

Chapter 12

Building Safe and Secure Communities

The 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that "the State shall, by law, and for the common good, undertake, in cooperation with the private sector, a continuing program of urban land reform and housing, which will make available at affordable cost, decent housing and basic services to underprivileged and homeless citizens in urban centers and resettlement areas". Thus, the Regional Development Plan 2017-2022 includes building safe and secure communities as one of its priority agenda.

This chapter discusses the challenges and strategies of Central Visayas in facilitating the realization of every Filipino's aspiration for adequate housing. For this planning period, the region aims to lay the foundation for future efforts in building safe and secure communities for Central Visayans.

Assessment and Challenges

Central Visayas has a long standing problem on housing backlog. However, because of weak mechanism for monitoring the implementation of housing programs, the region has made very little progress in addressing the problem.

The primary bottleneck that hampers the region from effectively implementing solutions to its housing problem is the lack of accurate information on the extent of its housing needs. The Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) relies on the local government units in the determination of the housing needs based on their respective local shelter plans. Therefore, until all LGUs in the region are able to formulate their local shelter plans, the region could not accurately estimate its actual housing needs. As of 2016, only four LGUs in Central Visayas have approved local shelter plans.

The presence of local shelter plans and programs does not only facilitate estimation of housing needs; more importantly, it allows LGUs to have a basis in appropriating budget for local shelter concerns. The failure to prepare shelter plans has therefore contributed to the housing backlog.

The issues relative to the institutional deficiencies in the housing sector is compounded by problems on rapid urbanization. Based on data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), the population in the Metro Cebu area, which is the region's urban core, grew by 2.63 percent annually on the average for the past 15 years to reach 2.84 million in 2015. Tagbilaran City and Dumaguete City are also quickly becoming populous with population in these cities growing annually by 2.03 percent and 1.68 percent, respectively, between 2000 and 2015.

The influx of people to the cities has resulted in the proliferation of slums and informal settlements in the urban areas. Because of the prohibitively expensive lands and high rents in

the urban areas, many families are prompted to live in unauthorized housing units with insecure tenure. They reside in slum areas that are usually high risk for flooding (beside waterways) and lack standard conveniences such as electricity, water, and drainage facilities. These families endure the dangerous and difficult conditions in slum areas just to be close to their sources of income.

A major impediment in the implementation of an effective housing program for the underprivileged and homeless constituents in Central Visayas is the failure of many LGUs to prepare or complete their comprehensive land use plans (CLUPs) and to undertake the other tasks expected of them under RA 7279. Under RA 7279 otherwise known as the Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992 (UDHA), LGUs are mandated to do the following: a) prepare a CLUP; b) conduct an inventory of all lands and improvements thereon within their respective localities in coordination with the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB) and with the assistance of the appropriate government agencies and update the same every 3 years; and (c) identify, in coordination with NHA, HLURB, NAMRIA and the Land Management Bureau of DENR lands for socialized housing and resettlement areas. Moreover, leakages of housing subsidies to non-poor families have been noted. Surveys and anecdotal evidence show that not all informal settlers are income poor¹. Some informal settlers have actually improved their conditions and status since the time they started to settle illegally on unoccupied tract of land. Some are even middle-class urbanites and professionals who

opt to reside in slum areas to avoid the financial burden attendant to owning formal housing or land.²

Considering the limited resources available for socialized housing, the government needs to improve the implementation of housing programs to ensure that subsidy programs reach the intended beneficiaries, particularly those who cannot afford to put up houses on their own. According to a World Bank report (2001), non-poor families including those living in informal settlements usually benefit from government housing programs. Although 95 percent of the beneficiaries of socialized housing programs are from the urban areas, the poor comprise only 20 percent of this number and few come from the bottom poor³. Based on section 17 of the UDHA, LGUs are responsible for identifying and registering all qualified socialized housing beneficiaries within their respective localities.

Alongside efforts to address the deficiencies in the implementation of housing programs, the government needs to implement schemes that would effectively increase production capacity to meet the growing housing demand triggered by rapid urbanization.

