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Women and the Economy^{*}

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Strategic Objectives:

- F1. Promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources.*
- F2. Facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade.*
- F3. Provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women.*
- F4. Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks.*
- F5. Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination.*
- F6. Promote harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men.*

MACROECONOMIC CONTEXT

The Philippines has been bannered as the second fastest growing economy in Asia, tied with Malaysia and behind only China (Rivera, 2014). In the period 2010 to 2013, the Philippines enjoyed an average Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate of 6.3% (World Bank, 2015a), 0.7% more than its average target of 5.6%. In 2014, it grew at 6.1%, with a strong fourth quarter growth rate (6.9%), after three consecutive quarters of “decelerated growth” (National Statistical Coordination Board [NSCB], 2015).

The slowing down of the Philippine economy in the first three quarters of 2014 was partly attributed to a contraction in government spending, brought about by “slow disbursement for Typhoon Yolanda reconstruction, and the ‘chilling’ effect of the Supreme Court decision which found some provisions of the Disbursement Acceleration Program to be unconstitutional” (World Bank, 2015, p. iii). Even with the slowdown, the country has been growing

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much faster now than a decade ago, when the growth rate ranged between 3% and 4.7% (Leyesa, de los Trino & Illo, 2005).

The country's impressive performance, however, seems to have done little to address the poverty problem. Despite the inclusive growth theme of the current Philippine Development Plan (National Economic and Development Authority [NEDA], 2011), the higher GDP growth was not accompanied by any significant decline in poverty. The National Statistical Coordination Board itself described the poverty incidence to be "unchanged" and the difference between the first-semester figure of 27.9% of the population in 2012 as not "statistically significant" from the figures reported for the same period in 2009 (28.6%) and 2006 (28.8%; Philippine Statistics Authority [PSA], 2013).

Some critics contend that the official poverty incidence estimates are based on very low poverty lines for a family of five, which translates to about 52 pesos per day per person (Ibon Foundation [IBON], 2014). Reinterpreting the 2006 Family Income and Expenditures Survey (FIES) data, IBON (2014) estimates that "some 56 million Filipinos live off around PhP100 or less a day and some 66 million Filipinos live off around PhP125 or less a day" (p. 10). This means that around 64% of the population live in poverty, which is consistent with the 67% derived from the 2010 IBON national opinion survey.

The 2012 FIES affirmed the persistence of a wide income gap between the country's richest and poorest deciles. Families in the highest decile income class earned an annual income of 715 thousand pesos, on average, while families in the poorest decile class earned an average annual income of 69 thousand pesos, or barely a tenth of what the richest families earned (PSA, 2013a).

The poor growth-poverty link can be partly explained by the fact that economic growth did not create jobs as fast. Habito (2013) noted that while the economy grew by 7.5% in 2013, jobs only grew by 1.6%, which was even slower than the population growth of 2%. This has understandably resulted in the rise of unemployment rate from 7% to 7.3% (PSA, 2014a).

Philippine Statistics Authority (2014a) figures show that youth unemployment is particularly high, averaging about 16.1% in 2013 among persons 15–24 years old. This subpopulation accounts for 48% of the total unemployed persons in 2013, and includes mostly high school graduates or undergraduates (49%), college undergraduates (13%) and college graduates (18%). This suggests the persistence of a weak match between job demand and skills. Unlike the overall employment trend, where unemployment rate is lower among the females than among the males, female youth seem to be less employable (unemployment rate of 17.8%) than male youth (15.1%).

The World Bank (2014a) remarked that most of the new jobs were created in the informal services sector, and informality "remains very high at over 70% of total employment," implying that a large percentage "do not have protection from job losses (e.g. many have no social or health insur-

ance), making them vulnerable to poverty and the effects of climate change” (p. 12). It further remarked on the weak overall quality of jobs, which could explain the continuing attraction of working overseas. For 2013, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (2013) reported the deployment of 1.836 million overseas Filipino workers.

Critics of Philippine economic development planning judge the country’s socioeconomic performance as “poor,” attributing this to “decades of neoliberal globalization policies, which undermined local agriculture and Filipino industry” (IBON, 2014, pp. 10–11). These policies have configured the economy to “generate wealth for a few rather than provide for the needs of its tens of millions of peasants, fisherfolk, private and public sector workers employees, and smaller domestic enterprises” and prioritizes “foreign and corporate profits” (IBON, 2014, p. 11) over national interests. Nonetheless, neoliberal policies will continue unabated, particularly in the context of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) objectives of a “single market and production base” which involve “facilitation of trade in goods, services, and investment free flow of skilled labor and freer flow of capital” (Lagman & Enriquez, 2014, pp. 10–11).

