

# 18 Ensuring Security, Public Order, and Safety





# Ensuring Security, Public Order, and Safety

The realization of the Filipino people's long-term vision of a *matatag, maginhawa, at panatag na buhay para sa lahat* rests upon an environment that is safe, secure, and orderly. It is the government's duty to ensure that all Filipinos feel secure to walk and travel around all places in the country, without fear of harm to themselves and their property, and are able to go about their business, economic, and social pursuits. Moreover, as the country pursues greater economic development, it is imperative that the government safeguards national interests, territory, and sovereignty.

In the first three years of the Duterte Administration, efforts towards building a safe, secure, and orderly Philippines were intensified. While significant strides have been made in terms of putting in place structural reforms and various mechanisms in the security sector, recurring challenges persist and new threats to public safety have emerged. The protection of our country's entitlements, not only in the West Philippine Sea, has been one of the most pressing security concerns facing the country. Criminality and illegal drugs remain a prevalent threat to public safety, along with the increased frequency of natural disasters, isolated occurrences of human-induced disasters, and outbreak of diseases.

For the remainder of the Plan implementation, the government will maintain its independent and principled foreign policy. The government will strengthen the capabilities of its security forces to ensure that Philippine territories and sovereignty is defended. It will also remain committed in its campaign against all forms of criminality, illegal drugs, transnational crimes, trafficking-in-persons, and violent extremism. During times of health emergencies, the whole security sector will be mobilized to adequately respond to the needs of the people, including the provision of support to sectors that bring food, basic necessities, and essential services to them. Furthermore, the government will upgrade its systems and operations to conform to the new normal in keeping public order and safety. The protection of human rights, as enshrined in the Constitution, will be ensured, especially during the implementation of policies and measures in times of crisis and emergencies.

## Assessment and Challenges

**Assessment:** Successful negotiations for the formulation of the “Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) - China Code of Conduct in the South China Sea” have been pursued to ensure security and stability in the region. Various efforts have been exerted to engage claimant states and to promote a rules-based regime in the “South China Sea (SCS),” including the Single Draft Code of Conduct (COC) Negotiating Text, which will inform the formulation of the COC. The crime situation has generally improved with the reduction of average monthly index crime rate and the improvement of index crime solution efficiency rate from 2016 to 2018. A holistic approach, involving community and civil society groups, to the campaign against illegal drugs was introduced through the issuance of Executive Order (EO) 66, s. 2018, which institutionalized the Philippine Anti-illegal Drugs Strategy.

**Challenges:** Managing conflict and reducing tensions among claimant states of the SCS, continue to be the main challenge to external security. Various emerging and non-traditional threats such as radicalization, violent extremism, and increasing risks to disasters and health hazards continue to threaten the safety of Filipinos.

