



**INTER-AGENCY COUNCIL
ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
AND THEIR CHILDREN**

**GUIDELINES ON THE PARTICIPATION OF NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION
(NGO) REPRESENTATIVES IN THE INTER-AGENCY COUNCIL ON VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN (IACVAWC)**

In the Philippines, the government has recognized the crucial role of non-government and civil society participation in its pursuit for development. This is embodied in the 1987 Philippine Constitution, wherein the duty of the State to institutionalize the role of NGOs in development has been emphasized. In particular, Article II, Section 23 of the Constitution provides that the State shall encourage the participation of non-government, community-based, or sectoral organizations that promote the welfare of the nation. The relationship of the local government units (LGUs) with NGOs is also well-specified in the Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991. Section 34 of the Code states that the LGUs are mandated to promote the establishment and operation of people's and non-government organizations.

In the past and in contemporary times, women's organizations have been at the forefront in advocating for women's empowerment and gender equality. They were instrumental in achieving landmark victories such as women's suffrage (i.e. rights to vote and getting elected to public office) and the passage of legislations and policies for the promotion, fulfillment and protection of women's rights. As a result of their efforts, the Philippines is now recognized as one of the few countries in the world with a comprehensive body of laws on women's rights.

NGO involvement in the implementation of Republic Act (RA) 9262 is defined in Section 54 (d) of its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR). This provision directs IACVAWC to create a mechanism to ensure the participation of NGOs, academe, private sector, civic and religious groups in the implementation and monitoring of VAWC. This is further reiterated in Section 60 of the IRR which states that the council shall ensure the participation of NGOs working on VAWC to effectively implement the Act in whatever form appropriate, including but not limited to the following:

- Formulate and implement policies and programs to eliminate VAWC;
- Conduct capacity building activities for government personnel and share their experiences in handling VAWC cases;
- Coordinate with concerned agencies, LGUs, and other NGOs in reporting alleged perpetrators, rescuing victims of VAWC and conducting investigation, if necessary;
- Document VAWC cases;
- Disseminate related policies and guidelines to eliminate VAWC to their networks both at the local and international levels; and
- Provide services to the VAWC victim-survivor and their families.

However, RA 9262 does not have direct provisions for NGO membership in IACVAWC, unlike in RA 9208 (as amended by RA 10364) and RA 9775 wherein it is explicitly stipulated that there should be NGO representatives in the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) and the Inter-Agency Council Against Child Pornography (IACACP), respectively.

Inasmuch as a mechanism for the participation of NGO representatives in IACVAWC has yet to be created and institutionalized, this did not prevent them from actively participating in the 18-Day Campaign to End VAW and other related projects and activities to address violence against women.

Thus, in furtherance of the mandate of IACVAWC, as well as the National Strategic Plan 2017-2022 for the effective implementation of the Act, with a view of having an effective and efficient selection process of three (3) NGO representatives to IACVAWC, and of setting the procedures thereof, the following guidelines are hereby promulgated for strict implementation by all concerned.

Section 1. Title

These guidelines shall be known as Guidelines on the Participation of Non-Government Organization (NGO) Representatives in the Inter-Agency Council on Violence Against Women and their Children (IACVAWC).

Section 2. Purpose

These guidelines are promulgated to prescribe the procedure for the participation of 3 NGO representatives, with one representative from each theme – advocacy, legal assistance, and service provision, as agreed during the 34th IACVAWC Meeting last July 25, 2017.

Section 3. Criteria for Nominating NGOs and NGO Representatives

A. Minimum Requirements for NGOs. The following shall be the minimum requirements that render an NGO eligible for nomination:

1. The NGO is a duly licensed and registered non-stock, non-profit, and non-government organization in the Philippines;
2. The NGO has been implementing anti-VAW programs or services in the Philippines and has a proven track record of involvement in the advocacy against VAW, the prevention of VAW, or the protection of women victim-survivors for at least three (3) years;
3. Preferably, the NGO must be working with sectors or clients belonging to the marginalized sectors (i.e. IP, Muslim, women with disability);
4. It has a multi-disciplinary national or international network, or it is at least a member of an international or national NGO coalition or federation;
5. It must have a proven track record in collaborating with government or other non-government and civil society organizations for at least 3 years; and
6. There are no pending civil or administrative cases or investigation before any office, court, or tribunal against the NGO.

