The Philippine Constitution guarantees the equality of women with men in all spheres of life, thereby mandating the government to undertake measures that will uphold women’s equality in the political, social, economic, and cultural fields. Various legislation were passed and programs initiated aimed at improving the situation of rural women, including the ratification of global treatises like the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). CEDAW Article 14 mandates that “State Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development;” with due consideration of their non-monetized work in the economy. The Concluding Observations to the 7th and 8th periodic report of the Philippines recommended for the State to “further accelerate its achievement of substantive gender equality and the full realization of human rights for women, in particular by strengthening a gender-sensitive approach to development, peace and security, transitional justice, migration, disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response, and the mitigation of the negative impacts of climate change, with special attention paid to women facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination,” along with ensuring the active and meaningful participation of women and women’s rights organizations in such processes. The concluding observations aptly summarized the situation of rural women:

“The Committee is concerned that women living in rural areas are disproportionately affected by poverty and by food and water insecurity as a result of the discrimination that they face in relation to income, to access to land tenure, to extension services and training, and to participation in decision-making. In particular, the Committee is concerned that women benefit significantly less from the outcome of agrarian reforms, depriving them of access to productive resources. Furthermore, it is concerned that land appropriation and the resulting displacement due to extractive industries, development projects, and disasters continue to affect rural women disproportionately.” (par 43)

In relation, direct recommendations for rural women in the Philippines included the following:

(a) Ensure that rural women have access to adequate food, nutrition, water, and sanitation, taking into account international human rights standards on such rights;

(b) Eliminate income discrimination against rural women as compared with rural men, and improve rural working conditions by setting living wages, with urgent attention paid to the informal sector;

(c) Ensure the integration and mainstreaming of a gender perspective into all agricultural and rural development policies, strategies, plans, and programs, enabling rural women to act and be visible as stakeholders, decision-makers, and beneficiaries;

(d) Disseminate the text of the general recommendation in local languages throughout municipalities with the aim of raising awareness about its recommendations, especially among local non-governmental organizations.

The 9th Country Report of the Philippines, submitted last December 2022, listed a number of programs and interventions that have been provided for rural women (P. Rural Women, par 96-102). However, the
report did not fully describe the impact of these programs on rural women’s lives, nor how these may have mitigated effects of disasters, climate change and displacement due to extractives and development projects as mentioned in the Concluding Observations. In 2018, the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) conducted a study on the Magna Carta of Women and its impact on rural women. This study could have served as a baseline for tracking changes in the capacity of rural women to access services, participate and make decisions.

In relation, the National Rural Women Coalition (Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan or PKKK) and the National Land Coalition in the Philippines (NLC Ph) collaborated to provide a parallel perspective on the situation of rural women in the country, as differentiated by their sub-sectors - farming, fishing, and indigenous communities - and as linked by the cross-cutting issues of gender-based violence, unpaid care work, and climate change.

CONTEXT

The general aim of this Shadow Report is to provide information about the rural women situation in relation to the level of compliance of the Philippine national government on ensuring rights regarding land ownership, access to resources, and recognition of their huge contribution to the rural sector and the country’s agriculture & fisheries sub-sectors. The report shall also refer to the Articles 14, 15, and 16 of CEDAW, and the General Recommendation 34 on the particular issue of women’s access to land and related resources.

Following such compilation of relevant information on issues of women’s land rights, this report begins by introducing the centrality of the issue of women’s land rights, the developments in this context, and the remaining challenges. The report provides information about the implementation gaps and systemic deficiencies, related to the main pillars of CEDAW, to ensure equality and recognition of women’s rights over lands and resources. It also tackles cross-cutting concerns (unpaid care work, gender-based violence, and disaster and gendered climate impacts) affecting the three sub-sectors (farmers, fisherfolks, and indigenous women) of marginalized rural women in the country. This is followed by recommendations for various key actors who are involved in ensuring the related compliance.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

A. Women Farmers

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1 The National Rural Women Coalition (Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan) is a coalition of 326 organizations represented by women fishers, farmers, indigenous peoples, rural workers, and young women/girls, with extensive experience in the provision of direct support and advocacy toward improving the status of different sub-sectors of marginalized rural women.

