

# 18

Ensuring  
Security, Public  
Order, and  
Safety



# ENSURING SECURITY, PUBLIC ORDER, AND SAFETY

In 2018, the government expanded its diplomatic engagements to uphold and protect the country's territorial integrity and sovereignty, and continued its efforts at reducing all forms of criminality and drugs and ensuring public safety. Moving forward, the capacities of the security sector should be built and enhanced to respond to external and internal threats to secure the safety of the public. Key to achieving these are the efficient and timely implementation of priority programs and projects and the passage of legislative measures geared towards the institutionalization of reforms in the sector.

## Assessment

### Upholding and protecting territorial integrity and sovereignty

**The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China have agreed on a Single Draft South China Sea Code of Conduct Negotiating Text (SDNT).** The SDNT will guide the formulation of the draft ASEAN-China Code of Conduct in the South China Sea. The SDNT focuses on the prevention, management, and settlement of disputes in the South China Sea among parties. It states that signatories have a duty to cooperate in the protection of the marine environment. The current SDNT is “a living document” and will go through at least three readings towards the formulation of the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea.

**Diplomatic engagements with both traditional and non-traditional allies have been expanded and enhanced.** The Philippines has signed defense cooperation agreements with Turkey, Jordan, and Israel. Further, the recent visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping resulted in a number of bilateral agreements between the country and China. Likewise, the Philippines strengthened its existing defense agreements with the United States.

**Allocation for the defense sector has been increased.** The allocation for the defense sector increased by 4 percent in 2018. This increase in the budget was used to sustain the Modernization Programs of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG). Another PHP1.6 billion was allocated for the AFP/PNP Housing Program to provide adequate and affordable housing to military and police personnel.

The Department of National Defense (DND) has also been pursuing measures to improve the AFP's ability to monitor Philippine air and maritime domains. To complement DND's efforts, the PCG is also establishing a Vessel Traffic Management System, including radar stations, to enhance marine traffic monitoring system, navigational safety, and domain awareness.

## Reducing all forms of criminality and illegal drugs

**Success in reducing all forms of criminality has been sustained.** The Philippine National Police (PNP) was able to sustain its efforts against criminality, further reducing index and non-index crime rates in the country. On top of this, crime solution efficiency and crime clearance efficiency improved significantly. Amidst its success, the PNP will still pursue the expansion of its presence in the communities through the establishment of police stations in strategic locations.

**The administration continues to strengthen its commitment to the anti-illegal drugs campaign.** The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency's (PDEA) barangay drug-clearing program is on track in meeting its targets on reducing the level of barangay drug-affectation and the number of drug personalities. To further strengthen the government's efforts against illegal drugs, the President issued Executive Order (EO) No. 66, s. 2018 institutionalizing the Philippine Anti-Illegal Drugs Strategy (PADS). The PADS serves as a roadmap for national collaboration to harmonize the government's efforts against illegal drugs and help pave the way for a drug-free Philippines. It features a balanced and holistic strategy aligned with international frameworks on drug prevention and control. The EO tasks the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) to spearhead the implementation of the PADS.

Many of the country's barangays remain affected by illegal drugs and a huge number of drug personalities still remain at large. There is a need to sustain interventions on enhancing the capability of law enforcement agencies to address the pervasiveness of illegal drugs and criminality.

**The government has strengthened its commitment to countering violent extremism.** Several policies<sup>1</sup> were enacted to ensure that efforts made in combating and deterring the spread of violent extremism and terrorism are sustained and strengthened, as well as to promote the overall security, and the peace and order situation in the country. These policies are also aimed towards fostering a holistic and whole-of-nation approach in countering violent extremism and terrorism by addressing broader social, economic, and historical problems.

**Government is investing in vital infrastructure projects and providing basic social services in conflict-affected communities even though these were being targeted by various armed and lawless groups.** The implementation of vital infrastructure projects, as well as the delivery of basic social services in conflict-afflicted and conflict-vulnerable areas remain a great challenge due to threats of attacks by armed groups. Nonetheless, the government firmly believes that it is essential that basic social services be afforded to these communities to lessen their vulnerability to insurgents and radicals.

## Ensuring public safety

**Efforts to strengthen the capacity of the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) have been effective.** Through the implementation of the BFP Service Upgrading and Modernization Program and the intensified efforts of the BFP, there has been a 40 percent decrease in the amount of damage due to fire incidents, and number of casualties related to fire incidents resulting to deaths from 305 in 2017 to 260 in 2018.

**Non-traditional security threats such as transnational crimes and cybercrimes still persist.** Our porous borders exacerbates the country's vulnerability to both local and transnational criminal activities and groups. Additionally, the increasing complexity and diversity of cybercrimes continue to threaten the integrity of data and the information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure of both the public and private sectors.