ASSESSMENT OF GOVERNMENT COMPLIANCE WITH THE BPA

Employment, Work Conditions and Control over Economic Resources

Strategic Objective F1: Promote women’s economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources

The 2005 Philippine NGO Report identified the following issues on women’s employment and work conditions: limited career choices, lack of support facilities, sexual harassment, lack of protection for the informal sector and domestic workers, tenuous social protection, limited monitoring on labor standards, and unremitting promotion of labor export policy (Layesa, de los Trino & Illo, 2005). The same set of problems still beset Filipino women, although small strides have been noted in some areas. Poverty, lack of decent economic opportunities, and gender biases continue to haunt women, as they do the men.

Access to Meaningful Employment and Appropriate Work Conditions

Average annual unemployment rate among women has fallen from 7.8% in 2005 to 6.8% in 2013, but underemployment has been higher, ranging from 14.8% in 2010 to 16.2% in 2012 and 15.5 in 2013 (PSA, 2014a). The numbers also continue to be high: more than a million women are unemployed while 1.8 million are underemployed (PSA, 2014a).

More than a third of employed women are working as laborers and unskilled workers, but their share to total employment has been slightly declining since 2009 to 33.4% in 2013. In fact, an increasing number of women are landing supervisory or managerial positions, jobs requiring a profession (lawyer, engineer, nurse), as well as clerical and sales posts (PSA, 2014a). This implies that, despite the difficulties of first-time workers to find a job, there are available jobs for skilled and educated workers.

Although education and public administration sectors account for 1.7 million of the almost 15 million employed Filipino women (PSA, 2014a), the largest employers of women continue to be wholesale and retail trade (4.3 million) and agriculture (2.9 million). Manufacturing, with 1.4 million, and tourism establishments (accommodation and food services), 0.9 million, have also absorbed large numbers of women workers. Employment in sales and trading, agriculture and manufacturing is marked by informality and vulnerability, with tenuous contracts, low pay or earnings, and little social protection.

The business process outsourcing (BPO) industry has opened employment opportunities for women: from 45,225 jobs (55.4% of the total) in 2005 (PSA, 2009), to more than 110,000 (54.9% of the total) in 2002 (Calleja, 2012). In 2013, total employment in the BPO sector reached the one million mark (de Vera, 2014), half of which would likely have gone to women.

With limited supply of good paying jobs, women are forced to work as migrants. To date, there are one million Filipino women working abroad, with young women aged 25 to 29 years old accounting for the largest proportion (PSA, 2014b). Many of the women migrants end up in domestic service (Asis, 2014).

What have the Philippine government and women's groups and civil society organizations done to address the various issues facing women workers?

A legislative triumph that has already materialized for local and migrant domestic workers is the Philippine ratification of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 189, or the Domestic Workers Convention, that guarantees the protection and promotion of the rights of domestic workers. In compliance with the convention, the Philippine Congress passed Republic Act (RA) 10361, or the Domestic Workers Act, in 2014. The law was a product of the active campaigning of NGOs fighting for the recognition of domestic work and the protection of domestic workers (Nuqui, Sana & Rahon, 2014). Meanwhile, women migrants are also asserting their rights, as exemplified by a group of Filipina domestic workers in the United Kingdom. Called the Justice for Domestic Workers, the group campaigned against a controversial visa law that would tie a domestic worker's visa to their employers.

At the local government level, the Quezon City Gender Fair Ordinance ensures protection against employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.

In connection with women workers in the informal sector, the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) has included the Magna Carta of Workers in the Informal Economy as priority legislative agenda for the 16th Congress. PATAMABA, Homenet Philippines, MAGCAISA, and other informal networks are also actively pushing for the passage of the bill.

To strengthen protection of women in the workplace, the PCW has also included Expanding of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law that would include peer-perpetrated sexual harassment as an offense in its priority list. Civil society is also in the forefront of legislative campaigns in support of this and other bills on women workers' rights and protection.

A growing concern that calls for immediate attention and action is the insensitivity of BPOs to the needs of women. Domingo-Cabarrubias (2011), in her paper on the effects of call center work on women, calls for "paid breaks and breastfeeding stations for lactating mothers, and emphasis on work-life balance, security measures to protect women, and the need to address the gender pay gap," among others.

Control over Economic Resources

A quarter of Filipino women are poor. The Center for Women's Resources (2014) reports that "despite having an expensive poverty reduction program like the 4Ps," poverty incidence had not significantly changed since 2006. Majority of peasant families are landless and work in predominantly foreign-owned agricultural plantations, where they earn a basic pay of around 148 pesos, with women farmworkers getting, on the average, 125 pesos, or 15% lower than that basic pay (CWR, 2014).