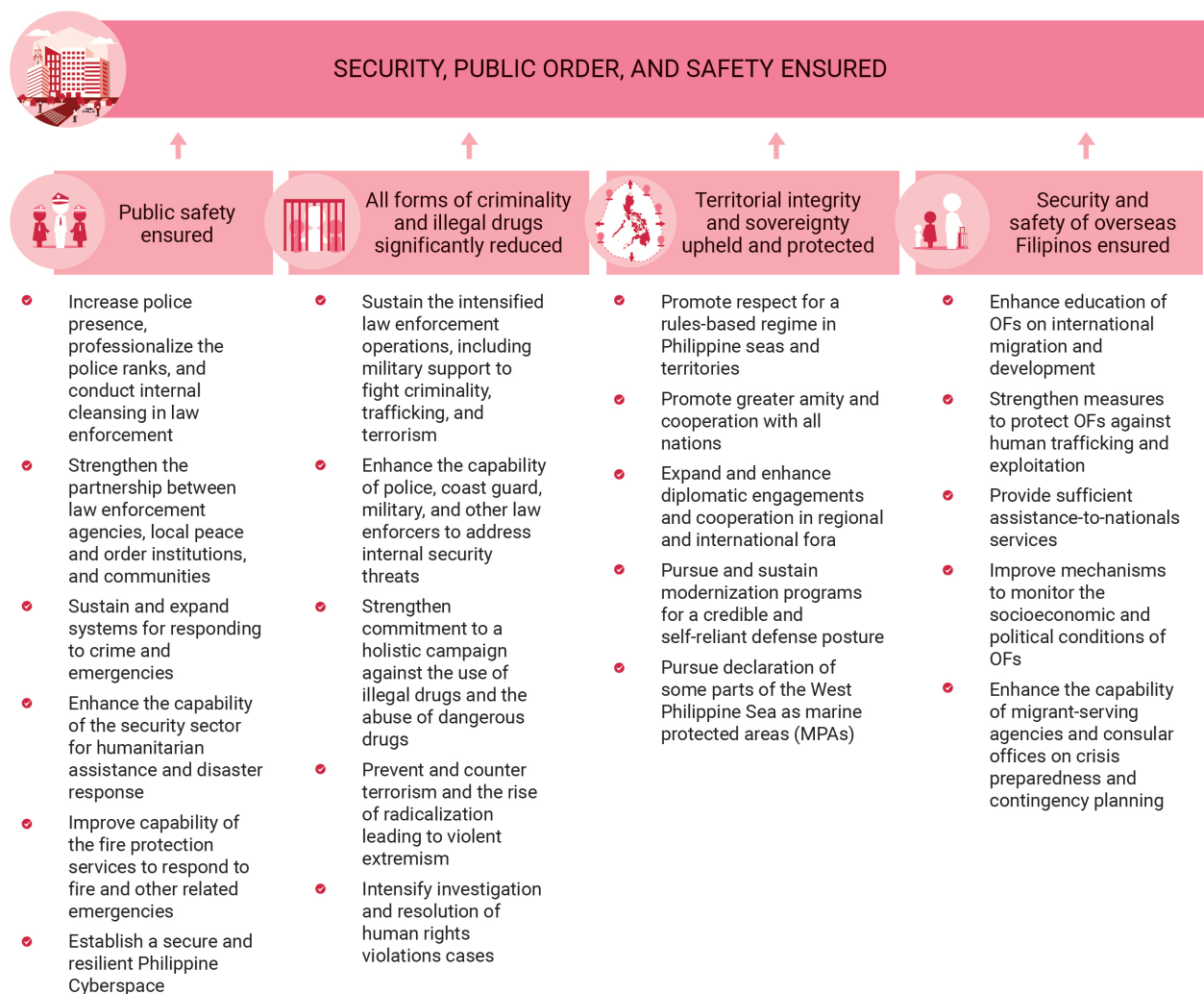
The outbreak of COVID-19 has posed another challenge to ensuring security and safety of the people. Despite the continued reduction in reports of criminal incidents even during the implementation of the community quarantine, law enforcement operations are stifled by the need to observe strict health protocols amidst limited supply of personal protective equipment (PPE), exposing enforcers to risk. On the other hand, incidence of cybercrimes is on the rise with the increased digital dependency of the public for financial and government transactions. The imposition of quarantine protocols also demands greater accountability from the government to ensure that human rights are protected and upheld.

# Strategic Framework

Ensuring security, safety, and public order is one of the foundational strategies in the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022, hence it is accorded high priority by the current administration. Achieving this goal will entail

pursuing the following strategic outcomes taking into consideration the new normal situation brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, as shown in Figure 18.1 below.

*Figure 18.1 Strategic Framework to Ensure Security, Public Order, and Safety*



Note: Refer to Migration on Chapter 21 for strategies relating to overseas Filipinos (OFs).

# Strategies

## Ensuring public safety

The government will continue to exert efforts in building the capabilities of public safety institutions to respond to all hazards, including pandemics, that pose risks to the safety of the people. This will include interventions in preventing the spread of radicalization resulting in violent extremism. The following strategies will be implemented to raise the standards for public safety.

**Increase police presence, professionalize the police ranks, and conduct internal cleansing in law enforcement.** Efforts to enhance police presence to maintain peace and order is primordial. As such, the Philippine National Police (PNP) will strive to meet the standard police-to-population ratio of 1:500 to greatly improve public safety. In addition, the government will pursue the construction of additional police stations in every community to further strengthen and expand their presence. To enhance police presence in communities, various programs and activities, such as *Pulis Nyo Po sa Barangay*, Barangay Peacekeeping Action Teams, and Barangay Information Networks, will be organized and empowered as force multipliers for the PNP. Moreover, the Community and Service-Oriented Policing (CSOP) System will be strengthened to help build ties between the PNP and communities and to strengthen the involvement of the latter in addressing public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime.

