23rd session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration

Written statement by the Philippine Society for Public Administration

Agenda item 5: Institutions, Climate Action and Environment

The Asia-Pacific is the most disaster-prone region across the globe. The Philippines has been one of the world's most vulnerable countries to disasters due to its geographical landscape (Alihab et al., 2019, as cited in Reyes, et al., 2022) and developmental vulnerabilities, according to the World Risk Index. Located in the Pacific Ring of Fire and typhoon belt, the Philippines is highly susceptible to typhoons, volcanic eruptions, floods, earthquakes, and droughts, along with the other "everyday risks" associated with poverty and ill-planned urbanization.

The impacts of climate change need a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach. One of the many policies that the Philippines has adopted is the mainstreaming of futures thinking in disaster risk management and climate change planning and policy development through **disaster and climate education** – a new area of interest in the field of education (Preston, 2012, as cited in Reyes, et al., 2022). Education has played a significant role in disaster risk management, especially in crucial moments of survival when governments and other disaster relief organizations are unable to respond to the victims immediately. Since the rising number of disasters causes major damage and losses globally, governments are utilizing capacity-building initiatives and knowledge products to ensure that citizens are well-informed about individual preparedness strategies (Reyes, P., et.al., 2022).

Apart from education, Local Government Units (LGUs) in the Philippines are required by law to develop Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plans. A **Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan is a comprehensive and integrated plan that serves as a basis for the implementation of disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) programs, projects, and activities at the local level**. The Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan encompasses all four (4) thematic areas in the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Framework of the Philippines, namely: prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response, and rehabilitation and recovery (Berse, K., n.d).

Agenda item 6: Principles of Effective Governance for Sustainable Development

The Sustainable Development Goals represent the grand effort of the United Nations and the countries of the world to define global goals achievable within the near future. It has become apparent that the achievement of national goals has become linked with the achievement of collective goals for ending problems such as poverty, hunger, and ill health.

Research showed that the academe and scientific community in the Philippines to promote Sustainable Development Goals at the national and local levels can be organized and mobilized by **engaging existing research councils and universities** to enhance teaching research, outreach, and institutional resilience functions using Sustainable Development Goals collective resources, capacity-building, and opportunities. In another study, it was recommended that there is a need to **sharpen and deepen the curricula of higher education institutions for the teaching of Sustainable Development Goals**, in line with the *Ambisyon Natin 2040,* particularly in the curriculum of public administration schools (Brillantes, A., Suarez-Crizaldo, R., Comia, A.S., Ruiz, K.E., n.d.).

Moreover, Sustainable Development Goals localization has been a key strategy in the pursuit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. **Sustainable Development Goals localization includes the setting of goals and targets, identifying the means of implementation, and selecting indicators to monitor progress**. The process supports the Local Government Units for the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals through bottom-up interventions (Magno, F.A., Vargas, H.G., n.d.). SDGs in the regional and local capacities can also be engaged, enhanced, and sustained through **science and technology inputs** into its local problem-solving activities through the Department of Science and Technology (Romero, S.E., Cruz, L.J., n.d.).

Lastly, incorporating futures thinking in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals may include **futures literacy**, which is the ability to interrogate particular awaited futures and ascertain what assumptions support them. This lets communities act decisively in the present to fix and manage looked-for futures, instead of simply gearing up on the face of the inevitable. Putting communities front and center, and underpinning the co-creation of ideas may allow people to see the landscape in different ways and give people a voice in transformation planning at places in transition. Co-designing **knowledge-exchange workshops** would also challenge

people to reflect momentously and jointly on some of the most pressing issues such as destruction, diversity, and climate change (Gonzalez, E.T., n.d.).

Agenda item 7: Public Sector Workforce Matters

Putting the focus on the education sector, the **Philippine Higher Education Career System** was conceptualized to professionalize and further educate the leaders of higher education institutions in the country. It attempts to develop a pool of higher education executives who will be drawn from leaders and presidents of state universities and colleges. Apart from providing the necessary competencies required of state universities and college leaders, the program also professionalized and protected the process from partisan politics (Brilliantes, A., 2020).