Women's lack of individual ownership rights is reflected in their disproportionately small possession of land instruments: 33% of Certificates of Land Ownership Agreements, and 14% of Emancipation Patents (PSA, 2014). We now look at two efforts initiated in two fronts—the government and the civil society—to give women economic control and security.

From 2007 to 2013, the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) implemented the Gender-Responsive Economic Actions for the Transformation of Women Project. More popularly known as the GREAT Women Project, the initiative aimed "to promote and support a gender-responsive enabling environment for women's economic empowerment, particularly those in microenterprises" (PCW, n.d., para. 1). The project has reportedly benefited 14,000 women micro-entrepreneurs in the country through training, convergence partnerships between local government units and national government agencies, and linkage to local and international markets (PCW, 2014a).

On the civil society front, PATAMABA, a Region VI network of informal workers organized by women, blends microfinance with mutual aid while building women-led cooperatives and group enterprises focusing on food production to enhance food security. Inspired by their previous success in mobilizing resources and fostering partnerships to benefit their members, the network has since engaged “both state and non-state actors in a solidarity network responding to its own needs while adjusting to external changes” (Ofreneo, 2013).

The two efforts, though similar in their goals, are very different in approaches. While both focus on women producers' groups, the GREAT Women Project has helped women producers band together and scale up their production through common service facilities, while PATAMABA stresses community building. Both are commendable initiatives. The GREAT Women Project has helped transform livelihood activities of women-producer groups to business enterprises and has helped these women's groups successfully negotiate for resources from local governments and national government agencies. However, the PATAMABA model may be one step ahead in ensuring economic empowerment for women, and making it stick.

Assistance to Women Entrepreneurs, Women in Business, and Women in Poverty

Strategic Objective F2: *Facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade*

Strategic Objective F3: *Provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women*

Strategic Objective F4: *Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks*

Access to Credit and Training

Support for micro, small, and medium enterprises

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are acknowledged as promotive of inclusive growth because of their capacity for employment creation. However, while the sector is also considered as “a critical driver for the country's economic growth...its growth has not been vigorous enough to propel the economy” (Department of Trade and Industry [DTI], n.d., p. 1). A significant percentage of MSMEs belong to the informal economy and “are established out of necessity” (Spaeth, Franco & Raras, 2010, p. 10), which may account for the poor performance of the sector. In the period covered by the Beijing+10 report, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), in particular, were already recognized by the government, and provided with training and credit assistance.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) reports that out of the 944,897 business enterprises in the Philippines in 2012, some 99.6% (940,886) were MSMEs (DTI, 2014). The overwhelming majority, or 89.8%, of these enterprises were microenterprises, followed by small enterprises (9.8%) and medium enterprises (0.4%). The DTI estimates the number of jobs created by MSMEs in 2013 to be 4,930,851 vis-à-vis 2,658,740 by large enterprises. Close to half (47%) of the jobs generated by MSMEs were by microenterprises, 41.8% were by small enterprises, and 11.2% by medium enterprises. Despite the immense size of the MSME sector, it contributed only 35.7% to value-added (DTI, 2014).

Enterprises owned and managed by women account for approximately one half of all enterprises (Spaeth et al., 2010). Most are “small consisting of only the owner/manager without any employees, founded with little capital (below PhP 10,000.00) in activities with low entry barriers, such as retail trade, food stalls or personal services, but also with low productivity” (Spaeth et al., 2010, p. 9). There are also instances when family enterprises are registered under the name of the husband even if the wife is co-manager (Spaeth et al., 2010). The significant percentage of women entrepreneurs is consistent with the results of a survey conducted for the Philippine Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Report 2013, which revealed that Filipino women are more optimistic and confident about entrepreneurship, and are more satisfied with their work than men (Licaros-Velasco, Conchada, Gozun, Largoza, Perez & Sarreal, 2014).

In the past decade, two laws specific to MSMEs were enacted. One is Republic Act No. 9501 (2007), or the Magna Carta for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The law seeks to promote entrepreneurship through strengthening development and assistance programs to MSMEs. The other, Republic Act No. 10644 (2013), aims to promote “job generation and inclusive growth through the development of micro, small, and medium enterprises.” The laws and policies for the development of the MSME sector, however, are “not fully enforced” (DTI, n.d., p. 23).

