

Statement of Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau

Women FIGHT for Change!

Even as we commemorate the international women's day, women today still continue to face violence, misogyny, and discrimination perpetuated, tolerated, and even encouraged by no less than the President himself.

In his two years of office, Duterte has mastered the institutionalization of misogyny in the government through his statements and actions. He has repeatedly violated the Magna Carta of Women and trampled on the 1987 Constitution, showing how little regard he has for women and girls.

Misogyny and discrimination against women come in many forms and are normalized. In fact, sexual violence is experienced by countless women and girls in the streets, at school, at work, and even in their own homes. State inaction is further manifested when violence is made a laughing matter by leaders and institutions, and incessantly reproduced by society, making it more difficult for women and girls to access justice.

On the other hand, we applaud the years of advocacy of women and labor groups to pass the Extended Maternity Leave Law. However, this law is seen by corporations and companies as additional cost to their operations thereby posing a threat to 15.5 million women¹ in the labor force. Moreover, we see violence at the center of lowering the minimum age of criminal responsibility (MACR) from 15 to 12 years old without scientific and evidence-based reasoning.

The TRAIN law had caused prices of goods to soar as high as 6.7% in October 2018, leaving the poor, especially women, with no option but to make both ends meet. In addition, the recently passed law on rice tariffication means death to small-scale local farmers, which puts women in the worst position as they are the ones who primarily secure food for the family. Enough of these anti-poor and anti-women economic policies!

Furthermore, this election has been used to commit violence and discrimination against women. Some senatoriables continue to use women as a form of entertainment either through lewd jokes and comments. Not to mention the candidates who relentlessly lie to our faces, despite charges of plunder, deny the existence of human rights violations during the Marcos regime, and continue their support to the misogynist President in their search for power over the marginalized sectors.

As we celebrate the International Women's Month, we give pride to all mothers, women, young women, and girls who fought hard for our rights to be fully realized. At the same time, this celebration also serves as a reminder that as women, we will continue to protest, fight, and resist all forms of violence, misogyny, and discrimination, because women deserve no less!

¹ Based on July 2018 data on *Employed Persons by Sex, Age Group and Highest Grade Completed* from the Philippine Statistics Authority