

[EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 141, June 25, 2021]

ADOPTING AS A NATIONAL PRIORITY THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MEASURES TO ADDRESS THE ROOT CAUSES OF THE RISING NUMBER OF TEENAGE PREGNANCIES, AND MOBILIZING GOVERNMENT AGENCIES FOR THE PURPOSE

WHEREAS, under Republic Act (RA) No. 10354 or the "Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012," the State recognizes and guarantees the human rights of all persons including the right to health which includes reproductive health, the right to education and information, and the right to choose and make decisions for themselves in accordance with their religious convictions, ethics, cultural beliefs, and the demands of responsible parenthood;

WHEREAS, among the declared strategies and priority legislative agenda under the updated Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022 is to reach the demographic dividend across all regions by, among others, preventing teenage pregnancies, while the Philippine Youth Development Plan (PYDP) 2017-2022 aims to strengthen youth participation in responsible sexual and reproductive health, by lowering the incidence of teenage pregnancies, unintended pregnancies, and maternal mortality, and increasing safe motherhood practices;

WHEREAS, data from the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System of the Philippine Statistics Authority recorded a total of 183,967 live births among adolescents aged 10-19 years in 2018, equivalent to 504 live births per day in the said age group, and 180,916 in 2019 for the same age group, equivalent to 495 live births per day;

WHEREAS, according to a January 2020 Policy Brief by the United Nations Population Fund Philippines, out of all live births within the adolescent age group, only 3% is fathered by men of the same age group, and that such pregnancies may be a result of coercion and unequal power relations between girls and older men;

WHEREAS, the number of adolescent pregnancies are expected to rise, as girls already living in dysfunctional homes spend more time with their households as a result of the pandemic and are thereby more exposed to abuse;

WHEREAS, based on a 2016 study by the United Nations Population Fund Philippines, adolescents lose an aggregate lifetime earnings of about P33 Billion due to early childbearing;

WHEREAS, childbearing in adolescence carries increased risks of health problems for both mother and child, like anemia, sexually transmitted infections, and postpartum hemorrhage; investing in people; (ii) advance and protect public health; (iii) address concerns on population, reproductive health and sustainable development; (iv) promote equal gender opportunities in all spheres of public policies and programs; and (v) ensure effective coordination of national government programs for poverty reduction at the local level;

WHEREAS, under RA No. 8044 or the "Youth in Nation-Building Act," among the objectives of the National Youth Commission (NYC) is to provide leadership in the formulation of policies and in the setting of priorities and direction of alt youth promotion and development programs and activities, and to harness and develop the full potential of the youth as partners in nation-building;

WHEREAS, under RA No. 10742 or the "*Sangguniang Kabataan Reform Act of 2015*," the *Sangguniang Kabataan* (SK) shall initiate and implement, in coordination with any national government agency and/or any private or nongovernment institution, programs and projects designed to promote general welfare, development and empowerment of the youth;

WHEREAS, the State acknowledges that at the root of the rising number of adolescent pregnancies are engendered patterns of discrimination, deep-seated norms and attitudes that normalize and justify violence against women and children, Jack of information and education, and the vulnerability and exclusion of women and children living in remote and rural areas, and recognizes that it is imperative to carefully coordinate, rationalize, monitor and assess the efforts of concerned government agencies and instrumentalities to ensure a whole-of-government approach in implementing measures to curb the rising number of teenage pregnancies, pursuant to the objectives of PDP 2017-2022 and the PYDP 2017-2022;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE, President of the Republic of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by the Constitution and existing laws, do hereby order:

Section 1. Prevention of Teenage Pregnancies a National Priority. The implementation of measures to address the root causes of the rising number of adolescent pregnancies is hereby adopted as a National Priority. To this end, the State shall mobilize existing coordinative and legal mechanisms related to the prevention of adolescent pregnancies, and to strengthen the adolescents' capacity to make autonomous and informed decisions about their reproductive and sexual health by ensuring access to comprehensive sexuality education and reproductive health and rights services.

Section 2. Interventions for the Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancies. Consistent with their respective mandates, subject to coordination of efforts through the HDPR Cabinet Cluster, all government agencies and instrumentalities shall identify and implement as far as practicable interventions related to the prevention of adolescent pregnancies, such as comprehensive sexuality education, education and employment opportunities for young people, and health promotion through media and communications. Agencies shall closely monitor the implementation of interventions in their regional and field offices and units.

In the implementation of the identified programs and interventions, all concerned agencies and instrumentalities shall maximize the use of digital and online platforms to reach adolescents and young people, and raise awareness on the the protection and promotion of reproductive health and rights.

These agencies and instrumentalities shall exert all efforts to reach especially those in geographically isolated and depressed areas such as island municipalities, upland communities, hard-to-reach areas, and conflict-affected areas by empowering their