The PNP will continue its efforts in sustaining internal discipline within their ranks through the implementation of the Revitalized Internal Cleansing Strategy, with particular focus on getting rid of incompetent and corrupt police personnel. Reporting platforms such as the Integrity Monitoring and Enforcement Group (IMEG) Hotline aimed at receiving complaints and information from the public about erring police officers will also be sustained. Disciplinary actions and sanctions will be strictly imposed on those involved in corruption and other unlawful activities.

The Philippine Public Safety College and PNP will continue to institutionalize a highly efficient, competent, credible, and professionalized corps of peace and order and public safety personnel through the conduct of mandatory courses, specialized and in-service training, and continuing quality education and training to PNP uniformed personnel. Online training programs and digital platforms will form integral parts of the learning process during this pandemic situation.

Being at the frontline of the pandemic and other crisis situations, the police force will be equipped with adequate logistical support for its operations and be provided with sufficient PPE. This is to ensure the safety and protection of the police forces while performing their duty of upholding the rule of law to maintain peace and order and public safety in the middle of a public health crisis.

**Strengthen the partnership between law enforcement agencies, local peace and order institutions, and communities.** LGUs will continuously strengthen local peace and order institutions to effectively address criminality and illegal drugs within communities. Maintaining peace and order and discipline in communities is of utmost importance, as quarantine restrictions adversely affect the economy and people's livelihood and income. To this end, the government will capacitate local government unit (LGU) officials, especially those at the barangay level, as force multipliers and frontliners in the fight against COVID-19. Capacity-building interventions will include developing protocols on checkpoints and enforcement of community quarantine guidelines. The PNP will support other sectors, particularly those involved in supply chains, to ensure unhampered distribution of food and other essential goods, including medical supplies and equipment. Together with the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), the PNP will also develop a concise rules of engagement with their civilian counterparts.

**Sustain and expand systems for responding to crime and emergencies.** The implementation of the 911 Emergency Hotline Service, which serves as the direct access of the people to the government, will be sustained. The DILG will expand its coverage to better serve and respond to emergencies in the countryside. Moreover, training programs for telecommunicators and responders will be provided.

In response to challenges arising from the new normal, the DILG, the Department of Health (DOH), and other relevant security sector agencies will expand the utilization of internet and mobile-based reporting channels. This will enable frontliners to respond in a timely manner to the information and security needs of the public under the new normal.

**Enhance the capability of the security sector for humanitarian assistance and disaster response.** To enable security sector agencies to effectively respond to natural and human-induced disasters, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) through the Office of Civil Defense (OCD), will continue to provide capacity-building programs for disaster responders such as the National Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Capacity Building. In support of this, by the fourth quarter of 2020, the DILG is expected to implement the Safe Philippines Project Phase I which will provide police, public safety institutions, and emergency response units with the latest technologies and equipment on surveillance and monitoring, with its own integrated operations and command center, and a remote back-up center. This will allow them to predict, detect, prepare for and quickly respond to incidents, and mitigate and respond to disasters promptly. The security sector shall also continue to build its capacities to qualify for International Search and Rescue Advisory Group's (INSARAG) external classification, to be recognized for international response support.

In view of the new normal, the OCD will augment the Human Resources for Health through the establishment and mobilization of a pool of medical and allied health professionals and volunteers from the security sector. These personnel will

provide support in the implementation of social support programs, especially during public health emergencies. Duty bearers in the security sector will be capacitated on providing medical/paramedic services to enable and intensify the conduct of contact tracing and early detection.

In line with the implementation of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (NAP-WPS) 2017-2022, which acknowledges the vulnerability of women in emergency situations, the government will strengthen the coordination and harmonization of protection and rehabilitation initiatives for women and girls in various emergencies. It will also develop comprehensive gender- and culturally- sensitive disaster risk reduction and management programs that specifically highlight the context and vulnerabilities of women during emergencies, including women in frontline agencies.

