
33 That the cost of the mandatory testing shall be covered by (Philhealth);  
34

35 2) The operation of motorcycle taxis shall remain suspended to prevent the spread of the  
36 virus through shared helmets and close physical contact between passengers and  
37 drivers, unless otherwise determined as safe by the appropriate authorities;  
38

39 3) Passengers in all types of public transportation vehicles shall be required to sanitize  
40 their hands prior to boarding the vehicle, shall be seated a seat apart and wear face  
41 masks and face shields while inside the vehicle;  
42

43 4) Contact-less payment mechanisms shall be promoted such as the use of money trays,  
44 Quick Response (QR) code payment, and automatic fare collection systems to minimize  
45 the risk of transmission of the COVID-19 virus;

- 1  
2 5) Agencies and authorities tasked to manage transport hubs such as airports, ports,  
3 harbors, and similar facilities shall coordinate with the concerned LGUs in the  
4 implementation of the Universal and Mandatory Safety Measures herein provided and  
5 shall consider the following special measures:  
6 a) Establishment of public health corridors in airports and ports;  
7 b) Mandatory body temperature reading for all arriving and departing passengers;  
8 c) Mandatory quarantine at home or in a government quarantine facility for all  
9 arriving passengers;  
10 d) Mandatory collection of data for the maintenance of a database of information  
11 for contact-tracing purposes only;  
12 e) Thorough sanitizing and disinfection of all arriving and departing vessels;  
13 f) Mandatory regular testing of all employees, personnel, staff, and crew attached  
14 to vessels and those who have assisted passengers; and  
15 g) Mandatory conduct of rapid testing for arriving and departing passengers.  
16  
17 6) The Department of Transportation (DOTr) shall craft and implement programs that will  
18 help modes of public transport, such as jeepneys and public buses, to transition to  
19 better normal in consideration of the health and safety protocols without requiring  
20 them to commit to the government's public utility vehicle (PUV) modernization  
21 program. The agency shall also ensure the smooth operation of different modes of  
22 public and mass transport while upholding existing health and safety protocols;  
23  
24 7) National Government authorities in coordination with the stakeholders of the transport  
25 sector shall establish dedicated lanes along roads, avenues, highways, and other  
26 transport infrastructure networks to give priority to healthcare, emergency, peace and  
27 order, and supply-chain vehicles transporting individuals, goods, equipment, or those  
28 used in the pursuit of services deemed essential and critical: Provided, That pursuant  
29 to the provisions of Section 21 (d) of RA No. 8749, otherwise known as the Clean Air  
30 Act, the DOTr shall ensure that vehicles strictly comply with current emission  
31 standards; and  
32  
33 8) To promote safe physical distancing and sustainable mobility, LGUs and appropriate  
34 government development authorities having jurisdiction over roadways or highways,  
35 in coordination with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), and the  
36 Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) in the case of the National Capital Region  
37 (NCR), shall immediately create green lanes which are dedicated, protected and  
38 interconnected lanes for personal mobility devices such as bicycles, e-bicycles,  
39 scooters, and similar micromobile devices: Provided, That personal mobility users shall  
40 observe safe physical distancing and speeds prescribed by the LGUs or relevant  
41 regional development agencies. Bicycle racks and secure bicycle parking sheds and  
42 spaces shall be established in government offices, hospitals, public schools and higher  
43 education institutions (HEIs), and other facilities. Changing and rooms shall be  
44 promoted as well by public facility managers to encourage more bicycle and  
45 micromobile commuting: Provided, further, That the DOTr, DPWH and LGUs shall

1 ensure that these dedicated and interconnected lanes for bicycles and micromobile  
2 devices are included in current and future road projects.  
3  
4

#### 5 **D. Better Normal for Schools and Education Institutions** 6

- 7 1) To give priority to the health, well-being and safety of the education sector, the  
8 Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED)  
9 are authorized to determine the start of the academic year 2020 to 2021 for all public  
10 and private schools, state universities and colleges (SUCs), local universities and  
11 colleges (LUCs), private colleges and universities, and other learning institutions.  
12 *Provided, That* local chief executives may postpone the start of the academic school  
13 calendar or temporarily suspend classes in their jurisdictions if COVID-19 transmissions  
14 remain high;  
15
- 16 2) All public and private education institutions including private and public universities  
17 and colleges shall formulate, develop and adopt a flexible learning approach which is  
18 designed to meet students' needs, taking into account the special needs of students  
19 with disabilities, capabilities of faculty members and conditions on the ground,  
20 ensuring accessibility and inclusivity and without prejudice to the adoption of measures  
21 for online learning. The DepEd shall also develop a long-term national distance learning  
22 framework that would address educational access concerns post-pandemic and in the  
23 eventuality of future emergencies;  
24
- 25 3) The DepEd shall develop, implement and promote a flexible learning program for K-  
26 12 students in all public and private schools, taking into consideration the capability of  
27 the school and its teachers in delivering such program, and the accessibility of learning  
28 materials, either physical or electronic, to the students. The DepEd shall train all public  
29 school teachers in the conduct of distance learning or blended learning. Training  
30 programs may be open for private school teachers whenever applicable.  
31
- 32 4) The flexible learning program shall be geared towards limiting physical contact among  
33 the school population and minimizing the impact on the potential for learning and  
34 instruction between learners and teachers and upgrading or improving the quality of  
35 electronic and digital content to be made available in cases where online or distance  
36 learning modalities are pursued: *Provided, That* students shall not be penalized for  
37 their inability to access and participate in electronic or digital means of learning due to  
38 limitations in connectivity, unavailability of equipment or other circumstances caused  
39 by the COVID-19 pandemic: *Provided, further, That* television (TV) and radio programs  
40 done in partnership between DepEd, National Council for Children Television, National  
41 Commission for Culture and the Arts and its attached agencies, Film Development  
42 Council of the Philippines, Philippine Sports Commission, Early Childhood Community .  
43 Development Center, higher education institutions (HEIs) and pertinent cooperatives  
44 and organizations, and with the assistance of licensed TV and radio broadcast stations  
45 shall serve as alternative platforms for learning;

