

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

# University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City

STATEMENT OF CONCERN

on the Appointment of Lt. Gen. Joselito Bautista

as DSWD Secretary

We, the faculty of the Department of Social Work, College of Social Work and Community Development, University of the Philippines, Diliman are deeply concerned over the recent appointment of Lt. Gen. Joselito Bautista as Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

Lt. Gen. Bautista is a graduate of the Philippine Military Academy with a military career that spans 33 years. He has impeccable credentials as an expert on counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency, as commander of the Presidential Security Guard, and commanding general of the Philippine Army. His stay in Mindanao also partly covered the 2017 Marawi siege, a five-month war against the Maranao people that resulted to thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and hundreds killed.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) is the national agency mandated “to develop, implement and coordinate social protection and poverty reduction solutions for and with the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged”. It is not in the business of counter-terrorism and warfare. To many impoverished and marginalised Filipino families and children, DSWD is a lifeline, a lifesaver, a source of opportunity and hope.

DSWD is a civilian institution that has been headed by civilians even during the martial law years in the Philippines. Its leadership and workforce are composed of various professionals such as social workers, psychologists, educators, and lawyers who strive to live up to the agency ’s commitment to provide “tunay na malasakit sa mahihirap; maagap at mapagkalingang serbisyo sa mamamayan” (genuine compassion for the poor; prompt and nurturing service to the people).

Thus, we question the fit of Lt. Gen. Bautista’s military credentials for DSWD. Counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism skills are not and should not be part of social welfare.

People’s empowerment and human rights are moorings of our society, and DSWD is a crucial institution to fulfill these. We call on our colleagues in social work, social welfare and development to make a direct stake in ensuring that these moorings remain.

The field of social welfare and development in the country has produced more than enough leaders and public servants whose professional competencies are attuned to the mandate of DSWD. THERE IS NO DEARTH OF QUALIFIED CANDIDATES FOR DSWD SECRETARY.

Sgd. Assoc. Prof. Yolanda G. Ealdama

Chairperson