2 The National Land Coalition in the Philippines (NLC Ph) is composed of civil society organizations (CSOs) and Peoples’ Organizations (POs) associated with the International Land Coalition (ILC). Namely, Asian Farmer’s Association (AFA), the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), the Center for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (CARRD), the Cordillera People’s Alliance (CPA), Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka (PAKISAMA), the People’s Campaign for Agrarian Reform Network (AR Now!), the Philippine Association for Inter-Cultural Development (PAFID), Task Force Mapalad (TFM), and Xavier Science Foundation (XSF). NLC synergizes efforts of CSOs, POs, and other stakeholders such as government and international organizations in building on the rich tradition of work in pursuit of the rural poors’ access to and control of land and natural resources. The CARRD serves as the host of the NLC Ph.
Rural women remain at a disadvantage despite provisions under the Philippine Constitution and various national legislation and international treaties mandating the government to protect them. Key threats remain to be stagnation of land distribution, threats to sale/transfer of rights, land use conversion, non-productivity of lands because of poor access to support, and the discouragement of the youth to continue farming.\(^3\)

One main issue is the continued non-recognition of rural women’s rights to land which in most cases have remained secondary and an adjunct to their relationship with their spouses. While there are rural women who have been recognized as agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) in their own right by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) especially after the passage of Republic Act No. 9700 or the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms (CARPER),\(^4\) the distribution has been skewed towards male ARBs, with women ARBs accounting only for 29.5% of the total 2.4 million ARBs in 2015. Women account for only 13.8 percent of all ARBs with Emancipation Patents (EPs), and only 32.8 percent of all ARBs with Certificates of Land Ownership Awards (CLOAs).\(^5\) This was also validated in the most recent National Demographics and Household Survey (NDHS) 2022 conducted by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). The report shows that only 6% of women own land alone or jointly with someone.\(^6\)

Unfortunately, there is no updated data available to see if this percentage has increased over time and whether affirmative action has been taken by the government as mandated. Further, potential land ownership under agrarian reform is further bogged down by the slow distribution of agrarian lands. PKKK has been waiting for substantial actions on rural women’s petition for coverage of more than 100,000 hectares, where women could be potential ARBs. As mentioned in a national farmers’ consultation, “only wives of ARBs are awarded lands in their own rights due to the lack of lands.”\(^7\)

Ongoing land disputes have also placed women ARBs in especially difficult circumstances, such as the case of farmers from Brgy. Sumalo, Hermosa, Bataan. Organized as the SANAMABASU\(^8\), the women farmer leaders are at the forefront of their legal claims to the land. This also means being at the forefront of harassment hurled against farmer-beneficiaries, common of which is the filing of Strategic

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\(^3\) FGD with agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs), organized by ANGOC & Kaisahan, 28-29 July, East View Hotel, Bacolod City


\(^7\) DAMMMA, INC. and 24 Farmers’ Organizations Belonging to Farmers and Landless Rural Workers Sector (FLRWS), “The State of Farmers Land Rights vis-a-vis Government’s Compliance to RA6657 ad amended by RA9700”, National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) on Commission on Human Rights (CHR), Consultation on Land Rights Compliance of the Government, at CHR Office, UP Diliman Campus, Quezon City, on March 10, 2023

\(^8\) Samahan ng Nagkakaisang Mamamayan ng Barangay Sumalo (SANAMABASU) has been in a long-standing dispute with the Riverforest Development Corporation (RDC) for the 213 hectares of land located in Barangay Sumalo, Hermosa, Bataan. In 2019, the Office of the President has subsequently ordered the acquisition and distribution of land to the ARBs. This resulted in increased pressure from RDC to evict the farmers from the community. (Updated Case Summary of the SANAMABASU Farmers, compiled by KATARUNGAN, March 2023).
Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs)\(^9\) as a tactic to silence and discourage farmers to pursue their land claims. In the case of SANAMABASU, more than fifty (50) cases have been filed against them. In January of 2023, nine (9) leaders were charged with syndicated estafa, a non-bailable offense. Eight (8) of those charged were women, four of whom are already above 60 years old. On 2023 International Women’s Day, the 8 rural women leaders were accompanied by the World March of Women (MMW-Pilipinas) to the Department of Justice (DOJ) to voluntarily present themselves and counter these false accusations.

For the few women recognized as ARBs and awarded lands, they face serious obstacles in terms of accessing important support services (i.e. access to capital and credit, seeds, extension work, etc.) needed to make their awarded lands productive. Women’s access to credit is limited as many financial institutions continue to require the male partners’ signature on the loan contracts.

This will be exacerbated because most new policy issuances are geared toward easing the sale and transfer of rights to land to facilitate the liquidation of assets in the land market.\(^10\) This is the idea behind the Support to the Parcelization of Lands for Individual Titling (SPLIT) project and ostensibly the condonation of amortization and other principal loans. Women ARBs tend to be more vulnerable to the primary dispossession of their land and livelihoods and can cause a further descent into poverty due to the accumulated debts and migration they have to undertake in order to find some means to support themselves and their families.