<sup>1</sup> Extension of Proclamation No. 216, s. 2017 declaring the State of Martial Law in Mindanao; and signing of EO 70, s. 2018 creating a National Task Force to end Local Communist Armed Conflict and Adopting a National Peace Framework.

**Compliance with local and international human rights laws needs to be intensified.** The number of reported human rights violations increased in 2018 from the previous year, and its annual target was not met.

## Ensuring security and safety of overseas Filipinos

**The government intensified its programs aimed at assisting and providing services to OFs.** The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) prioritized the provision of Assistance-to-Nationals (ATN) services, which covers legal, medical, psychological and welfare assistance, and the repatriation for OFs. DFA increased the number of serviced assistance-to-nationals cases by almost four times, from 27,871 cases serviced in 2017 to 87,097 in 2018. Similarly, DFA was able to considerably increase its provision of assistance to human trafficking victims (1,476 in 2017 to 2,472 in 2018), illegal migration cases abroad (9,595 in 2017 to 12,092 in 2018), and legal assistance cases (44 in 2017 to 2,790 in 2018). DFA was also able to repatriate 14,010 OFs, including undocumented OFs, and another 98 OFs repatriated due to medical reasons.

From January to October 2018, the OFW Command Center (OCC) and the Assistance to Migrants and their Families Desk (AMD) of the Department of Labor and Employment's International Labor Affairs Bureau, assisted 12,585 requests and resolved 1,081 cases. The AMD has functioned under the OCC since the latter's inauguration in February 2018 (*see also Chapter 5*).

In addition to the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration's (OWWA) 24/7 Operations Center and the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration's (POEA) 24/7 hotlines, the DFA has been implementing its 888 Hotline for ATN queries, and Facebook page for legal aid, guidance, and counselling to migrants.

**The Philippines has adopted the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM).** Along with 163 other member states of the United Nations, the Philippines formally signed and adopted the GCM on December 10, 2018. The GCM is an intergovernmental agreement which covers all dimensions of international migration (*see Chapter 11 for a detailed discussion on GCM*).

## Moving Forward

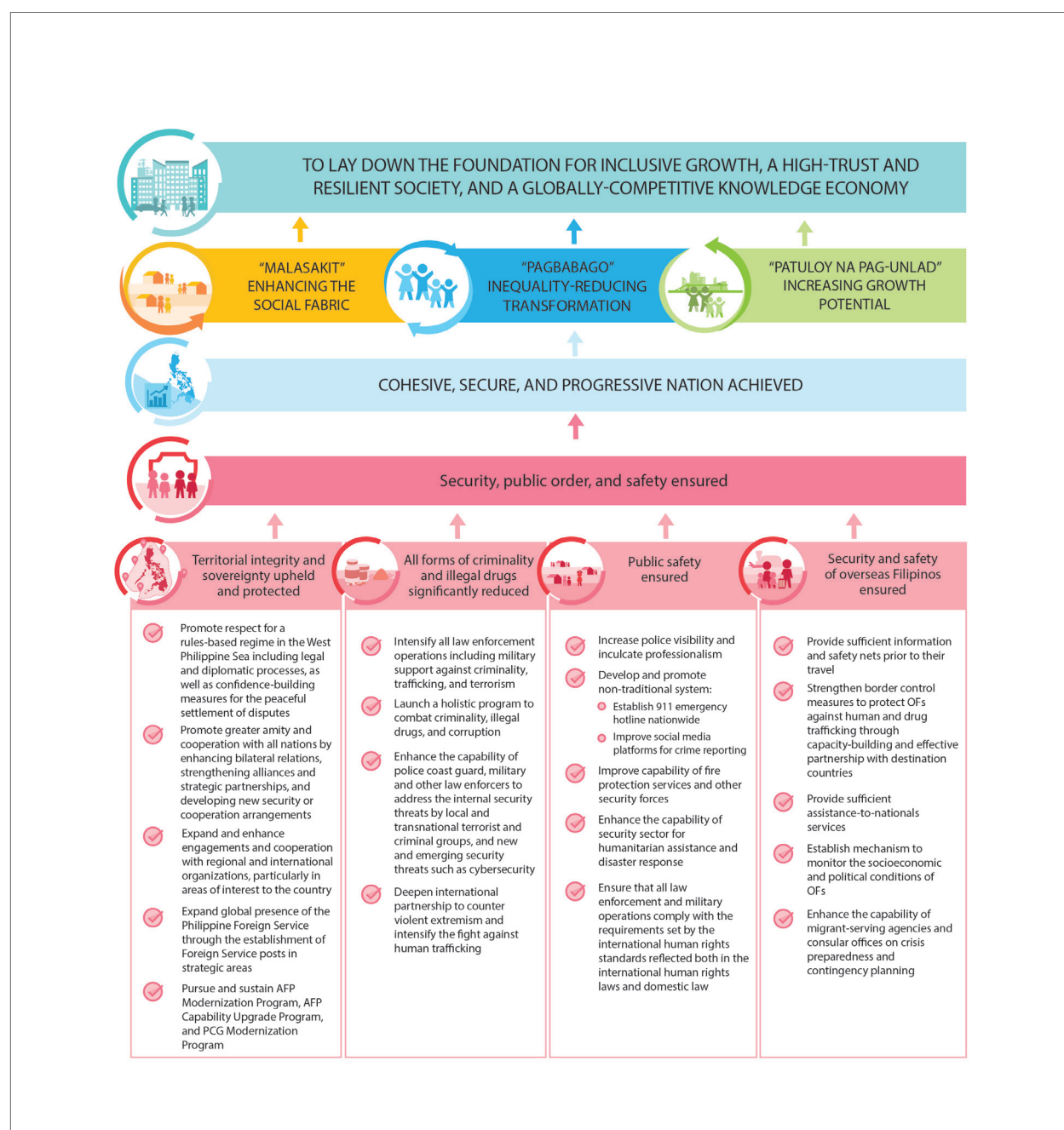
Successful negotiations for an ASEAN-China Code of Conduct will be instrumental in boosting the country's efforts in promoting respect for a rules-based regime in the West Philippine Sea towards upholding and protecting the country's territory and sovereignty. With the sustained pursuit of diplomatic engagements, the Philippines is bound to further strengthen its bilateral, regional, and international cooperation with ASEAN and other countries. This shall complement the government's efforts towards establishing a credible defense posture.

