

**11th Meeting of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly
Fact Finding Committee (AIFOCOM)
12-16 May, 2014, Lao, PDR**

**REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
COUNTRY PROGRESS REPORT ON DRUG CONTROL¹**

I. Introduction

The Philippine Government is still relentless in its fight against illegal drugs. The year 2013 has been fruitful for the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) as they have inflicted significant damage to the operations of drug trafficking organizations and personalities in the country. PDEA has conducted various anti-drug operation that have resulted in the arrest of drug personalities and seizure of billion pesos worth of dangerous drugs, controlled precursors, essential chemicals and laboratory equipment. PDEA has also discovered new modus operandi of drug syndicates in their illegal drug transactions and activities like the use of milk boxes, tea bags, mail and parcel in trafficking of drugs.

Recognizing these challenges posed by the illegal drugs problem in the country, PDEA has been directed to:

1. focus on high-value targets and high-impact operations;
2. ensure airtight cases against illegal drug personalities;
3. exercise ethical leadership and command responsibility; and
4. advocate a culture of cooperation with all stakeholders.

II. Drug Situation

¹ Source: Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) Annual Report 2013

Methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu remains the dominant drug of choice among drug abusers in the country followed by marijuana or cannabis sativa and methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA) or ecstasy. In 2013, 83.97% of the illegal drugs arrests involved that of shabu. The supply of illegal drugs is sustained by the pervasive illicit drug trafficking of various drug groups and personalities. These groups play a vital role in the proliferation of illegal drugs as through their networks, they facilitate the circulation of drugs from the source down to the user.

PDEA has identified several local and international drug syndicates to be operating in the Philippines. For several years, it has closely watched the activities of the African Drug Syndicates and the Filipino-Chinese Drug Syndicates. Recently however, it was established that the Mexican-Sinaloa Drug Cartel has also been operating in the country. The syndicates usually use minors in their operations in order to avoid apprehension. For the year, 148 minors were rescued from their involvement in illegal drug activities, and were turned-over to the Department of Social Welfare and Development. Consistent with previous data, males dominate the arrested drug personalities at 86.60%. For the local drug groups, this year's drug operations have been intensified as some of them have been found to be heavily armed. One hundred (100) of the 202 firearms recovered this year were high-powered thus they pose a greater challenge to the drug law enforcers.

III. Trafficking Situation

Drug traffickers have come up with new ways to conceal their transactions and activities. They take advantage of the country's vulnerability particularly its porous shoreline and entry and exit points. Last year, PDEA has observed the following modus operandi in the trafficking of illegal drugs: the use of milk boxes, Chinese tea bags, slippers, cell phone charger, and the use of mail and parcel courier. Several incidents of confiscation were recorded and they are either seized in the airports or intercepted in the freight forwarders. Some have even attempted to smuggle illegal drugs to the country by swallowing capsules containing shabu.

IV. Legislation / National Drug Control Policy

Republic Act (RA) No. 9165, or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 is the national anti-drug law of the Philippine government. It was passed by Philippine Congress in 2002 as they recognized the need to strengthen the Philippine drug law enforcement system. RA 9165 defined more concrete courses of action for the national anti-drug campaign and imposes heavier penalties to offenders.

The enactment of RA 9165 reorganized the Philippine drug law enforcement system as it created the PDEA and the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) under the Office of the President. Under the law, the DDB is tasked to formulate, develop and establish the comprehensive national drug use prevention and control policies while PDEA has the duty to implement these policies and the provisions of RA 9165 relative to the unlawful acts and penalties involving any dangerous drugs and/or controlled precursor and essential chemicals.

A year after, Executive Order (EO) No. 218 was issued to strengthen PDEA as the lead agency in the campaign against illegal drugs. EO 218 gave PDEA operational supervision of the anti-drug units by other law enforcement agencies like: the Philippine National Police Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operation Task Force (PNP-AIDSOTF), the Anti-Illegal Drug Special Operation Task Force of the National Bureau of Investigation; and the Customs Task Group and Task Forces on Dangerous Drugs and Controlled Chemicals of the Bureau of Customs.