As noted in the previous section, a notable government initiative that targeted women microentrepreneurs is the PCW’s GREAT Women Project. Began in 2007, the project built capacities of national government agencies and local government units that enabled Filipino women micro-entrepreneurs “to access information, credit, loans or financial assistance, training, markets technology and social protection” (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation [APEC], n.d.). The partners consisted of 12 national government agencies, six provincial local government units, two partner alliances, and 36 municipalities with technical and financial support from the Government of Canada in the amount of seven million Canadian dollars (PCW, n.d.). From its inception, the GREAT Women Project has reportedly delivered 432 capacity development and related interventions, capacitating 18,302 government officials, staff and stakeholders on various areas of gender-responsive governance (APEC, n.d.)

Obstacles faced by MSMEs in setting up their businesses have to do with numerous procedures, the length of time involved, and the high costs (PCW, 2012). Common problems of micro and small entrepreneurs are "lack of information and bargaining power" (Spaeth et al., 2010, p. 11). Further, self-organization of micro and small enterprises of women "is not well advanced" (Spaeth et al., 2010, p.11).

The MSME Development Plan for 2011–2016 clustered the issues and concerns of the sector into four, namely: business environment, access to finance, access to markets, and productivity and efficiency (DTI, n.d.). The business environment concerns are: (a) high cost of doing business, (b) lack of information services, (c) difficulties in registering businesses and/or obtaining license, (d) absence of convergence of support from the government, and, probably most important, (e) lack of an entrepreneurial mindset (DTI, n.d., p. 22). In terms of access to finance, borrowers are hindered by the "stringent requirements imposed by financial institutions," lenders by the "riskiness of lending to MSMEs," and stakeholders by "the inadequacy of government policies to address the concerns of MSMEs and the policies' non-responsiveness to gender concerns" (DTI, n.d., p. 23).

Access to market concerns, on the other hand, include: (a) inability to expand domestic markets and penetrate international markets, (b) access to market information, and (c) competition from cheap imports (DTI, n.d., p. 24). Meanwhile, productivity and efficiency are hampered by the following: (a) lack of access to technology, (b) lack of government support on productivity enhancement, (c) the negative effect of the inconsistent supply and high price of utilities, (d) inability to comply with international standards, (e) the lack of an appropriately skilled workforce, and (f) poor working conditions (DTI, n.d., p. 25).

In order to effectively address the specific needs of women in the MSME sector, data on them must be available. A GIZ study recommended the systematic collection of sex-disaggregated data by government agencies on MSME development and promotion and combining these with data on industry groups and value added (Spaeth, et al., 2010).

Support for women in poverty

As in the previous decade, microcredit and skills training for microentrepreneurs are still the primary forms of assistance. A key poverty alleviation project of the government is the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) that was implemented in January 2011. The SLP was designed to facilitate microenterprise and employment opportunities to its beneficiaries through capacity development and partnership building (DSWD, 2014, p. 3). By December 2014, the program had served 478,281 families, 87% of which were Pantawid Pamilya beneficiaries, with the remaining identified by the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction. Almost 94% of the families were as-

sisted by way of micro-enterprise development and the remaining 6% through employment facilitation (DSWD, 2014).

For microenterprise development, the participants were provided start-up capital (financial and/or non-financial assistance) through the Self-Employment Assistance-Kaunlaran (SEA-K) funds or referred to financial providers (DSWD, 2014). About 56% of the program participants were recipients of financial/non-financial assistance from the SEA-K with the rest served by other national government agencies or local government units and provided with physical assets (DSWD, 2014). There was a significant increase in the percentage of those provided with physical assets, as the training package usually included materials, tools and physical inputs that could enable participants to start their enterprises and apply the skills acquired through training and continuous mentoring (DSWD, 2014, p. 6). In the period January 2011 to December 2013, a total of 179,083 women benefitted from the SEA-K through the SLP (PCW, 2014b).

The SLP's employment facilitation interventions include the following: (a) provision of training, through technical-vocational schools and other training institutions; (b) physical assets (tools and materials, uniforms); (c) preparation of documents required for employment (identification documents, certificates, clearances), and (d) linkage to employers through bilateral coordination, job fairs, or direct referrals (DSWD, 2014, p. 7). Majority of employment opportunities were in the private sector, which is considered more favorable for SLP participants than short term opportunities in the public sector (DSWD, 2014).

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) implemented the DOLE Integrated Livelihood and Emergency Employment Program (DILEEP), one component of which is the Livelihood or Kabuhayan Program. The livelihood component provides working capital for the purchase of raw materials, equipment, tools; production, entrepreneurship, business management training; and technical and business advisory services (DOLE, 2014). As of December 2013, the Kabuhayan program had 112,026 women beneficiaries (PCW, 2014a, p. 10). In 2014, almost 569.5 million pesos was spent on assistance for livelihood enhancement, with 127,656 total beneficiaries (DOLE, 2015). Other livelihood projects of the DOLE are the Kabuhayan Starter Kits, wherein a livelihood starter kit is provided with a package of services; and the Negosyo sa Kariton for ambulant vendors, which entails the provision of a vending cart and livelihood tools, production capital or raw materials, training on business management, entrepreneurship, and production, and assistance with business permits (DOLE, n.d.).