- 1  
2 5) The CHED shall monitor the implementation of flexible learning programs for all HEIs,  
3 SUCs and LCUs. HEIs shall continue to exercise academic freedom and levels of  
4 autonomy in the governance of their own academic affairs: Provided, That students  
5 shall not be penalized for their inability to access or participate in electronic or digital  
6 means of learning due to limitations in connectivity or unavailability of equipment.  
7 Provided further, That all HEIs, SUCs and LCUs are encouraged to review and relax  
8 student residency requirements to accommodate students who fail to enroll or finish  
9 their courses within the prescribed time frame by reason of the pandemic or  
10 emergency;  
11  
12 6) The National Government shall allocate funding for the research, training of faculty,  
13 curriculum development, monitoring and evaluating, benchmarking, and the  
14 development of systems for learning continuity during times of crisis such as the  
15 occurrence of a pandemic. Such funding shall be made available by the National  
16 Government, from the existing budgetary allocation for the K-12 and other similar  
17 programs, and made available to HEIs, including those organized as stock corporations,  
18 local research institutes, academic organizations, LGUs, school boards, and individual  
19 researchers through an application process to be prescribed by the DepEd and the  
20 CHED: Provided, That for the benefit of learners who have hearing impairment, the  
21 full participation of deaf linguistics organizations and deaf cooperatives shall be  
22 required in the development of learning materials;  
23  
24 7) The DepEd shall create a connectivity mapping of schools in the country, which shall  
25 be updated every year or oftener, to aid in the formulation of distance learning or  
26 blended learning programs;  
27  
28 8) Subject to consultation with the DepEd, CHED, and the Technical Education and Skills  
29 Development Authority (TESDA), all face-to-face classes and group school activities,  
30 including sports, athletics, cultural, and academic meets, exhibitions, competitions as  
31 well as extra-curricular field or exposure trips and student exchanges shall remain  
32 suspended unless otherwise officially declared permissible by competent authorities  
33 without prejudice to the academic freedom and levels of autonomy enjoyed by HEIs in  
34 the management and conduct of their academic affairs;  
35  
36 9) Digital and broadcast learning shall be promoted by the National Government in  
37 coordination with telecommunications and broadcasting companies, private sector  
38 content providers and stakeholders, and internet service providers;  
39  
40 10) Public and private education institutions including private colleges and universities and  
41 other accredited learning and training institutions shall prioritize the establishment of  
42 online platforms for the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Mandatory  
43 Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) programs; and  
44  
45 11) Subject to existing rules and regulations, meaningful inclusion and effective

1 participation of students and the learning community must be ensured in all aspects  
2 of pandemic response and recovery plan in education: Provided, That mechanisms to  
3 uphold autonomy of student councils or governments, and support for uninterrupted  
4 operations of campus press shall be in place.  
5

#### 6 **E. Better Normal for Private Commercial and Industrial Workplaces** 7

- 8 1) The National Government, in coordination with the LGUs, and in partnership with  
9 accredited or duly-recognized organizations that pertain to each sector, shall maintain  
10 databases on all private commercial, industrial, and other businesses operating in their  
11 areas of jurisdiction. The database shall include information such as the number of  
12 employees, working hours, workspace conditions, office floor areas, and other  
13 information necessary to ensure compliance with physical distancing and other  
14 protocols prescribed by this Act to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 or similar  
15 diseases that may result in a pandemic;  
16
- 17 2) All private commercial, industrial, and other forms of businesses shall be required to  
18 submit a Management Plan to the concerned LGU which shall determine the said  
19 business's compliance with the necessary safeguards and the Universal Safety  
20 Measures provided under this Act, as well as industrial safeguards and safety measures  
21 provided for by the implementing agencies: Provided, That the review of all  
22 Management Plans shall be conducted promptly upon submission to allow  
23 establishments to resume operations as soon as possible: Provided further, That the  
24 Management Plan shall integrate circular economy strategies in the procurement of  
25 materials or the development of mechanisms for hygiene and sanitation: Provided,  
26 furthermore, That LGUs are authorized to conduct periodic inspection of private  
27 commercial, industrial and other businesses operating within their territorial  
28 jurisdiction to ensure compliance of these businesses with the Universal and Mandatory  
29 Safety Measures and other standards and protocols prescribed under this Act and its  
30 IRR;  
31
- 32 3) All private commercial, industrial and other businesses shall implement their  
33 Management Plan and shall incorporate alternative work arrangements such as work-  
34 from-home schemes, including rotational work or shifting in schedules, in applicable  
35 industries to lessen by at least fifty percent (60%) the number of employees required  
36 to report to their workplaces physically. For the private sector, the Department of  
37 Labor and Employment (DOLE), in consultation with the private sector, shall  
38 standardize the template for and the required contents of the said Management Plan.  
39 The LGUs shall be in charge of monitoring the implementation of this provision;  
40
- 41 4) All private commercial, industrial and other businesses shall shoulder all expenditures  
42 in complying with the mandates of this Act, and such expenditures shall not in any  
43 way be charged to employees. There shall be no diminution of salaries, wages, benefits  
44 and other remunerations guaranteed by the Labor Code and other relevant laws to  
45 employees by reason of employer's compliance with this Act. Work-from-home

1 employees shall be given a minimum of P1,000.00 monthly allowance to compensate  
2 for the increase in utility consumption; the allowances herein granted by private  
3 employers shall be deductible for income tax purposes.  
4

- 5 5) The relevant provisions of the Labor Code notwithstanding, being late or being absent  
6 for work due to heavy traffic, unavailability of public transport or of shuttle or  
7 transportation service due to reasons related to the implementation of this Act shall  
8 not be a cause for disciplinary action against, or termination of, the employees. Private  
9 commercial and industrial businesses are hereby mandated to adopt a flexible working  
10 schedule in keeping with the policy of maintaining a minimum of eight (8) hour work  
11 per day, or forty-eight (48) hour work per week, which shall be incorporated in their  
12 Management Plans; and  
13
- 14 6) The DOLE shall ensure the conduct of health and safety audits of all workplaces,  
15 including special economic zones, in line with RA No. 11058, otherwise known as "An  
16 Act Strengthening Compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Standards and  
17 providing penalties for violations thereof".  
18