V. Enforcement

For the year 2013, PDEA and other anti-drug units of other law enforcement agencies have accomplished the following:

1. Conduct of 11,474 various anti-drug operations which resulted in the arrest of 9,162 drug personalities. They include:

Pusher - 5,514

Possessor - 2,355

User - 819

Drug den visitor/client – 265

Drug den owner/maintainer – 119

Protector – 33

Drug den employee – 25

Marijuana Cultivator – 22

Cohort – 4

Facilitator/Coordinator – 3

Financier – 2

Clandestine Laboratory Chemist – 1

2. seizure of Php5.4 billion worth of dangerous drugs, controlled precursors and essential chemicals and laboratory equipment and recovery of 100 high-powered and 102 low-powered firearms;

3. Neutralization of 18 local drug groups;

4. Dismantling of 1 clandestine shabu laboratory;

5. Dismantling of 1 marijuana tiangge, 7 shabu tiangge and 83 drug dens;

6. Eradication of 451 marijuana plantation sites;

7. Filing of 10,502 drug cases; and

8. Destruction of dangerous drugs, controlled precursors and essential chemicals and laboratory equipment worth Php1.54 billion.

The highest seizure in a single operation for the year was the 433.24 kilograms of shabu worth Php2.1 billion during an interdiction operation conducted by combined elements of PNP Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force (AIDSOTF),

Bureau of Customs, Zambales Provincial Police Office, and Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority in Sta. Monica Subdivision, Barangay Sto. Tomas, Subic, Zambales on August 11, 2013.

The second highest seizure for the year was achieved during the implementation of a Search Warrant conducted by combined elements of PDEA, PNP AIDSOTF, RAIDSOTG Police Regional Office 4A, Batangas Provincial Police Office, and Lipa City Police at LPL Ranch, Barangay Inosluban, Lipa City, Batangas on December 25, 2013 which resulted in the seizure of 79.833 kilograms of shabu worth Php399.17 million.

VI. Preventive Education

To strengthen the anti-drug campaign of PDEA in the communities, the Agency conducts drug demand reduction activities nationwide in coordination with various partners and shareholders. The conduct of advocacy activities is aimed at increasing the awareness of the public on the government's anti-drug campaign and the strategies to prevent from being lured into illegal drug activities.

PDEA has also conducted more than 15 thousand seminars, lectures and symposia in various cities and towns throughout the country. Dialogues with the parents and youth of the barangay were also conducted to increase awareness of the residents on the ill effects of illegal drugs in families and communities.

VII. Treatment And Rehabilitation

As an important facet of drug demand reduction, the DDB together with the Department of Health (DOH) provides treatment and rehabilitation to victims of drug abuse. Through the use of effective treatment modalities, drug dependents are being trained to kick out the habit to become productive citizens of the country once again.

There are several government accredited treatment and rehabilitation facilities throughout the country. DDB and DOH continually monitors trends in treatment and rehabilitation as well as issues and concerns that families and recovering drug dependents face during the process.

VIII. International Cooperation

As the drug problem recognizes no borders, Philippine drug enforcement agencies like DDB and PDEA maintain cooperation with regional and international agencies by adhering to treaties, formulating agreements, conducting tie-up projects, attending foreign conferences, exchanging drug reports, hosting study tours and field visits, and contributing to drug-related international efforts.

DDB has represented the country in international gatherings such as: the Workshop Meeting on the Revision of the Life Skills Manual in Jakarta last March 2012 (sponsored by the US State Department Office and Colombo Plan Drug Advisory Programme (CPDAP), 33rd ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters Meeting in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia, and Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters in Phnom Penh, Cambodia last April 2012s.

PDEA on the other hand, attended the following conferences:

- 1) 18th Asia Pacific Operational Drug Enforcement Conference (ADEC-18)
February 25-27,2013 Tokyo, Japan
- 2) 56th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)
March 11-15,2013 Vienna, Austria
- 3) Working Group Meeting of Asia-Pacific Information & Coordination Center for Combating Drug Crimes April 3-4, 2013 Bangkok, Thailand
- 4) Global Symposium of Narcotics Control and Exchanging of Informations
April 30 - May 2, 2013 Riyadh, SaudiArabia
- 5) 30th Annual International Drug Enforcement Conference (IDEC-30)

June 5-7, 2013 Moscow, Russia

6) 23rd Anti-Drug Liaison Officials Meeting for International Cooperation (ADLOMICO) June 26-28, 2013 Jeju, South Korea

7) 34th Meeting of the ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD) September 24- 27, 2013 Yangon, Myanmar

IX. Conclusion

The problem of illegal drugs is persistent in the country and the Philippine government is committed to continue and intensify its unwavering war against this menace. Whatever success we have achieved last year, was made possible through the effort of our drug enforcement agencies, local government units, non-government organizations and the community. The Filipino people are hopeful that we can build on this success and achieve someday a drug-free nation.

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5.06.14