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is the lead implementing agency of the Rural Micro Enterprise Promotion Program (RuMEPP), a seven-year, US\$ 22.826 million program assisted by the International Fund for Agricultural Development, or IFAD, targeting around 200,000 poor households in 19 provinces of the five poorest regions (Small Business Guarantee and

Finance Corporation [SBGFC], n.d.). Its aim is to “help poor entrepreneurs and rural families in the country by providing technical and financial support for micro enterprises, which can, in turn, benefit other poor families through job opportunities (SBGFC, n.d.).

Are these efforts sufficient to address the needs of tens of millions of women in poverty? All the efforts appear not to have produced additional income with which people and families can buy food and other basic needs. Even using official statistics, the poverty incidence, recorded at 27.9% among the population in 2012, has barely changed since 2006 (PSA, 2013b). As national poverty surveys suggest, the number of people living in poverty could be as high as 67% (IBON, 2014).

Access to and Control of Resources

Support for women in agriculture and fisheries

Recognition of and support for women's roles in agriculture have been spelled out in specific laws. For instance, Section 20 (b) of Republic Act No. 9710, or the Magna Carta of Women (2008), under “Right to Resources for Food Production” states that

The State shall guarantee women a vital role in food production by giving priority to their rights to land, credit, and infrastructure support, technical training, and technological and marketing assistance. The State shall promote women-friendly technology as a high priority activity in agriculture and shall promote the right to adequate food by proactively engaging in activities intended to strengthen access to, utilization of, and receipt of accurate and substantial information on resources and means to ensure women's livelihood, including food security.

The Magna Carta of Women provides for, among others, equal status between women and men in the titling of land and issuance of stewardship contracts and patents; equal treatment as beneficiaries of the agrarian reform program; customary rights of women to the land including access to and control of the fruits and benefits; information and assistance in claiming rights to the land; equal rights in the enjoyment, use, and management of land, water, and other natural resources; and equal access to the use and management of fisheries and aquatic resources.

Republic Act No. 9700, or The Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms (CARPER) (2008) is “an act strengthening the comprehensive agrarian reform program (CARP), extending the acquisition and distribution of all agricultural lands, instituting necessary reforms.” It amends certain provisions of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law of 1988 (Republic Act No. 6657). As of December 31, 2013, a total of 6.9 million hectares of land, or 88% of the total land subject to CARP, was acquired and distributed by the government (Official Gazette, 2014). For the period 2014 to 2016, the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) has to acquire 771,795 hectares, and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)

134,857 hectares, a total of 906,652 hectares, for distribution (*Official Gazette*, 2014).

With specific reference to women, R.A. No. 9700, Section 14 also states that the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (PARC) shall “adopt, implement, and monitor policies and programs to ensure the fundamental equality of women and men in the agrarian reform program.” Specifically, the PARC shall ensure that: (a) these support services integrate the specific needs and well-being of women farmer-beneficiaries; (b) rural women can organize themselves in order to obtain equal access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities and technology, and other support services; and (c) equal treatment will be extended to women and men in land reform and resettlement schemes.

Five years after the enactment of the CARPER, women continue to have less land and control over productive resources. Only 29% (674,486), of the total Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries, or ARBs (2,303,454) with Certificates of Land Ownership Award are women (numbers from PCW, 2014b). As widely noted, Philippine laws “offer vast opportunities in terms of women’s rights and access to land,” but there is “a big gap in policy implementation” (*Official Gazette*, 2012).

Manahan (2014) asserts that the Aquino administration has not prioritized agrarian reform. She claims that the DAR “has consistently failed to meet its yearly targets, failed to provide support services to its beneficiaries, and failed to protect farmers’ rights from illegal conversions and land-grabbing” (para. 14). There are questions with respect to implementation—whether the ARBs actually have their lands and land titles, and are provided with the support services mandated by law (para. 19). Land distribution must be completed and the reforms under CARPER implemented, including “rural women-friendly provisions in terms of giving access to land and support services, socialized credit and initial capitalization for new and old agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs)” (para. 20). The coverage of support services should go “beyond the agrarian reform communities (ARCs)” and there must be an “adequate budget for the implementation of agrarian reform” (para. 21). There is also a need to interrogate “contradictory economic policies” wherein “liberalized entry of agricultural products” renders weak ARBs “unable to compete” (para. 22).