#### 19 **F. Better Normal Governance Measures**

20

- 21 1) Various forms of electronic governance or e-governance mechanisms shall be  
22 established to facilitate continuous and efficient transactions between and among  
23 government agencies, and the private sector, as well as in the delivery of socio-  
24 economic services including the utilization of online payment system, appointment-  
25 based transactions, the Philippine national public key infrastructure, electronic  
26 business permits and licensing systems, electronic procurement system, electronic  
27 management systems for human resources, records, accounting, as well as other ICT-  
28 enabled systems and solutions for effective and efficient e-governance.  
29

30 An internet based electronic payment facility and gateway, such as e-money  
31 and similar platforms, shall be utilized in collecting taxes, fees, tolls, imposts, and other  
32 revenues and in paying for goods, services, and other disbursements. Government  
33 offices and government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs) that are already  
34 partially applying this kind of digitized payment mechanism must improve the current  
35 system used in order to accommodate the increase in the number of transactions. The  
36 government shall establish online payment systems and may partner with payment  
37 solutions providers;  
38

- 39 2) All government agencies shall promptly relay to the public pertinent information on  
40 their operating schedules and accessibility during quarantine restrictions and other  
41 similar eventualities that may lead to limited operations due to utilization of skeletal  
42 workforce. Provided finally, That all government agencies issuing licenses, permits, or  
43 are otherwise performing quasi-judicial functions, or processing transactions with the  
44 general public, shall expeditiously release the corresponding guidelines and  
45 requirements for the availment of services in response to the new normal setting;



- 1
- 2
- 3) Government agencies involved in business registration such as the Department of  
3 Trade and Industry (DTI), Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Cooperative  
4 Development Authority (CDA), Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), Social Security  
5 System (SSS), Home Development Mutual Fund (Pag-Ibig Pag-IBIG Fund), Philippine  
6 Health Insurance Corporation (Philhealth), LGUs, and other permit and license issuing  
7 agencies shall be integrated to facilitate the efficient delivery of business registration-  
8 related services;
- 9
- 10 4) The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas shall accelerate the adoption by all payment service  
11 providers of the National Quick Response (QR) Code standard to hasten the  
12 interoperability of QR-driven payment services and eliminate the need for merchants  
13 and clients to maintain several accounts;
- 14
- 15 5) A government online procurement system that encompasses all procurement  
16 processes involving bidding, contract agreements, and payment for services or  
17 supplies, and which shall contain a tracking and customer service mechanism shall also  
18 be developed; and
- 19
- 20 6) Where applicable, the relevant provisions of RA No. 11032, otherwise known as the  
21 Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018, shall  
22 supplement the provisions of this Act.
- 23

#### 24 **G. Other Aspects of Better Normal**

25

- 26 1) The government shall provide important information related to health emergencies to  
27 persons with disabilities (PWDs) and institutionalize assistive mechanisms for them  
28 such as requiring sign interpretation in TV news broadcasts and live streamed public  
29 information programs and content. In relation thereto, a system of standards for  
30 assistive mechanisms for PWDs shall be planned, financed, implemented, and  
31 monitored. For purposes of this Act, individuals who assist PWDs such as sign language  
32 interpreters shall be recognized as front liners providing essential services;
- 33
- 34 2) The government must likewise provide sufficient support for culture bearers and  
35 masters, and those engaged in craftmaking such as weaving and carving;
- 36
- 37 3) Emergency cash subsidies shall be given to poor artists, cultural workers, freelancers  
38 and the self-employed, such as those working in the audiovisual, entertainment, and  
39 live events sector, and other creative industries such as architecture and allied arts,  
40 dance, dramatic arts, literary arts, music, visual arts, contemporary arts or expressions,  
41 audiovisual and multimedia, and scholars, critics, curators, and cultural workers;
- 42
- 43 4) There shall be a continuous implementation of alternative work arrangements in the  
44 public and private sectors based on the nature of work of an employee, the workplace  
45 and its location or place, and its distance to and from the residences of employees;

- 1
- 2 5) The implementation of RA No. 9003, also known as the Ecological Solid Waste
- 3 Management Act of 2000, in relation to the proper disposal and management of
- 4 healthcare wastes resulting from activities related to the implementation of this Act
- 5 shall be strictly monitored: Provided, That the National Government shall implement
- 6 regulations on the manufacture and importation, use, recycling of all single-use plastics
- 7 used in trade or commerce in business enterprises, as well as by retailers and
- 8 consumers: Provided, further, That the government shall conduct a research and
- 9 develop single-use plastic packaging alternatives and provide incentives to plastic
- 10 industries that will shift to other manufacturing activities;
- 11
- 12 6) Adaptation measures such as the establishment of multi-hazard early warning systems
- 13 that reach out the last mile;
- 14
- 15 7) To prevent the transmission and spread of zoonotic diseases among humans, all
- 16 government agencies and offices and LGUs shall ensure that the protection of
- 17 biological diversity is integrated and mainstreamed into programs and projects;
- 18
- 19 8) The National Government, through relevant government agencies such as the DICT,
- 20 DTI, DILG, in accordance with their respective mandates, and with the support of the
- 21 private sector, shall plan for and undertake universal digitalization as well as promote
- 22 and implement programs and innovations to accelerate public access and connectivity
- 23 including the progressive roll-out of the National Broadband Program and the Free
- 24 Public Internet Access Program down to the barangay level;
- 25
- 26 9) The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), National Disaster Risk Reduction and
- 27 Management Council (NDRRMC), DILG through the Persons with Disabilities Affairs
- 28 Offices (PDAOs), and DOH shall gather, compile, update, and publish online,
- 29 disaggregated demographic and mapping data on deaf and all other persons with
- 30 disabilities nationwide in the context of the pandemic;
- 31
- 32 10) The PSA, DTI, NDRRMC, DOLE, DOH, National Economic Development Authority
- 33 (NEDA) and other relevant agencies shall gather, compile and update disaggregated
- 34 demographic and mapping data on critically impacted businesses, sectors, and
- 35 industries in the context of the pandemic in order to get a better census of the needs
- 36 of the various sectors and industries; and,
- 37
- 38 11) In compliance with Section 10 of RA No. 11106, otherwise known as the Filipino Sign
- 39 Language Act, ensure the continued placement of TV insets in news and public affairs
- 40 programs through video remote interpreting on TV as well as online streaming
- 41 platforms, and promote as well deaf-produced/-signed pandemic and quarantine
- 42 related public information.
- 43

