



Concern, Inc.

Her Excellency Magdalena Andersson
Prime Minister
Sweden

Dear Prime Minister,

We, **Center for Emergency Aid, Rehabilitation and Development (CONCERN Inc.)**, a partner organization to We Effect, write to you to express our deep concerns about the decision to dramatically cut Sweden's official development assistance.

The war in Ukraine has underlined how severely vulnerable groups are affected in times of crisis. Already enduring the economic effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and the climate crisis, people in poverty are now suffering from skyrocketing food prices.

The Secretary-General of the UN warns that 1,7 billion people – one-fifth of the world's population– are at risk of hunger and poverty. The world is in the worst humanitarian situation since World War II. Nearly half of humanity lives in the danger zone of the climate crisis.

The **Center for Emergency Aid, Rehabilitation and Development (CONCERN Inc.)** is supported by We Effect Philippines and is implementing a 3-year project titled, “**Capability Assistance for People's Initiatives at Transformative Actions and Leadership in Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience to Disasters**” (**CAPITAL in CCARD**) which aims to equip disadvantaged communities and sectors with an understanding of climate change and disasters and how these impact on their lives and communities and by developing the necessary skills to take pro-active measures, the project generates in them the desire and resolve to take on the problem themselves. We are a people-based, and development-oriented organization and we rely principally on the communities' own organized efforts to address the underlying problems of disempowerment, poverty, political abuse and environmental degradation, and to reduce their vulnerabilities and enhance their capabilities.

In the context of the Philippines, the significance of the project objective cannot be overstated. The existing economic and power structure does not offer optimism for attaining disaster resilience of the poor and the Philippines vulnerability to disaster is further exacerbated by global warming and climate change. But concerted people's initiatives and actions, including rights-claiming, can give some ray of hope, that indeed, change can still be

pursued; that disaster resilience can be attained, if stakeholders, equipped with sufficient knowledge and skills and organized, take it upon themselves to pursue it. Meanwhile, the project also provides a component creating for a mechanism where the internally displaced population, especially women and youth affected by the Marawi siege, can raise their voices on issues relative to their right to rehabilitation and development, and to building safer and more resilient communities that will empower them to claim their rights.

We, at CONCERN Inc. are currently in our 3rd year of project intervention. With this in mind, the historic and tragic decision to cut the development assistance will impact us in unprecedented ways. For us, the cut has drastic implications/effects.

- The support in strengthening the capacity of partner CSOs/NGOs in integrating climate change adaptation and disaster resilience in development efforts in order to support the vulnerable and marginalized sector in taking pro-active measures and meaningful actions will not be sustained.
- On the third year of the project, the skills and knowledge acquired by partner CSOs/NGOs will be shared to member-based organizations who are directly exposed to many hazards and are mostly affected during disasters. With the budget cuts, we will be unable to achieve the objective in capacitating grassroots communities to actively pursue disaster resilience especially among the rural and urban poor.
- The budget cut will also create a delay in our organizing and improving the capacities of the consolidated DRR networks in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. It is very important that the DRR Network is formed and organized as they act as the first responders when a disaster strikes - implementing their preparedness plans, mobilizing their pooled resources to attend to immediate needs, defining needs beyond their capacities, and coordinating support from other responders as they come. It also serves as a nerve center for mobilizing resources outside the disaster-impacted areas and generating support for the local advocacy and campaign plan, beyond their areas of coverage.
- We will be forced to remove some of the activities that focus on strengthening the capacity of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Marawi City for rights-claiming in upholding people's rights in the displacement scenarios. The project through the support of SIDA CIVSAM has created a huge impact on people's participation and empowerment. The project has also supported the establishment of Reclaiming Marawi Movement (RMM), an IDP-led advocacy group. At present, Marawi IDPs have the longest-running displacement record in the Philippines, it has been 5 years since the Marawi siege but the government still has no clear plan for IDPs, most remain in transitional shelters. As of June 2021, around 17,446 families

(approximately 87,230 individuals) belonging to the most affected areas remain displaced and in need of durable solutions. The campaign is ongoing and still needs support from other stakeholders in order to drumbeat the issue of displacement in order to reach a broader audience and push for the duty bearers to act.



The slow rehabilitation and infrastructure-driven and an infrastructure-driven development in Marawi City put many lives at worst condition because of multiple burden, yet people's campaign prosper in light of the challenges that concern the right to life, dignity and call for justice.



Areas in Marawi City where the temporary and permanent shelters are built for the IDPs faces threat to natural hazard-given their location – being prone to landslides and flooding, while their shelters units are slowly deteriorating because of the changing climate.

Dear Magdalena, as Sweden's prime minister and leader of your government, we know you are a strong believer in international solidarity. We can't thank you enough for the support your country has given in the past.

We now encourage you to stand with us in these desperate times and re-evaluate the decision to cut development assistance, to make sure that the consequences of the war in Ukraine and the climate crisis will be as limited as possible.

Show your full support to civil society organizations and people in poverty that we support. Your financial support is needed more than ever. It is a long-term investment in a more sustainable and just world.

We look forward to your reply.

Proleta N. Gomez
CONCERN, Inc.
Executive Director