

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 2026-02

TO: Heads of Executive Departments, Agencies, Bureaus, Offices, State Universities and Colleges, Government-Owned and/or -Controlled Corporations, Legislative and Judiciary Branches, Constitutional Bodies, Other Instrumentalities of the National Government, Local Government Units, and All Others Concerned

SUBJECT: **Guide for the 2026 National Women's Month Celebration**

DATE: January 29, 2026

1.0 Purpose

This Memorandum Circular is issued to provide guidance to stakeholders in the preparation and conduct of the National Women's Month Celebration (NWMC) in March 2026. The following sections are included:

- Background and Policy Mandates;
- Multi-year Theme and Objectives;
- Focus for the 2026 NWMC Campaign;
- Suggested Activities for Stakeholders;
- PCW-Organized Activities;
- Observance of Health and Safety Protocols and Conduct of Peaceful and Non-partisan Activities;
- Use of Gender and Development (GAD) Budget; and
- Details for Sending Inquiries and Feedback

2.0 Background and Policy Mandates

The National Women's Month is an occasion recognizing the significant contributions of women in nation-building. Held every March, it serves as a platform to honor achievements across various sectors while emphasizing the continuous need to advocate for gender equality and women's empowerment.

The Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) spearheads the annual celebration, highlighting the vital roles women play in national development. This observance emphasizes the importance of respecting, protecting, and advancing women's rights, enabling them to reach their fullest potential and thrive in all aspects of life. Moreover, the NWMC is aligned with the global observance of

International Women’s Day (IWD), reinforcing the worldwide movement for gender equality and women’s empowerment.

The following issuances serve as the legal bases for the NWMC:

- **Proclamation No. 224, s. of 1988** – Declaring the first week of March each year as **Women’s Week** and **March 8** as **Women’s Rights and International Peace Day**;
- **Proclamation No. 227, s. of 1988** – Providing for the observance of the Month of **March as Women’s Role in History Month**; and
- **Republic Act No. 6949 (1990)** – Declaring March 8 of every year as National Women’s Day.

3.0 2023-2028 Campaign Banner

This year marks the fourth installment of the 2023–2028 recurring campaign banner, **WE for Gender Equality and Inclusive Society**.

More than a statement of achievement, the theme serves as a rallying point. It highlights the milestones the Philippines has achieved in narrowing gender gaps while encouraging continued engagement from individuals, communities, and institutions. According to the 2025 Global Gender Gap Report by the World Economic Forum, the Philippines has surged back into the global top 20, climbing five places to rank 20th out of 148 countries. With an overall gender parity score of 78.1 percent, the Philippines reasserts its leadership as Asia’s most gender-equal nation and ranks third in the East Asia and Pacific region.

3.1 Elements of the Theme:

- **WE** represents both **Women and Everyone**, highlighting that achieving gender equality is a shared responsibility. **WE** also stands for **Women’s Empowerment**, a goal which can only be realized when all sectors—individuals, agencies, institutions, private partners, and duty-bearers at both national and local levels—work together to ensure women have equal rights and opportunities. Women’s active participation in seizing these opportunities is equally essential. Through the combined efforts of Women and Everyone, gender equality can transition from an aspiration to a tangible reality.
- **Gender Equality** constitutes the first component of the GEWE advocacy, representing the fundamental goal in advancing women’s rights. The theme emphasizes the urgent need to accelerate efforts toward this critical aspiration. According to the 2025 Global Gender Gap Report, achieving

full gender parity is projected to take 123 years. While this remains a long horizon, it is an improvement from the 132-year estimate in 2024, bringing the global community 11 years closer to parity in just one year. This progress, though modest, reflects a growing recognition that gender equality is essential to economic growth and societal resilience, especially amid global uncertainty.

The pursuit of gender equality today is an investment in a more inclusive and equitable future, even if its full realization may extend beyond our generation. The phrase “gender equality”—preceded by the word “for”—serves as a call to action for both Women and Everyone to advocate for, act on, and promote equality and inclusivity.

- **Inclusive Society** extends beyond a gender-responsive approach, envisioning a community that transcends distinctions in SOGIE, class, ability, generation, status, and culture. It aspires to a society where every individual, each inherent rights and responsibilities, actively contributes to collective growth. Equality and inclusion are interwoven elements of the GEWE advocacy, emphasizing the importance of cultivating a society that embraces and celebrates diversity.