44 SEC. 7. Role of LGUs. - LGUs shall, in their respective territorial jurisdictions, be

45 primarily responsible for instituting localized policies and legislation in accordance with the

1 better normal measures prescribed under Section 6 hereof and other related directives and  
2 issuances of the National Government. Local governments must ensure that their policy-  
3 making process shall involve the participation of all stakeholders. Consultations with the  
4 communities shall be pursued as a matter of course to ensure that such policies respond  
5 properly to the needs of the people. In this regard, the LGUs shall have the following  
6 responsibilities:

- 7
- 8 a) Ensure the proper implementation of the provisions of this Act within their respective  
9 territorial jurisdiction;
  - 10
  - 11 b) Enact the necessary and appropriate ordinance for the local implementation of the  
12 provisions of this Act, including the promotion of low-contact payment mechanisms  
13 such as the use of electronic money (e-money) as a medium of exchange in collecting  
14 taxes, fees, tolls, imposts, and other revenues and in paying for goods, services, and  
15 other disbursements: Provided, That the LGU shall make the necessary arrangements  
16 with the relevant government agencies and government-recognized regulating entities  
17 to acquire e-money payment capability;
  - 18
  - 19 c) Require, by ordinance, merchants or business entities in their localities to obtain and  
20 maintain e-money payment system capability that is accessible by phone or other  
21 access devices, as a prerequisite for the approval of application for or renewal of  
22 business permits. Provided, That merchants or micro, small and medium enterprises  
23 without connectivity or technological capacity shall be exempt from such requirement.
  - 24
  - 25 d) Create a Better Normal Task Force to monitor the compliance of the private businesses  
26 and offices with the provisions of this Act;
  - 27
  - 28 e) Orient the applicant thereof of the guidelines on the management of spaces as  
29 provided in Section 6 (B) of this Act, which shall be observed throughout the entire  
30 gathering;
  - 31
  - 32 f) In cooperation or with the assistance of the Land Transportation Office (LTO), initiate  
33 information campaigns on public transportation schemes in their localities in  
34 accordance with Section 6 (C) of this Act;
  - 35
  - 36 g) Establish the Inter-Local Government Unit Task Force as authorized by and in  
37 accordance with the appropriate guidelines of the DILG;
  - 38
  - 39 h) In coordination with the DICT, foster, support and facilitate the effective roll-out of  
40 free wi-fi access points and other infrastructure needed for the National Broadband  
41 Program. The LGUs shall likewise foster, support, and facilitate the construction of  
42 common towers and other passive telecommunication infrastructure in strategic  
43 locations for the use of telecommunications service providers to propagate connectivity  
44 and provide quality telecommunications services to their constituents in accordance  
45 with existing laws, and the policies and standards set by the DICT;

- 1  
2 i) In coordination with DICT and DSWD, establish an electronic database and electronic  
3 payment system for the delivery of social amelioration programs through microfinance  
4 institutions or virtual wallets, whenever applicable and at the option of the recipient,  
5 to prevent community transmission of the virus.  
6  
7 j) In coordination with DOH, provide immediate assistance to all reported COVID-  
8 confirmed residents and patients;  
9  
10 k) In coordination with the DOH, establish and maintain a functional local epidemiology  
11 and surveillance unit pursuant to RA No. 11332, also known as the Mandatory  
12 Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Health Events of Public Health Concern Act. In  
13 accordance with Section 6(A) of this Act, the LGU shall specify the conduct of contact  
14 tracing systems for suspect, probable, and confirmed COVID-19 cases, or other similar  
15 diseases, to avoid delay in contact tracing and to ensure the prompt management and  
16 containment of the disease. In all cases, the LGU shall ensure that disease surveillance  
17 and contact tracing procedures are in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012;  
18  
19 l) In coordination with the Department of Agriculture (DA), plan and implement a  
20 resilient agro-ecology and local food supply system that: (1) involves a shorter, more  
21 diversified food supply chain that is resilient to future shocks; (2) ensures food access  
22 shall remain at, or swiftly returns to, pre-pandemic levels, (3) mitigates the impact on  
23 vulnerable food systems actors, including small-holder producers, informal traders,  
24 and low-income and marginalized groups, (4) encourages a shift towards good  
25 agricultural and climate-resilient practices, and (5) builds capacity towards family-  
26 farming model to encourage food security. The plan shall promote permaculture and  
27 the establishment of community food gardens, family farms, local food production and  
28 shorter supply chains, the strengthening of urban-rural linkages, and the promotion of  
29 diversity in the food supply chain and channels of distribution as well as ensuring the  
30 integrity of sufficient wild spaces nearby to preserve genetic stocks, revitalize  
31 monoculture areas and ensure water security. The plan shall also promote a resilient  
32 local food supply system by mandating LGUs to procure livestock, fisheries and  
33 agricultural products locally before sourcing from outside the locality;  
34  
35 m) Establish and manage the use of cultural spaces to serve as venues and facilities for  
36 keeping the creativity of the people alive, affording people to exercise their freedom  
37 of expression, enhancing psycho-spiritual health, and providing them opportunities for  
38 meaningful participation in community life, even while observing the universal  
39 mandatory standards and protocols during the time of a pandemic: Provided, That  
40 such cultural space must meet the minimum criteria of facilities or landscapes that are  
41 open to the public: Provided further, That cultural spaces are adaptable, do not  
42 compromise on quality, able to enhance a sense of community, and are inclusive,  
43 accessible and welcoming; and  
44  
45 n) The LGUs, in coordination with the cultural agencies such as the NCCA, National

1 Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) and the National Museum, DepEd,  
2 CHED and SUCs, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR),  
3 Department of Tourism, DPWH, and the DOH, shall conduct a comprehensive cultural  
4 heritage mapping of their areas, with the end in view that the resulting database and  
5 documentation shall aid LGUs in formulating localized policies and programs that will  
6 help prevent the transmission of zoonotic diseases among the people and help protect  
7 their health and well-being; Provided, that the health and safety of the local people in  
8 the said areas shall be prioritized and health protocols shall be strictly complied with;  
9 Provided, further, that persons who shall be involved in the cultural mapping who are  
10 not residents of the indigenous community or locality shall be subjected to mandatory  
11 testing prior thereof; Provided, finally, that the cost of testing shall be borne by the  
12 respective LGUs.

