



Welcome Remarks: CHR's continuing call for women's human rights and dignity for all

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Focal Commissioner on Women

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On behalf of the Commission on Human Rights, I welcome everyone to the Commission's ***Bulwagang Ka Pepe***. For those who do not know, Ka Pepe Diokno is considered the father of Philippine Human Rights. This hall was established by the Commission to welcome those who seek the Commission's help and for those who work to promote and protect human rights for all. For the 5th Commission, we see this hall as a place where everyone can converge for what Ka Pepe considers worthy of fighting for – human rights. Today we gather for women's human rights.

Let it be clear, lest we are once again accused of being biased and partisan that today's gathering was organized by a group of concerned women's organizations and individuals to call for upholding women's dignity and democracy, a call which the Commission on Human Rights, as Gender Ombud, fully supports. If the Commission is biased and partisan, it is biased and partisan for human rights.

Last weekend, in view of the calls to show an alleged sex video in Congress, the Commission as Gender Ombud, made its position very clear. It is a position taken by most of the women and women's organizations here. Like the calls and statements issued by women's groups, the women in media, and more recently a group of 34 women legislators, we opposed the showing of the sex video. We reiterated our previous advisory that such act constitutes a violation of the Anti- Photo and Video Voyeurism Law (RA 9995), and most of all, that it violates women's human to privacy and dignity, to non-discrimination, and freedom from violence

In making the call, we recognize that remaining silent when violations occur contributes to the violation of women everywhere.

This is not the first time that the Commission has made its stand as Gender Ombud, previously it has investigated statements which were alleged to be discriminatory and constitute violence against women. Two weeks ago, we sent a letter to the editor of the Manila Standard, reminding them of the provisions of the Magna Carta of Women. And today, we stand in solidarity with all women in opposing all forms of discrimination and violence against women including attacks directed against Senator De Lima and her person. And we do not intend to stop here we will continue making the call for human rights and dignity for all.

While the Commission as an Institution respects the co-equal branches of the government and their respective mandates, including the right of Congress to conduct investigations in aid of legislation; and of the executive to enforce the law – including investigation of crimes, we continue our call for respect for human rights – including women's human rights, for the rule of law and dignity for all. For these are the tasks and the mandate given us by the Constitution, and which we, as officers of the Commission on Human Rights, has sworn to fulfill.

Without further ado, we welcome everyone to this forum, including Senator De Lima, our women panelists from the Urban poor, the Youth, and from Sarilaya; and all the other women's and human rights organizations and individuals present. Let it be clear, that today, regardless of our political leanings, we stand on the side of women's human rights and dignity for all.

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