Efforts to eradicate criminality and illegal drugs will be relentlessly pursued, as it remains to be one of the major thrusts of this administration.

The passage of the Disaster Resiliency Bill shall strengthen the capacity of the security sector to respond to and provide humanitarian assistance during disaster events. Similarly, the continued implementation of the DFA's Assistance-to-Nationals Program shall ensure the security and safety of overseas Filipinos.

Given this outlook, the following strategies shall be pursued to address the challenges besetting the sector and sustain the momentum it gained in the first two years of Plan implementation.

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



## To uphold and protect territorial integrity and sovereignty

**Negotiate an effective and transparent ASEAN-China Code of Conduct in the South China Sea.** The defense of the country's territorial integrity and sovereignty in the West Philippine Sea remains a formidable challenge. Notwithstanding the initial success in the negotiations for an ASEAN-China Code of Conduct in the South China Sea, the presence and activities of South China Sea claimant states may continue to threaten the Philippines' exercise of sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction in its territory. The risks of inadvertent escalation of hostilities persists without a substantive and effective Code of Conduct. The

Philippines, being the new country coordinator of ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations starting August 2018, is an advantage that should be maximized to expedite the conclusion of negotiations for a code of conduct.

In support to the government's push for an effective and transparent ASEAN-China Code of Conduct in the South China Sea, it shall promote respect for legal and diplomatic processes through confidence-building measures. It shall enhance existing bilateral relations and strengthen alliances and strategic partnerships, while pursuing new defense and security cooperation agreements. The government shall also expand and strengthen diplomatic engagements and cooperation in regional and international fora.

**Define the extent of the country's maritime territory.** The enactment of the Philippine Maritime Zones Bill and the Philippine Archipelagic Sea Lanes Bill shall strengthen our position during the negotiations for the ASEAN-China Code of Conduct in the South China Sea. These laws seek to establish our maritime zones and delineate the country's archipelagic baselines and sea lanes. This shall support efforts in reducing tensions and avoiding disputes with foreign vessels entering Philippine maritime territory.

The enactment of these laws will be complemented with efforts to raise Filipino's national consciousness on maritime and archipelagic issues and policies. To this end, the National Security Council shall develop a program on national awareness on maritime protected areas, including the West Philippine Sea and the Philippine Rise.

## To reduce all forms of criminality and illegal drugs

**Intensify efforts in reducing criminality.** The government shall pursue efforts to intensify law enforcement operations against criminality, trafficking, terrorism, and other non-traditional threats such as cybercrime and transnational crimes. The enactment of the PNP Reorganization and Modernization Act shall accelerate the capacity building for the PNP's personnel, and improvement in infrastructure, facilities, and equipment. Additionally, the conduct of a Crime Victimization Survey shall greatly complement the government's efforts in combating criminality by enabling the PNP to capture the number and types of unreported crimes, and the perception of victimization of Filipinos.