13  
14 An application shall be developed as repository of the data retrieved from  
15 cultural mapping activities.

#### 16 17 SEC. 8. Role of the Private Sector —

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

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

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

33  
34 3) Total number of workers at any given time in the workplace or office on a daily basis;

35  
36 4) Number of workers per area of space and the spacing mechanisms to be implemented in  
37 compliance with physical distancing protocols, if applicable;

38  
39 5) Mechanisms for maintaining personal hygiene and cleanliness among the employees and  
40 in workstations or areas including the availability of handwashing or hand sanitizing  
41 implements;

42  
43 6) Physical changes in space management introduced or to be introduced in the workplaces  
44 to protect employees and to implement physical distancing such as plastic barriers between  
45 customers and personnel or between and among customers or other individuals within the

1 workplace;

2  
3 7) Signages, reminders, and other information, in accessible formats, including infomercial  
4 videos incorporating Filipino sign language, and/or easy-to-understand text in the appropriate  
5 written language, installed or posted in key areas of the workplace to serve as constant  
6 reminders for workers to practice the mandatory health, safety and sanitation practices;

7  
8 8) Mechanisms for maintaining physical distancing in communally shared areas in the  
9 workplace, such as cafeterias, restrooms, conference rooms, prayer rooms, breastfeeding  
10 stations, including safeguards against sharing of tools, implements, utensils, equipment, and  
11 supplies;

12  
13 9) Physical and personal protective equipment shall be provided by businesses to their  
14 respective employees in order to inclusively implement the practices mandated in this Act at  
15 no cost to the employees. Equipment procured for employees under this provision shall be  
16 deductible for income tax purposes;

17  
18 10) Mechanisms for managing employees exhibiting symptoms or confirmed to have tested  
19 positive for COVID-19 or similar diseases that may result in a pandemic, including the company  
20 or business unit's system for contact tracing;

21  
22 11) The Workers' Compensation Plan which provides how workers are required to work and  
23 will be compensated while on quarantine;

24  
25 12) Mechanisms to implement a circular economy in the workplace such as the: i) reduction  
26 on the consumption of non-renewable resources; ii) development or design of products that  
27 minimize waste; iii) re-use of materials and expansion of the useful life of products; iv)  
28 prevention of harmful emissions to soil, air and water, and iv) the installation of segregation  
29 and recycling facilities;

30  
31 13) Mechanisms for a healthier working environment such as but not limited to the use of  
32 natural, non-toxic and low global warming potential materials and equipment, improved indoor  
33 air quality and ventilation with sustainable cooling technologies, and the more efficient use of  
34 space subject to the provision on physical distancing; and

35  
36 14) Measures to implement a "zero to landfill" policy such as setting targets for reducing waste  
37 production; implementing sorting and recycling for all office waste; ensuring that recycled  
38 waste is composted or recycled; or observing sharing economy practices such as reusing and  
39 recycling.

40  
41 b. All private businesses, offices and establishments shall require all employees to subject  
42 themselves to a thermal or temperature scan prior to being allowed entry. Employees whose  
43 recorded body temperature render them suspect for symptoms of COVID-19 shall be asked  
44 to undergo the necessary quarantine protocols and given the appropriate medical advice, or  
45 subjected to the appropriate health care in coordination with authorized medical facilities;

1  
2 c. Private entities resuming their operations and requiring the physical presence of their  
3 employee subject to their Management Plan shall provide shuttle or transportation services  
4 under the conditions applicable to public transportation operators: Provided, That private  
5 entities and owners of buildings and establishments shall support employees and building  
6 occupants who have opted to commute through bicycles and other micromobility devices by  
7 installing bicycle racks, storage, and bicycle parking spaces: Provided, further, That the  
8 installation of changing rooms to support green transport and promote safe and proper  
9 hygiene shall likewise be promoted by business establishments;

10  
11 d. There shall be an employee case management protocol to be observed on the treatment  
12 of patients or of persons suspected to be afflicted with the disease in accordance with  
13 prevailing DOH guidelines: Provided, That patient-doctor confidentiality shall be suspended  
14 only insofar as to aid the LGUs and competent authorities in contact tracing and in the  
15 identification of possible COVID-19 patients;

16  
17 e. Employers who opt to conduct testing may do so in a representative sample: Provided, That  
18 the cost of testing shall be borne by the employer and not charged to the Philhealth; and

19  
20 f. In the provision of assistance and financing schemes, the lack of capacity of micro, small,-  
21 and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the implementation of their respective Management Plan  
22 shall be taken into consideration.

23  
24 The implementation of mandatory public health standards and other health-promoting  
25 practices committed by business owners in their respective Management Plans shall be the  
26 joint responsibility of the owners or management of establishments and their respective LGUs.

27  
28 SEC. 9. Specific Responsibilities of Particular National Government Offices, their respective  
29 Attached Agencies, and GOCCs. In addition to the duties and mandates of National  
30 Government agencies already prescribed in the other sections of this Act, the following  
31 agencies and offices are mandated to carry out the following responsibilities, to wit:

32  
33 A. Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA)

34  
35 The PSA shall fast-track the implementation of the provisions of RA No. 11055, otherwise  
36 known as: the "Philippine Identification System Act", and RA No. 11315, otherwise known as  
37 the "Community-Based Monitoring System Act", to facilitate the profiling, contact-tracing, and  
38 distribution of forms of assistance under the better normal period after the lifting of enhanced  
39 community quarantine measures.

40  
41 The PSA shall coordinate with the DILG, Department of Social Welfare and Development  
42 (DSWD) and LGUs to cull information from the Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS)  
43 that may be utilized in fast-tracking efforts geared towards the full implementation of the  
44 Philippine Identification System Act.

