



Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE PHILIPPINES
Region IV-B MIMAROPA
Mindoro Provincial Office

**MAPPING OF LEGAL REFERRAL MECHANISMS ON GBV DURING COVID-19
PANDEMIC AND NEW NORMAL**

September 18, 2020

Municipality of Victoria, Oriental Mindoro

A NARRATIVE REPORT

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PREPARATION OF THIS NARRATIVE REPORT

This narrative report presents the conduct of Key Informant Interview and the narration of events that takes place during and after the activity. The main goal of this report stated in the Key Informant Interview Guide were as follows:

- Establish a baseline pertaining to the roles and participation of women in small scale fishing, and of the issues of women fisherfolks including trafficking and GBV, the implementation of MCW provisions on women fisherfolks, and the impact of the pandemic;
- Gather regional data on women fisherfolks and GBV during the COVID-19 Pandemic and the new normal, creating partnerships with communities and CSOs and strengthening CHR regional office's situation monitoring on women in the marginalized sectors as Gender Ombud in their respective regions.

Specifically, the following objectives were gathered in the conduct of this activity.

1. To render visible and document the roles and tasks undertaken by women fisherfolks in the household and in the community;
2. to monitor the implementation of MCW provisions on women fisherfolks by looking at: women's roles, economic participation and recognition, access to information, resources, and food production; Experiences of marginalization, discrimination; Gender Based Violence;
3. to document the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Women fisherfolks;
4. to document awareness of and availment by women fisherfolks of government programs in response to COVID-19;
5. to gather recommendations from the ground.

ABSTRACT

The Commission on Human Rights, as Gender and Development Ombud under the Magna Carta of Women undertakes regular monitoring of women's human rights, especially women in the marginalized sectors. Since the establishment of its Center for Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights Center, sectoral monitoring of women, girls, and LGBTQI human rights have been undertaken. Initial situations were released on indigenous and rural women, women with disability, LGBTQI, girl-children, women in detention, urban poor women, and older women. From these sectoral monitoring, policy recommendations are forwarded to key government agencies. Reports drawn from women's insights and identified issues also inform submissions to human rights treaty bodies and inputs to reports of human rights mandate holders.

One of the key sectors identified by the Magna Carta of Women are women fisherfolks. While they are amongst the most vulnerable, the Commission has not had the occasion of focusing on their specific issues and situation. It has been emphasized that the Philippines, being an archipelago, has for its key industries, the fisheries – and yet despite this, fisherfolks, and most especially women fisherfolks are among the poorest. With the COVID-19 pandemic with its vast economic impact, fisherfolks are among those affected, and yet, as always often invisible in the public discourse. With

this, the Commission on Human Rights, with its 16 regional offices, which serve as Gender Ombud in their areas of jurisdiction, will be undertaking sectoral monitoring focused on women fisherfolks, including women and girls at risk of trafficking in areas considered as fishing communities. *(Guidance Note for Women's Human Rights Situation Monitoring by CHR Regional Office)*



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I. INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence has become a widespread issue even before the time of COVID-19 Pandemic. This has brought drastic changes to men and women's lives.

In the study about women fisherfolks, it was identified that this sector is one among the most vulnerable. To better help this sector, the Commission on Human Rights as the Gender and Development Ombud is undertaking sectoral monitoring focusing on the women fisherfolks. It also includes women and girls at risk of trafficking in fishing communities during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Furthermore, a recent activity dated September 11, 2020 was successfully conducted. The activity has led to understanding their situation during the pandemic and how their sector has been affected.

II. PROGRAM DOCUMENTATION

September 18, 2020, the activity entitled Mapping of Legal Referral Mechanisms on GBV During Covid-19 Pandemic and New Normal was successfully held. The team arrived at the Venue at 8:00 o'clock in the morning. Venue preparation was ahead of time as a routine before CHR activity starts. Participants of the focus group discussion were government service providers including BFAR and DAR in-charge of women fisherfolks and programs for marginalized fisherfolks, DILG on COVID response, PNP for GBV and GAD Focals of LGUs.

