



Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON AUDIT
Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City, Philippines



MEMORANDUM

No. : 2021 - 006
Date : MAR 23 2021

TO : All Assistant Commissioners, Directors, Officers-in-Charge, Supervising Auditors and Division Chiefs, Other Officials and Staff, and Other Concerned Personnel

SUBJECT : Operationalization of Online Women's Help Desk of the COA Gender and Development Focal Point System

The Commission on Audit (COA), in support of the laws on violence against women and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), has made the Committee on Protection of Women (CPW) an integral part of its Gender and Development Focal Point System (GFPS) under COA Resolution No. 2015-039¹ dated December 1, 2015. Thereunder, the CPW is responsible for the implementation of programs, projects, and activities focusing on protection of women and men against violence. One of the significant projects implemented by the CPW is the establishment of the Women's Help Desk (WHD) in the Central Office, Regional Offices and the Regional Satellite Audit Office-Negros Island and Siquijor through COA Memorandum No. 2017-020 dated December 18, 2017² The WHD manages the reporting of gender-based violence (GBV) or violence against women (VAW) involving COA employees.

The outbreak of the corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and the implementation of quarantine restrictions and other health protocols necessitate the shift in the handling and management of the WHD. Studies show that GBV tends to increase during every type of emergency, including epidemics. Women and girls become more vulnerable to abuses that alarmingly happen inside their own homes. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) estimated that there had been a 20 percent increase in domestic violence globally, while in the Philippines, a study

¹ Revised Guidelines on Mainstreaming Gender and Development (GAD) and the Adoption and Institutionalization of the GAD Strategic Framework in the Commission on Audit.

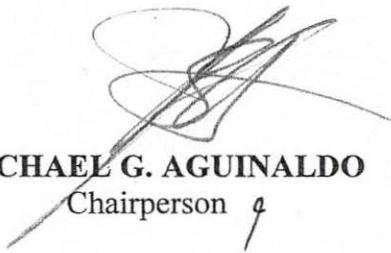
² Establishment and Guidelines on the Operationalization of the Women's Help Desk of the COA GAD Focal Point System.

commissioned by UNFPA approximates that intimate partner violence will increase by 16 percent during this pandemic.³

Thus, the COA GFPS-CPW, in coordination with the Information Technology Office, set up a web-based version of the WHD to remove the barriers to reporting and deliver a more efficient response to GBV and VAW cases, ensuring that assistance will be available to all COA employees when they need it.

The Online WHD is a dedicated link posted in the COA GAD Website (<https://coa.gov.ph/gad/>) and is accessible to all COA employees using their COA Intranet log-in credentials.

For the guidance of all concerned.


MICHAEL G. AGUINALDO
Chairperson *g*



³ Data from UNFPA, <https://philippines.un.org/en/105122-violence-against-women-and-girls-pandemic-we-must-end-now>.