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Citizens for Promoting Human Rights Webinar “Helping and Caring: An exchange of insights and experiences in supporting beneficiaries” 1 December 2021

Fellow defenders and promoters of human rights and human dignity, good morning!

On behalf of the Citizens for Promoting Human Rights or CFHR, allow me to thank all of you for sharing the experiences, insights, lessons, and even challenges of your organizations in providing care and support to the victims of the war on drugs.

Thank you also for your courage in continuing to fight for human rights, and in helping the victims of abuses and violence, even under a regime that threatens the safety of those involved in such work.

Truly, this work, our work, is a crucial one. One that offers a lifeline to the victims and their families, most of whom belonging to the poor, have no access to justice, and have to deal with the psychological trauma on their own. For most of them, putting food on the table is already a daily struggle.

If I may quote a victim who was interviewed by an independent researcher: “Hindi kami nanlilimos ng hustisya, ang hiling namin, patas na laban lang sana.”

The Philippines is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and our leaders made profound declarations to upholding human rights and human dignity. However, over the past five years, many of our institutions and leaders have forgotten that pledge and have been the cause of our people's suffering.

But where our leaders have failed, we stepped in. Our work can continue to transform the environment of fear, loss, and tragedy, to one of hope, love, and care.

We can, even by just a little bit, contribute to making it a fair fight for our beneficiaries to have justice and to earn a living.

As we heard during the discussions earlier, there are multiple dimensions and complexities involved in providing care. From immediate support, to education and livelihood, psychosocial, and even legal support at times. The lessons and insights shared today can hopefully benefit your respective organizations.

CFHR also engaged INCITEGov in crafting a policy case study to come up with a framework or blueprint for organizations involved in the work of providing care and support to victims of abuse and human rights violence.

This dark time in our history will come to pass, and when more people are ready, we hope that this blueprint can equip them on how to better engage the victims and their families.

Next week, on December 10, we will celebrate Human Rights Day. Our work is our contribution to this celebration. With this we are telling the world that Filipinos still value human rights and human dignity. As Eleanor Roosevelt once said, [“the real change, which must give to people throughout the world their human rights, must come about in the hearts of people.”](#)

No matter the risks, no matter the fear, respect for and upholding human rights and human dignity is alive in our hearts. Because we believe that it is the foundation on which our people, especially the poor and marginalized, can thrive.

Again, thank you and good morning