The government “implements rural agricultural programs for poor farmers through improved access to land, better land tenure, credit support to farmer productivity, and participation in farmer organizations” (PCW, 2014b, p. 11). Among its projects is the Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP) to be implemented by the Department of Agriculture and financed by a US\$ 508.25 million loan and grant package from the World Bank (World Bank, 2014b). The project is intended for rural infrastructure and small business and livelihood projects for farmers and fisherfolk in the Philippines, and “aims to improve the productivity of small farmers and fisherfolk as well as their

access to markets" (World Bank, 2014b). The number of expected direct beneficiaries of the projects is two million farmers and fisherfolk, almost half of whom are women, while indirect beneficiaries are estimated at 22 million people, including 10 million women (World Bank, 2014b).

The credit and microfinance programs of the DAR for ARB cooperatives, implemented in cooperation with the Landbank, CARD, Inc., and the National Confederation of Cooperations (NATCCO), are geared towards micro-finance capacity development (DAR, 2013a). Other programs for ARBs are the Agrarian Reform Community Connectivity and Economic Support Services, Enterprise Development for ARBs, Enterprise-based Social Services Systems Development, and Capacity Development Program for ARBs (DAR, 2013b).

In terms of participation in agriculture and local government governance, there are "468,706 female members in agrarian reform cooperatives, around 3,283 ARB organizations/women's organizations, 11,118 female board members in ARB organizations, 8,311 female ARBs involved in planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of socio-economic programs of organizations within agrarian reform communities, 8,349 female ARBs elected at the barangay (village) level, 1,244 at the municipal level, and 193 at the provincial level" (PCW, 2014b, p. 11).

Issues that continue to beset rural women in agriculture are "limited access to and control over resources and women's limited participation and representation in decision making" (PCW, 2014c). Their limited access to and control over resources is related to "threats to property rights in agrarian and aquatic areas and ancestral domain, loss of traditional sources of food, limited access to support services, and geological and climate-change hazards" (PCW, 2014c, pp. 55–56). Further, despite consisting half of the agrarian reform community membership, their participation in decision-making is highly constrained by "gender biases or cultural norms" (PCW, 2014c, p. 56).

These continuing concerns are affirmed by the Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan (PKKK), or the National Rural Women Coalition. Leyesa (2011) shows that among small owner cultivators, 74% of lands are titled to men, 24% to women, and 2% to the spouses. Among farmers who are considered tenants, 71 percent are men, 23% are women, and 6% are spouses. There is also a wage gap among farm workers, with men earning 19.40 pesos more than women. In terms of access to services and programs for production, less than 30% of women have access—the highest to irrigation (24%) and the lowest to capital (9%), which implies that they have no recourse but to resort to informal lending systems.

Moreover, Leyesa (2011) asserts that it is not automatically the women who decide on matters even in what is considered their principal responsibility. For instance, even when there are more women who plant, more often

than not, they do not make the decisions on the seeds to be used or the crops to be planted.

In fish ponds and cage culture, women faced the following constraints: (a) limited knowledge on pricing and on price changes, (b) limited time to sell their harvest in other areas because of household responsibilities, (c) lack of storage and post-harvest facilities, resulting in the immediate sale to avoid spoilage at less competitive prices; (d) lack of capital and difficulty to access loans because they had no assets that can be offered as collateral, (e) “limited opportunity to lease areas for fishponds/cage culture,” and (f) lack of confidence “because of gender stereotyping and cultural constraints” (Leyesa 2011). In seaweed farming, women also had difficulties in accessing credit services and facilities, technical information, and extension training; and “absence of women’s producers organizations” emphasized their “non-recognition as seaweed producers” (Leyesa, 2011).

Strategic Objective F5: Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination

Occupational Segregation and Employment Discrimination

In 2005, NGOs reported that gender biases continued to be “manifested in the occupational and sectoral distribution of workers and in the lower average wages of women compared to men’s, despite their generally higher education” (Layesa et al., 2005, p. 5). Ten years later, significant changes have yet to manifest in this area.

As the 2013 labor force data suggests, men are predominantly found in sectors that are traditionally described as physically demanding, such as: agriculture, hunting, and forestry, transportation and storage; and construction. Meanwhile, more women are found in sectors that could utilize their socially assigned feminine traits, such as nurturing and patience for repetitive work: education, community and health care, wholesale and retail trade, service activities, and manufacturing (PSA, 2014b). It must be noted, however, that there could be “female niches” in very masculine fields, such as administration and management in transport and construction; or the manufacture of wiring harness in the auto parts and copper industries.¹

The employment share of women in some occupations is disproportionately small compared to men. Because the jobs are associated with physical labor, there are much fewer women among trade and related workers, plant machine operators and assemblers, and farmers, forestry workers, and fisherfolk (PSA, 2014a). In the same manner, the number of male clerks is small compared to women. This shows that there are more occupations where

¹ J.F.I. Illo, personal communication, 12 February 2015.

women's involvement is limited. The persistence of these gender differences in occupations and employment in industrial sectors and the gender division of labor that assigns care responsibilities to women (World Bank, 2011) have contributed to the continuing gender gaps in wages that were noted by the World Economic Forum in its recent Gender Gap Report (2014).

