



Republic of the Philippines
National Authority for Child Care

Est. 2022

Administrative Order No. **07**
Series of 2024

SUBJECT: NACC GUIDELINES ON THE USE OF GENDER-FAIR LANGUAGE

I. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The Philippine Constitution¹ recognizes the role of women in nation-building, and shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men. Further, the Republic Act 9710 or the Magna Carta of Women provided the protection of women against discrimination, violence, or abuses in media portrayal, employment, and the family, and among others. This legal framework supports the promotion of gender equality and aims to eliminate gender biases in all forms, including language.

The use of gender-fair language is critical in promoting equality and non-discrimination. Language shapes our perceptions, influences behaviors, and reflects our values. By adopting gender-fair language, we can contribute to the empowerment of all genders, ensuring that our communication is inclusive, respectful, and devoid of bias.

As support to the government's efforts in integrating gender equality and women empowerment throughout the country, and as an initiative of the newly-established NACC GAD Focal Point System (GFPS) in developing gender-responsive programs in the agency, the use of gender-fair language has been recognized as a starting point as this may also serve as an enabling mechanism in gender mainstreaming. Furthermore, the use of gender-fair and gender-neutral languages in the agency's oral and written communications is also tantamount to GAD-responsive and sensitive agency.

The Philippine Commission on Women (PCW)² and the Civil Service Commission (CSC)³ have issued Memorandum Circulars (MCs) directing all government agencies and offices to promote the use of gender-fair language in the drafting and review of legislative measures, and use non-sexist language in all official documents, communications, and issuances. Furthermore, in the judiciary, the Supreme Court also issued Administrative Matter (AM) on the guidelines on the use of gender-fair language in the judiciary and gender-fair courtroom etiquette.

Despite these issuances, it has been observed that sexist language and terms are still being used in some of NACC's official documents, communications, and issuances. It is very timely that the agency developed and issued this guidelines on the use of gender-fair language.

¹ Section XIV, Article II of the 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines

² PCW-MC_2014-06_Promoting-the-Use-of-Gender-Sensitive-Language-in-the-Drafting-and-Review-of-Legislative-Measures

³ MC 2017-12-24 July 2017

II. LEGAL BASES

The following laws and issuances served as guide in crafting this Administrative Order:

- 1) Republic Act. No. 7192 - *Women in Development and Nation Building Act*;
- 2) Republic Act No. 9710 - *Magna Carta of Women (MCW)*;
- 3) Republic Act No. 11313 - *Safe Spaces Act*;
- 4) Article II, Section 11 of the 1987 Constitution - *The State values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights.*
- 5) Article II, Section 14 of the 1987 Constitution - *The State recognizes the role of women in nation-building, and shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men.*

III. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of these guidelines are:

- To eliminate gender-discriminating or sexist language in all NACC's official documents, oral and written communications, and issuances thereby promoting the use of gender-fair language in the agency.
- To eliminate gender biases in written and spoken communication by ensuring that all genders are represented fairly and equitably by all NACC staff.
- To comply with legal mandates and the principles of the Magna Carta of Women, the Philippine Constitution, and related issuances on GAD mainstreaming and gender equality.

IV. COVERAGE

This Administrative Order will cover all Divisions/Units/Sections of the National Authority for Child Care (NACC) and the Regional Alternative Child Care Offices (RACCOs).

V. SCOPE

These guidelines shall apply to all official documents, communications, and correspondences within the NACC, including but not limited to:

- Memoranda
- Reports
- Circulars
- Publications
- Digital communications (emails, social media posts)
- Training materials and modules

VI. PRACTICAL GUIDELINES

Below is the practical guidelines on the use of the gender-fair language at the NACC, which were adopted from the PCW MC No. 2014-06, MC No. 12, Series of 2005, and the Supreme Court Administrative Matter No. 21-11-25-SC or Guidelines for the Use of Gender-Fair Language in the Judiciary and Gender Fair Courtroom Etiquette.

1. Eliminate language, written and spoken, that excludes or renders invisible persons of another gender and/or people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC).

a. The use of the generic masculine.

Stop using the generic term “man” and similar terms to subsume all of humanity.

Start using gender-neutral mass nouns such as people, person(s), human(s), human being(s), humankind, humanity, the human race.

Examples:

Before: Negligence is the omission to do something which a reasonable man would do.

After: Negligence is the omission to do something which a reasonable person would do.

Before: Piracy is a crime not against any particular state but against all mankind.

After: Piracy is a crime not against any particular state but against all of humanity.

Avoid language that reinforces stereotypes or assumes roles based on gender. For example, avoid phrases like "manpower" and instead use "workforce" or "personnel."

Please refer to Annex A for a comprehensive list of gender-fair terms.

Start including women in a general statement about the human condition.

Example:

Before: Man is naturally endowed with the faculties of understanding and free will.