B. Minimum Requirements for NGO Representatives. The following shall be the minimum requirements that render the chosen representative of an NGO eligible for nomination:

1. The representative has been involved in the organization for at least 3 years;
2. Preferably, he or she is an acknowledged advocate on women's rights, familiar with gender and development principles and framework, willing to work with diverse groups, adheres to the ethical principles of integrity and fairness, gender-sensitive, and knowledgeable about VAW-related concerns of the sector his or her NGO is representing; and
3. There are no pending criminal, civil, or administrative cases or investigation before any office, court, or tribunal against the representative.

Section 4. Modality of NGO Participation

Inasmuch as RA 9262 does not have direct provisions for NGO membership in IACVAWC, NGO participation shall be consultative in nature. The following modalities shall be followed:

- A. NGO participation in the regular council meetings shall be by invitation only if there are important concerns that need to be discussed with them. The representatives shall take on an “observer” status during meetings;
- B. The Technical Working Committees (TWCs) representing Primary Prevention, Response System, and Cross Cutting Structures and Actions will also invite concerned NGOs to their meetings and workshops as needed;
- C. Their involvement could also be through a specific project or activity and shall be covered by a memorandum of agreement (similar with the arrangement with NAPC-WSC for the pilot testing of monitoring tool for assessing the functionality of Barangay VAW Desks); and
- D. Their attendance and participation in IACVAWC-led activities shall be ensured.

Section 5. Functions of NGOs and NGO Representatives

The selected NGOs and NGO representatives are expected to fulfill the following functions:

- A. Contribute to the development of gender-responsive anti-VAW policies, programs, and services;
- B. Assist IACVAWC in conducting advocacy to end VAW, awareness raising on women’s rights and related laws on gender-based violence, and capacity building for frontline service providers;
- C. Provide assistance in monitoring the functionality of local mechanisms on VAW such as PCAT-VAWC, LCAT-VAWC, and Barangay VAW Desks; and
- D. Attend Council and TWC meetings as necessary.

Section 6. Procedure for Application, Nomination, and Selection

A. Application

The IACVAWC Secretariat shall write to prospective NGOs regarding the opening of applicants for NGO participation in the Council. They will be requested accomplish a nomination form. NGOs may only be nominated upon submission of a fully accomplished nomination form.

B. Nomination by Member-Agencies

Any member-agency may nominate an NGO and its chosen representative. The agency may nominate only one (1) representative per theme, for a total of three (3) possible nominees coming from the identified themes – advocacy, legal assistance, and service provision. The nomination shall be in written form and submitted to the Chairperson, through the IACVAWC Secretariat.

The IACVAWC Secretariat shall determine a specific period for the submission of nomination forms, review the nominations, and validate the information and documents submitted. It shall then prepare a summary brief on all nominees who pre-qualified and shall furnish all member-agencies a copy of the brief and the corresponding nomination forms for their review, two weeks before a meeting is called for the selection process.

C. Selection of NGOs

In selecting an NGO during a meeting, the following procedures shall be observed:

1. The IACVAWC Secretariat shall present to the Council all nominations submitted.
2. Voting shall be done through secret balloting.
3. Tallying of scores shall be transparent and done immediately after all the votes are in.
4. An NGO may receive as many as eleven (11) votes. To be officially selected, an NGO needs only seven (7) votes, or the most number of votes in case there are abstentions, or by final vote of the Chairperson in case of a tie.

Section 7. Recognition of the Selected NGOs and NGO Representatives

The Council shall promulgate a resolution to formally appoint and recognize the selected NGOs and NGO representatives. It shall furnish a copy of the resolution to all member-agencies as well as to the selected NGOs. The member-agencies shall be enjoined to post the resolution in their corresponding websites.

Section 8. Duration and Termination of Participation

The selected NGOs and their representatives shall serve for a term of three (3) years and may serve as many terms for as long as it is selected and re-appointed. However, the Council, through a resolution can terminate an NGO's participation even prior to the expiration of its term when the NGO or its representative is no longer compliant to the minimum requirements set in Section 3.

Section 9. Effectivity

Upon its effectivity, the guidelines will remain in force until revoked by the vote of two-thirds of the member-agencies.