The low participation of women at the top of the organizational hierarchy is also apparent. While a good number of professionals are women (67.5%), they hold less than half (47%) of executive positions (PSA, 2014a). In the public sector, only 20% of elected officials are women despite 59% of them working as government personnel (PSA 2014b).

The heavy gender segregation in TESDA's list of certified trainees reveal the limited skill sets that women are able to acquire. Out of the 10 major kinds of training in 2010–2011, there were only two programs—Health, Social, and Other Community Development Services, and Tourism—where majority of enrolled were women (Technical Education and Skills Development Authority [TESDA], 2012). In colleges and universities, women and men tend to specialize in different fields, with women outnumbering men in education or teacher training, business administration, and certain health fields (particularly nursing). In contrast, men are in engineering, trades and industrial arts, urban planning, and the like (PSA, 2014b).

Data on Filipino migrants provide a telling picture of the enduring employment segregation and gender pay gap. While most men work as plant machine operators and assemblers, or are trade and related workers, most women are hired as laborers and unskilled workers. And while the number of male and female overseas Filipino worker (OFW) is about the same, the average remittance of a male OFW is almost double that of a female OFW (PSA, 2014b).

A welcome development in this area comes in the form of a recent ruling of the Supreme Court that “pregnancy out of wedlock is not a ground for dismissal of an employee” (Torres-Tupas, 2015). The decision provides a legal basis against an institutionalized form of employment discrimination against women.

Harmonization of Work and Family Responsibilities

Strategic Objective F6: *Promote harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men*

A decade or so ago, policies and programs were instituted that allow civil servants to work under a flexible time arrangement and a chance to exchange similar posts with their colleagues in other areas so they can work closer to

home. Also, Congress enacted laws providing day care services in villages and workplaces. Moreover, under Republic Act No. 8971, or the Solo Parents' Welfare Act of 2000, solo parents are granted additional parental leave privilege of not more than seven working days every year for those who have rendered services of at least one year. While these initiatives are significant, they remain insufficient considering the many issues confronted by workers with family responsibilities.

The official Beijing+20 report states that "while gender gap in the labor force participation rate between females and males narrowed from 2009–2012, it is imperative to appropriately address domestic work and care burdens, pervasive discrimination and gender stereotyping which contribute to this discrepancy" (PCW, 2014b, p. 24).

Demands of production and trade in the global economy continue to shape the shifting patterns of work. Hechanova (2008) notes the growing parallelism between the changes in the structure and nature of the family with that found in the workplace. Technological advancement, job loss, mergers and acquisitions, cut-throat competition create new work demands and expectations from the workers. These put pressure on workers to work efficiently and effectively, often at the expense of family and social life. But this tension between work and family continues to be a woman's problem, because women are still considered as the primary caretakers of children, the sick and aging parents. For example, while work schedules affect or obstruct appointments for studies and family time of workers in the Business Processing Outsourcing (Manuel and Ramos, 2008), married women or single mothers opt to work on nightshift or graveyard shift so they can still perform household responsibilities during the day (Hega, 2007).

For the period under review, there is a growing recognition of the issues of work-family disconnect. There have been some efforts to minimize this, however. The passage of Republic Act No. 10028, or the Expanded Breastfeeding Promotion Act of 2009, provides for a workplace policy promoting and supporting breastfeeding, setting-up of lactation stations and provision for compensable lactation breaks for nursing mothers.

Moreover, there are private corporations that have started to implement work-life programs and services to help workers achieve better quality of work and life. These initiatives are clustered into three general categories, namely; (1) flexibility in time and space, (2) family-related needs, and (3) personal development and well-being (Hechanova, 2008). The Employers' Confederation of the Philippines (2004) reports that on top of government-mandated benefits, some of the initiatives of its members include rice and/or meal subsidy, medical benefits extended to legitimate family members of the employees, scholarship programs/grants for academically outstanding children of the employees, and other programs involving employees' families, such as family day. Also, other companies implement work arrangements that offer employees' individual flexibility and mobility in relation to report-

ing time, work shifts, time-off and leaves. Among BPO companies, Manuel and Ramos (2008) note that most offer transportation allowance, meal allowance, performance incentive, attendance bonus and salary increase as monetary benefits for their workers. They also provide non-monetary benefits, such as medical insurance, flexi-time work arrangements, bereavement leave, study/training scholarship or subsidy, housing plan, recreational facilities and parenting or family support programs.

