



MISYON NG PILIPINAS SA MGA NAGKAKAISANG  
BANSANG AT IBA PANG SAMAHANG PANDAIGDIG

PHILIPPINE MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
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The Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and further to the Mission's Note 0124/EFB-08 dated 18 March 2008, has the honor to submit the Philippines' responses to the list of issues to be taken up during the consideration of the Philippines' report to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, to be held on 30 May 2008.

An electronic Word format of the Philippines' submission will be forwarded to the Secretariat.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 15 May 2008



**OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**  
Palais des Nations CH-1211 Geneva 10

**OHCHR REGISTRY**

19 MAY 2008

Recipients: CRC  
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Republic of the Philippines  
**COUNCIL FOR THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN**  
 Responses to the List of Issues to be taken up in connection with the  
 First Philippine Report on the Optional Protocol to the  
 Convention of the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict

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1. On the role and mandate of the Office of the Ombudsman and whether it has jurisdiction over military personnel, including the power to initiate preliminary investigation, and eventually prosecution, on cases which may be filed before it [Issue No. 1], DOJ provided the response:

“The Ombudsman has certain jurisdiction over military personnel, including the power to initiate preliminary investigation and eventually prosecution, on cases which may be filed before it. As a matter of fact, under Republic Act No. 6770 (Ombudsman Act of 1989), in Section 3 thereof, among the offices under the Office of the Ombudsman, is the Office of the Deputy for the Armed Forces, and in Section 12 thereof, it is stated that the Deputy of the Armed Forces shall hold office in Metropolitan Manila.

It is also pointed out under par. 10 of Section 15 of the same law (RA 6770), among the powers, functions, and duties of the Office of the Ombudsman, is that it can ‘Delegate to the Deputies, or its investigators or representatives such authority or duty as shall ensure the effective exercise or performance of the powers, functions, and duties hereinafter provided’.

Again, it may be noted that later on, the Office of the Deputy for the Armed Forces has been changed to the Office of the Deputy Ombudsman for the Military. Thus, in Memo-Circular No. 14, dated October 10, 1995, the Deputy Ombudsman for the Military shall continue to investigate all cases against personnel of the PNP, BFP, and BJMP, so that its authority to investigate members of the Armed Forces has been extended to the PNP, BFP, and BJMP Offices.

In said Circular No. 14, s. 1995, ‘The Deputized City/ Provincial Prosecutor and their Assistants shall continue with the preliminary investigation of the aforementioned cases pursuant to the guidelines laid down in DOJ Memorandum Circular No.2, dated April 15, 1994, but shall henceforth forward their recommendations directly to the Deputy Ombudsman for the Military who shall act on the same in accordance with Office Order No. 103, series of 1995’.

And since cases filed with the Ombudsman, in this case, the Deputy Ombudsman for the Military, are filed with the Sandiganbayan (RA NO. 7975), the cases filed and brought before it are those involving ‘(d) Philippine Army and Air Force colonels, naval captains, and all officers of higher rank’; and ‘(e) PNP Chief Superintendent and PNP Officers of higher rank’; (See Section 4(a) pars. (d) and (e) , ‘or cases where the principal accused are occupying positions corresponding to the salary grade 27 or higher, as prescribed in the said RA 6758, or PNP Officers occupying the rank of superintendent or higher, or their equivalent’.

2. On investigations, convictions and sanctions imposed in the last five years for the crimes provided under sections 53 and 56 of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act

No. 9208, which prohibit the recruitment, transport or adoption of a child to engage in armed activities in the Philippines or abroad [Issue No. 2], DOJ provided the response:

“Section 53 (Acts of Trafficking in Persons) of the IRR, provides among others, that – ‘Any person, natural or judicial, who commits any of the following acts shall suffer the penalty of imprisonment of twenty (20) years and – fine not less than One Million Pesos (P1, 000, 000. 00) but not more than Two Million Pesos (P2, 000, 000. 00); x x (h) To recruit, transport or adopt a child to engage in armed activities in the Philippines or abroad.’

On the other hand, Section 55 (Qualified Trafficking in Persons) of the IRR, states that: ‘The following are considered as qualified trafficking and shall be penalized with the penalty of life imprisonment and a fine of not less than Two Million Pesos (P2, 000, 000. 00) but not more than Five Million Pesos (P5, 000, 000. 00); ‘(a) When the trafficked person is a child’.

