

## Current situation in the Philippines and ECOP's Response to Covid-19

- On Thursday night, 12 March 2020, the President of the Republic of the Philippines declared that a “community quarantine” will be enforced over the National Capital Region
- Two types of community quarantine
  - General community quarantine – where movement of people shall be limited to accessing basic necessities and work; and uniformed personnel and quarantine officers shall be present at border points
  - Enhanced community quarantine – where strict home quarantine shall be implemented in all households; transportation shall be suspended; provision for food and essential health services shall be regulated; and heightened presence of uniformed personnel to enforce quarantine procedures will be implemented
- On Friday, 13 March 2020, a memorandum was issued: “Stringent Social Distancing Measures and Further Guidelines for the Management of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation”
  - Salient features:
    - Effective 15 March up to 14 April 2020
    - Classes and all school activities are suspended
    - Mass gatherings are prohibited
    - General community quarantine
    - Alternative work arrangements, including, but not limited to, work-from-home, compressed workweek, staggered working hours, and creation of skeletal workforces will be implemented in the executive branch (public sector)
    - All members of the Philippine National Police (PNP), Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), and health and emergency frontline services are directed to continue full operation.
    - **Flexible work arrangements (FWAs) shall be encouraged in the private sector. All manufacturing, retail, and service establishments are advised to remain open. In all cases, strict social distancing measures are required to be observed by their respective managements**
    - **Mass public transport facilities shall continue in operation. The Department of Transportation will issue guidelines to ensure social distancing**
    - **Land, domestic air, and domestic sea travel to and from the NCR shall be restricted. All workers, whether employed or self-employed, will be provisionally allowed to travel to and from the NCR, subject to review by the Inter-agency Task Force if public health considerations so warrant. Proof of employment and/or business must be presented at border checkpoints**
    - Movement of cargoes to and from the NCR, on in such other places which may be the subject of a community quarantine, shall be unhampered
- Workers outside metro Manila
- On Saturday, 14 March 2020, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) issued Labor Advisory No. 11 s. 2020 “Supplemental Guidelines Relative to Remedial Measures in View of the Ongoing Outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)”

- As better alternatives to outright termination of the services of the employees or the total closure of the establishments, (FWAs) referred to under Labor Advisory No. 9 s. 2020 including, but not limited to, other work arrangements, such as telecommuting, work from home, reduction of workdays/hours, rotation of workers, and forced leaves, are hereby reiterated and highly encouraged in establishments that continue to operate
- All manufacturing, retail, and service establishments are advised to remain in operation during the community quarantine period, provided that social distancing and other safety and health measures are strictly observed
- The leaves of absence during the community quarantine period shall be charged against the workers' existing leave credits, if any. Remaining unpaid leaves during said period may be covered and be subject to the conditions provided in the DOLE's proposed COVID-19 Adjustment Measures Program (CAMP)
- Residents of nearby cities and/or municipalities outside NCR who work in NCR and vice versa shall be allowed to report for work; proof of employment and residency must be presented at border checkpoints
- Self-employed workers shall be allowed to travel to and from the NCR; proof of business or economic activity must be presented at border checkpoints
- Those delivering goods should have access in Metro Manila; proof of delivery receipt shall be presented
- All healthcare facilities shall be fully operational and their employees shall be allowed to move from Metro Manila to other regions and vice versa
- On Monday, 16 March 2020, the President placed the entire Luzon under enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) through a Memorandum from the Executive Secretary
 

Highlights:

  - Strict home quarantine shall be observed in all households
  - Movement shall be limited to accessing basic necessities
  - Provision for food and essential health services shall be regulated
  - There will be heightened presence of uniformed personnel to enforce quarantine procedures
  - Work from home arrangement shall be implemented in the Executive branch, except the PNP, AFP, PCG, and health and emergency frontline services, border control and other critical services, which shall ensure as skeletal workforce
  - Only those private establishments providing basic necessities and such activities related to food and medicine production (i.e., public markets, supermarkets, groceries, convenience stores, hospitals, medical clinics, pharmacies and drug stores, food preparation and delivery services, water refilling stations, manufacturing and processing plants of basic food products and medicines, banks, money transfer services, power, energy, water and telecommunications supplies and facilities, shall be open; respective managements shall ensure the adoption of a strict skeletal workforce to support operations; strict social distancing is enforced
  - Business process outsourcing (BPO) establishments and export-oriented industries shall remain operational; strict social distancing measures are observed;

- respective personnel are provided appropriate temporary accommodation arrangements by 18 March 2020; skeletal workforce shall be implemented
- Media personnel shall be allowed to travel within the quarantine area; shall ensure an identification card from the Presidential Communications Operations Office
  - For purposes of the foregoing, transit to and from the above establishments anywhere within the area covered by ECQ shall be allowed; security personnel of the establishments within the quarantine area are likewise allowed to travel therein
  - Mass public transport facilities is suspended
  - Land, air, and sea travel shall be restricted
  - The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and DOLE, in coordination with the Department of Finance, Department of Budget and Management, and Department of Trade and Industry, shall formulate programs, projects, and measures for the social amelioration of affected workers and residents in the area subject to ECQ
    - May include, but not limited to, moratorium on lease rentals, advancing a pro-rated thirteenth (13<sup>th</sup>) month pay, reprieve in utility bills, and assistance to micro, small, and medium-scale enterprises
  - DSWD will institute measures to expedite the distribution of food assistance to the most affected residents of the entire Luzon
- On Monday, 16 March 2020, the President put the entire country under state of calamity through Proclamation No. 929
  - On Tuesday, 17 March 2020, DOLE issued Department Order No. 209 s. 2020 or “Guidelines on the Adjustment Measures Program for Affected Workers due to the Coronavirus Disease 2019”
    - COVID-19 Adjustment Measures Program (CAMP) aims to provide financial support to affected workers in private establishments to mitigate the adverse economic impacts and reduction of income brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic
    - CAMP shall cover workers in private establishments affected by the COVID-19 pandemic from its onset in January 2020 until the lifting of the Stringent Social Distancing Measures in NCR on 14 April 2020
    - Large establishments are highly encouraged to cover the full wages of employees within the one- (1) month community quarantine period
    - Financial support
      - Shall provide affected workers with financial relief necessary to mitigate the immediate adverse economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic
      - Financial assistance may be used to cover remaining unpaid leaves of affected workers
      - A one-time financial assistance equivalent to Php5,000.00 shall be provided to affected workers in lump sum, non-conditional, regardless of employment status
    - Employment facilitation

- Shall provide affected workers access to available job opportunities suitable to their qualifications through job matching, referral and placement services either for local or overseas employment, employment coaching, and labor market information

## **ECOP's Response**

### On flexible working arrangements

- Institutionalization of a work-from-home arrangement for the entire ECOP Secretariat
- Encouraged company members to adopt flexible work arrangements

### On advocacy, service delivery, and member engagement

- ECOP leaders are accessible to the media to represent and advocate for employers
- ECOP in close coordination and social dialogue with counterparts in the trade union exploring possible areas of collaboration (e.g. joint statement, etc.)
- Regular updating via advisory and infographics (using its website, e-bulletin, social media accounts, and CRM) on government issuances and pronouncements
- Collecting and documenting good business practices especially in terms of work arrangements; ECOP to release a series of write-ups
- Provision of assistance to members via the ECOP Service Helpdesk
- Holding of webinars to apprise both members and non-members on important policy issuances
- Membership collection efforts are on hold to empathize with the situation of our members
- Non-members who are reaching out to ECOP are still being encouraged to join ECOP as a member