Men are still privileged in decision-making over the primary means of production although women’s inputs are also being considered especially in cases when titles are awarded jointly and where a more egalitarian family/community culture is present.

In fact, there was a significant decrease in female representation in decision-making bodies affecting agrarian rights. The Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (PARC),\(^11\) the highest decision-making body on agrarian matters at the executive level, is composed of farmer representatives with a ratio of one woman per 21 men sitting within the national and provincial agrarian committees, and one woman to five men ratio at the barangay level. As Casazola and Ani (2020) put it, the “widespread low female representation can be attributed to the lack of awareness on women’s legal rights and entitlement to memberships in decision-making bodies, which is more prevalent among women in the agricultural sector.”\(^12\)

There is a need to continue challenging the traditional perception of the man as the farmer and rural producer which has resulted sometimes in the outright exclusion of women farmers from farmers’

\(^9\) Many of these SLAPPs are criminal cases like theft, trespassing, etc.
organizations and cooperatives. Women represent only 35 percent of the membership of farmers’ cooperatives and only 21 percent of cooperative leaders.

This traditional perception has also meant that while women participate in men-dominated tasks, men usually don’t prefer to participate in tasks relegated to women, especially around unpaid care and reproductive work in the household. The work distribution of different tasks in farming is 65 percent to 35 percent with more tasks undertaken by women. Tasks mostly exclusive to women are related to seed selection/storage and post-harvest processing, while men usually undertake physically heavy tasks like land preparation and hauling of materials and harvest.  

One of the biggest challenges facing the agriculture sector is its aging population. Experts predict that the Philippines will face a critical shortage of farmers in 10 to 12 years since the average age of Filipino farmers at present ranges from 55 to 59 years old. In general, rural youth are discouraged from taking up farming because children are being taught that farming not only entails hard work but is also the work of the poor. Young rural women in particular encounter more social pressures to work outside of the rural communities.

B. Indigenous Women

There are many issues confronting indigenous women. Especially in Mindanao, Moro and Lumad (IP) women are the poorest and most disadvantaged as they are considered “minorities within minorities,”

The continuing lack of support for the full implementation of Republic Act No. 8371 or the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) enacted in 1997 has led to the slow recognition of indigenous peoples’ rights to self-governance and to determine development pathways over their ancestral domains. This year, only 1.4 billion was allocated to NCIP in the national budget which is not enough to serve its main constituents and to map and delineate the 1500 ancestral domain claims filed with NCIP. For those IPs issued CADTs, the main problem is the lack of funding that will allow them to draft their own ancestral domain sustainable development and protection plan (ADSDPP). This is partly because the National

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15 FGD with agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs), organized by ANGOC & Kaisahan, 28-29 July, East View Hotel, Bacolod City


18 Focused group discussions with Indigenous Peoples, organized by ANGOC, PAFID, XSF. on August 3 and 4. Ps: 3-4 August, Malberry suites, CDO.
Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) tasked to champion IP rights are themselves marginalized with only a minimal budget allocated to them since their establishment.

Unfortunately, the delay in mapping and delineating ancestral domains has opened these ancestral domains to the encroachment of big agricultural corporations aiming to establish plantations. Since Indigenous women and their families rely heavily on farming and agricultural work for their food, income, and livelihood, the loss of lands to big corporations not only means the loss of income but also the loss of food for the family. In a survey conducted among indigenous women, respondents shared that they are cultivating rice, corn, root crops, and vegetables for their own consumption hoping that surplus harvests can be sold for the non-food needs of their families. 19 Indigenous women had to undertake other means to earn additional incomes such as handicraft making, weaving, and becoming household help or farm laborers, especially for those who didn’t have their own land to cultivate. Like their farmer and fisherfolk counterparts, indigenous women also have to bear the brunt of unpaid productive and reproductive work, as well as care for their families with indigenous men often taking on the gender stereotype role of concentrating only on the productive aspects of work and not really undertaking unpaid care work.

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed the depth of the structural and historical inequalities affecting indigenous peoples, especially indigenous women and girls, due to the limited access to health services and the blatant disregard for their traditional health knowledge and practices. The COVID-19 lockdown and strict quarantine protocols meant that farming had become the only source of livelihood for many indigenous women and their families as other work was no longer available. However, the lockdowns posed additional difficulties in selling their farm products due to costly travel requirements. This has caused a significant decrease in the income of the indigenous women and their families. 20

A significant number of indigenous women who participated in the survey pointed out three main conflicts affecting their communities and their status as indigenous women’s human rights defenders. They identified gender-based violence (GBV) as a primary issue within their communities. Due to the lack of recognition of their rights within their ancestral domains, land conflicts have abounded resulting in harassment of communities from those encroaching on their ancestral domain. In fact, many cases of harassment and red-tagging have been related to ongoing land conflicts and efforts of indigenous peoples’ communities to protect their ancestral domains. 21

There is also a huge gap in political participation and representation between indigenous women and men. While most of the indigenous women who participated in the survey believe that women are also capable and should be allowed to lead, those who are able to secure leadership positions are still mostly men.