Furthermore, the passage of the bill to establish the Department of Disaster Resilience will be actively pursued in the Congress. The bill will strengthen the coordination among agencies in providing response during emergencies and disasters. The bill should also be revisited to explicitly specify public health emergencies such as pandemics as disaster events, and identify measures that will enable the government to mitigate the impacts of such emergencies and to respond effectively. Meanwhile, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan (NDRRMP) will be revisited to reflect the aforementioned aspects, among others.

**Improve capability of the fire protection services to respond to fire and other related emergencies.** To safeguard life and property, as well as the country's vital and critical infrastructure, the capability of the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) will be strengthened. This includes fast-tracking the modernization of fire protection services and the implementation of the BFP service upgrade and capability upgrade programs. This will include the hiring of additional personnel and procurement of firefighting and communication equipment and fire trucks to service communities. The modernization programs of the BFP will likewise cover the procurement of PPE and other safety equipment for

firefighters during operations, especially those at the frontline providing assistance during pandemic response and other emergency situations. Strict compliance with health protocols and standards will be observed during operations to ensure not only the safety of the public, but also of the firefighters.

The capacity of the BFP to enforce the Fire Code and respond to fire and other related emergencies will be further strengthened. Priority will be given to urban areas with low firefighter-to-population ratio and to LGUs with inadequate fire protection services. Moreover, pursuant to DILG Memorandum Circular 2019-121, roads will be cleared of obstructions to ensure the smooth and quick access of responders.

**Establish a secure and resilient Philippine cyberspace.** The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) will ensure the successful implementation of the National Cybersecurity Plan (NCSP) 2022, which aims to protect the critical information infrastructure, government networks, supply chains, and individuals and establish programs and platforms for local and international cooperation in cybersecurity. The strategic initiatives of the NCSP will include enhancing security resilience of critical information infrastructure, government, public, and military networks, to deal with sophisticated attacks, promoting the adoption of cybersecurity measures among individuals and businesses, and enhancing and expanding the pool of local cybersecurity experts.

To better address the challenges to cybersecurity arising from the new normal, a strategic defensive posture within the Office of the President (OP) will be established. This will be complemented by the strengthening of the country's capability to protect the National Critical Information Infrastructures and improve its cyber resiliency through cybersecurity assessment and compliance and national drill exercises. The government will build the skills and capabilities of local cybersecurity experts, strengthen cooperation between law enforcement, cybersecurity experts, academe, and the private sector, and improve cybersecurity awareness through the conduct of National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, engagements

with non-government organizations (NGO) and other stakeholders, and employing social media, as means for disseminating information.

## Significantly reducing all forms of criminality and illegal drugs

The government remains committed to its campaign against all forms of criminality and illegal drugs. Likewise, the government recognizes the need to address the spread of radicalization and violent extremism that leads to terrorism, transnational crimes, and other non-traditional threats that pose risks to public safety. The conduct of law enforcement operations will need to consider new challenges brought about by the current pandemic. The following strategies will be pursued.

**Sustain the intensified law enforcement operations, including military support, to fight criminality, trafficking, and terrorism.** The PNP will sustain its efforts in reducing all forms of criminality and intensified crime prevention measures even amidst the pandemic. This will involve updating of existing and/or developing new policies, manuals, and procedures to ensure compliance with pertinent laws and human rights standards, particularly on crime investigations including those for missing persons, case documentation and filing, and harmonization of inter-agency procedures. Coordination between law enforcers and military, especially during conduct of operations, will also be enhanced.

To address the challenges under the new normal, standard procedures for law enforcement and anti-illegal drug operations will be revised and updated. Health protocols and measures will be incorporated in the procedures to ensure that both law enforcers and criminal personalities are protected from getting infected by the virus. The PNP will also consider using non-lethal weapons and other police equipment in the conduct of police operations, delivery of public safety services, and other law enforcement functions while strictly adhering to the minimum health standards provided by the Department of Health (DOH).

The rollout of the Core Competency-Based Training Program for investigators will strengthen the PNP's investigative capability and contribute to the success of law enforcement operations. Capabilities of police personnel, in case of recording and tracking, case filing and arrest, operational readiness, and disaster and emergency response will also be enhanced. Moreover, the current pandemic brought the need to utilize advanced information and communications technology (ICT) in the performance of PNP's mandate, such as the adoption of secured, mobile, artificial intelligence-driven, and real-time policing. This will harmonize information systems and improve data sharing and coordination within the criminal justice system.