Strategic Framework

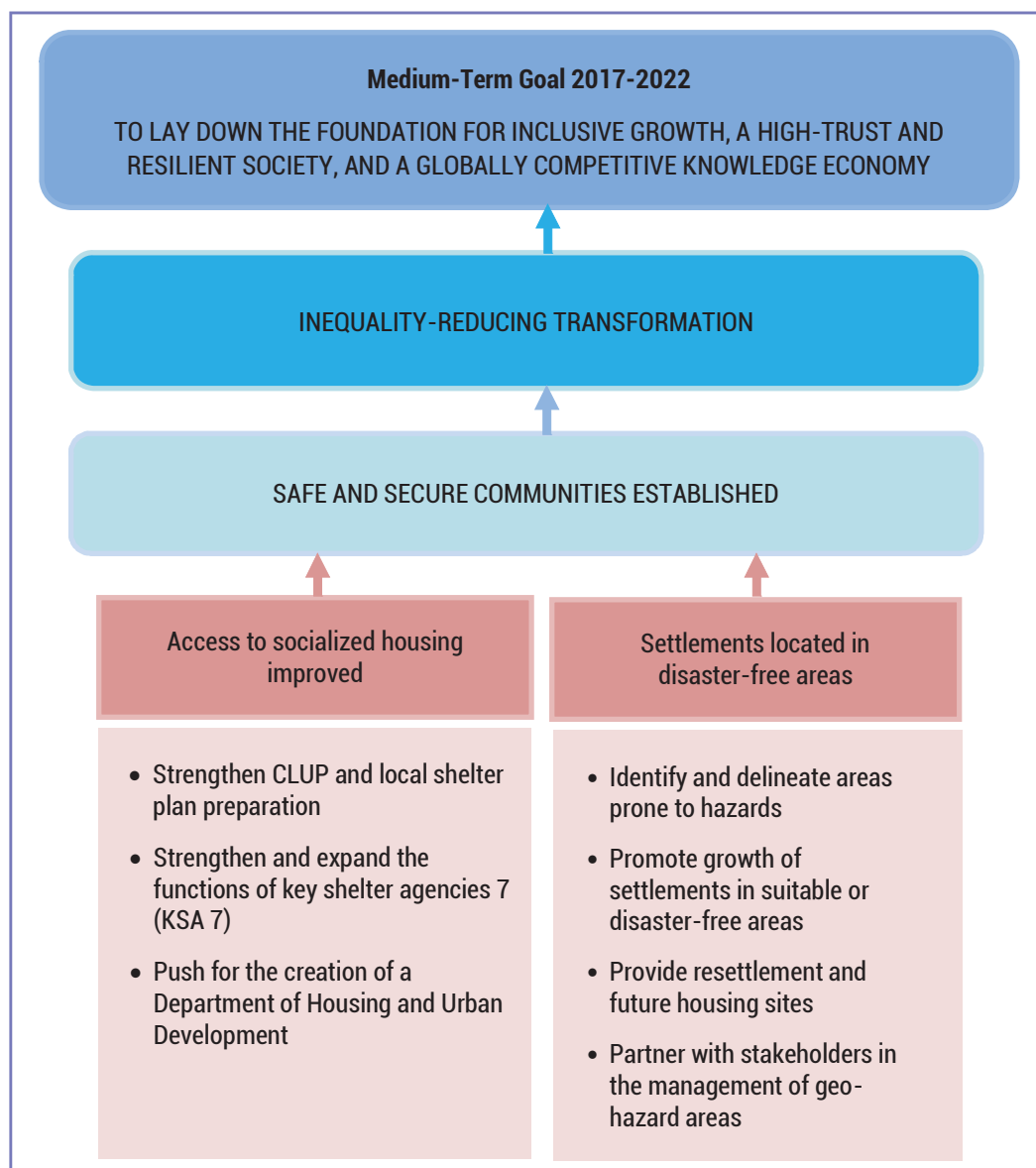
Central Visayas aims to improve access to socialized housing in order to ensure that the underprivileged are provided with adequate and decent housing.

¹ John Francis Lagman, "Anatomy of the Nations Housing Problems," *In Focus* 10 (2010): 106, <http://philrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/In-Focus-Issue-No.-10.pdf>.

² *Ibid.*, 107.

³ *Ibid.*

Figure 12.1 Strategic Framework to Build Safe and Secure Communities, 2017-2022



Targets

Table 12.1 Targets on Improving Access to Socialized Housing

INDICATORS	BASELINE (2015)	END OF TARGET (2022)
Housing backlog	167,818 ^{1/}	decreasing
Percentage of LGUs with updated CLUPs	21.2	increasing
Percentage of LGUs with approved Local Shelter Plan	3.0	100.0

Note: ^{1/} Unofficial estimate as of November 2016, excluding Siquijor

Strategies

Improving Access to Socialized Housing

Strengthen CLUP and Local Shelter Plan Preparation. The HLURB shall continue to provide technical assistance to LGUs in the formulation/ updating of their CLUPs.

The HLURB shall coordinate with the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) in monitoring the preparation by LGUs of their CLUPs.

