



Comments on Senate Bill 331 authored by Sen JV Ejercito; Senate Bill 936 authored by Sen Risa Hontiveros and Senate Bill 1216 authored by Sen Grace Poe on “**On-Site, In-City or Near-City Resettlement Act**” (Short title).

1. All three bills provide for amendatory provisions to Republic Act No 7279 otherwise known as the Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992 (UDHA). The amendments are proposed in support of the Constitutional rights to human dignity and to adequate standard of living including adequate housing. In accordance to these constitutional rights, the bills introduce changes specifically in the conduct of resettlement projects.
2. The PIDS agrees to the rationale of the law. The government has to implement an efficient and effective resettlement plan for informal settler families (or ISF) specifically those occupying danger zones or lands for infrastructure development. We also agree that on-site and in-city resettlements have several advantages compared to off-city resettlements. The study of PIDS on NHA Resettlement program that compared different resettlement modalities noted that on-site/in-city resettlement is more effective than off-city resettlement in terms of benefit cost analysis and socioeconomic impact.
3. To ensure that resettlement projects are effectively undertaken and that off-site resettlements are minimized (if not totally eliminated), proposed amendments the UDHA law should be considered in the context of city or municipality-wide development program instead of specific ISF projects or ISF settlements. In this context, the critical amendments that should be the focus of the bills are those that pertain to the ff: a) strengthening of LGU CLUPS; (b) addressing landownership issues; and (c) developing financing sources for city wide upgrading.
4. On LGU CLUPS. Require LGUs to have a resettlement plan that is integrated into their physical and development plans. Resettlement plans should be programmatic; identifying potential resettlement sites, ISF communities to be resettled and the needed programs and services.
5. On landownership issues. Land proclamations should not be used as a political tool. Stricter laws on professional squatting and use of spurious land titles.
6. On funding sources. Government should consider “value capture” to fund LGU development and social housing. A percentage of the increase in land/property values from infrastructure developments in cities/municipalities including increase economic activity that results from these developments should be allocated for city/municipality wide upgrading and social housing. There is also a need to define public and private roles in providing a more diversified housing finance services and subsidies.

Comments were written by Dr. Marife M. Ballesteros, OIC-Vice President of the Philippine Institute for Development Studies.



7. On adequate and genuine consultations. The requirements specifically requiring the government or landowners' full disclosure of land information and providing alternative housing options acceptable to ISFs can be cumbersome. Excessive consultation is counterproductive with adverse effects on economic development. A transparent and effective CLUPS can address the concerns on adequate and genuine consultation. This provision also fails to recognize the limitations of ISF associations and tend to favor some ISF groups but not others.

8. For your consideration.