



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
A. Francisco Gold Condominium II EDSA cor. Mapagmahal St.
Diliman, Quezon City

March 10, 2008

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR
NO. 2008-35

TO : ALL PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS, CITY/MUNICIPAL MAYORS,
PUNONG BARANGAYS, DILG REGIONAL DIRECTORS/FIELD
OFFICERS AND OTHERS CONCERNED

SUBJECT : CELEBRATION OF THE GIRL CHILD WEEK

Proclamation No. 759 issued on March 6, 1996, has declared every fourth week of March as the "**Protection and Gender-Fair Treatment of the Girl Child Week**".

The Proclamation underscores the need to provide every girl who is below 18 years of age with equal opportunities and adequate protection to prepare her for her role in community development. It also manifests the Philippine's commitment to the Declaration of the World Summit for Children, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Beijing Declaration,

The observance of the Girl Child Week on March 23-29, 2008 shall be guided by the theme: "**Karapatan ng Batang Babae Pahalagahan, Higit sa Panahon ng Disaster**". This is to highlight the special needs of girl children in situation of emergencies and disasters such that all emergency preparedness and management strategies should incorporate the development and protection needs of girl children, to minimize, if not eliminate, the chance of becoming victims of abuse in the midst of uncertainty during emergencies.

All Local Chief Executives are hereby encouraged to spearhead the week-long celebration by undertaking activities in line with the said theme, such as, but not limited to, the following:

- Hanging of the streamer (attached is the prescribed format)
- Discussion on the special needs of girl child during Flag Raising Ceremonies for the Week in the barangays, offices and schools.
- Fora and other advocacy activities where Child Focused Disaster Management and the Special Needs of Girl-Children in Situations of Disasters will be discussed.

DILG Regional Directors and Field Officers are hereby directed to facilitate the immediate and widest dissemination of this Circular and submit a report on the activities undertaken by the LGUs to the Secretary, through the National Barangay Operations Office (NBOO), within thirty (30) days after the week-long celebration. A briefer on the said celebration will be downloaded, through email, to all DILG Regional Offices.

For information, guidance and compliance.

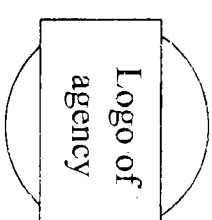
By Authority of the Secretary:

AUSTERE A. PANADERO
Undersecretary for Local Government



(Name of Agency)

joins the



COUNCIL FOR THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN

in the observance of the

Girl Child Week

With the theme:

*Karapatan ng Batang Babae Pahalagahan,
Higit sa Panahon ng 'Disaster'
March 23-29, 2008*

***Specifications:**

COUNCIL FOR THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN -- Times New Roman, Blue
Girl Child Week -- Times New Roman, Blue
Karapatan ng Batang Babae... (theme) -- Times New Roman, Italic, Blue



The Convention on the Rights of the Child guarantees girl-children the same rights as boys, in support of the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of sex.

Girl-children have unique needs: derived from being female with a particular role in the biological reproduction when they come of age.

Who is the Girl-Child?

- ❖ She is a girl below 18 years old
- ❖ She has rights both as a child and as a girl, regardless of age, race, religion, social and economic status
- ❖ Her future as an adult depends on her upbringing

Girl-Children Have Rights, Too! Council for the Welfare of Children, 2002.

What is the Girl-Child Framework?

- ✦ The Girl Child Framework is a bridge between the Philippine Plan for Gender Responsive Development (PPGD) and Child 21 or the Philippine National Strategic Framework for Plan Development for Children.
- ✦ The Girl Child Framework adopts a gender and development (GAD) plan for children through the rights-based and life cycle approach adopted by Child 21.
- ✦ It aims to address discrimination against the girl child and recognizes girl child rights as priority development agenda.
- ✦ For this to happen, the Girl Child Framework must be updated and mainstreamed in the programmes of national government agencies and localized in the LGU development plans.
- ✦ There is also a need for age & gender disaggregation of data on all relevant child rights indicators at all levels of documentation and reporting.

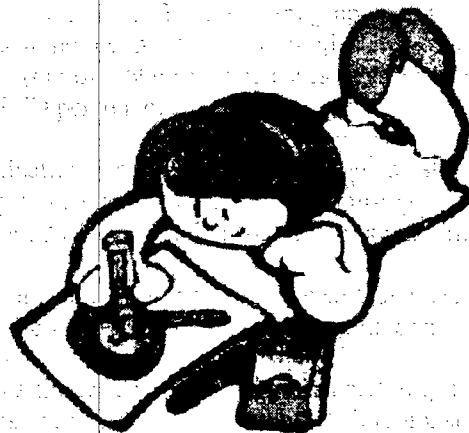
Philippine Third and Fourth Periodic Reports on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2007

What is happening to the Filipino girl-child?