Also under this strategy, the HUDCC shall fast-track the conduct of trainings among LGUs on the Local Shelter Plan. It shall vigorously promote the organization by LGUs of the Local Housing Boards. The Local Housing Board can undertake the preparation of the local shelter plan with the technical support of the HUDCC and key housing agencies.

Strengthen and expand the function of the Key Shelter Agencies 7 (KSA 7). The Key Shelter Agencies 7 (KSA 7) shall be strengthened and shall serve as the region's Technical Working Group for Housing Development. As such, it shall come up with recommendations to improve the implementation of housing programs in the region so that the issue on leakage would be addressed. It shall also look into the factors contributing to the slow implementation of housing projects. Moreover, it shall review the existing ceiling for socialized housing of PhP450,000 per unit to determine its sufficiency in providing decent dwelling units. The recommendations of the KSA 7 shall be elevated to the Regional Development Council (RDC) for onward endorsement to appropriate agencies at the national level.

Lobby for the Creation of Department of Housing and Urban Development. The RDC shall push for the creation of a Department of Housing and Urban Development (DHUD). This is to strengthen the regulatory environment of the country's housing sector. The proposed DHUD

will assume the lead role in coordinating, regulating, and supervising government activities relative to housing and urban development.

Location of Settlements in Disaster-free Areas

Identify and delineate areas prone to hazards. The boundaries of hazard prone areas and environmentally critical areas shall be clearly delineated and mapped out to determine the limits of land development, control the encroachment of settlements, and lessen the occurrence of natural disasters or loss of lives and damage to properties due to disasters. The information shall be disseminated to local government units and residents of affected areas so that disaster management programs appropriate to the area could be prepared.

Growth shall be restricted in areas identified as hazard-prone in order to prevent the occurrence of disasters. LGUs shall be required to protect the area by adopting policies and development regulations. Unless there are no feasible and prudent alternatives, new developments/ activities shall not be located in hazard-prone areas.

Promote growth of settlements in suitable or disaster-free areas. LGUs in cooperation with concerned national agencies shall identify the suitable or disaster-free areas where increased local growth shall be promoted in lieu of existing hazard-prone areas that are occupied. These areas shall be provided with the basic and key infrastructure and facilities to enable the areas to accommodate increased economic activities. These areas shall be integrated in the local land use and development plans of LGUs.

Provide resettlement and future housing sites. In the long term, high-risk disaster-prone areas must be cleared of settlements. Thus, this early, resettlement sites as well as future sites for housing located in disaster-free areas must be identified and acquired to prevent speculation. Government (national and local) can also link up with the private sector to provide the land or

increase the supply of land available for affordable housing development.

Partner with stakeholders in the management of geo-hazard areas. Cooperation shall be forged among all stakeholders — the community, civil society, service providers, LGUs, and national government — to come up with joint management plans for hazard-prone areas (e.g. disaster risk management and contingency plans). Common and complementary policies and activities shall be identified to prevent the occurrence of disasters or minimize damage to properties and loss of life in case of disasters. A valuable and necessary complement to promoting and strengthening the

partnership with stakeholders is increasing awareness on the values of disaster preparation and co-managing hazard-prone areas. Only when all stakeholders are aware of their duties and responsibilities and the long-term benefits of disaster preparedness can the partnership be effective and sustainable.

Legislative Agenda

To complement and support the ratio the strategies, the following legislative action will be sought of Department of Housing and Urban Development

Figure 12.2 Legislative Agenda to Build Safe and Secure Communities, 2017-2022

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA	RATIONALE
Creation of Department of Housing and Urban Development	To integrate all housing and urban development policies, plans, programs, and projects. This department will be the sole planning and policy-making, regulatory, program coordination, and performance-monitoring entity of the National Shelter Program.
Passage of the National Land Use Act (NaLUA)	To establish a national land use framework that will define the indicative priorities for land utilization and allocation across residential, infrastructure, agricultural, and protective uses, and integrate efforts, monitor developments related to land use, and evolve policies, regulations and directions of land use planning processes.
Creation of Local Housing Boards in every city/ municipalities	To strengthen the roles of the LGUs in the provision of shelter to households through the mandatory establishment of local housing boards in every city and municipality.
Evacuation Center Act	To establish permanent and typhoon-resilient evacuation centers with the necessary facilities to avoid the practice of using classrooms as evacuation centers during calamities. Centers should also have PWD-friendly, elderly-friendly, and women-child friendly spaces. The RDRRMC will be in charge of identifying which municipalities and cities will be given priority.