PHILIPPINE STATEMENT

We, the representatives of the government of the Republic of the Philippines would like to share our progress and best practices in the implementation of the “Incheon Strategy Framework” to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in the Asia and the Pacific region. The highlights of our accomplishments include Goal 3 (Enhance access to the physical environment, public transportation, knowledge and information and communication), Goal 4 (Strengthening social protection) and Goal 8 (Improve the reliability and comparability of disability data.

For Goal 3, our Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) has included in the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) the compliance to Bata Pambansa Blg. 344, otherwise known as the “Accessibility Law” as one of the criteria under the Social Protection component and this has started. The inclusion of the said indicator has improved the compliance of Local Government Units (LGUs) in the provision of access ramps in the city and municipal halls and health centers, including accessible toilets. In 2014, Out of the 1,676 LGUs, only 251 complied with the Accessibility but for 2016, it is now 306. In addition, DILG issued a Memorandum Circular (MC) mandating all rural health units to be accessible relative to Republic Act No. 10354 otherwise known as the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health (RPRH) law. With regard to access to transportation, our major airports, Cebu and Manila are accessible to PWDs in accordance to International standards. Some major sea ports like Batangas, Mindoro, Cebu City and Ormoc City are also accessible to PWDs. Disability Sensitivity Trainings are also being conducted among frontline service providers such as Airport and Sea port terminal personnel, Philippine Coast Guard and Railway transport personnel. These resulted to a decrease in the complaints of passengers with disabilities. Moreover, there is an increase of PWDs who can now exercise their right to suffrage because COMELEC is required by RA 10366 to establish accessible polling places for persons with disabilities and senior citizens since 2013. In view of this development, public elementary and secondary schools are now required to be accessible and this will also increase opportunity for PWDs to access quality education which is compulsory to elementary students but free education to both elementary and secondary students.

With regard to information and communication, our Department of Information, Communication and Technology (DICT) issued a Circular requiring all government websites to adopt the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (WCAG 2.0) as the minimum requirement to disability inclusive websites. In addition, PWDs are now capable of availing 20% discount in purchasing airplane tickets online in domestic travels. PWDs also enjoy 20% discount transportation fare in Transport Network Vehicle Services (TNVS) such UBER and GRAB because of disability accessible mobile applications.

Concerning Goal 4, our Sub-Committee on Health through the Department of Health (DOH) has developed and updated a registry of persons with disabilities since 2012 which is the basis for the monitoring of the issuance of Persons with Disabilities ID as per Republic Act 9442 as amended by Republic Act 10754. This data registry has been the basis for the development of health and wellness
program of the DOH which ensures that health services are available at the rural health units. It also paved the way for the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (Philhealth) packages such as Z benefit package for Mobility, Orthosis, Rehabilitation, Prosthesis Help (ZMORPH) and the rehabilitation package for children with disabilities. And to ensure that the benefit packages are responsive to the number of PWDs’ needs.

On the hand, the Department of Social Welfare and Development through its Modified Conditional Cash Transfer (MCCT) program included already families with persons with disabilities. There are about 1.1% or 313,574 who were identified as having hearing, visual, mental, orthopedic, communication disabilities and those with multiple disabilities.

Regarding Goal 8, our Philippine Statistics Authority has adopted the Washington Group Questions (WGQ) in the disability prevalence survey outsourced by the Department of Health (DOH), while the National Household Targeting System of the Department of Social Welfare and Development has included the WGQ in their previous surveys.

Moreover, the National Council on Disability Affairs is presently developing a National Disability Data Collection System (NDDCS) in partnership with the Polytechnic University of the Philippines to develop the first integrative disability data system.

The Philippines, also recognizes its present limitations and challenges especially in data collection at the local government units such as:

1. Constant change in LGU leadership and personnel, including service providers because of our limited personnel capable of conducting capacity building activities

2. Limited number of health and rehabilitation professionals in the provision of services at the local level.

3. Establishment of data collection system that will enhance the DOH registry since most LGUs have no skilled IT personnel and limited access to internet connectivity including acquisition of IT resources such as IT hardwares and softwares.

4. National agencies have low priority on disability data collection since they have no appreciation of the value of the data which resulted to low implementation of disability-related laws and low priority on budget support despite the provision under the General Appropriations Act for budget allocation.

Despite all these challenges, the Philippines is committed to realize the goals set by the “Incheon Strategy Framework” and will do more to accomplish the tasks in the next remaining five years.