After: Men and women are naturally endowed with the faculties of understanding and free will.

b. The unwarranted use of masculine pronouns.

When referring to individuals, use their preferred pronouns and titles. In the absence of a preference, use gender-neutral pronouns such as "they/them" or the individual's name to avoid assumptions about gender identity.

Start using plural nouns to avoid using third person singular pronouns.

Example:

Before: If the child is found outside his or her place of birth, facilitate an Out-of-Town Reporting of Birth with the nearest LCR.

After: If the child is found outside their place of birth, facilitate an Out-of-Town Reporting of Birth with the nearest LCR.

Start using articles (a, an, the) as substitutes for pronouns.

Example:

Before: Within 15 days from receipt of the application letter, the applicant may follow-up his letter.

After: Within 15 days from receipt of the application letter, the applicant may follow-up the letter.

c. The use of masculine terms for profession, occupation and roles

Stop using terms ending in "man" to refer to functions that may be performed by individuals of either sex.

Start using widely-used gender-neutral forms of professions, occupations and roles.

Example:

Before: Some of the adoption petitioners are businessmen.

After: Some of the adoption petitioners are business owners.

Continue using gender-neutral terms for law employs

Examples

Before: The Barangay Chairman is supportive of the Foster Care Program.

After: The Punong Barangay or Barangay Chairperson is supportive of the Foster Care Program.

Before: The birth mother of the child is a housemaid, while the father is a houseboy.

After: Both of the child's birth parents are kasambabay.

d. The use of sex-appropriated terms

Stop using terms as though they apply to adult males only, or are appropriated to a particular sex.

Start using "spouses" for "wives," "family" for "wife and child," and similar terms.

Examples

Before: His wife attended an adoption forum as part of the adoption process.

After: The spouse attended an adoption forum as part of the adoption process.

2. Eliminate language that trivializes or diminishes the stature of persons of another gender and/or people with diverse SOGIESC.

a. The use of diminutive feminine suffixes

Stop using feminine suffixes such as *-ess*, *-ette*, *-trix*, or *-enne*, which make unnecessary reference to the person's sex and suggest triviality, unimportance, or inferiority of women occupying such a position.

Start using gender-neutral terms

Example:

Before: There, they saw Annie Ferrer, a popular movie starlet.

After: There, they saw Annie Ferrer, a popular movie artist.

b. The use of sex-linked modifiers

Stop using gratuitous and patronizing sex-linked adjectives and modifiers.

Start using gender-neutral forms of occupations and/or common nouns when fact on gender is not necessary in the statement.

Example:

Before: Appellant pleaded to the lady doctor to do all she can to save the child.

After: Appellant pleaded to the physician to do all she can to save the child.

Before: The birth mother is a housewife while the birth father is a fisherman.

After: The birth mother is a housekeeper while the birth father is a fisherfolk.

c. The use of gender-linked modifiers

Stop using gender-linked adjectives and modifiers that carry disrespectful, if not pejorative, connotations.

Start removing references to gender identity and/or expression when irrelevant.

Example:

Before: The adoptee often traveled to and from Japan as a gay entertainer in said country.

After: The adoptee often traveled to and from Japan as an entertainer in said country.

d. The use of outdated honorifics and forms of address

Stop using honorifics that obscure women, trivialize their achievements, etc.

Start using Ms. instead of Mrs. when the woman's marital status is irrelevant to the issues, or the woman's preferred form of address is unknown.

Example:

Mrs. Dela Cruz

Ms. Dela Cruz

Start using a married woman's name instead of her husband's.

Example:

Mrs. Juan dela Cruz

Ms. Maria Santos-dela Cruz

Start using gender-neutral honorifics or terms.

Examples:

Dra. Concepcion Reyes
Dear Sir

Dr. Concepcion Reyes
Dear Editor, Dear Manager, Dear Colleague

Start using *Mx.* when addressing a person who does not identify as being of a particular gender, or for a person who simply doesn't want to be identified by gender.

Example:

Ms or Mr. Sanchez

Mx. Sanchez

3. Eliminate language which disparages and marginalizes persons of another gender and/or persons of diverse SOGIESC

a. The use of disparaging language

Stop perpetuating unfounded generalizations

Stop using antiquated terms.

Start using non-oppressive, modern terms.

Examples:

Before: Carmen, a spinster, is a proud foster parent

After: Carmen, unmarried, is a proud foster parent

Before: The negligence of the sales lady is not excusable

After: The negligence of the sales representative is not excusable.

b. Gender Stereotypes

Stop using terms with sexist assumptions that the occupant has a particular sex or are demonstrable only by a certain sex.

Start using gender-fair terms

Examples:

Before: The policeman provided the social worker a copy of the blotter reports

After: The police officer provided the social worker a copy of the blotter reports

Before: Petitioner was employed as a flight stewardess of the respondent company since 1947

After: Petitioner was employed as a flight attendant of the respondent company since 1947.