On the registration, three participating offices attended. Three (3) from the Department of Agrarian Reform Provincial Office, Two (2) from the Municipal Agriculture Office, LGU Victoria and Two (2) other personnel from Local Government Unit of Victoria.

To formally commence the activity, the opening prayer was solemnly viewed and was followed by the singing of Lupang Hinirang. The opening program was facilitated by the program documenter, Marivie Andalis. In the presentation of the CHR Office,

Atty. Estrella C. Baltazar was introduced. She was able to present the CHR's Mandates as the Gender and Development Ombud under the Magna Carta of Women. A video presentation about the activities conducted by the commission was presented too. It has showcased accomplished programs and sectoral works of success.

"Nasaan ang CHR?" in the slide presentation, programs conducted by the Commission was given emphasis. It also presents that the CHR as an independent agency has promoted awareness on gender-based violence, education and promotion of activities regarding Human Rights and SOGIE. Atty. Baltazar briefly share the existence and history of the CHR- MIMAROPA- Mindoro Provincial Office.

On the next part of the program, the participating government service providers took part in introducing their offices. Each participating office was able to share its office's mandate and functions. Being the host for the activity, Sir Noel Nilo, from the Municipal Agriculture of Victoria, shared their role in helping the communities. He made mention of the Samahan ng Mangangisda that existed in the town of Victoria. He gave appreciation to the Commission on Human Rights for sharing the activity with women fisherfolks in their area. Sir Nilo also added that they already have existing programs for women in the municipality.

The next presenter is from the Department of Agrarian Reform, Sir Isagani Placido. He shared his warm greetings at first. Ma'am Ophelia Radovan continued the introduction of their office. She has introduced their office in the assigned municipalities, Victoria, Socorro, Pinamalayan and Pola. The support services in the municipalities they offered was also explained. Their office also offered cooperatives to specified areas. Through this service, their support was handed to local farmers.

Ma'am Radovan, shared information on proper land owning and other reforms about their department. It has added relevant information about their office including, Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries and the Agrarian Reform Communities. To further present their office, the Provincial Director, Sir Isagani Placido discussed their policies and programs. In the department their main client are the agricultural farmers and it is directed to Agrarian Development in particular areas.

The developments they offered was also enumerated like skills, livelihood, infrastructure and cooperative to better help their clients. The development plan was continuously on process to serve, such as development of infrastructures in other municipalities, basically to agrarian communities.

Sir Placido also identified the clustered offices in the province. Clearances in terms of transfer of properties was also explained. Selling of more than 5 hectares is not allowed according to the process of selling and land owning. The provincial office also gave recognition to the CHR and also asked assistance to give training regarding on Human Rights.

In response, Atty. Baltazar gave her appreciation to the participating offices. She added that the office's Mandate will continue to better serve amidst lack of human resource. The CHR will remain as the watchdog of the government offices but more so will provide preventive measures in the middle of misconceptions and other unnecessary manifestations. Atty. Baltazar also reiterated the prevention of Gender bias in all offices through CHR promotional Activities and gender orientations.

After the introduction of participating offices, the Focus Group Discussion and Interview then followed. Personal answers were written on sheets of paper to each corresponding questions. The following information were gathered accordingly.

1. Situationer of women fisherfolks

- *Does the office have sex disaggregated data of fisherfolks in the region? How many are the recorded women fisherfolks?*
- *Based on agency data, what the current state of fisherfolks in the region? (explore kinds of fishing, numbers, income of the sector)*
- *What issues of fisherfolks are particular to the region?*
- *What about women fisherfolks? Are they recognized as fisherfolks independent from their fisherman husbands?*
- *Does the agency have data on GBV/trafficking in fishing communities? What are the identifiable trends?*

On the situationer of women fisherfolks, the participating offices have no sex disaggregated data on women fisherfolks. According to the Municipal Agriculture Office of Victoria, there is no agency data about the current state of women fisherfolks. Illegal fishing was the most common issue encountered by the municipality, there was no ordinance made and implemented in this municipal issue. Data on gender-based violence is also not present. There is no identified human trafficking in this fishing communities. The Department of Agrarian Reform has its focus on the farmers and therefore lack the data on the women fisherfolks situation.