3. On information as to whether the State party assumes extraterritorial jurisdiction over the war crime of conscripting or enlisting children under the age of 15 into the armed forces or using them to participate actively in hostilities [Issue No. 3], DOJ provided the response:

“Under Article 2 of the Revised Penal Code (Republic Act No. 3815, as amended), except as provided in the treaties and laws of preferential application, the provisions of the Philippine Penal Code ‘shall be enforced not only within the Philippine Archipelago, including its atmosphere, its interior waters and maritime zone, but also outside of the jurisdiction, against those:

1. Should commit an offense while on a Philippine ship or airship;

x x x

x x x

4. While being public officers or employees, should commit an offense in the exercise of their functions;

5. Should commit any of the crimes against national security and the law of nations, defined in Title One of Book Two of this Code’. As provided under Article 114 up to 123, of the Revised Penal Code, this includes: Treason, Conspiracy, and Proposal to Commit Treason, Misprision of Treason, Espionage, Inciting to war or giving motives for reprisals, violation of neutrality, correspondence with hostile country, Flight to enemy’s country, piracy in general and mutiny on the high seas or in Philippine waters; and Qualified piracy.

Our country can certainly assume extra territorial jurisdiction should ‘the war crime of conscripting or enlisting children under the age of 15 into the armed forces or using them to participate actively in hostilities’, or ‘involvement in hostilities of a person under 18 if committed outside the Philippines, by or against a Philippine citizen’ fall under the foregoing paragraphs of Art. 2 of the Revised Penal Code. As such, our country certainly may assume jurisdiction over said cases, and Philippine Courts may exercise jurisdiction over the same. Also, under the concept of a continuing offense, the offender may also be extra territorially

liable.

If the offender is abroad, our country may ask for the extradition of said individual from a friendly country or a country where we have extradition treaties, otherwise we will just have to wait when he returns to the Philippines to face trial.”

4. On the meaning of ‘direct participation’ in hostilities in the State Party’s legislation and practices [Issue No. 4], OPAPP provided the response:

“The direct participation of children in hostilities refer to the involvement of children as combatants and/or those who take support roles as spies, guides, couriers, messengers, cooks, medics, and other similar capacities. Children Involved in Armed Conflict (CIAC) are either forcibly, compulsory, or voluntarily recruited by either state or non-state armed forces/ groups.

Article X, Section 22 Item (b) of Republic Act 7610 specifically prohibits the recruitment / use of children in armed conflict. Specifically, it provides that ‘Children shall not be recruited to become members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines or its civilian units or other armed groups, not they be allowed to take part in the fighting or used as guides, couriers, or spies.’”

5. On the one year compulsory Citizen’s Army Training (CAT) which is required for high school students aged 15 and 16, [Issue No. 5], DepEd provided the attached copy (Annex I) of the Revised Implementing Guidelines of the Citizenship Advancement Training (CAT) for both Public and Private Secondary Schools.

The said DepEd order states that the Citizenship Advancement Training (CAT) is a restructuring of the Citizen’s Army Training, and is a component of Makabayan, separate from MAPEH in the Fourth Year of High School. It aims to enhance the students’ social responsibility and commitment to the development of their communities and develop their ability to uphold law and order as they assume active participation in community activities and in assisting the members of the community especially in times of emergency. The components of the CAT program are (a) Military Orientation for students to gain knowledge, skills, and understanding of the rights and duties of citizenship; (b) Community Service that help achieve the general welfare and betterment of life of the community members; and (c) Public Safety and Law Enforcement Service which encompasses all programs and activities which are contributory to the maintenance of peace and order and public safety and observance of and compliance with laws.

6. On the measures taken to implement the Committee’s recommendation upon consideration of the State party’s second periodic report and related to children in armed conflict [Issue No. 6], this Council would like to refer to the provisions lifted from the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> CRC Report of the GRP:

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### A. Children in situations of emergency

244. The number of children displaced by armed conflict every year during the last four years is estimated at around 30,000 to 50,000. These children have lost the security of their normal family and community relationships, the familiarity of their surroundings, suffer serious psychosocial stress, experience school disruption, and have to seek refuge in overcrowded evacuation centers without adequate health and water and sanitation services. Children living in conflict areas also experience the threat of human rights violations, particularly those who are suspected of giving support to armed groups and whose parents and siblings are suspected members of insurgent or rebel groups.

