

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Save the Children Philippines welcomes passage of First 1,000 Days Ordinance in Caloocan City

Save the Children Philippines on Wednesday welcomed the passage of Caloocan City's First 1,000 Days Ordinance that aims to reduce cases of preventable malnutrition and deaths of children in deprived areas.

Lawyer Albert Muyot, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Save the Children Philippines said local governments have a critical role in implementing high impact and life saving measures such as the First 1,000 Days ordinance to improve health and nutrition of children.

Caloocan is the third city to adopt the First 1,000 Days Ordinance, after Malabon and Navotas. The ordinance, passed by the Caloocan City Council on June 14, 2019 is in line with Republic Act 11148 or Kalusugan ng Magnanay Act- known as the First 1,000 Days Law that mandates an integrated strategy for maternal and child health and nutrition in the first 1,000 days of a child's life.

"Malnutrition has devastating and irreversible impact to the child's physical growth and brain development, we must do all we can to allow children to survive and thrive," said Muyot in a statement.

Save the Children Philippines lobbied for the passage of the First 1,000 Days Law due to rise in child deaths from malnutrition, surpassing global average.

In 2015, at least 48 percent of the deaths of children below 5 years old was due to their being underweight, a condition indicating that they were malnourished. The rate is higher than the global average of 45 percent. This means that 31,813 of the 65,613 child deaths in the country in 2015 were linked to malnutrition.

Caloocan City has a total population of 1.6 million and ranks fourth in Metro Manila with the prevalence of malnutrition among children at 2.32 percent. In 2017, Caloocan had 2,894 children below 5 years old who were undernourished and 17,163 children below five who were stunted.

The ordinance, which was given an initial funding of P980,000 also stressed on full implementation of Executive Order 51 or the Milk Code or exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of babies and continuous breastfeeding up to two years.

Save the Children's Global Childhood Report 2019 cited malnutrition among children remains a critical public health concern in the Philippines with 33.4 percent – or 3.8m – children under five years not getting enough daily nutrition.

The report also cited that infant mortality is high too, with nearly three percent – or 322,000 – of children in the country dying before their fifth birthday from preventable causes.

Save the Children Philippines has been implementing maternal, newborn and child health and nutrition programs in deprived areas in Caloocan, Navotas and Malabon to address the problem of child deaths due to malnutrition and other preventable causes.

These include providing pregnant women and children access to health and nutrition services, orientation workshops on breastfeeding and complete vaccination.

To sustain the impact of these programs, Save the Children Philippines pushes for local governments to adopt the First 1,000 Days ordinance with allocation of budget to provide assistance to pregnant and lactating mothers and children below two years old.

“We commend local officials for their initiatives to invest on children to ensure they grow up healthy through the First 1,000 Days ordinance,” said Muyot.

NOTES TO EDITOR:

Save the Children is a global movement with presence in 120 countries. We believe that every child deserves a healthy start. We do whatever it takes for children, transforming their lives and the future we share.

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MEDIA CONTACT:

Lei Tapang | Campaign and Media Coordinator | **Save the Children**
3/F Midland Bldg., 1040 EDSA Magallanes, Makati City 1232, Philippines
Tel. No: +63 (2) 853 2142 ext. 141 | Mobile No: +63 917 8733448
Lei.Tapang@savethechildren.org