How have trade and labor unions responded to the work-life balance issues? Majority of the 50 Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) reviewed by Edralin (2009) provide leaves for vacation, sickness, paternity and emergency to attend to family needs, but only a few have provisions for daycare services. Existing legal maternity benefit is still way below what ILO Convention 183 provides,² but some unions were able to negotiate for an increase of maternity leave for normal delivery by seven more days.

However, on a bigger picture, women workers' list of demands for CBA proposals—menstrual and maternity leaves and equal pay—are usually traded off for other bargaining proposals. Unions tend to focus more on wage increases and other direct economic proposals in the collective agreement while “employers were more likely to resist agreeing to provisions that they saw as costs, such as menstrual leave, special leave for women, day care services and facilities, pay equality, breastfeeding facilities and maternity leave beyond what is provided by law” (Global Labor University Alumni, 2010, p. 13).

Although there are notable improvements in the formal sector as to programs and policies related to work-life balance, there are still a lot of issues that need to be looked at. How are these work-life initiatives implemented? Who benefit more among the managerial and rank and file workers? What are the roles of employers and unions in crafting work-life balance programs? How about work-life balance issues of informal workers? For Filipino workers in lower level jobs, the informal sector or overseas, work-life balance may just be a far-fetched dream (Hechanova, 2008, p. 21). For these workers, the more pressing concern may not even be work-life balance, but something more fundamental—finding decent work to provide a decent life (Hechanova, 2008).

INSIGHTS, CHALLENGES AND POSSIBLE ACTION POINTS

Strengthening Women's Claims to Better-Paying Jobs

The issues identified ten years ago continue to this day. Although there have been some gains, Filipino women workers, including migrant workers, have limited career choices brought about partly by the gendering of occupations and worksites and partly by their training and education. Post 2015,

² Maternity Protection 2000 has yet to be ratified by the Philippine government.

the focus should be on strengthening women's claims to better-paying jobs through training in non-traditional fields in engineering, technology and the like; improving labor productivity in women-dominated fields that could serve as the basis for improving wages in these sectors; and introduction of improved technologies that make "heavy" work "lighter," thereby dismantling the basis for employers' bias for male workers and/or their inclination to protect women workers from physically strenuous tasks.

Promoting Work-Life Balance

The drive towards competitiveness has created demands on workers that spill over to their homes. Long work hours have made work-life balance impossible for workers in many industries, including business process outsourcing.

Informal-economy workers with no set hours and home-based face the perennial problem of multiple burdens. Post-2015 efforts should focus on promoting work-life balance by government, the private sector, and civil society organizations. The strict enforcement of laws that can alleviate women's reproductive burdens should be prioritized, such as the provision of day care centers in every barangay, elderly centers in all cities and municipalities, and family planning services in establishments required to maintain a clinic.

Improving Access of Women to Social Protection and Other Resources

Social protection schemes for workers and micro-entrepreneurs in the informal economy have very limited coverage. The campaign for the passage of the Magna Carta of Workers in the Informal Economy will be an important initiative of government, women's groups and other civil society organizations.

With labor migration seeming to continue at least in the near future, there is a need for the Philippine government to strengthen its efforts to protect the interests and rights of Filipinos working overseas. The Center for Migrant Advocacy (2014) emphasizes the requisite of empowering Filipino women migrant workers through the enhancement of pre-departure programs, capacity-building on legal rights, expansion of protection mechanisms, social security, and health insurance programs, improvements in the collection of gender-specific data, and the incorporation of anti-trafficking laws into the ASEAN region.

Rural women—farmers, workers and entrepreneurs—face limited access to and control over resources and limited participation and representation in decision making, despite government laws and policies. Post-2015 initiatives should include helping these women secure key resources, economic as well as political, and reducing their vulnerabilities to climate change and other

disasters. This means continued organizing of women, on the one hand, and government's implementation of existing laws and policies, on the other.

Growing Women's Enterprises and Businesses

Government efforts to assist the development of micro, small and medium enterprises are focusing on business environment, access to finance, access to markets, and productivity and efficiency. The implementation of these efforts can profit from the experiences of women-empowerment initiatives: the critical contribution of convergence partnership between and among local government units and national government agencies, and the importance of organizing women and networking among women's groups for negotiating for policy changes and resources. All these are probably needed to help women's enterprises and businesses grow and be sustainable post 2015.

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