DSWD FO III: Begging and Giving Alms in the Streets, Prohibited by the Law

PAMPANGA, Philippines. DSWD FO III, other agencies, Promotes Anti-Mendicancy Law, Maintains Christmas Spirit among Indigenous People

This Yuletide season is said to be the happiest time in the Philippines. For most of us, it is the season for giving and sharing. However, it is also being observed that this is also the time when Indigenous People (IPs) are more visible in the most populous places in the city as well as in the main high-ways. They are seen practicing mendicancy by asking for alms.

The presence of such activity signals the Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office III (DSWD FO III) to activate its campaign on Anti-Mendicancy Law (PD 1563) a law "Establishing an Integrated System for the Control and Eradication of Mendicancy, Providing Penalties, Appropriating Funds therefor, and for other purposes". This law prohibits both the act of begging and giving of alms.

The said campaign aims to promote and protect the best interest of Children. Aside from being exploited to seek sympathy from the public, they are also being placed in dangerous situations especially in the streets. However, Dr. Emma P. Dionisio, Medical Officer III of the National Commission on indigenous Peoples (NCIP) Region III), shared that IPs do not consider this as begging but an act of “Pakikipamasko”.

With this, the Anti-Mendicancy Task Force in Region III conducted the 2nd Donors’ Forum on 9 November 2018 in City of San Fernando, Pampanga. Different government agencies and private corporations banded together to offer IPs in region III something to remember this Christmas. The task force was able to gather 25,000 pesos cash and in-king pledges such as 100 family food packs worth 500 pesos each, kitchen wares, school supplies, random donation boxes from several NGAs and more which they will deliver in the up-land areas of the target IPs.

“Let’s extend our *pagmamalasakit* to them not because they are IPs but because they humans like us,” said Director William Beltram, Philippine Information Agency (PIA) Region III before opening the IP exhibit.. Enjoined in the task force are DSWD, NCIP, PIA, Commission on Human Rights, Philhealth, Philippine National Police, Provincial and Local Government Agencies, FAITH Pharma, CLTV36, Kapampangan Development Foundation,

among others.

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