Some critical issues affecting Filipino girl children, are:

- ❖ vulnerability to economic exploitation, sexual abuse and exploitation, trafficking, pornography and violence at home, in school and in other institutional settings; (out of 7,606 reported cases of child abuse in 2006, 70 percent of victims were girls);
- ❖ discrimination against girls in education and skills training as manifested in refusal of admissions for pregnant adolescents and unwed adolescent mothers;
- ❖ inaccessible and unfriendly youth health services and inadequate sexual and reproductive health care;
- ❖ cultural attitudes and practices prejudicial to girl children, particularly Muslim and IP children, such as pre-arranged, forced, and early marriages;
- ❖ Limited opportunities, compared to boys, for participation in decision-making in the family and the community.

Philippine Third and Fourth Periodic Reports on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2007



COUNCIL FOR THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN

Sub-Committee on Children Affected by Armed Conflict & Displacement (SC CAACD)
10 Apo Street Sta. Mesa Heights, Quezon City 1114 Tel. (02) 7811039 local 2003; Telefax 742 2010
cwc@cwc.gov.ph; CWC_SC_CAACD@yahoo.com

The GIRL CHILD, in FOCUS



Child Protection in Emergencies

Every child's development is a concern in emergencies. The stresses of displacement and changes to families and communities mean that children are subject to neglect or the failure to provide for a child's basic needs.

Disruption of routine, constraints on resources, and/or the loss of schools, recreational and other facilities - through destruction, abandonment or other means, or displacement - can deprive children of opportunities to mix with peers, play, learn and develop new skills.

Experience shows that the best way to help children who have undergone such events is to ensure their basic needs are met and that they feel safe and cared for, ideally within their own family or at least their own community.

Even during an emergency, children will seek a place to play, and while parents will want them to stay nearby, some boys and girls will look further afield. Latrines, open fires and wells are all potential hazards, and the design of camps may not have taken the needs of children into consideration. Thus, it is important to assess the conditions of where children are gathering and playing.

In high-profile emergencies, many groups will be on site with the declared aim of helping children. They will have a range of skills and resources at their disposal - from significant budgets and trained staff to minimal resources and well-meaning volunteers. It is important that there is coordination of all child protection actors, and agreement on and adherence to standards.

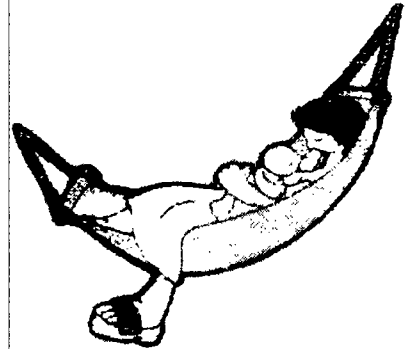
Do no harm. Maintain any indigenous protective elements in boys' and girls' lives. No matter how depleted materially or spiritually, family and community members are the key actors to protect children.

Have a deep sensitivity on the issues that may be raised and how to interact with children in distress.

Ensure that cultural norms and respect are taken into account, especially in relation to gender and behavior.

Make certain that children are not repeatedly interviewed about their experiences.

UNICEF Rapid Assessment Guide and Tools for Child Protection in Emergencies



Girl-Children and Disasters

Girl-Children have unique needs, and in times of emergencies, efforts should be taken to minimize, if not eliminate, the chance of their being victims of abuse in the midst of uncertainty during emergencies.

Example of strategies that could be undertaken to protect girl-children in emergency situations include:

- ✓ Temporary shelters should also designate a separate sleeping area for girl-children. If possible, breastfeeding areas should also be identified to provide a secure place for the mothers and their babies.
- ✓ Whenever possible, evacuation centers should have designated latrines and/or bathing rooms for girl-children. Minimum strategies may be done also by ensuring that latrines and bathing rooms are secure.
- ✓ Relief goods should include supplies such as disposable napkins and brasseries for use of adolescent girl-children.
- ✓ Distribution of relief goods should also consider that child and/or women-headed households. Care should be taken that they are incorporated in the list of intended recipients of assistance.



COUNCIL FOR THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN

Sub-Committee on Children Affected by Armed Conflict & Displacement (SC CAACD)
 19 Apo Street Sta. Mesa Heights, Quezon City 1114 Tel: (02) 7811039 locs. 2003; Telefax: 742 2010
cwc@cwc.gov.ph, CWC_SC_CAACD@yahoo.com