



## Business organizations urge immediate passage of Special Law to address COVID-19

March 23, 2020

We, the undersigned organizations, thank the Administration and Congress for quickly starting official deliberations today on the proposed **“Bayanihan Act of 2020”** and its counterpart bill in the Senate known as **“We Heal as One Act”** that are specially designed to help the country aggressively combat the COVID-19 pandemic and address its ill effects to our countrymen and economy.

We express support for the immediate passage of the law.

We commit ourselves to continue working with the government to fight COVID-19 with the assets and facilities at our disposal and, with proper consideration for their safety, with our manpower, starting from our managers. We commit to continue to support the health workers and medical establishments at the frontline of the war.

We recommend that any law that is passed by Congress should be consistent with our constitutional and legal principles, and not be overly broad and over-reaching -- in particular with realignment and reallocation of government and GOCC funds that should consider the constitutional guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court, and take-over of private enterprises -- in order to avoid constitutional challenges that would delay implementation thereof.

We suggest the Administration and Congress consider provisions on the following.

1. Limit the duration of the law to two months and any extension thereof should be by an act of Congress;
2. Authorizing the President or his designees to grant special permits and exemptions from bureaucratic requirements under existing laws and regulations as may be reasonably necessary to avoid delay in the deployment or utilization of the funds and procurement of needed requirements;
3. Authorizing the President to adopt measures as may be reasonably necessary to facilitate and/or minimize disruption to the supply chain, especially for basic commodities and services to the maximum extent possible;
4. Providing rehabilitation, special financing programs and/or stimulus package to help businesses - especially MSMEs - that are adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, especially to help them pay workers to remain quarantined and, when the pandemic is under control, to rehire and resume normal operations;
5. Supporting any fund raising or other forms of assistance that the President may seek to get from foreign countries, multilateral organizations and the capital markets.

Some of the foregoing items can also be covered in a second bill if including them now will cause needless delay in the passage of the bill.

Cognizant that the re-allocated or re-aligned funds from government agencies and GOCCs may not be sufficient for the foregoing purposes, a second bill may provide additional funds to address both health and economic issues.

In order to minimize the damage of COVID-19 to the people and the economy, we urge Congress to pass quickly the special law at the earliest possible time.

AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE PHILIPPINES (AMCHAM) ● ANVIL BUSINESS CLUB ● AUSTRALIAN-NEW ZEALAND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PHILIPPINES (ANZCHAM) ● BANKERS ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES (BAP) ● CANADIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE PHILIPPINES (CANCHAM) ● EUROPEAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE PHILIPPINES (ECCP) ● FEDERATION OF FILIPINO CHINESE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY, INC. (FFCCII) ● FEDERATION OF INDIAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE (PHIL) INC. (FICCI) ● INVESTMENT HOUSE ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES (IHAP) ● JUDICIAL REFORM INITIATIVE (JRI) ● MAKATI BUSINESS CLUB (MBC) ● MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES (MAP) ● MICROFINANCE COUNCIL OF THE PHILIPPINES ● ORGANIZATION OF SOCIALIZED HOUSING DEVELOPERS OF THE PHILIPPINES (OSHDP) ● PEOPLE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES (PMAP) ● PHILIPPINE ASSOCIATION OF SECURITIES BROKERS AND DEALERS, INC. (PASBDI) ● PHILIPPINE CENTER FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP (GO NEGOSYO) ● PHILIPPINE HOTEL OWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC. ● SEMICONDUCTOR AND ELECTRONICS INDUSTRIES IN THE PHILIPPINES FOUNDATION, INC. ● SHAREHOLDERS’ ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES (SHAREPHIL) ● SUBDIVISION AND HOUSING DEVELOPERS ASSOCIATION (SHDA) ● WOMEN’S BUSINESS COUNCIL PHILIPPINES (WBCP)