4.0 Focus and Objectives of the 2026 National Women’s Month Celebration

With the goal of recognizing that women’s leadership is a fundamental part of national identity, the 2026 NWMC carries the sub-theme ***“Lead like the Babaylans, Filipinas!”***. It aims to highlight the distinctive leadership qualities of Babaylans, women leaders in pre-colonial Philippines whose authority was grounded in wisdom, empathy, mediation, and moral guidance rather than force, hierarchy, or territorial power. Setting them apart from others who often governed through warfare or dominance, Babaylans led through inclusion, spiritual insight, and collective care, safeguarding communities and guiding them through conflict. By embodying these qualities, the celebration underscores how women’s leadership fosters balanced, resilient, and empowered communities, reflecting a model that remains relevant today.

This focus also aligns with regional aspirations, complementing the 4th ASEAN Women Leaders Summit, ***“Shaping the Future of ASEAN: Women’s Leadership in Advancing People Empowerment, Regional Security, and Economic Prosperity.”*** By drawing inspiration from Babaylan leadership, the 2026 NWMC demonstrates how Filipino women continue to drive inclusive governance, peacebuilding, and community development locally and across ASEAN, emphasizing values-driven, community-centered leadership that advances gender equality and collaborative progress.

4.1 Objectives

This year's celebration serves as a continuing campaign to amplify women's leadership across sectors by reclaiming and embodying the Babaylan model—anchored in wisdom, compassion, courage, and a deep sense of responsibility to the community. It seeks to affirm gender equality not merely as a policy principle, but as a cultural legacy that has long guided Filipino society, highlighting the vital role of women in shaping our nation. Through this campaign, women are empowered to lead transformative change—not only in their families and communities, but also in the broader Philippine society and across the ASEAN region. This demonstrates that gender-responsive leadership is a powerful force for social progress, regional collaboration, and sustainable development. By showcasing the impact of women's leadership in all sectors, the celebration underscores the enduring truth that when women lead, communities thrive, societies advance, and nations grow stronger.

Specifically, it aims to:

- Showcase women's leadership and contributions by demonstrating how Filipino women, are already leading change in governance, peace, security, and economic development in the country and in the ASEAN region by highlighting pathways to embody Babaylan-inspired leadership;
- Promote gender-responsive programs and policies to ensure women have equitable access to opportunities, resources, and meaningful participation in decision-making spaces enabling them to exercise leadership that benefits communities and drives inclusive growth. Empower marginalized and underrepresented women, including rural women, indigenous women, and women with disabilities, by providing capacity-building and meaningful engagements, ensuring all women can participate fully and lead in their communities and sectors.
- Strengthen multi-sectoral collaboration and accountability, engaging government agencies, LGUs, civil society, and other stakeholders to scale up initiatives that achieve visible outcomes for women, supporting leadership that foster transformative change nationally and regionally.

5.0 Suggested Activities for Stakeholders

PCW calls on all government agencies, NGOs, sectoral groups, private entities, CSOs, and various stakeholders at the national, regional, and local levels to organize meaningful and relevant activities aligned with the focus of the 2026 NWMC and the GAD objectives. Suggested activities may include:

5.1 NWMC-themed Flag Raising Ceremony – NGAs and LGUs are encouraged to integrate NWMC announcements, reminders, messages, and activities into their Flag Raising Ceremonies during the last week of February and the first week of March (or on other relevant dates). It is strongly recommended that the All-Women Cast Lupang Hinirang music video be featured in NWMC events. The video can be downloaded from <https://library.pcw.gov.ph/lupang-hinirang-all-women-cast/>.

5.2. For GAD Focal Point System (GFPS) Members – Members of the GFPS from agencies are invited to participate in the onsite event on March 6, 2026. Further updates including specific details, will be posted on the NWMC webpage and official accounts of PCW.

GFPS are also encouraged to conduct activities that recognize and honor the leadership, achievements, and contributions of their women employees as part of the 2026 National Women’s Month Celebration. It aims to highlight exemplary performance, inspire others, and promote a culture of appreciation and empowerment within the agency.