245. Involvement of children in armed conflict is still being reported despite denials of the state armed forces and non-state armed groups. Both the government forces and the non-state entities maintain a policy of non-recruitment of children for direct hostilities; however, children have been involved in non-combat duties and mobilization for “self-defense” and “jihad”. There has been no evidence of systematic or forcible recruitment of children by the New Peoples Army (NPA) of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), yet the children volunteer their support mainly because of the influence of family, peers, and community members. Based on reports from combined sources (DSWD, DND, AFP and NGOs), there were 186 children involved in armed conflict (CIAC) for the period 2001-2006. Of this number, 174 children have been demobilized and reunited with their families and brought back to school. The Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE) also implemented the Community Sala’am (Peace) Corp Project wherein 300 children between the ages of nine (9) and seventeen (17) years old were given education, skills training, employment and livelihood assistance for the period 2005-2006.

246. The Philippine government continues to pursue a comprehensive peace process to address armed conflict with rebel groups. This presently involves the implementation of a National Peace Plan, which is chapter 14 of the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan. Among the efforts being undertaken with significant contribution to preventing and stopping the recruitment of children in armed hostilities are as follows:

- (a) The peace process with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which includes security through cessation of hostilities, rehabilitation and development of conflict-affected areas, and negotiations on the issue of ancestral domain.
- (b) Implementation of the interim peace agreements with two (2) local communist movements (the RPMP-RPA-ABB and the RPMM), particularly in terms of rehabilitation of conflict-affected communities, cessation of hostilities, reintegration, and protection of civil and political rights particularly of the alleged political offenders and political prisoners.
- (c) Continuous monitoring of and advocacy on the implementation of the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) between the Philippine government and the Communist Party of the Philippines-New Peoples Army-National Democratic Front (CPP-NPA-NDF).

- (d) Complementary measures to reduce the level of violence on the ground such as support to local and indigenous peacemaking and peacekeeping mechanisms including peace zones, and support to the implementation and civilian monitoring of ceasefire agreements.
- (e) Efforts to complete the implementation of existing final peace agreements with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Cordillera Peoples Liberation Army (CPLA).
- (f) Efforts to mainstream former rebels through reintegration and rehabilitation programmes, including the President's issuance in March 2007 of Administrative Order No. 172, creating the National Committee on Social Integration under the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP). The Social Integration Programme includes the process of arms management, forces management, and the transition of former rebels to civilian life.
- (g) Rehabilitation, development and healing of conflict-affected areas through various local and ODA-funded programmes and projects.

247. The peace process at the regional level has been strengthened through the issuance of Executive Order No. 569 on 26 September 2006, mandating the Regional KALAHI Convergence Groups (RKCG) and Presidential Assistants as peace process mechanisms and Regional Peace Advisors respectively. Their tasks include, among others, activating a quick response mechanism to help prevent the outbreak and escalation of armed conflicts, and to address the humanitarian needs and other urgent concerns arising from ongoing hostilities.

248. More specifically, the government has pushed further the implementation of a Comprehensive Programme for Children Involved in Armed Conflict (CP-CIAC) which was launched through Executive Order No. 56 on 26 November 2001. Led by OPAPP and the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC), the programme seeks to prevent the recruitment of children in armed hostilities, as well as rehabilitate and reintegrate those who have surfaced or been recovered. At the present, the programme is implemented by 18 government agencies. Among the efforts undertaken under the programme are: (a) policy development and coordination, (b) database development, (c) case monitoring, (d) provision of services to CIAC, (e) development and implementation of training modules, and (f) development and use of advocacy and IEC materials. Also integral to the programme is strengthening the peace constituency and promoting a culture of peace through peace education, promotion of interfaith dialogues, peace forum, and media-based information and education campaign.