According to Sir Isagani Placido, "Women Fisherfolks could be recognized as independent from their fisherfolk husbands because of their differences in the roles they play. Women fisherfolks could be involved in managing the house and in selling the catch of their husbands while the fisherfolk husbands are mainly concerned with the actual fishing activity."

2. Policies and Programs;

- Are there policies adopted by the agency pertaining to fisherfolks? Women fisherfolks?
- What are the general programs of the agency for fisherfolks before the ECQ?
- Are there specific programs for women fisherfolks in accordance with the MCW?
- Does the sector currently benefit (in terms of program and benefits) from the GAD budget of the agency?

On the policies and programs that the participating agencies adopt pertaining to fisherfolks, there was no clear document was recorded. There are activities where women fisherfolks benefited but these activities do not directly pertain to the said fisherfolk sector.

In the municipality of Victoria, maintenance of the fish sanctuary is strictly observed even before the pandemic as a program in maintaining the food and water resources.

From the stated answers, the farmers sector were being benefited as they were recognized unlike the fisherfolk sectors. It was therefore observed that fisherfolks sector is in need of government assistance in terms of policies and programs.

3. COVID-19 Impact and program

- During ECQ, what programs were developed to assist fisherfolks during crisis? How many beneficiaries are there to the programs?
- How many beneficiaries were able to avail?
- Are these programs available for women?
- What impact of the pandemic on the sector have you documented?

COVID-19 has affected the lives of many Filipinos and other people around the world. As a whole, the Social Amelioration Program from the Government assisted during the time of crisis. This program helped a lot of families to survive during the time of pandemic, but it is not mainly for the fisherfolks sector.

In the Department of Agrarian Reform, several programs and projects were implemented to help 1000 Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries. Distribution of relief packs and production inputs was recorded. Program specifically for women was also conducted. 5 women member of 3 Agrarian Reform Organizations were given livelihood project founder by DAR.

There are no documented impact of pandemic to the fisherfolks sector.

Based on the data gathered, the fisherfolks sector, specifically the women fisherfolks, are not recognized. Their situation is not merely documented and there was no specific program intended to this sector.

The recommendations to empower the sector and to address invisibility, undervaluation and underrepresentation of women fisherfolks were cited. There are also suggested recommendations to enhance agency response to the women fisherfolks sector.

1. A continuous project to recognize women in all aspects of certain offices is suggested.
2. Livelihood projects other than fishing should also be introduced to this sector, this can uplift their living and can also help them find other ways of earning.

3. Related agencies to the fisherfolk sector should include program of giving capitals to women fisherfolks to help them in starting up new business or improve the existing ones.
4. Assistance to women fisherfolks as they request for livelihood programs should be enhanced.
5. Necessary data and information about women fisherfolks and fisherfolks in general should be documented.
6. An alternative source of livelihood should be considered to be given to fisherfolks sector and it is recommended to provide them skills and knowledge to empower their sector.
7. The concerned agencies or Local Government Units should consider the allotment of funds targeting activities/ projects for the Women Fisherfolks and the fisherfolks in general.

III. CONCLUSION

A closing program was prepared to formally end the activity. Awarding of tokens of appreciation and certificates was handed to the participating offices. Certificate of Appreciation is also awarded to the Municipal Mayor of Victoria, Joeslito Malabanan.

The activity has served its purpose and was able to gather the relevant information. It ended at 11:00 in the morning.

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