C. Women Fisherfolk

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20 Ibid, Sectoral Monitoring.
21 Ibid, Sectoral Monitoring.
The lack of updated information on women’s participation in the fisheries sector has resulted not only in a vast underestimation of the important role that women play in the sector but also in the lack of programs and projects that will address the specific needs of women fisherfolk. The government’s Registry System of Basic Sector in Agri (RSBSA) and Fisherfolk Registration System (FishR) “have limited registry of women farmers and fisherfolk in their databases as data entries predominantly consist of data of men farmers and fisherfolk who are traditionally considered as head of the households.”

In the 1995 Census of Population, 91.7% of those employed in fisheries are male and 8.2% are female, indicating that fisheries is a male-dominated field. But Weeratunge et al. (2010) and Arenas and Lentisco (2011) as cited in Dizon (2019) state that while the fisheries sector is male-dominated, women fisherfolk contribute immensely through the different roles they assume as gleaners, fishers, traders, fish farmers, and processors in the small fisheries sector, though this contribution remains unacknowledged and unpaid.

In fact, upon further observation, women’s work in fishing is not that different from men. Both do capture fisheries and gleaning, with women doing much of the selling.

Despite the Philippines having one of the longest coastline in the world and 60% of its population live along its coastline, the government’s 9th report shows very minimal information on the situation of women fishers, and on how the existing programs have potentially brought positive results. Large and medium scale privatization of shores and waters for tourism and commercial projects, coastal land reclamations and development projects, have resulted in economic displacements of coastal communities. These have a direct impact on the safety of fishing because fishers are forced to fish further from the shore and resources are depleted due to pollution. Women’s activities by the shoreline, including gleaning and trading activities, are also being limited and restricted.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, this non-recognition became apparent as women were provided with very minimal or no assistance at all in some cases. In another FGD, women from fishing communities shared that only men fisherfolk were provided with aid. Solo parents who are mostly women did not receive assistance from the local government unit. In the municipality of Sorsogon, province of Bicol, members of women fisherfolk organizations from Prieto Diaz, Gubat, and Bacon shared that they received very minimal support from the government except for fish corral livelihood. According to a study on gender roles in Philippine fisheries, “social constructs and misconceptions, are barriers to women’s full participation in fisheries management and decision-making. These social constructs include housework are women’s duty, men are physically stronger than women which is required in fishing.”

D. Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Sexual & Reproductive Health & Rights (SRHR)

22 Ibid, Casasola.
24 Focused Group Discussion among Fisherfolk, organized by ANGOC, NFR and CARRD in July 26-27, 2023, Smallville 21 Hotel, Iloilo City.
25 Ibid.
26 PKKK FGD among Women Fisherfolk, July 25, 2023 via zoom.
Gender-based violence (GBV) and Sexual & Reproductive Health & Rights (SRHR) are at the core of rural women’s concerns, especially during COVID-19 lockdowns. The PCW (2020) indicated that “prolonged imposition of community quarantine tends to actually put women, children, boys, and girls at greater risk of experiencing violence at home. This has been attributed to parental stress and household tensions due to loss of livelihood and economic instability which may trigger abusive behavior; limited access to social services and help due to restrictions in transportation and mobility; and challenges in the delivery of related services due to the influx of demand for COVID-19 response.”

The NDHS (2022) showed that 13% of women between 15–49 years old have experienced physical violence since age 15 and 4% have ever experienced sexual violence, including 2% who have experienced sexual violence by someone who is not a husband or intimate partner. It was observed that GBV increased during the COVID-19 restrictions. The Philippine National Police (PNP), cited by the Philippine News Agency (2020), recorded a total of 4,260 cases of violence against women and children, 88% of which occurred between partners in intimate relationships (March to June 2020). This PNP data indicates a 13.1% increase in the number of reported cases compared to the previous reporting cycle. Among women who have ever been married and have experienced physical violence, 48% of them said it was perpetrated by their current husband or partner. Meanwhile, 25% said it was from a former husband or partner. The link between fishing communities, poverty and gender-based violence have previously been documented. WLB reported that women and girls resort to ‘akyat barko’, ‘sistemang palit’ or other forms of prostitution due to poverty.

