
Online consultation with Member States

Survey response 1

Information details

Name of the State:
PHILIPPINES

Questions

<p>1. What innovative practices did authorities in your state adopt to facilitate civil society's input to decision-making during the COVID-19 crisis, including through online channels? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)</p> <p>Civil Society in the Philippines is composed of 101,000 registered non-profit organizations, around 60,000 of which are non-government organizations (NGO) engaged in advocacy work as mentioned in the Philippine Human Rights Situationer, May 2020.</p> <p>An innovative approach in accessing civil society's inputs and contributions during the CoViD-19 crisis is the recognition of their role as well as "non-government organizations and the private sector" in "inter-sectoral collaboration to establish preparedness and ensure efficient government response" under Executive Order (EO) No. 168 s. 2014 Creating the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases in the PH.</p> <p>In adopting a whole-of-nation/ whole-of-society approach, the Inter-Agency Task Force has been freely engaging all concerned stakeholders, including civil society in regularly conducted online public conferences.</p>
<p>2. Are there innovative practices that authorities in your country used to enable safe and inclusive online participation, which encourages a diversity of participation, with a particular emphasis on underrepresented parts of civil society? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)</p> <p>As in the previous item no., civil society in the PH is composed of 101,000 registered non-profit organizations, around 60,000 of which are non-government organizations (NGO) engaged in advocacy work as mentioned in the Philippine Human Rights Situationer, May 2020.</p> <p>A vast majority of these civil society organizations are not engaged nor known to the United Nations (UN) or other foreign stakeholders/ observers.</p> <p>Thus, the State conducted the first PH Human Rights Defenders National Assembly on 14 December 2021 as an innovative practice to enable safe and inclusive online participation encouraging a diverse participation of underrepresented, marginalized and/ or unknown civil society actors.</p> <p>More than 150 human rights defenders and civil society organizations/ actors participated in the said online assembly to commemorate Human Rights Day in 2021 together with foreign stakeholders/ observers like the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, representatives from other international organizations/ bodies such as the UN Resident Coordinator in the Philippines, UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women, UN High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), International Labor Organization (ILO), the European Union (EU) Delegation in the Philippines and other foreign permanent missions and embassies in the Philippines.</p> <p>The first Philippine Human Rights Defenders National Assembly or PHRDNA is an innovative practice to bridge the gap between foreign stakeholders/ observers and previously unknown marginalized civil society organizations and/ or human rights defenders in the grass-roots level.</p> <p>Notable among these marginalized human rights defenders representing vulnerable sectors are mothers of disappeared children taken by violent extremist groups and indigenous peoples from geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas.</p>

3. Do you have examples of good practice in including civil society in designing and implementing strategies to respond to the pandemic? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)

A good practice in responding to the pandemic is the adoption of a whole-of-nation/ whole-of-society approach.

Thus, the Philippines enacted Republic Act (RA) No. 11469 or the “Bayanihan to Heal As One Act” into law declaring the existence of a national emergency arising from CoViD-19 and a national policy that was legislated through the extensive participation of all stakeholders concerned, including civil society, especially partnering with humanitarian agencies and the private sector.

From the start of the CoViD-19 pandemic in the Philippines, sometime March 2020 to present, the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases has adopted the policy of conducting regular public conferences in “real-time” allowing the inclusive participation of civil society during these conferences, specifically members of civil society who are authorities in the various fields of public health or on matters discussed during the particular conference.

4. Do you have examples of innovative steps taken to minimise the impact of measures imposed during the pandemic, including emergency measures, on the free and safe functioning of civil society and on public freedoms (of expression, access to information, assembly, and association) as well as on the protection of personal data and privacy? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)

Recognizing the limits enshrined in Articles 18, 19 and 22 of the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) on the right to freedom of expression, assembly and association, the State adopted innovative measures in the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (with Amendments as of 08 October 2020) Omnibus Guidelines on the Implementation of Community Quarantine.

The said omnibus guidelines recognizes the free and safe functioning of “humanitarian assistance personnel, civil society organizations, non-government-organizations and United Nations-Humanitarian Country Teams, as well as individuals performing relief operations” during the duration of community quarantine period in Section 2, item no. 4 (c-xvi).

5. Did authorities in your state implement any innovative measures to protect and facilitate civil society access to resources in the COVID-19 context? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)

Authorities in the State implements an inclusive whole-of-nation/ whole-of-government approach in facilitating access of beneficiaries to resources in the CoViD-19 context. Beneficiaries under the whole-of-nation/ whole-of-society approach includes civil society.

Thus, laws and guidelines issued in the CoVid-19 context ensures access and the smooth delivery of essential goods and services as well as to protect against “hoarding, profiteering, injurious speculations, manipulation of prices, product deceptions, cartels, monopolies and other restraint of trade or other pernicious practices affecting the supply, distribution and movement” of essential goods and services.

6. Has your state identified any good practices to identify, and protect civil society from, online intimidation and attacks (e.g. online threats, harassment, organized smear campaigns etc.)? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)

The State, as good practice, adheres to the rule of law, respects and recognizes the independence of the legislative and judicial branch of government.

Thus, the State recognizes the independence of the legislature through the Philippine Senate in identifying and clarifying allegations of intimidation, attacks, threats and harassment to protect civil society in the conduct of its own investigations.

The Philippine Senate publicly conducted an investigation in between October 2020 to March 2021 with the participation of all concerned stakeholders resulting in two extensive Senate reports comprehensively dissecting issues regarding intimidation, attacks, threats and harassment found in Senate Report No. 559 dated 20 October 2020 and Committee Report No. 186 dated 10 March 2021.

Also, laws enacted by the legislature such as the Anti-Terror Act of 2020 specifically adopted provisions submitted by civil society organizations and/ or human rights defenders to protect civic space and the practice of “advocacy, protest, dissent, stoppage of work, industrial or mass action, and other similar exercises of civil and political rights” in Section 4 of Republic Act No. 11479.

In addition, as good practice, the State also respects the independence of the judiciary through the Supreme Court of the Philippines in its landmark rulings identifying and clarifying alleged intimidation, attacks, threats and harassment.

The following are examples of judicial remedies that seeks to protect civil society and individuals:

1. Criminal procedure of filing a case in Court for threats and coercion in Article 282 to 289 of the Revised Penal Code of the Philippines which is a remedy available for the protection of another against any person who shall threaten another with the infliction upon the person, honor or property of the latter or of his family of any wrong amounting to a crime.

2. Petition for a Writ of Amparo in Court which is a remedy available to any person whose right to life, liberty security is violated or threatened with violation by an unlawful act or omission of a public official or employee, or of a private individual or entity.