

**INTERSESSIONAL PANEL OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION  
ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD)**

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**CSTD 2020-2021 priority theme on “Using science, technology and innovation to close the  
gap on Sustainable Development Goal 3 on good health and well-being”**

Statement submitted by

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**UNITED NATIONS  
COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (CSTD)**

Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams  
18-22 January 2021 | 8-10 PM, Manila Time

**CSTD 2020-2021 Intersessional Panel Meeting**  
**Priority Theme 1: Using science, technology and innovation to close the gap on**  
**Sustainable Development Goal 3, on good health and well-being**

Statement submitted by

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On behalf of the

Republic of the Philippines

*Mr. Chair,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,*

It is my privilege to participate today in the Intersessional Panel Meeting and represent the Republic of the Philippines as a newly re-elected member of the CSTD.

We would like to share with you what the Philippines has been doing to apply science, technology, and innovation to contribute to the SDG3 for the Filipino people.

The Philippines has a national health research framework defined through the Philippine National Health Research System Law. The law was created to ensure that research contributes to evidence-informed health policies and actions. Some of the mechanisms placed to meet the objectives of the law are the National Unified Health Research Agenda, the Philippine Health Research Ethics Board, and the Regional Health Research Systems.

The Philippines has R&D programs on health.

Under the “Tuklas Lunas” or Drug Discovery and Development Program, we were able to establish centers in different regions of the country to further capacitate local researchers and study the potential medicinal application of bioresources in their areas.

We also have the Omic Technologies for Health Program that enables development of local technologies which can lead to the creation of personalized medicines, diagnostics, and therapeutics, and also serve as a support to health and clinical practice guidelines and policies of the Philippines. The country invested on projects in non-communicable, infectious, and rare/metabolic diseases, cancers, forensics, and ethnicity.

We are implementing research studies on therapeutics for COVID-19 patients through different methods. First is the use of traditional medicinal plants and natural products such as virgin coconut oil (VCO), Tawa-tawa plant (*Euphorbia hirta* L.), and Lagundi (*Vitex negundo*) as adjunctive treatments. Another is the project on Convalescent Plasma Therapy as adjunctive therapy for hospitalized COVID-19 patients.

The country was able to rapidly develop, modify, and use new and existing local technologies in response to the pandemic. Local scientists were able to create our own COVID-19 testing kit called GenAmplify. We have been using RxBox, a telemedicine device for health monitoring, FASSSTER web application for modeling disease spread, Quick Response (QR) codes for monitoring movements in the community, and various satellite, AI, and data applications to guide policymaking and to adapt to the digitalization of transactions.

In our fight against COVID-19, we are reminded that a challenge in one country may transcend across another and that a crisis in a specific sector is interconnected with the others. The pandemic does not solely affect the health sector, but it has also aggregated

issues on economics, poverty, hunger, digital divide, labor and employment, and even human rights.

We may have heard the saying, “*We are facing the same storm but we are not in the same boat*”. The pandemic hit hard the developing and least developed countries which may take longer to recover compared to the high-income and developed ones. Now, more than ever, it is necessary for us to use these available platforms such as the CSTD and the United Nations to collectively strengthen our strategic plans. The Philippines supports the need to mobilize international action in STI for health. It is our duty to ensure that opportunities would be provided equally and with fairness across countries and ensure that the entire world rises above this global crisis.

That would be all.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.