Further, NDHS noted that “women’s experience of sexual violence declines with increasing wealth; 5% of women in the lowest wealth quintile have experienced sexual violence, as compared with 3% of those in the highest quintile.” Considering that the highest poverty incidence is observed in the rural areas, i.e. poverty incidence among fisherfolk (30.6%), farmers (30%), children (26.4%), and individuals living in the rural areas (25.6%), then it is highly likely that sexual violence is a sad reality among rural women.

30 The work of Talikala, an NGO in Davao City also documents different forms of prostitution among girl children in fishing communities. They describe how ‘akyat barko’ as a system works -when a ship docks, girls together with the pimps, ride “pump boats” to meet the customers in the cabin. According to Talikala, this type of work is usually a “packaged deal”, that is, the price paid for by the customer includes doing the laundry, cooking, aside from the sexual service given. They also documented the ‘sistemang palit’ or barter among girl children in places near the coastal areas – in this case, sexual service is given in exchange for fish.
31 2022 National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) Final Report, Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), June 2023
During the implementation of the Sexual Health & Empowerment (SHE) Advocacy Project\textsuperscript{33}, PKKK saw an increase in the number of cases of incest rape and teenage pregnancy during COVID-19 lockdown. This proved alarming, especially when even government data acknowledges that only 3% of adolescent pregnancies are fathered by men of the same age group, hence, “such pregnancies may be a result of coercion and unequal power relations between girls and older men.”\textsuperscript{34} In connection, the practice of early arranged marriages remains widespread in far-flung areas indigenous communities.

\section*{E. Unpaid Work/Care}

According to the 2020 Philippine labor force survey, the women’s labor force participation\textsuperscript{35} rate was at 34.5% which was significantly lower than the 54.8% labor force participation rate of men. Although the employment rate among women was at 90.3%, slightly higher than the 89.4% employment rate of the men.

This however does not reflect the unpaid work mostly performed by women, not only in terms of housework and care for the elderly, but also within the farm or the coastal areas for rural women. According to FAO (2003, cited in Garcia 2004),\textsuperscript{36} rural women are economically active, but their livelihood and income-generating activities are unpaid family labor not recognized in official statistics. The tendency is to view this work as an extension of the domestic duties of women and are therefore not exactly work.

In the Philippines, women and girls spent significantly more time on care work than men and boys. Unpaid care work has been defined as all “unpaid work” performed within the household including housework, care for persons, and voluntary community work. Based on the Household Care Survey conducted by Oxfam Philippines in 2017, the average time of care work undertaken by women and girls is 4.5 to 6.5 hours a day; increasing to up to 11-12 hours a day when there is childcare.\textsuperscript{37} This is especially true in the rural areas where traditional and gender stereotyped roles still prevail.

But during the COVID-19 lockdowns and quarantine, 66 percent of the men who participated in the Oxfam survey in the Philippines in 2020 said their unpaid care workload had risen\textsuperscript{38} perhaps due to the fact that people were confined in their homes and were not allowed to venture out freely.

\textsuperscript{33} PKKK has been implementing the SHE Project in the provinces of Misamis Occidental, Bukidnon, Zamboanga del Sur, and Zamboanga Sibugoy since 2018, in partnership with Oxfam Pilipinas, Oxfam Canada, and Global Affairs Canada.
\textsuperscript{34} 2020 data according to United Nations Population Fund Philippines, as cited in the Executive Order 141 or “Adopting as National Policy the Implementation of Measures to Address the Root Causes of the Rising Number of Teenage Pregnancies,” issued by the Office of the President last 25 June 2021.
\textsuperscript{35} The PSA defines the labor force as the “the population 15 years old and over who contribute to the production of goods and services in the country. It comprises the employed and unemployed.”
\textsuperscript{36} Garcia, Z. (2004). “Impact of Agricultural Trade on Gender Equity and Rural Women’s Position in Developing Countries.” \url{http://glow-boell.de/media/de/txt_rubrik_5/sus_Garcia.pdf}
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid. Miranda.
F. Climate Impacts to Women

When the Philippines was reported to be first in the World Risk Index in 2022, women’s groups who were involved in disaster-response and climate actions were not at all surprised. Women’s groups have in fact been offering solutions especially in times of climate emergencies. Yet, these women-led actions despite having proven valuable in disaster response and recovery, and in protecting women and girls from further harm, violence and exploitation during times of emergencies, continue to have little support and space in program and policy decision-making.