Law enforcement capability on cybercrime detection and investigation will be improved and modernized. This also calls for efforts to increase the general public's awareness on the detection of cybercrimes to protect themselves and avoid being a victim, especially at the height of a pandemic and other crisis situations. Moreover, the DILG will lay down policies to protect and rehabilitate children at risk and children in conflict with the law. This will include developing a manual on handling and treatment of children at risk, as well as preventing trafficking of persons, especially women and children.

The PNP will ensure timely and accurate crime monitoring and reporting through information technology solutions and initiatives. The conduct of a periodic nationwide Crime Victimization Survey will be pursued to augment administrative-based data. In addition, a survey on the perception of criminality and law enforcement will be carried out.

**Enhance the capability of police, coast guard, military, and other law enforcers to address internal security threats.** Development and full implementation of the modernization programs of the PNP, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), the

Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), and other law enforcement agencies are critical in addressing threats posed by local and transnational terrorists and criminal groups, and emerging security threats, such as cybercrimes. Information and communications capabilities of law enforcement agencies will be strengthened to ensure that they are responsive in addressing such threats. Online trainings may be utilized as the primary mode in implementing capacity-building programs for personnel.

Protection of our porous borders will be ensured through the enhanced interdiction and strengthened presence and capability of the Bureau of Immigration (BI), the Bureau of Customs (BOC), and other agencies mandated to enforce border security. The PCG and BFAR will intensify the conduct of maritime security law enforcement patrols within Philippine territory. The PCG will also pursue the development of maritime detection systems and operationalize the Vessel Traffic Management System to secure the country's maritime jurisdiction.

The threat of global pandemics calls for intensified air and maritime border security and strict imposition of health protocols and quarantine procedures for arriving passengers and visitors. This will be carried out through the installation of modern e-gates and other border control systems, which will also efficiently prevent human trafficking and entry of terrorists, especially in major ports of entry.

**Strengthen commitment to a holistic campaign against the use of illegal drugs and the abuse of dangerous drugs.** The government will continue to strengthen the conduct of its intensive and unrelenting campaign against the trafficking and use of dangerous drugs<sup>1</sup> and other similar substances through an integrated system of planning, implementation, and enforcement of anti-drug abuse policies, programs, and projects. In doing so, the government will aim to achieve a

<sup>1</sup> Dangerous drugs include those listed in the schedules annexed to the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, as amended by the 1972 Protocol, and in the schedules annexed to the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances as enumerated in the annex, which is an integral part of the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 (RA 9165).

balance in its national drug control program, so that people with legitimate medical needs will still have access to dangerous but licit drugs, subject to the prescription of appropriate medication.

Central to the government's campaign is to address the country's illegal drug use problem through the Philippine Anti-Illegal Drugs Strategy (PADS). The PADS recognizes the need for a holistic, human rights-based approach in addressing the problem on illegal drugs production, trafficking, and use. The strategy entails a comprehensive and balanced approach to drug demand and drug supply reduction. This involves the suppression of the flow of illegal drugs supply through sustained law enforcement operations and reduction of consumer demand for drugs and other illegal substances through drug rehabilitation and massive preventive education and awareness programs.

In support of the implementation of the PADS pursuant to EO 66, s. 2018, all government agencies, including government-owned and controlled corporations and state universities and colleges, are mandated to formulate their respective implementing and operational plans. This will include programs and activities to ensure a drug-free workplace, including those in the private sector. The strategy also calls for the support of LGUs through the strengthening of Anti-Drug Abuse Councils (ADAC), conducting barangay drug clearing operations, and appropriating funds for anti-illegal drugs programs and projects. The EO also prescribes the conduct of a nationwide survey to determine the extent and magnitude of drug abuse prevalence in the country. In addition, the establishment of an age- and sex- disaggregated database and secure database for dangerous drugs operations will ensure transparency and enable an effective monitoring of the implementation of the government's fight against dangerous drugs.

The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) will also intensify the random drug testing in the transportation sector as a preventive effort against drug-related road traffic accidents. It will enjoin

all government agencies through the Inter-Agency Committee on Anti-Illegal Drugs, as created through EO 15, s. 2017, to ensure that the anti-illegal drugs campaign is implemented in an integrated and synchronized manner.