1 The PSA may likewise obtain information contained in the existing databases of the  
2 government on birth certificates, passports, voter's registration, GSIS, SSS, PAGIBIG,  
3 Philhealth through data-sharing arrangements, subject to the rules and procedures that shall  
4 be established by the National Privacy Commission (NPC) for purposes of facilitating the  
5 implementation of the Philippine Identification System Act.

6  
7 To facilitate the integration of environmental concerns in national development planning and  
8 policy-making, the PSA, in coordination with the DENR, DA, NEDA, Department of Energy  
9 (DOE), and the Climate Change Commission, shall enhance the Philippine Economic-  
10 Environmental Natural Resources Accounting (PEENRA) System as part of the national income  
11 accounting system. The DENR and the DA shall generate baseline information and build a  
12 database to support ecosystem-based assessment and monitoring, continuing research and  
13 development, technology development and transfer, and capacity building, for the  
14 conservation and sustainable use of natural resources and ecosystems, especially the coastal,  
15 marine, and forestry sectors.

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

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

#### 29 30 B. Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT)

31  
32 The DICT shall fast track the progressive and full implementation of the National Broadband  
33 Program (NBP) by immediately establishing and implementing a nationwide and  
34 comprehensive information and communications technology (ICT) action plan that shall  
35 involve all stakeholders, including the major TELCOs, small TELCOs, internet service providers  
36 (ISPs), and developers of technology and digital applications, with the end in view of widening  
37 and improving connectivity not only for the fight against COVID-19 but also for the long-term  
38 development needs of the country. The NBP shall serve to enable the widespread accessibility  
39 to and utilization of the internet for essential and significant public and private transactions,  
40 including learning and instruction: Provided, That the NBP must be reliable and sufficiently  
41 able to support a high volume of video streaming, in compliance with the Filipino Sign  
42 Language Act.

43  
44 Further, the DICT shall immediately formulate and implement an industry-wide policy for the  
45 TELCOS, both major and small, ISPs, and technology applications that aims to widen



1 connectivity in all sectors of society, particularly the poor, the unconnected, the underserved  
2 households in poor urban and rural communities, geographically isolated and disadvantaged  
3 areas (GIDAs), and the MSMEs:  
4

5 Provided, That in relation to the widening of connectivity to all sectors of society, the principle  
6 behind the NBP shall be adhered to. To achieve the goal of providing connectivity to all sectors  
7 of the economy, incentives shall be provided to new market that shall invest in unserved  
8 areas: Provided, further, That such incentives shall result in affordable prices for internet  
9 usage: Provided finally, That the following key policies shall be implemented:  
10

11 a) Provision of incentives to TELCOs which serve the poor and underserved MSMEs nationwide  
12 via WiFi technology by implementing a reduced Spectrum User Fee (SUF) for WiFi such that  
13 a fair and reasonable scheme is achieved consistent with existing rules and regulations  
14 governing the use of WiFi;  
15

16 b) Implement its departmental policies and initiatives for the propagation of Common Tower  
17 and the sharing of Passive Telecommunication Infrastructure in the telecommunications  
18 industry;  
19

20 c) Implementation of the provision for fiber optic transmission rental from the National Grid  
21 Corporation to new telecommunications industry players to accelerate development therein;  
22

23 d) Implementation of the spectrum sharing arrangement among and between TELCOs, at  
24 intra-industry fee agreements regulated by NTC, to fully and optimally utilize the usage of  
25 licensed frequencies that are presently assigned to existing major TELCOs;  
26

27 e) Full use of the Internet Bandwidth supply made available by the Luzon Bypass infrastructure  
28 to provide connectivity to all government offices and to the unserved and underserved areas  
29 of the country. For this purpose, the DICT shall formulate a policy to implement effective  
30 measures to make the internet Bandwidth supply available at a fair pricing scheme, to other  
31 TELCO stakeholders, giving priority to new incoming players, particularly those that serve the  
32 poor and underserved communities and GIDAs;  
33

34 f) Undertake contracts and other arrangements with private sector, including the middle and  
35 last mile providers, the GOCCs or LGUs for the provision of internet bandwidth sourced  
36 separately from, or in conjunction with, the Luzon Bypass Infrastructure, should it become  
37 necessary, to provide connectivity to end-users through multi-year obligations;  
38

39 g) Promulgate joint policies with the DILG that mandate a simplified and streamlined  
40 permitting process for telecommunication and broadband infrastructure; and  
41

42 h) Promulgate and implement policies for effective cross-sector infrastructure sharing, such  
43 as, but not limited to, coordinated or joint infrastructure development, dark fiber leasing, and  
44 joint venture.  
45

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

2  
3 i. Implement programs that shall facilitate the setting-up of online, internet-based systems  
4 and platforms in offices of the public sector, including schools, universities and even barangay  
5 halls, across all levels;

6  
7 ii. Assist public sector offices and agencies in the upgrading of their existing internet and other  
8 ICT infrastructure;

9  
10 iii. Establish, in coordination with other government agencies, learning modules and relevant  
11 ICT solutions and systems to assist public sector employees, freelancers and self-employed  
12 individuals, and MSMEs in the use of relevant technological and digital platforms that can  
13 assist in the various cycles of their business model; and

14  
15 iv. Direct the NTC to implement all relevant policy directives under this Act, including, but not  
16 limited to, those pertaining to the enhancement of connectivity, improvement of internet  
17 speed and quality of service, and development of the digital infrastructure of the country.

18  
19 The DICT in coordination with the DOH shall also promote research towards the development  
20 and establishment of an online data tracking system or the creation of a digital/phone-based  
21 application which is downloadable by the public for case monitoring, mapping, and contact-  
22 tracing that shall be integrated with global positioning system (GPS) activated by real-time  
23 technologies to monitor and track individuals, alert the user of location-based risks and provide  
24 the user with updated and constant reminders and information for their health and safety.  
25 Any technology created for case monitoring, mapping and contact tracing shall be consistent  
26 with the Data Privacy Act. The DICT shall leverage the existing systems used for case  
27 monitoring, mapping and contact tracing. All systems, initiated by the public or private sector,  
28 shall be interconnected to each other and shall be subject to the policies and standards issued  
29 by the DICT.

