

(Healing) Philippines' Situation amid Pandemic through Government Responsiveness in Securing COVID-19 Vaccine

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Dear Editor,

Some have suggested that 2020 was a year of despair relative to the statistical data of the COVID-19 pandemic.¹ Among the anticipative remedies for the global pandemic, vaccination tops the list in most countries' priorities and programs. In the November 2020 issue of the *Oman Medical Journal*, Al Awaidy and Khamis expressed that "the race for the coronavirus vaccine gives hope for millions of individuals". Nonetheless, its accessibility has become the major concern of all countries.² With the approval of some vaccine candidates and massive vaccination in developed countries, the least developed nations, on the other hand, struggle to secure a supply of vaccines for their people. In the Philippines, the government optimistically projected that by the first quarter of 2021, a COVID-19 vaccine would become available, hoping for a 'year of healing'.³ In December 2020, government officials and experts debated on what vaccine should be purchased.⁴ Even some legislative agenda such as Charter Change (or the constitutional reform of the 1987 Constitution) emerged as a political interest among several politicians, whereas other legislators questioned its relevance and practicality amid the pandemic.⁵ In a nutshell, it is not law-making versus vaccination rather the prioritization and deliberation of bills and legislative laws should and must cater to the real and evident experiences of Filipino people that might even extend until next year if (quality) aid is not given.

If healing corresponds to the accessibility and availability of the COVID-19 vaccine, then it

should not be perceived as a single-stage rather as a developmental process in lessening the stirring situation of the country. Vaccination may be the start; however, people should internalize and continue to follow the significance and vitality of health-related measures to ensure its therapeutic effect. On top of this, the government's inspiration, diligence, and willpower are necessary to execute this goal. Setting the vision for a 12-month reality requires a committed and unyielding character throughout the year. Similarly, an approach of neutrality, disregarding the political identity of people, is an essential feature to place the Filipino people as the sovereign and chief concern by having a unified plan while directing government focus onto the lens of vaccine accessibility.

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