249. Through the CP-CIAC, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) provides a package of social services and interventions designed to protect and rehabilitate children affected directly or indirectly by armed conflict. This package includes provisions for the special needs of girl child soldiers. To provide guidance to various agencies and levels of government participating in the CP-CIAC, the Department of Social Welfare and Development issued in 2002 Administrative Order No. 84, "Procedures in the Handling and Treatment of Children Involved in Armed Conflict". The procedures apply to children involved in armed conflict either as courier, guide, spy, combatant, or any similar capacity. On the other hand, OPAPP monitors compliance of concerned agencies, including the Armed Forces of the Philippines, to existing guidelines on the handling and treatment of

rescued and recovered CIAC.

250. DSWD also takes custody of CIAC based on a "Memorandum of Understanding in the Handling and Treatment of Children Involved in Armed Conflict" forged between and among the Department of National Defense (DND), the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Philippine National Police (PNP), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Department of Health (DOH), the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), and the National Programme for Unification and Development Council (NPUDC) signed on 21 March 2000.

251. The Emergency Operation Philippines-Assistance to Conflict-Affected Mindanao (EMOP-ACAM) joint initiative of DSWD and the UN World Food Programme also supports the peace process in Mindanao by addressing the food security needs of its vulnerable population living in conflict-affected communities. The project benefits families in five provinces, namely, Lanao del Norte (Region 10), North Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat (Region 12), Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao in ARMM. As of July 2007, the project scaled up implementation as follows:

- (a) Food for Education. This component reaches 306,594 school children for take-home ration and 19,226 children for on-site feeding.
- (b) Mother and Child Nutrition. Food baskets have been provided to 43,448 pregnant and lactating women and 37,709 children below two years old.
- (c) Food for Work (FFW) and Food for Training (FFT) activities reached 15,174 and 23,052 beneficiaries respectively.
- (d) Food for Internally Displaced Persons (IDP). This covered 34,182 affected families in North Cotabato and 68,130 displaced families in Maguindanao.
- (e) Sulu Emergency Operation for IDPs. More than 276,500 affected families were provided with food assistance.

252. Regarding displaced children as a result of armed conflict, various programmes and projects are being implemented to ensure that these children are protected and have access to basic services, including Days of Peace (DoP) campaign. The agreement with the MILF to conduct the Days of Peace campaign has been a result of continuing CRC education and awareness-raising with partners on the ground involving LGUs, NGOs and FBOs. With support from UNICEF and with the involvement of OPAPP, DOH, DILG and DepEd, the DoP campaign launched in April 2007 aims at creating a corridor of peace and reaching out to around 250,000 under-five children, 50,000 children less than one year old, and 60,000 mothers in 70 conflict-affected barangays in Mindanao. The services provided include immunization, micronutrient supplementation, de-worming, breastfeeding counseling, birth registration and distribution of basic school supplies. As a rolling campaign, it shall expand its areas of coverage in other peace agreement areas and the UNICEF-assisted CPC 6 areas in Luzon and Visayas.

253. Also under the GOP-UNICEF 6<sup>th</sup> Country Programme for Children 2005-2009, special protection measures and basic social services to boys and girls affected by armed

conflict have been provided and supported. As of mid-2007, more than 20,000 children in 64 conflict-affected barangays (45 in Mindanao, 15 in Visayas and 4 in Luzon) had been provided basic services such health and nutrition, early childhood care, basic education, and technical-vocational education and training. Other measures undertaken were youth organizing, rights advocacy, community-based peace education, and disaster management. Moreover, in the conflict-ridden regions of Sulu, Samar, Surigao del Sur, Quezon, North Cotabato and Maguindanao over 10,000 families who were displaced because of escalating hostilities between government forces and non-state actors were given emergency relief and psychosocial support services (e.g. art therapy); 3,000 pupils received school packs; and around 60,000 internally displaced persons (IDP) were provided with medicines and water purifiers. The provision of these services were facilitated through NGO partners involved in community organizing (CO) in rural, remote and hard-to-reach areas. A sustained CO strategy helps empower disadvantaged families and build community resilience and capacity to cope with emergency situations. To enable children and their families to cope with disasters and emergency situations, WVDF has introduced the concept of a child-friendly space (CFS). A CFS provides a protective environment for children ensuring their safety and continuous healthy physical, psychosocial, moral and spiritual development despite adverse circumstances.