**Prevent and counter terrorism and the rise of radicalization leading to violent extremism.** To address communist terrorist groups, the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) will intensify the implementation of the whole-of-nation approach at the regional and local levels. This will require strong coordination between regional and local development and peace and order councils, as well as the commitment and support of local chief executives and the communities.

Following the adoption of the National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (NAP-PCVE),<sup>2</sup> various national government agencies (NGA) will be capacitated, particularly on the formulation of their respective agency's PCVE plans that are aligned with the NAP. In the same manner, the LGUs will be capacitated on the preparation of their local plans that will adopt and translate national strategies into concrete action at the grassroots level, taking into consideration the current health crisis and other emerging threats to peace and order and public safety. These plans will include programs aimed at addressing the political, economic, cultural, psychosocial, and religious factors of radicalization that lead to violent extremism. The government will pursue a comprehensive and people-centered approach in addressing drivers of radicalization and ensure that such plans are conflict-, culture-, and gender- sensitive, uphold the rule of law, and are compliant with international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

The government's efforts to prevent violent extremism and terrorism will be further intensified to maintain community resilience, especially during pandemics and other public health emergencies.

<sup>2</sup> Adoption of the NAP-PCVE is pursuant to the Anti-Terrorism Council's Resolution No. 38, s. 2019.

The cooperation of the citizens, private sector, and NGOs with the government's efforts on PCVE will build a strong and solid front against violent extremists, which may lead to their possible containment and neutralization.

The government will continue to deepen partnerships with the international community through multilateral and bilateral mechanisms such as mutual legal assistance agreements, global cooperation, and international law enforcement arrangements (e.g., International Criminal Police and joint law enforcement operations). This will also include intensified government and multisectoral efforts against domestic and transnational trafficking in persons through international partnerships and the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking.

**Intensify investigation and resolution of human rights violations cases.** Investigation strategies and approaches to strengthen case build-up will be further strengthened to ensure successful prosecution of human rights violation cases. The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) will pursue efforts to empower the poor, marginalized, vulnerable, and disadvantaged to seek response and remedies for injustice through the development of client-based education and training programs. These will include developing learning modules, teaching aids, and education materials and organizing and mobilizing a network of public support for the conduct of human rights events, utilizing primarily digital platforms and mechanisms during the pandemic. Partnerships with state and non-state duty bearers in addressing human rights violations cases will also be pursued. Furthermore, the NAP-WPS will pursue the protection of human rights of women and girls at all times and the prevention of gender-based violence.

In line with the international human rights law, which mandates that duty-bearers not derogate from their obligation to respect, protect, and fulfill human rights even in times of emergencies, a human-rights based approach will be followed in the implementation of relevant laws, policies, protocols, and guidelines. The government will ensure that constitutionally-enshrined human rights are upheld

and protected, and that violators will be treated humanely in the enforcement of community quarantine procedures and protocols amidst the pandemic situation. Updating of standard procedures for law enforcement operations must adhere to human rights standards while ensuring health protocols to protect both the suspects and the law enforcers from getting infected by the virus.

## Upholding and protecting territorial integrity and sovereignty

Deescalating tension and resolving disputes in the SCS continue to be the main challenges in sustaining stability and security in the region. To uphold and protect territorial integrity and sovereignty, the following strategies will be implemented:

**Promote respect for a rules-based regime in Philippine seas and territories.** The government will sustain efforts that promote respect for legal and diplomatic processes in clarifying issues and resolving disputes on maritime jurisdictions, in accordance with international law, particularly the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Central to this is the push for an effective and substantive ASEAN-China COC that will guide actions of claimant-states to avoid activities that raise tension or threaten security and stability in the SCS. On the other hand, the Philippines remains committed to taking necessary diplomatic interventions against actions that run counter to international laws and principles, including the UN Charter, the 1982 UNCLOS, and the 2002 ASEAN-China Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the SCS, to preserve national security and maintain peace and stability in the region. The government will continue to enhance its relations with other claimant countries such as China, but with the consciousness of the need to protect the country's rights and interests in the West Philippine Sea, as recognized under the foregoing international instruments and the 2016 Award of the Arbitral Tribunal on the SCs arbitration case.