The impacts of climate change are not experienced evenly by men and women. Rural women who own less productive assets and are more often dependent on natural resources for their food and livelihoods are likely to be most affected. In cases of typhoons and other such natural calamities exacerbated by climate change, women have to spend more time gathering food, collecting water, doing laundry, etc., on top of their usual work around the farm and home. Though the gendered impacts of climate change had to be thoroughly studied, due to Valero and Kaul (2023) posited that rural women’s capacity to cope with the effects of climate change is also hindered by their overall structural and historical disadvantage: women are over-represented among the poor, play a minor role in decision-making, and face unequal access to resources.

The 9th CEDAW Country Report cited that the PCW, with the Coalition against Trafficking in Women-Asia Pacific, drafted Guidelines on the Implementation of Gender-Responsive Emergency Interventions during Humanitarian Crises to operationalize the MCW Section on Women Affected by Disasters, Calamities, and Other Crisis Situations. CATW-AP has also been building capacities of local communities in coastal areas and those most vulnerable to disasters, in the survivor-centered prevention and response to trafficking and prostitution with setting up of rights-based and gender-responsive community watch groups of women affected by the disasters. As a result, a quantifiable decrease in cases of violence against women has been observed in evacuation camps. The National Rural Women Coalition (PKKK) has also adopted similar strategy of organizing and/or strengthening women’s organizations as GBV Watch Group per barangay, with the aim of being part of the barangay DRR and GAD committees. The GBV Watch Groups on various occasions have served as front liners in situations of emergencies. These various women’s organizations and watch groups need to be recognized, supported and integrated in all levels of DRR and climate action planning and monitoring.

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41 Currently, PKKK has organized around 138 GBV Watch Groups nationwide in at least 10 provinces.
42 In the Municipality of Clarin, when the abrupt flooding due to shearline in December 2022 happened, the 12 GBV Watch Groups conducted immediate rapid data gathering and analysis in the affected villages. With support from Oxfam and Global Affairs Canada, they planned and distributed around 500 relief packs which considered the special needs of women and girls. They also provided sessions on community resiliency model (CRM) and sexual reproductive health & rights.
Women’s voices should also be heard as they articulate their critique towards the industrial model of extraction industries such as mining & fossil fuels, land conversions from agricultural to non-agricultural, deforestation and displacement of indigenous peoples from their ancestral lands. For instance, the proposed Kaliwa Dam project in the Sierra Madre mountains is estimated to displace 1,400 indigenous families and will flood protected areas. The mountain range has been a major defense against supertyphoons such as Noru in 2022. As Jean Enriquez, World March of Women Pilipinas said: “We need to replace capitalism, which had meant patriarchal appropriation of nature and people’s/women’s lives, and its endless growth model for unlimited profit, with a new system that is participatory, one that addresses inequalities, and seeks harmony between humans and nature.”

The 9th country report also mentioned that “through the first Nationally Determined Contribution, which integrated gender equality considerations, the State committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 75% by 2030.” The Philippine Movement for Climate Justice (PMCJ), of which PKKK is a member, has been raising that climate and gender justice means putting a stop to energy projects that use fossil fuel, including LNG (liquefied natural gas). In the province of Batangas, five of the six LNG power plants in the country have been in the development pipeline. By its location alone, the power plants will directly affect the Verde Island Passage, known as the “center of the center of the world’s marine biodiversity.” The PKKK Batangas Coalition confirmed with women of the affected barangays that they were not consulted at all on these projects. Currently, representatives of these communities have formally requested the Department of Health (DOH) to investigate the impact of power plants on the health of the host communities. Data from the city health office record showed that “one out of every 10 people” in these host barangays have respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, with more women getting sick compared to the men.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In consideration of the issues tracked and raised with the various consultations with rural women, as well as the analysis of how laws impacting rural women are being implemented, these are the recommendations for the Philippines government as a state party to the CEDAW:

A. On Women Farmers

Recognize women farmers are ARBs in their own right. CLOAs should be awarded under their name and not just a spouse to their farmer husband. DAR should provide updated and gender-disaggregated data on women’s land ownership under CARPer to ensure that the rights of women ARBs are being respected and recognized. Sufficient and complete support services should be provided to women ARBs and farmers to ensure that they can continue farming without the constant threat of possibly losing their lands as they struggle to make their lands productive. State agricultural colleges should be encouraged to upgrade their curriculum to package agriculture courses and extension work as scientific, environmental entrepreneurial, cultural, and creative partnerships for men and women of all ages.

