

26 June 2020

**SENATOR JUAN EDGARDO “SONNY” M. ANGARA**

Chairperson  
Committee on Youth  
Senate of the Philippines  
Roxas Blvd., Pasay City

Dear **Senator Angara**:


We are pleased to submit the Department’s position on **Senate Resolution No. 424**, entitled:

**“Resolution Urging the Appropriate Senate Committee to Conduct an Inquiry, in Aid of Legislation, on the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Our Youth”**

This is without prejudice to the Department’s submission of additional inputs.

With my best regards.

Very truly yours,

  
**RAMON M. LOPEZ**  
Secretary



**OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

**Department of Trade and Industry**

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DTI Position on

**Senate Resolution No. 424**

**“Resolution Urging the Appropriate Senate Committee to Conduct an Inquiry, in Aid of Legislation, on the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Our Youth”**

The Department notes that as per the latest Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) census made in 2015, there are 29.6 million of the Filipino population that would fall under the category for “youth<sup>1</sup>”. Other related demographical statistics from the PSA’s latest 2017 Annual Poverty Indicators Statistics (APIS) reveal that there are 31.1 million population aged 3 to 24 years old who are currently attending school; 15.3 million who are not attending school or classifiable as out-of-school youths (OSCY); and, 14.8 million families with members aged 5 to 17 years old who are gainfully employed.

The COVID-19 pandemic has directly affected the youth with a total of 9,003 cases recorded within the youth sector, the breakdown of which are as follows:

Table 1. COVID-19 Cases by Age Group, as of 24 June 2020

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Admitted/Active</b>	<b>Recovered</b>	<b>Deceased</b>
11-20 years old	1,420	262	11
21-30 years old	5,548	1,738	24
<i>Total</i>	<i>6,968</i>	<i>2,000</i>	<i>35</i>

Source: Department of Health (DOH); processed by University of the Philippines Resilience Institute (UPRI)’s EndCOV dashboard

In an effort to control the pandemic, parts of the country were placed on varying levels of community quarantine, and the deterrence of mass gatherings of any kind are being normalized. Businesses and academic classes were initially suspended but eventually eased into remote arrangements and/or partial re-openings.

Nonetheless, there are now increased difficulties for the youth in terms of enrolling and attending classes, which are even worse for low income households. The 2017 APIS shows that there were approximately 4.6 million OSCY (40.8% of total OSCY) who cited their condition as due to either the inaccessibility of schools, high cost of education/financial concern, employment/looking for work, or problems with school record. It would be understandable to expect this number to increase as potential learners are dissuaded to continue school due to technical and material incapability.

As per the PSA’s latest Labor Force Survey (LFS), aggregate unemployment skyrocketed to 7.3 million persons in April 2020, compared to 2.4 million in January 2020 (immediate preceding period), and 2.3 million in April 2019 (year-on-year).

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<sup>1</sup> Section 2 of Republic Act No. 8044 (*Youth in Nation-Building Act*): “xxx Youth is the critical period in a person’s growth and development from the onset of adolescence towards the peak of mature, self-reliant and responsible adulthood comprising the considerable sector of the population from the age of fifteen (15) to thirty (30) years. xxx”

This increase in unemployment was observed for all age groups. Similarly, unemployment among persons aged 15 to 24 years old also increased drastically to over 2 million in April 2020, compared to 1 million in January 2019, and a little less than 1 million in April 2019. The above data imply that for families wherein youth members contribute to household income, their welfare has significantly decreased during the pandemic. We can foresee a reduction in their savings and expenditure, thereby a loss in socioeconomic security.

The DTI remains at the service of all entrepreneurs and consumers, regardless of age. Still, the Department recognizes the productive role of the youth in society and seeks to foster this through the Youth Entrepreneurship Program (YEP), which was launched in 2019, the Philippine Trade Training Center (PPTC)'s menu of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSME) training programs, and the various livelihood courses offered by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). However, the pandemic has since shuttered the continued roll-out of YEP, as well as other DTI programs, for the year 2020. On the other hand, the Department's normal public services, including business registration and consumer protection, are still available online. Simultaneously, we are making efforts to reach out to the public and deliver our programs through digital means, as well as formulating a resiliency and recovery assistance program for businesses to directly address the gaps experienced during the pandemic.

The Department expresses its favorable position to the objectives of the resolution and hopes for support to the DTI's ongoing endeavors to assist businesses and entrepreneurship as we endure the COVID-19 pandemic. We recommend for the National Youth Commission (NYC), as the principal agency charged with the mandate of handling youth concerns, to be solicited for inputs on this subject matter, aside from DOH, Department of Education (DepEd), and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

  
**Bureau of Trade and Industrial Policy Research**  
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