MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 2014-06

TO : All Heads of Government Departments, Agencies, Bureaus, Offices, State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), Government-Owned and Controlled Corporations (GOCCs) and All Other Instrumentalities of Government, and Chairpersons of their Gender and Development (GAD) Focal Point Systems

SUBJECT: Promoting the Use of Gender-Sensitive Language in the Drafting and Review of Legislative Measures

DATE : 19 December 2014

Pursuant to Section 14, Article II 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." This State Policy is affirmed in the President's Social Contract with the Filipino People as pursued through Executive Order No. 43 s. 2011, which includes Gender Equality in its sixteen-point agenda and commits to transform the government "from a lack of concern for gender disparities and shortfalls, to the promotion of equal gender opportunity in all spheres of public policies and programs."

Recognizing that the use of gender-fair language is the first benchmark of gender-sensitivity, the Civil Service Commission (CSC) issued Memorandum Circular No. 12, series of 2005, attached herein, which encourages the use of non-sexist language in all official documents, communications and issuances. Republic Act 9710, otherwise known as the "Magna Carta of Women," reinforces the use of gender-sensitive language at all times.

While there has been growing observance on the use of gender-sensitive language in government documents, it has been observed that sexist language and terms are still used in existing laws and in some proposed legislative measures.

Language shapes thoughts, perceptions and attitudes and, thus, plays a very crucial role in promoting gender awareness and consciousness. The use of generic masculine terms to refer to both sexes in the text of laws renders women invisible, and could result to the non-consideration of their needs and concerns in the implementation of such laws.

In this regard, heads of agencies shall ensure that their GAD Focal Point Systems coordinate with and assist their legislative liaison officers in enhancing the gender-sensitivity of legislative measures by observing the use of gender-sensitive or non-sexist language in the drafting and review of their priority legislative measures and implementing rules and regulations of laws.

For your guidance and appropriate action.

REMEDIOS I. RIKKEN
Chairperson

1 Retrieved from the Official Gazette Online: http://www.gov.ph/about/gov/exec/bsaiii/platform-of-government
MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR

TO: ALL HEADS OF CONSTITUTIONAL BODIES; DEPARTMENTS, BUREAUS, OFFICES, AND AGENCIES OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT; LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS; STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES; GOVERNMENT-OWNED-OR-CONTROLLED CORPORATIONS WITH ORIGINAL CHARTER

SUBJECT: Use Of Non-Sexist Language In All Official Documents, Communications, And Issuances

Pursuant to CSC Resolution No. 050433, dated March 30, 2005, government officials and employees are encouraged to use non-sexist language in all official documents, communications, and issuances.

In line with the government’s efforts to integrate women’s concerns in its plans and programs through the years, the Civil Service Commission continues to undertake gender mainstreaming activities, taking extra efforts in promoting gender-sensitivity in the bureaucracy. Beginning June 2000, gender and development (GAD) perspectives have been integrated in the conduct of civil service examinations partly through the use of non-sexist language in the test items. This has led to the Commission’s active campaign on the use of gender-fair language.

Language is a very essential tool in communication. It articulates consciousness, reflects culture, and affects socialization. Hence, the need to recognize the importance of transforming language from traditional usage to a more liberating one, that which is gender-sensitive.

Since government employees and officials encounter gender issues everyday, the use of non-sexist language in preparing letters, memoranda, and other issuances, will encourage them to make a conscious effort to avoid implicit and explicit discriminatory language against women or men. This, in turn, will help promote gender-sensitivity in the bureaucracy.

Attached are some suggestions on how to use non-sexist language.

Please be guided accordingly.

KARINA CONSTANTINO-DAVID
Chair

March 31, 2005
Suggestions on How to Use Non-Sexist Language

1. Eliminate the generic use of HE, HIS, or HIM unless the antecedent is obviously male by:
   a. using plural nouns
      
      TRADITIONAL: The lawyer uses his brief to guide him.
      SUGGESTION: The lawyers use their briefs to guide them.
   b. deleting he, his, and him altogether, rewording if necessary
      
      TRADITIONAL: The architect uses his blueprint to guide him.
      SUGGESTION: The architect uses a blueprint as a guide.
   c. substituting articles (a, an, the) for his, using who instead of he
      
      TRADITIONAL: The writer should know his readers well.
      SUGGESTION: The writer should know the readers well.
   d. using one, we, or you
      
      TRADITIONAL: As one grows older, he becomes more reflective.
      SUGGESTION: As one grows older, one becomes more reflective.
   e. using the passive voice
      
      TRADITIONAL: The manager must submit his proposal today.
      SUGGESTION: The proposal must be submitted by the manager today.

2. Eliminate the generic use of MAN. Instead, use PEOPLE, PERSON(S), HUMAN(S), HUMAN BEING(S), HUMANKIND, HUMANITY, and THE HUMAN RACE.

   TRADITIONAL: ordinary man, mankind, the brotherhood of man
   SUGGESTION: ordinary people, humanity, the human family

3. Eliminate sexism in symbolic representations of gender in words, sentences, and texts by:
   a. taking the context of the word, analyzing its meaning, and eliminating sexism in the concept
      
      TRADITIONAL: feelings of brotherhood, feelings of fraternity
      SUGGESTION: feelings of kinship, solidarity
      
      TRADITIONAL: the founding fathers
      SUGGESTION: the founders, the founding leaders
b. finding precise words to delineate the thing itself from supposedly sex-linked characteristics

**TRADITIONAL:** Titanic was a great ship, but she now rests at the bottom of the sea.

**SUGGESTION:** Titanic was a great ship, but it now rests at the bottom of the sea.

**TRADITIONAL:** “Don’t let Mother Nature rip you o!! She’s out to kill your car’s new finish... Stop her...”

**SUGGESTION:** “Don’t let Nature rip you o!! It’s out to kill your car’s finish... Stop it...”

4. Eliminate sexual stereotyping of roles by:

a. using the same term for both genders when it comes to profession or employment

**TRADITIONAL:** salesman, stewardess

**SUGGESTION:** sales agent, flight attendant

b. using gender fair terms in lexical terms

**TRADITIONAL:** sportsmanship

**SUGGESTION:** highest ideals of fair play

c. treating men and women in a parallel manner

**TRADITIONAL:** I now pronounce you man and wife.

**SUGGESTION:** I now pronounce you husband and wife.

d. avoiding language that reinforces stereotyping images

**TRADITIONAL:** a man’s job, the director’s girl Friday

**SUGGESTION:** a big job, the director’s assistant

e. avoiding language that catches attention to the sex role of men and women

**TRADITIONAL:** working mothers, spinsters or old maids

**SUGGESTION:** wage-earning mothers, unmarried women

**TRADITIONAL:** busboys, chauvinist pigs

**SUGGESTION:** waiters’ assistants, male chauvinists
5. Eliminate sexism when addressing persons formally by:

a. using Ms. instead of Mrs.

TRADITIONAL: Mrs. dela Cruz
SUGGESTION: Ms. dela Cruz

b. using a married woman’s first name instead of her husband’s

TRADITIONAL: Mrs. Juan dela Cruz
SUGGESTION: Ms. Maria Santos-dela Cruz

c. using the corresponding titles for females

TRADITIONAL: Dra. Concepcion Reyes
SUGGESTION: Dr. Concepcion Reyes

d. using the title of the job or group in letters to unknown persons

TRADITIONAL: Dear Sir
SUGGESTION: Dear Editor, Dear Credit Manager, Dear Colleague