30  
31 The DICT shall take the lead in the establishment of e-government systems and shall fast  
32 track its plans to build the necessary infrastructure to promote and facilitate digitization of the  
33 government and interoperability of government services and systems, especially those located  
34 in the provinces and rural areas. Under this Act, government offices and agencies shall  
35 develop, introduce, and implement solutions and systems to effectively facilitate government  
36 transactions through various online channels or contact-less mechanisms. This includes the  
37 uploading of pertinent government forms and their completion and/or submission thru  
38 websites or online portals in order to minimize the need for face-to-face transactions or  
39 physical travels or visits to government offices. Government agencies shall utilize creative  
40 adaptive technology that allows full access of PWDs to government services and are  
41 compliant with relevant existing laws and practices. This includes the establishment of a  
42 system of standards for Filipino sign language interpreting.

43  
44 C. Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)

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

4  
5 Regulatory bodies and other concerned government agencies and instrumentalities shall allow  
6 the immediate use of online platforms for application, processing, approval and release of  
7 loans;

8  
9 The use of video or teleconferencing, emails, and other online platforms shall be allowed and  
10 shall be considered as compliance with government rules and regulations, and the  
11 requirements of meetings such as service of meeting notices, quorum and attendance  
12 requirements, and the registration of votes, on matters before the body conducting the  
13 meeting.

14  
15 The DTI shall provide special support programs that will assist MSMEs and startups in  
16 achieving business recovery and resiliency including the following:

- 17  
18 i. Capacity-building in digital skills;  
19 ii. Support for digitalizing operations:  
20 iii. Knowledge transfer and information-sharing with MSMEs; and  
21 iv. Startup and MSMEs innovation aid.

22  
23 Delivery of fresh produce directly to consumers shall be promoted to lessen foot traffic in wet  
24 markets. The DTI, in coordination with Technical Education and Skills Development Authority  
25 (TESDA) and the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), shall promote the transition to a  
26 digitalized wet market. The TESDA shall develop a digital literacy program which shall be made  
27 online and offer the same for free to farmers and public market vendors to fast-track the  
28 development of a digitalized wet market in every municipality and city in the country. The  
29 operation of market-on-wheels shall also be encouraged.

30  
31 The DTI, in coordination with the DICT and the DOH, shall also promote the shifting,  
32 prioritization, or increase in government support or funding for the manufacturing sector,  
33 including MSMEs engaged in the production of healthcare, hygiene, and safety related goods,  
34 and the establishment of real-time online information exchange between private hospitals and  
35 medical facilities in the supply, demand, and procurement of the same: Provided, That  
36 concerned government agencies shall promote and integrate circular economy strategies in  
37 the procurement of materials or the development of mechanisms for hygiene and sanitation  
38 in the implementation of this Act.

39  
40 The provision of government support could come in the form of. (1) integrated and  
41 uninterrupted supply chain networks; (2) reliable online market platforms; (3) stable universal  
42 broadband; (4) digital IDs or digital signature infrastructure; and (5) secured mobile payment  
43 channels, among others.

44  
45 The DTI, NEDA, Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO), cultural government

1 agencies such as the NCCA and the FDCP, in partnership with the private sector, shall  
2 formulate and implement a strategic marketing communications plan that will renew public  
3 interest in and restore confidence in  
4 industries classified as non-essential but heavily affected due to the implementation of  
5 quarantine and other health measures to prevent the transmission of COVID-19.

#### 6 7 D. Department of Health (DOH)

8  
9 The DOH shall institutionalize and regulate telemedicine and e-prescription activities, in  
10 accordance with relevant rules and regulations. It shall likewise explore technological  
11 innovations for certain health services that might be compromised in the new normal setting.  
12 It shall promote and support local research on COVID-19 testing and treatment, and the  
13 development, manufacture and distribution of a vaccine.

14  
15 To improve on public sanitation, the DOH shall execute all plans geared at achieving zero  
16 open defecation and require all LGUs to report on their achievements of this goal.

#### 17 18 E. Local Water Districts and Water Utilities

19  
20 Considering that water is a basic need in containing the transmission of COVID-19 and similar  
21 diseases, the local water districts shall ensure the availability of sufficient water supply in their  
22 areas of coverage. In the case of private water utilities, such service providers shall review  
23 and recommend the appropriate extension of concession agreements necessary to ensure  
24 sufficient water supply in their service areas as well as to fast track sewerage systems as  
25 required under RA No. 9275, otherwise known as the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004. Such  
26 service providers shall also be required to submit new master plans to reflect a speedier full  
27 sewerage, septage and wastewater treatment coverage of the metropolis.

#### 28 29 F. Department of Public Works and Highways

30  
31 The DPWH shall take full responsibility for the implementation of the National Sewerage and  
32 Septage Management Plan, and shall provide sufficient funds for it. All highly urbanized cities  
33 shall, in coordination with DENR, identify remaining hotspots of fecal transmission and  
34 construct the necessary waste water infrastructure using funds made available by the DPWH.

35  
36 The DPWH shall include in its priorities, the construction and completion of farm-to-market  
37 roads and barrio-to-hospital or barrio-to-health center road connectivity.

#### 38 39 G. Department of Budget and Management (DBM)

40  
41 The DBM shall undertake the formulation of the annual national budget in a way that ensures  
42 the appropriate prioritization and allocation of funds to support programs and projects to  
43 implement this Act for green, resilient and sustainable communities.

#### 44 45 H. Department of Finance (DOF)

1  
2 The DOF shall streamline and rationalize the process for accessing international green and  
3 climate finance for programs and interventions identified under this Act to accelerate the  
4 implementation of technical cooperation projects and grants supportive of the resilient and  
5 sustainable recovery objectives of this Act.

6  
7 Any sector that may be affected adversely by measures under this Act that would lead to  
8 unemployment or industry collapse shall be assisted by the LGUs and interlocal units in  
9 alleviating their economic status.