254. The Philippines recently agreed to join the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) initiative following the UN Security Council Resolution No. 1612. Resolution No. 1612 asks for the establishment of MRM on six grave violations of children's rights in situations of armed conflict in countries where recruitment of children is still being reported. With support from UNICEF, the Sub-Committee on Children Affected by Armed Conflict and Displacement (SC-CAACD) of the Council for the Welfare of Children has pushed for the establishment of MRM on children involved in armed conflict.

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## **IX. Optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child**

### **B. Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict**

320. The Philippine report on the implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict was submitted in March 2007. Some highlights of that report will be mentioned here. On the whole, the Government of the Philippines has already adopted and implemented several measures to fulfill its obligations to the Optional Protocol. Major CIAC-related policy and legislative measures had already been formulated and enforced (some even before the Philippines ratified the Optional Protocol in August 2003). Some of these policy measures include the following:

- (a) The National Strategic Framework for Plan Development for Children 2000-2025 or Child 21, which established a rights-based, open, consultative and participatory process for the implementation of programmes for child protection and development.
- (b) The National Plan of Action for Children (NPAC) 2005-2010, which is a five-year strategic plan based on Child 21, aims at reducing disparities in indicators of rights and well-being of children across regions in the country. A companion document of

NPAC is the Comprehensive Programme on Child Protection (CPCP), 2006-2010 which aims at creating a safe, protective, and caring environment for children.

- (c) Executive Order No. 56 or the Comprehensive Programme Framework for Children in Armed Conflict was issued on 26 November 2001. This complementary framework outlines and promotes rescue, recovery and reintegration of CIAC in the Philippines. It has been implemented through the Comprehensive Programme for Children Involved in Armed Conflict (CIAC) supervised by the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) in tandem with the Council for the Welfare of Children. The programme includes an advocacy component which aims to create awareness on the CIAC issue and educate the different sectors of society through various media and activities such as peace education, peace camps, and peace forums.
- (d) Also underpinning the policy environment in the Philippines for peace and development is Executive Order No. 3 of 2001 which defines policy direction and administrative structure for the government's comprehensive peace agenda vis-à-vis the basic issues and contexts related to the armed conflict including the phenomenon of CIAC. The law calls for, among others, the protection of civilians in armed conflict situations; reintegration, rehabilitation and reconciliation programmes for former combatants; and peace education and advocacy programmes including human rights education.

321. The main thrusts of government action towards child protection and compliance to the provisions of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict include the following:

- (a) The government has taken legislative and administrative steps to both prohibit and punish compulsory recruitment into the armed forces of children less than 18 years of age.
- (b) The government has prohibited compulsory or voluntary recruitment, and any use of children less than 18 years of age by armed groups distinct from the national armed forces through legislative, administrative and other measures.
- (c) The government has raised the minimum age for voluntary recruitment from that set in the CRC; described safeguards to prevent forced recruitment; and set minimum safeguards to include legitimacy of voluntary recruitment.
- (d) The government has prohibited, prevented and criminalized recruitment of children for use in hostilities by non-state armed forces (NSAs).
- (e) The government has taken steps to implement and promote the Optional Protocol and to provide for the demobilization, recovery and reintegration of persons recruited or used in hostilities.
- (f) The government has provided legislative and administrative measures to ensure that any child arrested, detained or interned for reasons related to the conflict enjoy the special protection provided by the Optional Protocol, the CRC, and the IHL.
- (g) The government is seriously enhancing local capacities for compliance to the

Optional Protocol through technical and financial cooperation and other arrangements with national and international organizations.

- (h) The government has been setting the groundwork for concrete interventions at the community level through the implementation of necessary programmes, projects and activities.
- (i) The government has laid down the framework for pursuing comprehensive and lasting peace in the country, including addressing issues concerning CIAC through the implementation, coordination, monitoring, and integration of all government peace initiatives with the participation of civil society organizations and non-state duty bearers.