Stop using imprecise terms to identify non-binary SOGIESC.

Start conscientiously using language and terms commonly used to describe specific SOGIESC.

Examples:

Before: If immoral thoughts could be penalized, COMELEC would have its hands full of disqualification cases against both the “straights” and the “gays”

After: If immoral thoughts could be penalized, COMELEC would have its hands full of disqualification cases against all sexual orientations.

4. Eliminate language that fosters unequal gender relations.

- a. Words and phrases which lacks parallelism

Stop treating the sexes with lack of parallelism.

Start adopting parallelism in word choices.

Examples:

Before: They were married in the City of Manila and lived together as man and wife.

After: They were married in the City of Manila and lived together as husband and wife.

- b. Calling attention to a person's sex

Stop using terms that call attention to a person's sex when not relevant for communication.

Start using gender-neutral terms.

Examples:

Before: Appellant, aged 20, was employed as a delivery boy.

After: Appellant, aged 20, was employed as a courier.

Before: Lena is excited about her motherhood.

After: Lena is excited about her parenthood.

5. Eliminate sexist language in quoted material

Stop quoting unfair conclusions about the sexes and retaining sexist language.

Start paraphrasing the quote using non-sexist language

Example:

Before: "Indeed, a man is king in his own house."

After: Indeed, it has been said that a person is the ruler of one's own home.

6. All official documents, memoranda, reports, and other communications should reflect gender-fair language practices. This includes the careful selection of words, titles, and pronouns to ensure inclusivity.

Example:

Use "Dear Colleagues" instead of "Dear Sirs/Madams" in formal correspondence.

7. Ensure balanced gender representation in case study reports, images, and examples, scenarios used in documents and presentations.

VII. EFFECTIVITY

This Administrative Order shall take effect immediately.

SEP 09 2024
Issued this _____ day of August 2024.

JANELLA EJERCITO ESTRADA
Executive Director

DECEMBER 12 2024

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NACC

Annex A

LIST OF GENDER-FAIR TERMS⁴

Outdated Terms	Gender-fair/ Gender Neutral	Outdated Terms	Gender-fair/ Gender Neutral
man	human being, human	anchorman	anchor
mankind, men	humanity, humankind, people, men and women	businessman, businesswoman	Business executive, manager, business owner, retailer
forefather	ancestor	cameraman	Camera operator, cinematographer
layman	Layperson, non-professional	congressman, congresswoman	Representative, Member of the House of Representatives, legislator
manhood	Adulthood, maturity	craftsman	artisan, craftspersons
manning	Staffing, working, operating	firemen	Fire fighters
one-man show/team	One-person show/team, solo	fishermen	fisher, fisherfolk
founding fathers	founders	foremen	supervisors
manpower	Human resources, staff, personnel, labor force	linemen	line installer, line repairer
statesmanship	diplomacy	pressmen	members of the press
man-made	Handmade, manufactured, artificial, synthetic, of human construction, of human origin	Policemen, Policewomen	Police officers

⁴ Supreme Court StyleBook, 2023 First Edition, "Employing Inclusive Language."

repairmen	repairers		chairman, chairwoman	chairperson
salesman, saleslady, salesgirl	salesperson, sales representative, sales employee		mailman, postman	mail carrier, letter carrier
spokesman, spokeswoman	spokesperson		cleaning woman	cleaner
statesmen	diplomats, political leaders		waiter, waitress	waitstaff
watchmen	guards		brotherhood	solidarity, human fellowship, human kinship
actress	actor		fraternal twins	non-identical twins
comedienne	comedian		gentleman's agreement	honorable agreement, unwritten agreement
executrix	executor		landlord, landlady	owner, lessor
heroine	hero		to man	to staff, to operate, to run
hostess	host		manholes	sewer holes, utility holes
proprietress	proprietor		manpower	workforce, employees, personnel, human resources
usherette	usher		man-made disaster	human-induced disaster
carer woman	caregiver		Mother Earth	Earth, planet earth
career woman	professional		motherland, fatherland	country of origin, domicile
house husband, housewife	homemaker, housekeeper		mother tongue	native language
maid	household helper, kasambahay		mothering	parenting, child rearing, childcare

busboy	waiter's assistant		noblemen	nobility, aristocrats
chambermaids	hotel staff		no-man's land	uninhabited land, neutral zone
flight stewardess	flight attendant, cabin crew		caveman	cave dweller
fatherhood, motherhood	parenthood		prehistoric man	prehistoric human being
cowboy, cowgirl	ranch hand		workmen's compensation	worker's compensation
clergyman	member of the clergy, minister, rabbi, priest, pastor, etc.		young man, young woman	youth, adolescent, teenager