10  
11 SEC. 10. Gender and Social Equity. - in the implementation of this Act and its  
12 implementing rules and regulations, special care and consideration shall be given to  
13 integrating gender issues and eliminating all forms of discrimination in the following:

- 14  
15 a) Implementation of alternative work arrangements in the public and private sectors  
16 ensuring that DSWD and LGUs attend to possible heightened cases of gender-based  
17 discrimination and domestic violence during intermittent mandatory lock-downs or  
18 quarantines;  
19  
20 b) Social protection measures to be instituted for low-income and informal workers and  
21 daily wage earners that ensure restoration of livelihoods and such other ameliorative  
22 measures that shall compensate for temporary loss of incomes;  
23  
24 c) Sufficient and equal support for persons with disabilities, cognizant that women with  
25 disabilities are most disadvantaged and excluded from access to vital pandemic-related  
26 information and assistive acts;  
27  
28 d) Sufficient and equal provision of protective personal equipment to male and female  
29 frontline health workers and employees in both health centers and public and private  
30 firms and workplaces; and  
31  
32 e) Public reproductive health care services and the capacity of maternal health clinics and  
33 midwives to address needs of child-bearers in terms of isolation from infected patients,  
34 lactation and relactation assistance, and sufficient staffing and facilities for life-saving  
35 procedures.

36  
37 The needs of women in the health care and medical frontline professions shall  
38 be considered in the procurement of personal protective equipment and such other  
39 assistive measures such as access to clean restrooms, reasonable work shifts and  
40 equity in wages.

41  
42 SEC. 11. Prohibited Acts.- The following acts and omissions are prohibited under this  
43 Act:

- 44  
45 a) Failure to wear a mask while in public spaces or in the workplace during a pandemic  
46 caused by a respiratory virus such as the COVID-19;

- 1  
2 b) Failure to comply with the provisions on the management of spaces required in  
3 Section 6(B) of this Act except in subsections (1) and (3). In such cases, the subject  
4 gathering shall either be ordered ceased, with the maximum tolerance possible under  
5 existing laws, if such gathering does not comply with Section 6 (A) of this Act;  
6  
7 c) Failure to implement and monitor the proper implementation of Management of Public  
8 Transportation provided for under Section 6(C) of this Act;  
9  
10 d) Failure to submit the Management Plan within the period required in Section 8(a) of  
11 this Act; and  
12  
13 e) Failure of the employer, supervisor, manager or any person in charge to abide by the  
14 Case Management Protocols as provided for in Section 8 of this Act.  
15

16 SEC. 12. Penalties. - Any person, natural or juridical, who violates the provisions under  
17 Section 11 of this Act shall, upon conviction, suffer the following penalties:  
18

- 19 a) For violation of Section 11 (a) of this Act, a stern warning shall be issued for the first  
20 offense, and for succeeding offenses, a mandatory rendition of community service or  
21 performance of productive tasks, such as assisting in information campaign to combat  
22 the pandemic;  
23  
24 b) Imprisonment of one (1) month and one day to two (2) months or a fine ranging from  
25 One thousand pesos (P1,000.00) to Fifty thousand pesos (P50,000.00), or both, at the  
26 discretion of the court for violation Section 11(b) to (e) of this Act.  
27

28 In case the violation is committed by a partnership, corporation, association or  
29 any juridical person, the partner, president, director or manager who consents to or  
30 knowingly tolerates such violation shall be directly liable and responsible;  
31

- 32 c) Suspension of the entity's permit to operate for any violation of Section 11(e):  
33 Provided, That the place owner, administrator or manager of the entity shall be given  
34 a period of fifteen (15) days to submit the required Management Plan: Provided  
35 further, That failure to comply within the 15-day period shall be meted a fine of Twenty  
36 thousand pesos (P20,000.00); and  
37  
38 d) Imprisonment of not less than two (2) months but not more than six (6) months, or a  
39 fine of not less than Five thousand pesos (P5,000.00) but not more than One hundred  
40 thousand pesos (P100,000.00), or both imprisonment and fine, at the discretion of the  
41 court, in case the offender is a government official or employee.  
42

43 SEC. 13. Appropriations.- The amount necessary to effectively carry out the provisions  
44 of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the concerned government  
45 agencies. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of

1 this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

2  
3 **SEC. 14. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** - Within fifteen (15) days from the  
4 effectivity of this Act, a technical working group (TWG) shall be constituted composed of the  
5 respective heads or the duly authorized representatives of the following agencies:

- 6  
7 a) Department of Interior and Local Government,  
8 b) Department of Finance;  
9 c) Department of Trade and Industry  
10 d) National Economic Development Authority;  
11 e) Department of Labor and Employment,  
12 f) Department of Information and Communications Technology;  
13 g) Department of Budget and Management;  
14 h) Department of Transportation;  
15 i) Department of Education;  
16 j) Department of Health;  
17 k) Civil Service Commission;  
18 l) Commission on Higher Education: and  
19 m) the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) for the Management of Emerging Infectious  
20 Diseases

21  
22 Within fifteen (15) days after the TWG is constituted, it shall promulgate the necessary  
23 rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

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

29  
30 **SEC. 16. Sunset Clause.** — This Act shall expire after a three-year period from the date  
31 of its effectivity, or sooner upon official declaration of the President of the Philippines issued  
32 upon recommendation of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging and  
33 Infectious Diseases that the prevailing pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus or similar  
34 infectious diseases has already been eradicated: Provided, That standards, protocols, and  
35 other measures prescribed by this Act which are not rendered useless or impractical by the  
36 eradication of COVID-19 may continue to be implemented.

37  
38 **SEC. 17. Separability Clause.** — If any part or provision of this Act shall be declared as  
39 unconstitutional or invalid, the other parts or provisions hereof which are not affected thereby  
40 shall continue to be in full force and effect.

41  
42 **SEC. 18. Repealing Clause.** — All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, rules  
43 and regulations or parts thereof which are in conflict or inconsistent with the provisions of this  
44 Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

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

3  
4           SEC. 20. Reauthorization Clause. - This Act shall be revived upon declaration of a State  
5 of National Emergency of the President of the Philippines due to emergence of similar diseases  
6 that may result in a pandemic.

7  
8 Approved,