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43 Enriquez, Jean, “CATWAP-WMW Pilipinas on Climate Crisis”, Presented during the 2nd Womenitarian Summit last May 2023.
Break traditional perceptions and educate rural communities on how women farmers are as knowledgeable and as skilled as men farmers, and are equally capable of managing and making their farms more productive. Invest in women's roles in farm capital and seed sourcing, and support their aspirations for community seed banks, access to good seeds, registration in RSBSA, and better control over prices of their produce. Women farmers themselves expressed the need to have access to training on new technologies and organic farming, as well as access to markets for individual and organizational enterprises.  

Thoroughly review and assess the situation in the agrarian areas where SPLIT has been implemented so far to check whether there’s an increase of pawning and selling awarded lands. It is important that women ARBs’ right to own land are translated into individual CLOAs. SPLIT should only be implemented once ARBs have been given adequate support and have succeeded in making their awarded lands productive, in order to safeguard against selling of lands due to poverty or other externalities. The government should be more careful in entertaining projects that promote market-based solutions to providing farmers’ capital through the collateralization of their awarded lands. The previous World Bank Land Administration and Management Program (LAMP) in the early 2000 that was rejected by farmers groups had the same proposition as SPLIT.

B. Indigenous women

It is important to push for the serious implementation of IPRA and the rightful issuance of the Certificate of Ancestral Domain Titles. Evidence gathered in an on-going study on gender-just landscapes in land, natural resources and climate conflicts, show how collective claims over the land protected individual occupation and enabled women to utilize their agricultural practices. When indigenous communities are able to exercise their customs and control over the land, there’s also high regard to women being nurturers of their communities, and performers of rituals and traditions around agriculture and food. Such high regard to indigenous women impacts on GBV prevention.

Hence, government should generate reliable and accurate data to assess how indigenous women are faring and whether they are empowered in their ancestral domains after the issuance. Relatedly, support should be given to IPs so that they can be capacitated in drafting their own ancestral domain sustainable development and protection plan (ADSDPP) in accordance with their customary practices, laws, and traditions and as an ultimate recognition of their right to self-governance and determination within their ancestral domains. Indigenous women should be equally capacitated to engage in this

44 Rice Watch Action Network (RWAN), “Enhancing Gender Outcomes of Different Rice Related Agencies through Gender Analysis of Rice Supply Chain and Advocacies,” End of Project Report to Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries (PCAF), March 2022.
45 Under IPRA, Certificate of Ancestral Domain Titles (CADTs) are issued by the government to formally recognize the rights of possession and ownership of Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples (ICCs/IPs) over their ancestral domains as identified and delineated in accordance with this law, while Certificate of Ancestral Land Titles (CALTs) formally recognize the rights of ICCs/IPs over their ancestral lands.
process. During the IP FGD, it was recognized that “when an indigenous woman assumed the head role in their tribe, women rose to the occasion and voiced out their concerns and recommendations more.”

Indigenous women are also impacted differently through conflicts and hence, their needs should be addressed accordingly. Before and during the pandemic, there was a significant number of indigenous women that identified themselves as indigenous women human rights defenders (IWHRD). Gender-based violence as the primary issue of IP WHRDs within their communities should be addressed, including incidences of child, early forced marriages. It was strongly recommended by indigenous groups that implementation and referral mechanisms related to Prohibition of Child Marriage (RA11596) should be culturally-sensitive, i.e. conduct massive information campaign to involve indigenous parents, elders, and ritualists, and ensure that an IP desk/personnel dedicated for such cases be installed as part of the referral mechanism.

C. Women Fisherfolk

Urgently and programmatically address the situation of women in fisheries, through evidence-based and reliable gender analysis of the sector. Being the poorest sector, women fisherfolk should be able to have dramatic changes in terms of quality of life and well-being. Women fisherfolk should be informed about Fisherfolk Registration System (FISH R) and encouraged to be listed in the registry system of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR).

Launch massive campaigns that would challenge social constructs and misconceptions that serve as barriers to women’s full participation in fisheries management and decision-making. It is important to challenge these constructs and bust these myths to address issues confronting women fisherfolk.

D. Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Adopt a zero-tolerance policy against any form of gender-based violence. Providing rural women with the means to support themselves economically will go a long way in addressing poverty and inequality in family relations, which are some of the root causes of vulnerability. Hence, sector-based program outcomes for farmers and fishers should eventually contribute to reduced GBV incidences in the rural areas.

Systematically collecting disaggregated data on violence against women will also help identify the needed interventions to address this pervasive issue. Implement outreach activities that will help rural women acquire information and understand their rights guaranteed by current existing laws and state commitments to international treaties.