5.3 Regional Women’s Leadership and Innovation Exhibits: Stakeholders are encouraged to organize exhibits that showcase women’s leadership and innovation through programs and initiatives led or co-led by women. Examples include highlighting women-led projects that achieve measurable community or governance outcomes, presenting success stories of women influencing policy and decision-making, conducting interactive sessions or mini-workshops led by women leaders to share skills and strategies, hosting panel discussions or mentorship showcases connecting emerging and experienced women leaders, and displaying innovative practices where women drive inclusive solutions and advance gender equality. Exhibits may also feature multimedia presentations linking local initiatives to ASEAN-aligned priorities, demonstrating how women’s leadership contributes to transformative change, community empowerment, and regional development.

5.4 Celebrating Women Leaders: Organize a mini recognition activity within the agency to highlight women leaders who demonstrate exemplary leadership and inspire others. Examples include short nomination drives for outstanding women employees, conducting quick “leader share” sessions where nominees talk about their experiences, or giving certificates of appreciation during team meetings or NWMC events. This activity aims to celebrate women’s leadership, inspire colleagues, and foster a culture of appreciation and empowerment.

5.5 Capacity-Building and Women in Governance Dialogues: Conduct training and mentorship programs on leadership, entrepreneurship, digital literacy, and climate resilience for women, with a focus on linking local participation to regional outcomes in governance, economic growth, and peacebuilding. These sessions aim to equip women, particularly those in rural or

marginalized communities, with the knowledge and skills to actively participate in decision-making and community development. Moreover, the dialogues will demonstrate how grassroots initiatives contribute to ASEAN's socio-cultural, economic, and political-security objectives, and how women's participation strengthens regional development and resilience.

5.6 #GADtoKnow Campaign: Implement awareness initiatives that showcase women's leadership in advancing gender-responsive laws, programs, and services, highlighting how women actively lead, implement, or influence initiatives that improve access to opportunities and align with ASEAN frameworks and agreements. Examples include featuring stories of women leaders driving change in governance, policy, or community programs, or highlighting their contributions to promoting gender equality and inclusive development.

5.7 Offer your own "Serbisyo para sa Kababaihan": Public and private entities that provide direct services, transactions, and products to the public may extend gestures of appreciation to women and girls on International Women's Day (March 8) or throughout March. These tokens may include freebies, discounts, priority lanes, and other special promotions. These activities can serve as platforms to showcase initiatives and programs aimed at empowering women. Stakeholders who wish to have their #SerbisyoParaSaKababaihan activities included in PCW's official announcements are invited to fill out the form posted on the NWMC webpage.

5.8 For DOH-retained hospitals and Local Government Units: In line with Section 17 (Women's Right to Health) of RA 9710 or the Magna Carta of Women, which mandates the provision of comprehensive health services for women, DOH-retained hospitals and LGUs are encouraged, as may be allowed, to support HPV testing and vaccination activities for women and girls, such as free or subsidized HPV screening, vaccination, and information and education sessions on cervical cancer prevention.

5.9 Cultural and Artistic Events: Organize storytelling sessions, music performances, art exhibits, or theater productions highlighting women's creativity, leadership, and contributions to communities. These events aim to celebrate women weavers and other traditional artisans, demonstrating how cultural heritage can support economic empowerment and sustainable livelihoods.

5.10 Organize activities in support of the Girl Child Week and the Women with Disabilities Day Celebration: Initiate activities for the Girl Child Week, observed every fourth week of March, which is led by the [Council for the Welfare of Children \(CWC\)](#), as well as the Women with Disabilities Day celebration spearheaded by the [National Council on Disability Affairs \(NCDA\)](#).

5.11 #PurpleWednesdays, #PurpleYourIcon and #PurpleYourProfile: Show your commitment to women's empowerment and gender equality by wearing

purple every Wednesday throughout March. Extend your support by illuminating offices, landmarks, and public spaces with purple elements. Join the online movement by updating your profile picture with PCW's official frame through #PurpleYourProfile, helping amplify awareness and engagement in digital spaces. These simple yet impactful actions not only celebrate women but also sparks conversations about Women's Month.

5.12 Musika ng Kababaihan Fridays (#MNKFriday): Celebrate gender equality through music and harmony every Friday in March! Play empowering songs from the MusikJuana Songwriting Contest and other PCW advocacy songs in offices, public and private spaces, parks, and on social media. Let these anthems of women's empowerment inspire action and amplify the message of gender equality. Access the collection here: <https://library.pcw.gov.ph/search/?q=musikjuana>.