To safeguard the public against cybercrimes, the necessary resources for the implementation of the National Cybersecurity Plan 2022 must be secured. Additionally, measures to ensure data privacy compliance and to upgrade the country's ICT infrastructures will be pursued.

**Strengthen border security to protect the country's porous borders against trafficking and transnational crimes.** Efforts to strengthen regional and international cooperation to combat human trafficking, transnational crimes, and cybercrime shall be implemented. Border security forces need to be equipped to ensure maritime and airspace security. To ensure vessel security and freedom of navigation, the PCG shall establish a Vessel Traffic Management System which will use radar and automatic identification systems to keep track of vessel movements and provide navigational safety and security, and maritime domain awareness. Amendments to the Philippine Immigration Act shall also be pursued to allow for the creation of additional plantilla positions for immigration officers.

**Strengthen the campaign against the prevalence of illegal drugs.** Central to the government's campaign against illegal drugs is the implementation of EO 66, s. 2018 "Institutionalizing the Philippine Anti-Illegal Drugs Strategy". To ensure its success, the necessary budgetary requirement must be allocated for the full implementation of the PADS. Moreover, the DDB, as the lead agency for the PADS, shall launch an advocacy campaign to secure the buy-in for the whole-of-government approach against illegal drugs. This will include strategies to reduce the demand for illegal drugs through education campaigns, sports and cultural programs involving the youth, family- and community-building activities, and the like.

To further intensify its efforts against illegal drugs, the PDEA shall expand its presence nationally through establishing provincial offices. The PDEA shall also enhance its ability to control the entry of illegal drugs through the operationalization of interdiction units and operations center in various airports and seaports in the country.

The PDEA shall also push for the amendment of the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 (Republic Act No. 9165). The proposed amendments include the provision for a legal presumption of who can be considered as the importer, financier, and protector or coddler of illegal drugs. Additionally, it amends and expands the definition of drug trafficking. It also seeks to penalize the exportation of illegal drugs and the negligent leasing of properties used as covert laboratories.

## To ensure public safety

**Strengthen coordination among agencies and enhance capability of the security sector in providing humanitarian assistance and disaster response.** Central to this strategy is the passage into law of the Disaster Resiliency Bill which will provide for the establishment of the Department of Disaster Resilience. Additionally, capacity-building measures for humanitarian assistance and disaster response such as incident command system, Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives (CBRNE) response and earthquake drills will be provided to relevant security actors. The capacity of the BFP to respond to fire incidents shall also be strengthened.

The implementation of the Mandatory Reserve Officers' Training Corps Program shall also enhance the capacity of the public to respond to disaster incidents. To ensure the continuity of public service during times of disasters, government agencies shall formulate and implement their respective Public Service Continuity Plans.

**Safeguard the implementation of vital government socioeconomic programs.** To ensure the timely and efficient implementation of vital infrastructure and delivery of basic social services to conflict-afflicted and conflict-vulnerable areas, implementing agencies shall tap the AFP in the monitoring of projects with certain security concerns.

**Strengthen efforts to comply with the local and international human rights law in law enforcement and military operations.** The AFP, PNP, and other law enforcement agencies shall strengthen the implementation of policies in compliance with local and international human rights laws during law enforcement and military operations such as the Child Protection during Armed-Conflict Situations, Prohibition on Red-Tagging, and the Doctrine Publication on the Law of Armed Conflict. The integration of human rights and International Humanitarian Law modules in the AFP's Professional Military Education shall also be sustained. Complementary to such efforts, the Commission on Human Rights shall also strengthen its monitoring of reported cases of human rights violations.



## To ensure security and safety of overseas Filipinos

**Complete the establishment of foreign service posts, especially in high-risk countries and those with high levels of undocumented OFs.** Safety and welfare of OFs must be always ensured, especially during time of emergencies. DFA will ensure that its foreign posts<sup>2</sup> have the necessary budgetary requirement and are adequately staffed to timely address the needs of OFs, especially with heightened reports on the extent of violence and exploitation that OFs are exposed to. This will be coupled with enhancing the capabilities of consular officers in terms of crisis preparedness and contingency planning. The government shall likewise strengthen its efforts in establishing mechanisms to monitor the socioeconomic and political conditions of OFs through the ATN Mapping Program.

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<sup>2</sup> Particular focus will be given to the following foreign posts: Philippine Embassies in Ireland, Cuba, Sweden, Ethiopia, Palau, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Colombia; Philippine Consulate General in Spain, Japan, Australia, Turkey, Kazakhstan; and a Philippine Mission to the International Maritime Organization.