Also, **futures thinking** is a competence or skill that may be helpful to the policymakers and public policy-making process, in order to improve the public sector workforce. Accompanied by three (3) other 21st century skills such as: *hiraya* foresight, knowledge co-creation, and phronetic leadership, futures thinking becomes a reliable and holistic approach to carving out desirable futures. Engaging in foresight and futures thinking through research, education, training, and advocacy to prepare for the future is imperative. Foresight and futures thinking is a skill needed by individuals and organizations to continuously develop (Perante-Calina, L.E., 2020).

Agenda item 8: Public Financial Management

The Philippine Public Financial Management anchors its future and reforms through the Sustainable Development Goals and the *Ambisyon Natin 2040*, towards a highly sustainable and future-proofed public financial management ecosystem by 2050.

Research conducted by Aromin, S.G. (2023) showed that there are four (4) plausible scenarios of public financial management under the Inayatullah (2008) model namely: **Fragmented PFM System, Reconditioned PFM System, Adaptive PFM Ecosystem**, and **Convergent PFM Ecosystem**. Each plausible future was also analyzed using the: **(1) PESTLE**

Analysis for the Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environment, which evaluated the internal political landscape, global economic considerations, and stakeholder relationships; **(2) People, Process, Technology + Policy (PPT+P) framework** which listed the key areas of reform in public financial management such as, but not limited to the (people) country's leadership, administration agenda, war and conflict, (process) transition mechanisms, devolution, economic situations and issues, (technology) strategic communication and media platforms, global digital trends, digital divide, (policy) fiscal policies, fiscal space and fiscal balance, and debt management issues; and **(3) Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis** which identified that the Philippines' leadership support is one of the country's strengths when it comes it public financial management reforms, however weakness is seen in the transitions mechanisms during changes in administration. Opportunities also arise due to the evolving role of Government-Owned and Controlled Corporations and Government Financial Institutions in public financial management, and the never-ending war and conflict continue to pose a threat.

Agenda item 9: Digital Government

The rise of data and digital technologies is rapidly transforming economies and societies, with enormous implications for the government's daily operations. 21st century governments must keep pace with the growing expectations of their citizens, manage the increasing pressure on their budgets, and react to new policy challenges. At the core of digital transformation is the confluence of four (4) profoundly disruptive technologies: cloud computing, big data, the Internet of Things (IoT), and artificial intelligence (Siebel T.M, 2019, as cited in Batapa-Sigue (n.d.).

The challenge posed in the Philippine context derives from the thought that a sustainable and resilient future is one that is effectively anchored on the **intelligent analysis of data with public value**, is visually accessible, and is useful to key decision-makers, especially in the public sector and to a digitally literate citizenry, provided that the country is continuously positioning itself as a strong economy moving towards digital transformation. Digital transformation in the government can be better realized when **data-driven approaches** are also in place. In pursuit of attaining a digitally empowered Philippines, **a strong framework is needed to sustain data-driven and responsive programs and policies (**Batapa-Sigue, J., n.d.).

Agenda item 10: Institution Building in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Areas

A study made by Loong (2030) entitled "Bangsamoro Region in 2030: Tourism Heaven or Terrorism Haven" elucidated the hope anchored on the newly created Bangsamoro Regional Government led by the former Moro Islamic Liberation Front leaders. The Bangsamoro Law was likened by former President Duterte to an effective vaccine against terrorism.

Using the concept **of Futures Thinking and the Futures Thinking Tools**, the research showed that the **prevention of terrorism in the Bangsamoro Region is not the sole responsibility of the Bangsamoro government**. Apart from the Regional Government, major responsibilities and contributions are required of the National Government. **Phronetic leadership** should also be used by the National and Bangsamoro leaders which may lead to the Bangsamoro Region being a heaven for tourists in 2030, which is characterized by a future with high socio-economic development, an effective security sector, and an efficient justice system.