



Citizens' Monitoring of Financing for COVID-19 Response and Recovery

June 4, 2021 / 1:30PM – 4:30PM

CONCEPT NOTE

The COVID-19 pandemic has far-reaching implications on poverty eradication and potentially sets back whatever gains have been made towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Social Watch Philippines (SWP) sees the importance for budget advocacy groups to do its part in ensuring that sufficient public resources are raised to fund COVID-19 responses and that they are utilized effectively, efficiently, and in a timely manner.

The Philippines government has secured billions of fresh loans to finance its response to the pandemic. SWP is undertaking the **Citizens' Monitoring of Financing for COVID-19 Response and Recovery** project to generate interest and capacitate CSOs to undertake and enhance spaces for meaningful citizens monitoring of COVID-19 loans. The preliminary focus of the citizens' monitoring is the **USD750 million** loan from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) which co-finances the COVID-19 Active Response and Expenditure Support (CARES) Program.

SWP has conducted a multi-level research: one, in order to understand how the CARES program was operationalized and implemented by the relevant agencies, three program studies were conducted namely, COVID-19 Testing (Department of Health), Small Business Wage Subsidy Program (Department of Finance), and Social Amelioration Program (Department of Social Welfare and Development); two, SWP also conducted field-based research in the cities of Manila and Tacloban, in order to generate citizens views on how local communities benefited from these programs; and three, an assessment of the Gender Monitoring Matrix was also conducted, and, using a gender rights lens, an analysis was applied in relation to the three government programs and two field studies. Finally, all these researches have been consolidated, integrating the various findings, as well as recommendations into a Citizens' Report of the AIIB Financing for COVID-19 Response and Recovery (May 28, 2020 – May 31, 2021). The Citizens' Report aims to generate learning to help ensure that the loan proceeds are spent in the most effective, efficient, and timely manner. It is also essential to monitor the impacts of servicing these debts in tax and budget policies in the long term and to engage the government into taking fiscal measures that will promote sustainable, equitable, and adequate financing for development.

The objective of the **Policy Dialogue** is to present the **Final Report** to policymakers, to the CSO community, the media, and other stakeholders, in particular the key findings as well as recommendations, and to collectively generate learnings and insights on the importance of citizens' engagement in the various aspects of public financing, including the accessing of loans, for government programs to combat the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Programme

TIME/SCHEDULE	TOPIC
01:30-1:35 (5 minutes)	Preliminaries & House Rules
1:35-1:45 (10 minutes)	Welcome Remarks Prof. Ma. Victoria Raquiza, PhD Co-convenor, Social Watch Philippines Professor, UP National College of Public Administration and Governance
01:45-02:15 (30 minutes)	Project Report – Citizens’ Monitoring of Financing for COVID-19 Response and Recovery Wilhelmina Cabo Project Writer and Former UP NCPAG Professor
2:15-2:25 (10 minutes)	Brief presentation of the Gender Monitoring Matrix Christine Galunan Researcher on the Gender Monitoring Matrix
2:25-2:30 (5 minutes)	Acknowledgement of Panel of Reactors
2:30-2:35 (5 minutes)	Reaction from the Department of Budget and Management Asec. Rolando U. Toledo Spokesperson, Department of Budget and Management
2:35-2:40 (5 minutes)	Reaction from the Philippine Commission on Women DD Maria Kristine Josefina Balmes Deputy Director for Operations, Philippine Commission on Women
2:40-2:45 (5 minutes)	Reaction from the Department of Health Director Maria Soledad Q. Antonio, MD, PhD, MPH, DPAFP, CESE Director IV, Bureau of International Health Cooperation
2:45-2:50 (5 minutes)	Reaction from the Department of Social Welfare and Development Ms. Cynthia B. Lagasca Division Chief, Policy Development & Planning Bureau (Research and Evaluation Division)
2:50-2:55 (5 minutes)	Reaction from the Department of Finance
2:55-3:00 (5 minutes)	Reaction from the Department of Labor and Employment
3:00-3:05 (5 minutes)	Group photo
3:05-4:00 (55 minutes)	Open forum, reaction, additional comments/questions
4:00-4:10 (10 minutes)	Closing remarks Ana Maria Nemenzo WomanHealth Philippines
4:10-4:30 (20 minutes)	End of Program – announcements, invitations, etc.

Moderator:

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This citizens’ monitoring project is being undertaken by SWP in partnership with Oxfam.