Establish an Interagency Committee on Rural Women under the Philippine Commission for Women (PCW) to work together and tackle the gender-based violence issues confronting rural women holistically. There should be a GBV Working Group in the PCW as well. The Department of Interior and

47 Focused group discussions with Indigenous Peoples, organized by ANGOC, PAFID, XSF. on August 3 and 4. Ps: 3-4 August, Malberry suites, CDO.

48 Based on inputs from the PKKK consultations with the Hilgaonon-Talaandig tribe of Sumilao, Bukidnon, and the Subanen women leaders from Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga Sibugay and Misamis Occidental, last September 23 and October 25, 2022 respectively.
Local Government (DILG) should recognize and support community-based initiatives, such as the GBV Watch Groups, as partners in preventing GBV and protecting victim-survivors.

E. Unpaid Care/Work

Address structural and historical disadvantages of rural women and recognize their non-monetized contribution to the economy. Systematically combat and bust myths around care and housework as work that should be done by women.

For rural development programs to be gender responsive, programming should be able to include the recognition, reduction, redistribution, representation, and reward of unpaid care work. Specifically, program support should include mechanisms that will support community-based child care that will enable women to actively enter into productive work. It is notable that women’s employment in agriculture has been on the decline from 2017 to 2019 at an average of -4% annually. When the pandemic happened, women’s employment in agriculture increased dramatically, 21.9% in 2020-2024. Although there’s no empirical evidence yet that would link the pandemic lockdown to women’s agricultural employment, it is worth investigating if the presence of other family members within the household enabled rural women to gain access to more economic work.

It is high-time to review the RA6972 or the Barangay-Level Total Development and Protection of Children, and its impact not only on early childhood and care development but also on working mothers. So far, PKKK’s initial policy study showed that the current day care services hardly provide time for mothers to work, e.g. out of 33 mothers interviewed, only 3 do productive work. Most day care services accommodate the children only for a short period of time in a day, and during this period, mothers stay within the day care and extend their roles as cleaners and cooks for supplementary feeding, since the day care workers are also often short staffed.

F. Climate Change

Recognize, support, and integrate women’s organizations and watch groups in all levels of DRR and climate action planning and monitoring. Build capacities of rural women to address and cope with the adverse climate change impacts. Build capacities of local communities in coastal areas and those most vulnerable to disasters in survivor-centered prevention and response to trafficking and prostitution. Set up rights-based and gender-responsive community watch groups composed of women affected by the disasters with government support.

These recommendations were also echoed during the two Womenitarian Summits held in 2019 and 2023. Additional policy recommendations were: Strengthen the support and collaboration with

51 Women in Humanitarian or Womenitarian Summit is regularly convened by the Women in Emergencies Network (WENet), an alliance of 6 of organizations, namely Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan, Inc. (PKKK) as acting secretariat, Purple Action for Indigenous Women’s Rights (LILAK), Central Visayas Farmers Development Center Inc (FARDEC), Pagtambayayong Foundation, Inc. (PFI), LIHOK Pilipina Foundation Inc., and
grassroots women-led, persons with disabilities, indigenous women, and youth organization to assert and bring their voice into the environmental protection and climate change agenda; Improve on the representation and recognition of rights, roles, needs, and capacities of women and other vulnerable sectors in Disaster Risk Reduction and humanitarian action; Promote community-based efforts recognizing the capacity of local women’s organizations in becoming the first responders in the community, especially the GBV Watch Groups; Allocate greater funding to establish more spaces for women in situations of emergencies and Gender-Based Violence.

Time and time again, rural women’s experience of marginalization happens at the same time that agricultural trade liberalization policies were being fast tracked, i.e. Rice Tariffication Law in 2019 and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) in 2023. It has been observed that these policies further marginalized local food producers, who just couldn’t compete with the cheap imported agri-fishery products. It is in these vulnerable times that rural and indigenous women and girls fall prey to multiple forms of economic exploitation, eg. cases of trafficking in cities/overseas, online sexual exploitation in the rural areas.

An impact study on the effect of RTL and RCEP should be carried out in line with the overarching obligation to the General Recommendation 34:

“States parties should ensure that macroeconomic policies, including trade, fiscal and investment policies, as well bilateral and multilateral agreements, are responsive to the needs of rural women and strengthen the productive and investing capacities of small-scale women producers. They should address the negative and differential impacts of economic policies, including agricultural and general trade liberalization, privatization and the commodification of land, water and natural resources, on the lives of rural women and the fulfilment of their rights. Similarly, development partners should also ensure that their development assistance policies focus on the specific needs of rural women.” (par 11)

Submitted by

Balay Mindanaw Foundation, Inc, (BMFI). The Summits have also reached out to other women’s rights and climate justice groups, including the World March of Women and the Philippine Movement for Climate Justice.
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