

Statement of the World March of Women - Pilipinas

International Women's Day 2019: Celebrating Hard-won Victories; Affirming the Women's Role in the Forefront of Women 's and Peoples' Struggles

Through our mass actions, public gatherings, and different forms of protest, we are commemorating this year's International Women's Day as an occasion to celebrate the victories that we have won and to affirm our continuing fight against forces that set us back in our hard-won struggles—forces of patriarchy, of misogyny, as embodied by President Duterte himself, his government, and apparatuses of the state.

Women and women's movements are under attack worldwide by conservative, authoritarian, misogynistic—and even rogue—regimes. In the Philippines, President Duterte has been all out in his attack on women even before the start of his government—in his remarks that encouraged sexual violence of women and have debased women's place in the family, community, and society; in his actions that have emboldened his fellow misogynists in government, in the private/business sector, among ordinary folk; in his policies that rob us of our human rights—even that most basic of rights, the right to live and live with dignity.

Duterte's government has used and continues to use and conspire with the state apparatuses in its attack on women's social, political, and economic rights:

- the police force in the execution of the war on drugs that have resulted in extra-judicial killings of more than 20,000 people in the estimates of human rights organizations, a war on drugs that is really a war on the poor aimed at 'cleaning up' urban poor communities and freeing these spaces that are now intended for private and commercial sector development;
- the military in its implementation of martial law in Mindanao and in bombing Marawi, a war that have also cost the lives, shelter and livelihood of innocent Muslims and indigenous peoples, a war that is also underpinned by business interests whose goal is to control the natural and economic resources of the region;
- still the military in its counter-insurgency and anti-terrorist campaigns which are being used to justify the attacks and harassments of activists and human rights defenders; and killings of community and indigenous leaders fighting for their lands, claiming they were legitimate military operations;
- the legislature in its efforts to change the Constitution in order to weaken, if not erase, its human rights provisions and open up the country's resources to full foreign ownership and control
- still the legislature in pushing for laws that would renege on the country's previous commitments to human rights, such as the proposed lowering of minimum age for criminal responsibility, inaction to amend the Anti-Rape Law and place lack of

- consent at its centre, inaction on the anti-prostitution bill that would shift accountability from prostituted persons onto pimps and buyers;
- the legislature in liberalizing imports through rice tariffication or RA 11203, an anti-farmer law that has brought the rice industry to its deathbed, wherein big corporations only stand to benefit in importing unlimited volumes rice, when what is needed is support to local production and not to importation;
 - the business/corporate sector in collusion with legislators and politicians in ensuring that the anti-ENDO law will not pass;
 - the bureaucracy, such as the Department of Agrarian Reform, in overturning the gains of the agrarian reform law by allowing more land conversions.

As we continue to confront these assaults on women's rights, victories, and advocacies, we want this International Women's Day to be a day to affirm our role in the forefront not only of women's but also of the peoples' struggles. We have witnessed recently the fruit of more than two decades of work, particularly by those from the labor sector, in the signing into law of the Extended Maternity Leave and Universal Health Coverage. But we shall still press forward as women and hand-in-hand with people's organizations and broader social movements in defending the Constitution and fighting charter change; in putting a stop to this government's misogyny and violence against women; in winning legislative advocacies; in ensuring that the coming elections will truly be an opportunity to advance women's and the people's social, economic, and political rights, and not the selfish agenda of this administration.

Bagong Kamalayan Prostitution Survivors' Collective, Inc.

BUKLOD – Olongapo

Center for Migrants' Advocacy (CMA)

Coalition Against Trafficking in Women – Asia Pacific (CATW-AP)

Foundation for Media Alternatives (FMA)

LILAK (Purple Action for Indigenous Women's Rights)

Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan (PKKK)

Partido Manggagawa (PM) – Women

SARILAYA

Sentro ng Nagkakaisa at Progresibong Manggagawa (SENTRO) – Women

WomanHealth Philippines

Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau (WLB)

Youth and Students Advancing Gender Equality (YSAGE)

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