322. Despite the above efforts, the government still needs to consider and improve on the following aspects in order to fully comply with the Optional Protocol:

- (a) The state's policy of prohibiting the recruitment of children and their employment in combat and related activities is only a starting point in the prevention of CIAC. The tasks of creating, developing and strengthening institutional consciousness on human rights and international humanitarian concepts, especially those enshrined in the CRC and the Optional Protocol on CIAC must be continuously pursued in order to help the country's defense and security forces to properly respond to CIAC issues.
- (b) The legal and administrative mechanisms on non-recruitment and non-participation of minors in armed conflict have to be reinforced by the implementation of education and training programmes whose objectives, content, methods and strategies must be geared towards clarifying and strengthening institutional policies as well as instilling human rights, especially child rights, and humanitarian concepts.
- (c) Training and education programmes are futile when these are not translated into observable positive changes. The country's police and military forces who receive training and education must show identifiable indications of effective learning in their values, attitudes, skills and knowledge especially in actual conduct and disposition regarding CIAC. The steps and procedures to track, assess, and make responsive actions regarding noted changes must form part of the framework in addressing gaps in compliance to the Optional Protocol.
- (d) The proper government agencies must undertake serious investigations and researches especially in remote areas where children are reportedly being recruited into paramilitary structures to provide security and protection against ordinary criminal elements such as cattle rustlers, thieves and other armed bandits. These paramilitary organizations are also often field to fight guerilla insurgents. Notable of these organizations are the Civilian Volunteers Organizations (CVO) and the Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Units (CAFGU) which are also being organized and trained for civil military operations such as social investigation, counter-propaganda, and other counter-insurgency functions.
- (e) The government must explore possible and acceptable ways to include the issue of child soldiers in all negotiations and peace talks. It recognizes that including the issue of child soldiers in the current peace talks entails the authorized government agencies to design and situate programmes and projects under the National Peace

Plan in the context of the Optional Protocol on CIAC.

- (f) The government must take all necessary measures to provide adequate human, financial and technical resources for the effective implementation of the Comprehensive Child protection Programme and towards full compliance with the Optional Protocol on CIAC. The government must seriously study ways and means to reduce its debt service-interest payments so that adequate resources can be allocated to child protection initiatives.

7. On the treatment received by children who are arrested for reasons related to the armed conflict, including for being associated with an armed group [Issue No. 7], DSWD provided the inputs below:

CIAC rescued or surrendered and turned-over to the DSWD were provided psychosocial intervention and eventually re-integrated to their family and community. Those who cannot be re-integrated with their families due to security reasons were temporarily admitted in DSWD residential care facilities or placed in licensed foster families if available, while re-integration is being worked out. Services provided by DSWD residential care facilities include:

- Financial Assistance
- Legal Assistance
- Counseling
- Occupational Skills
- Non-formal Education
- Psycho-social Enhancement
- Values Formation and Spiritual Enrichment.

8. On the demobilization and integration of children recruited by Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) [Issue No. 8], OPAPP provided the response:

“Since the formation of the Joint GRP-MILF Ceasefire Committees in 1998, there had been no reported case of CIAC from among the ranks of the MILF who had been rescued/recovered or apprehended and turned over to local authorities.

With the re-imposition of the ceasefire agreement in 2003, the deployment of the Malaysian-led International Monitoring Team (IMT) in 2004, and the accompanying prospects of a negotiated political statement, most MILF communities (including children found in these communities) have slowly shifted towards a process of normalization and active involvement in rehabilitation and development work. The actual process of demobilization for CIAC is envisioned to take place within the larger context of DDR for all MILF personnel once a final peace accord with the said group is signed.

Regular monitoring of child recruitment in MILF communities is difficult to establish owing to the relative inaccessibility of Muslim communities and the negative dynamics usually

present between the residents and the local authorities. In addition, certain cultural nuances commonly observed among Moro (ethno-linguistic tribes professing Islam) communities complicate the prospects of successfully implementing any DDR-related program.

While reports of continuing recruitment persist to this day, the Joint Ceasefire Committees and the IMT are tasked to make sure that children's involvement in actual armed skirmishes is avoided altogether. It is likewise noted that the sharp decrease in the number of armed skirmishes between the AFP/ PNP and MILF significantly insulates children in MILF communities from exposure to actual armed violence.

Direct service providers within the Inter-Agency Committee on the CIAC (IAC CIAC) Program have existing standard tools and procedures on the handling and treatment of CIAC cases in the event that victims surface or are rescued/ recovered.