5.13 Use the official collateral designs: Stakeholders are encouraged to use the official branding design released by PCW for the 2026 NWMC. The branding guide, standard banner, and sample collateral designs are available for download on the NWMC webpage.

5.14 Use the official hashtag #WEcanbeEquALL': The online campaign to rally support for gender equality under the hashtag #WEcanbeEquALL. This encourages everyone to stand for equality and inclusivity, ensuring that all individuals, regardless of gender, ability, status, or circumstance, are treated with respect and granted their rights. By embracing #WEcanbeEquALL, participants reaffirm their commitment to leaving no one behind and sharing actions advancing gender equality and building a truly inclusive society.

5.15 Be featured in the NWMC Calendar of Activities and Event Photos: Agencies with planned activities are encouraged to share details with PCW for inclusion in the NWMC Calendar of Activities. Agencies may also submit photos of their events for posting on PCW's Facebook page, pending review and compliance with deadlines. Activity lineups and photos can be submitted via the links provided on the NWMC webpage.

6.0 PCW-Organized Activities

Stakeholders are encouraged to participate in or support the activities organized by the PCW in celebration of the 2026 NWMC:

6.1 National Women's Month Celebration Kickoff Ceremony

A one-day celebration to be held on March 6, 2026, at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum, Malate, Manila. The event will feature messages and presentations from key leaders, highlighting the national government's vision of Filipino women as powerful catalysts for inclusive growth, peace, and development in the Philippines and in the ASEAN region.

The whole day event will include a trade and service fair, engaging interactive activities such as games, trivia, raffles, as well cultural and artistic performances. Together, these elements create a joyful and participatory celebration that honors women's achievements, leadership, and creativity in all their diversity.

6.2 #SheSays 2026: Women Bridging Change

PCW introduces #SheSays, a campaign highlighting women leading transformative initiatives in governance, peace, innovation, and sustainability. Messages and statements will showcase their achievements, challenges, and partnerships, demonstrating how Filipino women contribute to national development and support ASEAN priorities for empowerment, economic growth, and regional security.

6.3 Development of 2026 NWMC Sticker Pack

A digital sticker collection featuring empowering messages on gender equality and women's empowerment will be made available for use across popular social media and messaging platforms such as Viber, Facebook Messenger, Instagram, among others. Users can easily add these stickers to conversations, sharing positive messages, sparking dialogue, and raising awareness on gender parity. By integrating these stickers into everyday chats and social media interactions, the campaign turns digital spaces into platforms for advocacy, encouraging a fun yet meaningful way to promote women's empowerment and inclusive leadership.

7.0 Observance of Health and Safety Protocols and Conduct of Peaceful and Non-partisan activities

PCW reminds all stakeholders to adhere to relevant health and safety protocols during physical gatherings. The annual NWMC is a peaceful and non-partisan event. To maintain focus on the advocacy, stakeholders are requested to refrain from using PCW-produced materials for partisan political activities.

8.0 Use of Gender and Development (GAD) Budget

Government offices may allocate expenses for the NWMC from their GAD Budget and include them in their GAD Accomplishment Reports, provided that the activities align with the theme, objectives, and focus area specified in PCW's guidelines and fall within the mandate of the implementing agency.

This Circular is not intended to alter established policies related to GAD Planning and Budgeting, procurement, auditing, or other financial and administrative regulations set by relevant oversight agencies.

9.0 Details for Sending Inquiries and Feedback

Stakeholders are encouraged to visit the following link for more information, downloadable collateral designs, and updates about the 2026 NWMC:

<https://pcw.gov.ph/2026-national-womens-month-celebration/>

Announcements are also available on PCW's official social media pages:

<https://www.facebook.com/PCWgovph>

<https://twitter.com/PCWgovph>

<https://www.instagram.com/pcwgovph/>

Advocates can also join the PCW's Viber Channel for the latest updates:

<https://bit.ly/pcwgovphviber>

For further inquiries and clarifications, stakeholders may contact the **PCW Corporate Affairs and Information Resource Management Division (CAIRMD)** through the following channels: (02) 8735-1654, 0917-845-4814, womensmonth@pcw.gov.ph , or media@pcw.gov.ph, and look for Ms. Jescel Aquino or Ms. Ciarra Dave Abcede.

For guidance and appropriate action.

SGD

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Chairperson