

## Technical Assistance to the Human Rights Victims' Claims Board in the Philippines

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On 25 February 2013, the President of the Philippines signed the Compensation Act to Victims of Human Rights Violations. The Act enables all victims of human rights violations committed between September 1972 and February 1986 under the Marcos regime to obtain reparations. Contingent upon the success of its implementation, this historical Act is a critical step forward for the Philippines in dealing with the past legacy of State violence and human rights violations.

However, a range of factors are expected to raise a number of complex and challenging issues, potentially affecting the Act's implementation. These include: the time passed since the violations took place; the nature of the caseload including the victims population's considerable size; the multiple types of remedies foreseen in the Compensation Act; the short timeframe provided to implement the reparations effort; and the multiple areas where the Act requires the further development of rules and policies.

With a view to adding to local implementation capacities, and following a request for technical assistance through the Federal Department For Foreign Affairs of Switzerland and Swisspeace, IOM organized a four-day workshop entitled "Implementing Victims'

Reparations: International Practices and Experiences" with the members of the Human Rights Victims' Claims Board in Manila in March 2014. This initiative exposed participants to IOM's experience in implementing other reparations efforts. It further enabled the identification of principal challenges related to the Compensation Act's implementation and supported efforts to adequately and appropriately plan for the Act's implementation.

Following the workshop, the Chair of the Board requested IOM's technical assistance on such key areas as document validation, evidentiary standards and access to the compensation scheme for vulnerable victims living outside the metropolitan centres. Envisaged future work will engage with this request employing both a transparent and inclusive approach to maximise outreach and claim intake.

IOM undertakes its work with particular gender sensitivity through a pronounced emphasis on the outreach and inclusion of women to help eliminate gender barriers in the claims process.

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