In addition, the government will pursue negotiations of maritime boundary delimitation agreements with countries the Philippines shares borders with. Further, dispute settlement mechanisms consistent with international law will be pursued for the settlement of maritime border delineation and outstanding territorial claims.

**Promote greater amity and cooperation with all nations.** The country will continue to enhance and strengthen existing bilateral relations, alliances, strategic partnerships, and defense cooperation, while expanding bilateral diplomatic engagements. The government will maximize existing platforms and pursue alternative platforms to maintain diplomatic engagements with its bilateral and multilateral partners and strengthen cooperation towards addressing the impact of public health emergencies such as pandemics.

**Expand and enhance diplomatic engagements and cooperation in regional and international fora.** The country will strengthen relationships at the regional level. Aside from the existing Trilateral Cooperative Agreement with Indonesia and Malaysia, which contributed to the enhanced stability in the Sulu-Celebes Seas, the Philippines will continue to engage ASEAN through its various platforms towards promoting joint patrols, maritime exercises, intelligence cooperation, regional security, and stability. It will also strengthen cooperation to effectively manage the current and avoid future pandemic situations.

**Pursue and sustain modernization programs for a credible and self-reliant defense posture.** The establishment of a credible and self-reliant defense posture is critical to the protection and preservation of the country's territorial integrity, sovereignty, and sovereign rights. Thus, the government will fully implement the AFP Modernization Program and the AFP Capability Upgrade Program by ensuring continued budgetary support to these programs. Air and maritime domain awareness will likewise be intensified through the conduct of law enforcement

patrols and operations in Philippine maritime jurisdiction, as well as the establishment of domain awareness platforms. Various structures that can be used for territorial defense operations, marine resource protection, information gathering, and civilian purposes will be established to strengthen the AFP's presence in Philippine-owned islands and features. Moreover, the AFP will strengthen the Reserved Forces and the Reserved Officers Training Corps (ROTC) Program to augment its numbers, especially during crisis situations.

#### **Pursue declaration of some parts of the West Philippine Sea as marine protected areas (MPAs).**

The government will pursue this strategy to address environmental degradation and to ensure food security and the livelihood of fisherfolk who depend on the area. Pursuant to existing domestic laws, specifically the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 2018 (RA 11038), the management and enforcement of MPAs will be the mandate of the military and relevant civilian NGAs, local communities, and NGOs. Towards this end, the government will acquire sea vessels to aid navigation, construct and maintain bases, support organization and operations of *bantay-dagat*, and conduct marine scientific research in these areas. While MPAs are considered national initiatives, the Philippines will also pursue cross-border and multilateral or regional cooperation with neighboring countries for more effective administration and management of the oceans.

## **Ensuring security and safety of overseas Filipinos**

Armed conflicts, economic instabilities, and social tensions in other countries continue to put the welfare and safety of all Filipinos overseas at risk. Strategies to ensure the security and safety of overseas Filipinos are discussed thoroughly in Chapter 21.

# Legislative Agenda

To support the implementation and effectiveness of the strategies, legislative action is needed on the following:

**Table 18.1 Legislative Agenda to Ensure Security, Public Order, and Safety**

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA		RATIONALE
<b><i>Territorial integrity and sovereignty upheld and protected</i></b>		
National Defense Act	This will update and define key national defense policies, principles, and concepts. It will codify the various issuances concerning national defense, the AFP, and the civilian bureaus in the DND with the aim of streamlining and professionalizing the defense bureaucracy through the institutionalization of reforms. It will prohibit the sale of defense real properties; redefine the minimum and maximum tenure in key positions to provide stability in the AFP leadership, implement mandatory military service for all natural-born or naturalized Filipino citizens for a minimum of two years, and transform the National Defense College of the Philippines into the National Defense University of the Philippines, among others.	
Defense Acquisition Act	This proposed legislation will exempt all acquisition of defense equipment, materiel, ordinance, and integrated military systems of the Department of National Defense (DND) and its attached bureaus from the regular procurement process bounded by the Government Procurement and Reform Act (GPRA).	
National Security Code	This measure seeks to institutionalize the national security planning process. This aims to address the required regular preparation of a National Security Policy and a National Security Strategy and identify how the government will implement the policy and strategy.	
Philippine Defense Industry Development Act	This bill will promote and stimulate the local defense industry, as in-country enterprises will be entitled to avail incentives under the Omnibus Investments Code (EO 226, s. 1987). The proposed law places premium in encouraging local industry players to invest in developing in-country defense capabilities. The industry players may avail of credit and other financial products extended by government financial institutions and enjoy exemption from customs duties and national internal revenue taxes that are payable on the importation of raw materials and critical components. The government will promote the export of locally made defense materiel and the in-country enterprises to other countries.	
Philippine Maritime Zones Act	This will serve as a general declaration of the maritime zones under the sovereignty and jurisdiction of the Philippines. It will also provide the necessary foundation and framework for the enactment of subsequent laws pertinent to the rights and obligations of the Philippines over its maritime zones.	
Philippine Archipelagic Sea Lanes Act	The proposed law will establish archipelagic sea lanes in Philippine archipelagic waters and the adjacent territorial sea. It will likewise prescribe the rights and obligations of foreign ships and aircraft that exercise the right of passage through the established archipelagic sea lanes. The bill will also determine and put in place appropriate measures for the protection of areas along said sea lanes, in accordance with international conventions and agreements to which the Philippines is a party.	
<b><i>All forms of criminality and illegal drugs reduced</i></b>		
PNP Revitalization and Capability Enhancement Act	This will enhance the capabilities of the PNP through infrastructure and facilities development, as well as equipment acquisition and upgrading.	

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA	RATIONALE
Forensic Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) Database Act	The bill will give way for the establishment of a DNA database system for the collection, storage, and maintenance of genetic identification information for law enforcement purposes.
Anti-Drug Abuse Council Law	This will institutionalize the creation of Anti-Drug Abuse Councils in every local government unit. It provides for the corresponding budget allocation for the operations of the Councils and the conduct of other anti-illegal drug activities, among others.
Amendment of the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002	This will allow for the mandatory drug testing of students in the secondary and tertiary levels and the forfeiture of properties involved in drug cases in favor of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA). The amendment will also prescribe stronger penalties to those found guilty of trafficking dangerous drugs, provide for the destruction of seized dangerous drugs and controlled precursors and essential chemicals, and restore plea bargaining and probation laws. It will also strengthen the PDEA as an organization, including the provision of benefits for personnel, among others.
<b>Public safety ensured</b>	
BFP Modernization Act	This intends to modernize the BFP and enable it to become a fire and emergency medical and rescue services agency capable of responding to hazards, such as destructive fires, accidents, and other natural and human-induced disasters. It will strengthen the ongoing modernization of the BFP and give them the power to investigate all causes of fire, and if necessary, file proper complaints.
Amendment of the Fire Code	This aims to amend certain provisions of the Revised Fire Code of the Philippines of 2008 (RA 9514) and clarify the respective authorities and jurisdictions of the BFP, the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA), and other similar entities on the enforcement of the law within economic zones. It will give the BFP the sole responsibility to administer and enforce the Fire Code. It also expands the utilization of the Fire Code Fees collections for the acquisition of properties of fire stations. It also provides more stringent penalties for every act that compromises fire safety and endangers the lives and limbs of Filipinos.
Disaster Resilience Bill	This proposed measure seeks to establish a Department of Disaster Resilience with sufficiently high level of authority to lead the coordination, monitoring, oversight, and implementation of disaster risk reduction and management efforts. The proposed Department will be equipped with the necessary competency and resources to engage new actors, particularly in the field of risk transfer and insurance and build the necessary structure to manage broader governance programs. The current version of the bill should also be revisited to explicitly specify public health emergencies, such as pandemics as disaster events and to identify measures that will enable the government to mitigate the impact of such emergencies and respond effectively.
Mandatory ROTC Program	<p>This will address the decline in the number of students taking up ROTC, which resulted in the insufficient number of reserve officers and personnel for the AFP that may be tapped in times of need. The proposed law seeks to revive the mandatory nature of the ROTC.</p> <p>The re-establishment of mandatory basic ROTC Program will form part of the basic curricula for Senior High School (Grades 11 and 12) in public and private schools and a requisite for graduation. The program aims to enhance the students' consciousness in the ethics of service, patriotism, and nationalism, military training for national defense preparedness and civil military operations, and civic training for disaster risk reduction and management, human and civil rights awareness, and law enforcement.</p>